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North Korean invasion and Chinese intervention in Korea: failures of intelligence

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NORTH KOREAN INVASION AND
CHINESE INTERVENTION IN KOREA:
FAILURES OF INTELLIGENCE

A Thesis

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ABSTRACT

The America intelligence community in 1950, unprepared to perform its missions, failed to provide adequate indications and warning to U.S. national leaders and to the Commander, Far East Command (FEC), about the North Korean invasion of South Korea and Red Chinese intervention in the Korean War. Post-World War II policies that reduced the size of the military, cut systems and training, and reorganized intelligence services are responsible for that failure.

Training deficiencies meant that intelligence soldiers deployed to Korea without required skills. The military trained analysts to assess enemy capabilities rather than intentions, contributing to poor predictive analysis. Shortages of analysts, photo interpreters, and linguists further plagued the intelligence community and degraded intelligence collection and production.

The post-war political climate focused on the Soviet threat. American estimates saw the Soviet Union as the center of control for other communist states, such as Red China and that paradigm framed analysis of Chinese intentions.

Assessments by General MacArthur, head of the FEC and Supreme Commander of United Nations Forces in Korea, of Chinese intentions proved decisive in shaping the course of the war in the fall of 1950. The Far Eastern Command (FEC) G-2 shared MacArthur's view that the Chinese would not intervene and spread that appraisal throughout the FEC intelligence community. In MacArthur opinion, the Chinese would not attack late in 1950 because the opportune time to do so had passed; furthermore, he thought since the Red Chinese lacked an Air Force, they would be annihilated by U.S. airpower. Analysts at all levels underestimated the Peoples Republic of China (PRC) and failed to understand Chinese operational art and tactics. Consequently, they did not recognize the Chinese first phase offensive in North Korea, and erroneously concluded that the Chinese would withdraw and defend its border.

The intelligence community's poor readiness and lack of capability to provide indications and warning resulted in the enemy's achieving surprise. The first surprise led to the deployment, and near defeat, of Task Force Smith at Pusan. The second surprise led to the withdrawal and rout of U.N. forces, which led to a prolonged war of attrition.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

"Practical politics consists in ignoring facts."[1] - Henry Adams

The events of September 11, 2001 have brought the requirement for strong national defense into sharp focus. A decade after the United States Army's rallying cry of "No More Task Force Smiths"† was popularized, and five years after the completion of the U.S. Joint doctrine on intelligence, America has discovered that its intelligence apparatus, especially its capabilities in the area of human intelligence (HUMINT), is inadequate. Since September 11, President George W. Bush has issued new orders to the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) to conduct a wider and more intense effort to eliminate Osama Bin Laden as leader of the terrorist organization Al Qaeda.[2] Serious questions about whether the intelligence community is up to the effort have arisen. "The agency is being assigned a monumental task for which it is not fully equipped or trained," according to an experienced CIA insider.[3] HUMINT sources in the Muslim world are scarce in general and the CIA Operations Directorate faces significant statutory restraints on its ability to conduct lethal covert activities. Intelligence-sharing agreements with other countries will go only so far because, clearly, nations will not share their most sensitive secrets with the U.S. no matter how much diplomatic or political pressure Washington brings to bear. Overnight development of language capability and cultural expertise is not possible. One can be certain that since September 11 the U.S. intelligence community has

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† The first combat troops that were deployed to the Korean War in June 1950 was the 1st Battalion, 21st Infantry Regiment, 24th Infantry Division, commanded by Colonel Charles Bradford Smith. Plucked from occupation duty in Japan where training standards were weak to non-existent and equipment was not on a combat-ready, wartime footing, TF Smith was thrust into combat with advancing North Korean Army forces that nearly destroyed attempting to block the road to the strategic port city of Pusan while reinforcements were sent to join them in combat.

In 1991, the end of the Soviet threat triggered a planned draw down of U.S. troops in Europe. General Sullivan emphasized the Army' s historical record of deterioration following its wars to avoid cutting military strength too severely. Radical declines in strength and readiness had led to debacles such as the near-destruction of Task Force Smith in 1950. Thus, "No more Task Force Smiths," became a watchword in the Army in 1991.

begun dramatically retooling its capabilities and exercising its newfound authorities to perform covert operations, conduct inter-agency missions, share information with foreign governments and recruit HUMINT sources. The challenge is for our national leaders and the intelligence community to take a longer view, having learned the hard lessons of being unprepared in Korea, and now on September 11, and to ensure that the intelligence community remains prepared for the next conflict, after the U.S. has won the current war against terror. All Americans share responsibility for the continuing education that is required to ensure that, although citizens may feel secure inside U.S. borders during a period of relative calm, the government does not reduce military preparedness to detect enemy capabilities and intentions and to project national power to defend U.S. interests wherever threats arise.

A peculiar phenomenon in American history is that, following its major wars, U.S. military warfighting capabilities typically have shrunk dramatically. The reasons for this trend are many, but a central one has always been the apparent financial benefits of reducing force levels. "Cashing in on the peace dividend" is a popular refrain in domestic politics. There are, however, hidden costs in downsizing the military. Degraded military readiness results not only in heavier casualties, but greater financial burded when the nation calls on neglected forces to fight.

Following World War II, the U.S. military again underwent national bulimia, shedding manpower, equipment, and capabilities faster than was prudent. At the same time, inter-service and civil-military rivalries prompted the complete reorganization of the U.S. national security structure. The Defense Department was born along with a new service department, the U.S. Air Force. These changes resulted in economies, but they also weakened the nation' s ability to respond to crisis. The military structured itself as an occupation force in Europe and the Far

East. The administrative and logistical structures that remained after the drawdown were postured to sustain these forward-deployed troops. The National Security Act of 1947 reorganized many different intelligence organizations with the creation of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and the consolidation of the functions of other organizations, such as the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), inside the newly created agency.

The political climate in post-war America had a profound impact on military readiness. The perceived threat of Soviet world domination colored the judgment of American political and military leaders. The political climate of the era shaped the intelligence community's focal point for intelligence collection. Justifiable fear of Soviet expansion became the lens used for analyzing events around the globe.

Military intelligence suffered similar force reductions, compelling it to reallocate finite resources to priority missions. The reductions were too deep, however, and too many threat areas went uncovered. By the early 1950s, the intelligence community was unprepared to provide adequate indications and warning of regional threats to U.S. interests.

The reduction in resources and the turbulence created by downsizing and reorganization affected the military's ability to train its intelligence troops adequately. The Army's post-war reorganization did not include creation of a separate Military Intelligence branch, a lapse that weakened efforts to standardize and professionalize its intelligence corps. Training standards were variable and the selection and training of analysts across all intelligence disciplines was haphazard.

The ability of the intelligence community to provide adequate imagery support to tactical and operational commanders during the Korean War was inadequate. The number of aerial reconnaissance planes, a shortage of trained photo-interpreters, and excessive order-to-delivery

times for imagery support were among the principal deficiencies. Furthermore, a lack of a true all-weather imagery capability and technological and political restrictions on conducting photo reconnaissance inside China further restricted the capability of imagery intelligence to support commanders.

Signals Intelligence (SIGINT) efforts, at the national, theater and strategic level, suffered under the drawdown and reorganization polices of the times. The dissolution of service cryptological elements and creation of the National Security Agency created a whirlwind of organizational changes that diluted the ability of theater and national SIGINT units to provide adequate signals collection and analysis support. Downsizing policies severely affected tactical SIGINT units, which lacked manpower, possessed outdated, ineffective equipment, and had no ability to deploy for contingency operations in a timely manner.

Arguably, the intelligence discipline that requires the most time to develop an effective capability, HUMINT, was unprepared to support commanders adequately with intelligence collection and interrogation. The military reduction policies of the times and the reorganization of the intelligence community undoubtedly contributed to the overall lack of capability. The dissolution of the OSS resulted in virtually no effective HUMINT collection operations inside North Korea or Manchuria before the onset of hostilities. Theater efforts to develop a HUMINT capability to fill the gaps created by a lack of national-level clandestine support proved unfocused, uncoordinated and ineffective. A lack of interrogators who spoke Korean or Chinese and ineffective policies and procedures for the tagging, transport and exploitation of enemy prisoners of war hampered interrogation efforts during the early months of the war.

While the ability of the various intelligence disciplines to collect, synthesize and report intelligence on Korea and China was degraded, the analytical centers that evaluated this

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reporting, and influenced commanders' decision-making, also revealed shortcomings. General Douglas MacArthur, Commander of the Far East Command, had a profound personal impact on the analysis of intelligence at all levels. MacArthur habitually surrounded himself with fawning staff officers and aides who were inclined to tell the General what he wanted to hear. His principal staff officer for intelligence, Major General Charles A. Willoughby, was a MacArthur acolyte and the commander's opinions about the possibility of Chinese intervention very likely affected his judgment. MacArthur was disinclined to believe that the Chinese would attack and consequently his intelligence staff disregarded information that indicated that an attack was imminent. Intelligence agencies in Washington deferred analytical judgments to the Far Eastern Command and regurgitated the analysis in their national-level reports. This circular reporting and analysis loop tended to disseminate erroneous conclusions throughout the intelligence community and stifle independent thinking. Unfortunately, the ability of the intelligence community to collect information and synthesize these disparate facts into a coherent all-source picture of enemy capabilities and intentions was inadequate and incapable of debunking the analysis of General MacArthur and his staff.

The U.S. intelligence community of 1950 was woefully unprepared to predict the North Korean invasion that triggered international conflict in Korea. Even with the onset of combat and the refocus of intelligence assets onto the problem in Korea, the subsequent Chinese intervention caught the intelligence community off-guard. This study will examine in detail the reasons behind the failure of intelligence to provide accurate indications and warning of the North Korean invasion of South Korea and the subsequent intervention of Chinese forces in the Korean War.

[1] Ernest Samuels and Jayne N. Samuels, eds., *The Education of Henry Adams* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1973), 373.

[2] John H.Cushman, Jr., "New Orders Spur CIA Hunt For Bin Laden," *New York Times,* 22 October, 2001, 1.

[3] Quoted in Bob Woodward, "CIA Told To Do ' Whatever Necessary' To Kill Bin Laden," *Washington Post,* 21 October, 2001, 1.

CHAPTER 2: BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW OF THE KOREAN WAR

Shortly after the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the Japanese surrendered unconditionally on August 14, 1945. The Soviets, advancing into Manchuria and Korea, could quickly gain control of the entire Korean peninsula since the Japanese had ceased to be a factor on the battlefield. American authorities proposed a plan for the disarming of Japanese troops that would temporarily divide the peninsula in half at the 38th parallel, leaving the Soviets to occupy Korea north of the line, where American forces stabilized the situation in the south. The Soviets agreed and quickly moved into cities throughout the north. The U.S. military troops arrived at Inchon on September 8, 1945 and began controlling the southern half of the peninsula. The three divisions of the XXIV Corps', the 7th, the 6th, and the 40th, made up the initial occupation force. Major General John R. Hodge, the corps commander, was designated the military governor in Korea.[1]

The United Nations General Assembly determined in the spring of 1948 that the Korean people would elect one national assembly for the whole country. South Koreans participated in a U.N.-supervised election in May that selected members of the Korean National Assembly; however, the Soviets prohibited elections in the North and did not permit the U.N. Election Commission to enter North Korea. The South Korean National Assembly ratified the country' s constitution July 17, 1948 and the Republic of Korea (ROK) was formally established on August 14, 1948. Dr. Syngman Rhee became the first president of South Korea. The northern half of Korea held separate elections in the fall of 1948, establishing the Democratic People' s Republic of Korea and inaugurating Kim Il Sung as its new president.[2]

By the fall of 1948, the temporary demarcation line at the 38th parallel had become a contested, de-facto international border. Kim Il Sung began a campaign of subversion and

irregular warfare against South Korea as soon as he consolidated his position as president. Kim considered a more direct approach when Rhee proved to have a tighter than anticipated grip on power in South Korea.

The Soviets withdrew their forces by December 25, 1948, leaving behind 3,000 military advisors to assist North Korea in organizing, equipping and training its military forces. The North Korean Peoples Army (NKPA) was activated February 8, 1948. A veteran cadre of Korean Chinese Communist Forces based the NKPA on the Red Army model. It consisted initially of a Border Constabulary composed of former Korean guerrillas, but grew quickly to a force of 135,000 troops composed of seven infantry divisions, three reserve infantry divisions, one independent infantry unit, one armored brigade and five Border Constabulary brigades. Each NKPA infantry division consisted of approximately 11,000 soldiers organized in three regiments, each with three battalions. A regiment was outfitted with six 120mm mortars, four 76mm howitzers and six 45mm anti-tank guns. Battalions were equipped with nine 82mm mortars, two 45mm anti-tank guns and nine 14.5mm anti-tank guns, while a division had an organic artillery regiment with twelve 122mm howitzers, twenty-four 76mm guns, twelve SU-76 self-propelled guns, twelve 45mm anti-tank guns and thirty-six 14.5mm anti-tank rifles. The NKPA organized with a separate armored brigade, the 105th, consisting of approximately 6,000 soldiers armed with 120 T-34 Soviet main battle tanks. The 105th maintained thirty more T-34s in reserve. The North Korean Air Force had sixty YAK trainers; forty YAK fighters, seventy attack bombers and ten reconnaissance planes. The North Korean Navy had sixteen patrol craft of various types and a few coastwise steamers with light deck guns.

The U.S. Military Government ended its control with the creation of the Republic of Korea. By June 1949, the 50,000 American occupation troops had completed their withdrawal,

leaving the Korean Military Advisory Group (KMAG) behind to continue training Korean security forces. The KMAG numbered approximately 500 American officers and enlisted men charged with structuring the Republic of Korea Army (ROKA) as a lightly armed constabulary designed to maintain internal order.

The ROKA consisted of approximately 98,000 soldiers, of which only 65,000 were combat troops. Organized into eight infantry divisions, four of which were deployed along the 38th parallel, it was equipped with U.S. made 60mm and 81mm mortars, 2.36 inch rocket launchers, 37-mm anti-tank guns, and ninety-one 105mm M3 howitzers. Significantly, the ROKA had only twenty-seven armored cars and no tanks, medium artillery, heavy mortars or recoilless rifles. The Republic of Korea Air Force (ROKAF) consisted of approximately 1,900 airmen equipped with one group of twelve liaison-type aircraft, ten advanced AT6 trainers and ten F-51s. The ROKAF had no qualified pilots for the F-51. The Republic of Korea Navy consisted of 6,100 sailors equipped with one patrol craft, one LST, fifteen mine sweepers, ten mine layers and miscellaneous small craft.[3]

While there was a rough parity in naval forces, the quantitative superiority of the NKPA vis-à-vis the ROKA was obvious. Qualitatively, the difference between the two armies was perhaps even more significant. The NKPA possessed a strong cadre of combat veterans, especially among the officers and noncommissioned officers, while the South Korean forces had little battle experience. A few of the ROKA officers had served as junior officers and noncommissioned officers in the Japanese Army, but many had no prior military experience at all. Furthermore, ROKA leaders organized along regional, political and class lines whereas no such problem existed among their thoroughly indoctrinated northern counterparts.

In 1949, the Chinese communists won the civil war in China. This success emboldened

Kim Il Sung to make several trips to Moscow and Peking to persuade Josef Stalin and Mao Tse Tung to support the reunification of Korea by force. Kim and his communist mentors had little reason to expect that the U.S. would interfere with forcible reunification in any meaningful way. The last of the U.S. occupation forces in Korea withdrew in 1949 and occupation duties completely consumed the troops in Japan, leaving them far from being combat-ready. His military force in place, Kim Il Sung engaged in some intense diplomacy with Mao Tse Tung and Josef Stalin for their support of an invasion of the ROK. Kim convinced the Soviet dictator that a North Korean invasion would quickly subdue South Korea before the U.S. could intervene. The Soviets would provide essential logistical support and technical advisors for the invasion force.[4]

If the invasion were successful, the Soviets stood to take advantage of the warm water ports of Inchon and Pusan. A North Korean success would enhance the communist cause worldwide. Stalin could disavow any connection with the invasion if Kim's gamble failed by explaining that he had intended that Kim use material support and advisors for defensive purposes. Soviet communists also had an opportunity to test the American's resolve to contain Soviet expansion.

The U.S. government appeared to lack interest in Korea when Secretary of State Dean Acheson, in a January 1950 speech to the Washington press corps, stated that the U.S. defensive perimeter in the Far East included Japan and the Philippines, but specifically excluded Taiwan and Korea.[5] Acheson's speech very likely contributed to Stalin and Kim's assessments of the strategic situation.

The U.S. was not prepared for war in Korea in June 1950. The government had reduced defense expenditures after World War II because of public sentiment against a large standing

military establishment and the desire to produce consumer goods. America's strategy for

containing communism depended on the atomic bomb and strategic air power. Expenses in these

areas required significant reductions in the strength of the Army, Navy and Marine Corps. The

result of the post-World War II drawdown in military readiness was that few trained units were

available for immediate commitment in Korea when the North Koreans invaded.

The North Korean Army attacked across the 38th parallel on June 25, 1950 with the

objective of unifying the peninsula under the leadership of Kim Il Sung. The invasion led

President Truman to commit U.S. forces to the defense of South Korea. Simultaneously, the

United Nations Security Council called upon member states to do likewise, authorizing for the

first time the establishment of a U.N. multinational force to repel aggression. Fifty-three

member nations approved the Security Council's recommendations and on July 7, 1950, the U.N.

asked the U.S. to lead the Unified Command to halt the North Korean aggression. Accepting the

responsibility, President Truman appointed General Douglas MacArthur as commanding

general.[6]

Initially, the North Korean offensive drove the ill-equipped, unprepared, untrained

defenders into the southeast corner of the peninsula where they were nearly defeated. U.N. and

South Korean forces established a desperate defense of the strategic port city of Pusan. The

perimeter held through tough battles, due in part to reinforcement by American divisions. As a

result, the North Korean advancing forces overextend their capabilities, making possible a

brilliantly-conceived U.N. amphibious assault at Inchon.

General MacArthur perceived that the deeper the North Koreans drove, the more

vulnerable they would become to an amphibious envelopment. Planning for such an operation

began almost at the start of hostilities. MacArthur favored the Yellow Sea port of Inchon,

halfway up the west coast, as the landing site for the amphibious envelopment. A force landing there would be just twenty-five miles east of Seoul and it would have only a short distance to move in order to cut North Korean supply routes. The recapture of Seoul would have a positive psychological impact for South Koreans and U.N. forces. MacArthur reasoned that a landing at Inchon, combined with a northward attack by the Eighth Army, would produce decisive results. The amphibious force would cut off enemy troops retiring before the Eighth Army; forcing their surrender or a slow and difficult withdrawal through the mountains farther east.

Many military professionals judged the Inchon plan dangerous.[7] The Navy considered the extreme tides in the Yellow Sea, and narrow channel approaches as big risks to amphibious assault ships. The Marine Corps judged that a landing in a built-up area with the requirement to scale high sea walls to get ashore as extremely risky. Since MacArthur would be committing his only reserves when no more reserve units were available in the U.S. for deployment to Korea, the Joint Chiefs of Staff anticipated serious consequences if a strong enemy defense of Inchon occurred. MacArthur's decision to conduct the amphibious assault at Inchon was remarkably bold considering the uncertainties and consequences of failure.

Against light resistance, the X Corps landed at Inchon on September 15, 1950, and steadily pushed inland throughout the next two weeks despite stiffening opposition. The corps seized Suwon, cleared Kimpo Airfield, crossed the Han River, and fought through Seoul. On September 29, 1950, MacArthur returned control of Seoul to President Rhee.[8]

As the supporting effort to the amphibious assault at Inchon, the Eighth Army attacked out of the Pusan Perimeter on September 16, 1950. General Walker's forces moved slowly initially; but the North Korean forces broke on September 23, 1950. The Eighth Army rolled forward in pursuit, linking with the X Corps on September 26, 1950.[9] About 30,000 North

Korean troops escaped through the eastern mountains above the 38th parallel. Eighth Army bypassed several thousand North Korean troops in their pursuit. Many of the bypassed enemy troops hid in the mountains of South Korea to fight as guerrillas. By the end of September, 1950 the NKPA did not operate as an organized force anywhere in South Korea.

Despite the initial U.N. mission of repelling the attack on South Korea and restoring the Republic of Korea to its status before the North Korean invasion, there was substantial military reason to carry the war into North Korea.[10] Thirty thousand North Korean troops had escaped above the parallel and an equal number in northern training camps remained a considerable threat to South Korea. Expanding the scope of the conflict into North Korea had the potential to achieve the long-standing U.S. and U.N. objective of reunifying Korea. On September 27, 1950, President Truman authorized MacArthur to attack north of the 38th parallel if no major Chinese or Soviet forces were in North Korea, and there was no threat of war with Chinese or Soviet troops.[11]

Eighth Army crossed the 38th parallel and on October 19, 1950, captured the North Korean capital of Pyongyang. Eighth Army pressed the attack north against light opposition along the western coast, and captured, on November 1, 1950, Chongdo-do, a village eighteen miles from the Yalu River.

On the opposite coast X Corps attacked into northeastern Korea with the 1st Marine Division occupying positions around the Chosin Reservoir, while elements of the Army's 7th Infantry Division's reached the Yalu River in eastern Korea on November 21, 1950. This stunning progress indicated all but certain victory for U.N. forces; however, the course of the war turned dramatically with Red Chinese intervention.[12]

On October 4, 1950, Chairman Mao Tse Tung ordered Chinese People's Volunteers into

action in Korea. Chinese intervention would change the war's strategic nature and the battlefield conduct of the war. The Chinese managed to achieve almost total surprise because of intelligence failures, both in Washington and in Korea.

Approximately 130,000 soldiers of the Chinese Communist Forces (CCF) XIII Army Group infiltrated across the Yalu River, in the western sector opposite Eighth Army, between October 13 and 25, 1950. By early November, another 120,000-Chinese soldiers from the CCF IX Army Group had infiltrated into the eastern sector in Korea, opposite X Corps. The total CCF intervention consisted of some 380,000 soldiers organized into two army groups of nine corps-size field armies comprised of thirty infantry divisions. The Chinese surreptitiously infiltrated the vast majority of this combat power into North Korea and covertly staged it for a surprise offensive on U.N. forces.[13]

The Chinese first-phase offensive consisted of two feints, in early November 1950, against Eighth Army at Unsan and against X Corps at Sudong. The Chinese force withdrew to hidden positions, out of contact, after the initial probing attacks and prepared for future operations. This lull in the fighting provided the Far Eastern Command and Washington an opportunity to assess the situation and evaluate the nature and size of the Chinese threat. MacArthur concluded in his reports to Washington that the Chinese had not intervened in force, but their strength in Korea could potentially force a retreat of his troops.[14] Far East Command intelligence organizations misread these first-phase attacks and did not realize that the CCF had intervened in the war until well after its main attack.

The CCF main attack began on November 25, when the XIII Army Group struck the Eighth Army, driving it completely out of North Korea and ultimately retaking Seoul on January 4, 1951. On November 27, 1950 the IX Army Group struck X Corps, and by Christmas, 1950, X

Corps was forced to retreat from North Korea as well.

On December 26, 1950, Lieutenant General Matthew B. Ridgway took command of Eighth Army, replacing Lieutenant General Walton H. Walker. Ridgway turned Eighth Army into a tough, battle-ready force and by March 7, 1951 the Eighth Army re-crossed the Han River, attacked into Seoul and was across the 38th parallel by the end of March.[15]

The CCF launched a spring offensive on April 22, 1951 and attacked along a forty-mile front north of Seoul with over 250,000 men in twenty-seven divisions. By May 20, the CCF, after some initial gains, had been turned back with terrible losses, in what was the largest battle of the war. After that success, Washington ordered Eighth Army to maintain its defensive posture.[16]

Two years of peace talks began in June 1951 with opposing forces locked in bloody, inconclusive combat, and stalemate along what would become the new demarcation line between North and South Korea. On July 27, 1953, representatives for the U.S. and North Korea (also representing China) finally signed the Military Armistice Agreement.[17] Because a permanently divided Korea was unacceptable to the government of South Korea, it refused to sign the Military Armistice Agreement. Today, there is still no official peace on the peninsula.

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[1] *American Military History* (Washington, DC: Office of The Chief of Military History, U.S. Army, 1969), 546-547, http://www.army.mil/cmh-pg/books/AMH/amh-toc.htm.

[2] Ibid., 544-545.

[3] Ibid., 548, 550-552.

[4] Billy C. Mossman, *Ebb and Flow: November 1950–July 1951* (Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History, U.S. Army, 1990), 8-10, http://www.army.mil/cmh-pg/books/korea/ebb/ch1.htm.

[5] Dean G. Acheson, *Present at the Creation* (New York: Norton, 1969), 355-358.

[6] Mossman, *Ebb and Flow*, 15.

[7] Roy E. Appleman, *South to the Naktong, North to the Yalu - June–November 1950. U.S.* (Washington, U.S. Army Center of Military History, 1961), 492-495.

[8] Harry J. Summers, "The Korean War: A Fresh Perspective," *Military History,* 13, no. 1 (April, 1996), 22-25, http://www.historynet.com/mh/blthekoreanwar/index.html.

[9] Appleman, *South to the Naktong*, 542-543.

[10] Ibid., 608-609.

[11] Mossman, *Ebb and Flow*, 17-18.

[12] Ibid., 20-21.

[13] Ibid., 53-54.

[14] Harry S. Truman, *Memoirs by Harry S. Truman, Vol. II: Years of Trial and Hope* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1956), 377.

[15] James F. Schnabel*, Policy and Direction: The First Year* (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, 1992), 306-307, http://www.army.mil/cmh-pg/books/P&d.htm.

[16] Ibid., 380-388.

[17] Summers, *The Korean War*, 28.

CHAPTER 3: THE EVOLUTION OF INTELLIGENCE AFTER WORLD WAR II

"There is apparently much truth in the belief that the wonderful progress of the United States, as well as the character of the people, are the results of Natural Selection; for the more energetic, restless, and courageous men from all parts of Europe have emigrated during the last ten or twelve generations to that great country, and have there succeeded best."[1] - Charles Darwin

Following the successful conclusion of the Second World War, the American people wanted their soldiers returned home and back to civilian life as quickly as possible and yearned to enjoy the blessings of peace, but the old isolationism would not be possible in the rapidly developing bi-polar, cold war world. Fear of Soviet communist worldwide expansion soon dominated domestic politics as well as foreign affairs and became the chief determinant of post-war defense policy.

The post-World War II political climate, increasingly polarized between the Soviet Union and the U.S., inevitably channeled the bulk of defense resources toward countering the Soviet threat in Europe, the traditional U.S. area of interest. Communist threats to U.S. security appeared everywhere, both at home and abroad, but Western Europe remained the fulcrum balancing Washington's interest against an apparently monolithic Communist bloc headed by Moscow. That vision--one that saw Moscow and Peking as a single entity--shaped major policy decisions, the analysis of world and regional conditions, and hence, the allocation of resources.

The military dramatically shrank in size following the end of World War II. The drawdown was rapid and the priorities for demobilization of capabilities, units and personnel resulted from political pressure to cut the size of the force quickly. It was not a controlled, orderly process of reducing capabilities or balancing requirements based on overall assessments of regional threats and the likelihood of the need to respond to crisis.

Quick demobilization and an end to the draft in 1947 shrank the Army to 550,000

soldiers largely focused on occupation duties abroad. Many leaders in and out of the military believed that real military power for Washington lay in the American atomic monopoly. Thus, U.S. defense policy counted on the umbrella offered by exclusive use of atomic weapons to shelter its reconstruction of Europe and other conquered areas. Such a policy ignored the possibility that regional threats might require a less apocalyptic military response. The Soviets' explosion of a nuclear device in the summer of 1949 seemingly eliminated the U.S. nuclear advantage, but this change in the nuclear balance of power did not result in redirecting significant resources back into conventional military force modernization.

The Army of 1950 certainly did not assign military intelligence a sufficiently high priority. The reorganization of the Army that year designated fourteen separate services, but intelligence was not one of them.[2] The lack of an intelligence branch or military intelligence corps resulted a failure to standardize the selection of soldiers for duty in intelligence, set standards for training and performance of critical tasks, and operate centralized schools that trained intelligence professionals.

The military did not base its force structure on anticipated mission requirements. Commanders required tactical intelligence capabilities that did not exist in the force structure. For example, the Army of 1950 had minimal ability to detect hostile artillery and perform accurate counter-battery fires because it possessed a single observation battalion equipped with sound-ranging devices and radar. The Army lacked a single jammer and could not electronically attack enemy communications. Finally, with the exception of the attaché system and overseas Counter-Intelligence Corps units, the Army lacked a HUMINT collection ability. The peacetime military required linguists, signal intelligence personnel, and counterintelligence specialists to support the national focus on a Moscow-driven, international communist conspiracy. "However,

there was no similar demand for photo interpreters and order of battle specialists. As a result, the combat intelligence specialties were allowed to atrophy."[3]

With specific regard to Chinese intervention in the Korean War, Eric Hammel has argued that while a lack of experienced analysts contributed to the intelligence failure, the "root of the problem" was a lack of photoreconnaissance capability.[4] Hammel is probably incorrect in that specific. There were ample indicators of Chinese intentions to attack besides photography. Photographic evidence could have confirmed those indicators, but it was not essential to analysis. But Hammel's general point that military intelligence's analytical capabilities were a shadow of their older self is valid, especially in view of the large number of indicators of impending attack that were available at all levels, but went unnoticed or were dismissed outright.

Well into the conflict, Eighth Army Commanding General James Van Fleet would complain, "Today our intelligence operations in Korea have not yet approached the standards we reached in the final year of the last war."[5] Van Fleet's comments in the Korean War support Hammel's conclusions almost thirty years later. One must examine the details of specific effects of the post-war drawdown on individual intelligence disciplines to comprehend their unreadiness at the start of the Korean War. Describing the readiness level and the intelligence community's basic capabilities and limitations will enable a more thorough analysis of the effects readiness had on the ability to provide indications and warning of impending North Korean and Chinese attack.

The post-World War II drawdown of the military negatively affected the U.S. Signals Intelligence (SIGINT) community. The affects of downsizing and reorganization, combined

with the priority given to the Soviet target, proved lethal: the intelligence community failed to

warn of the impending Korean War and the subsequent intervention of the Communist Chinese Forces.

World War II had identified problems in the control of SIGINT collection assets. During the war, the Signal Security Agency and theater commanders divided responsibility for SIGINT. It was impossible to separate the tactical from the strategic aspects of communications intelligence. September 1945 marked the separation of the Signal Security Agency from the Signal Corps. The new entity, the Army Security Agency (ASA), under the direct control of the Army G-2, had command of all Army SIGINT. ASA' s mission expanded to include the communications intelligence (COMINT) and communications security (COMSEC) functions, formerly the purview of theater commanders.[6]

The newly formed ASA was "stovepiped." ASA controlled all activities through a separate chain of command, centralizing control over all Army SIGINT and COMSEC assets. As a separate entity within the Army, it was almost completely self-sufficient. It conducted its own operational missions, administered its own personnel system, ran its own school, arranged for its own supplies, and conducted its own research and development. The agency' s cryptologic activities continued to be indispensable to the nation' s security. The post-war draw-down affected the ASA just as it did the rest of the armed forces, and the organization was realigned to meet new national priorities.[7]

Further changes were in store for the SIGINT community. Four years after the Army reorganized all of its SIGINT under ASA, all three military cryptologic services consolidated in the new Armed Forces Security Agency (AFSA), targeted against the Cold War enemies of the U.S. Before the North Korean attack, at Washington' s insistence, AFSA and its partners focused almost exclusively on Communist China and the Soviet Union. Their justifiable preoccupation

with the main communist threat prevented them from properly covering secondary targets like Korea. At the time of the North Korean attack in June 1950, there was only one SIGINT analyst working on North Korean communications. AFSA had no Korean typewriters, no books on the Korean language, and no Korean dictionaries.[8] The U.S. SIGINT community's consolidation and reorganization from proprietary service and theater organizations into one agency resulted in a SIGINT corps that was neither concerned with, nor capable of, providing adequate support to the Far Eastern Command. U.S. SIGINT capabilities would require significant buildup before they were a capable combat-multiplier in the Korean War.

Post-war reorganization degraded strategic, national-level HUMINT collection. In 1945 President Truman dissolved the Office of Strategic Services (OSS). The State Department assumed responsibility for former OSS analytical personnel, with the remainder of the OSS being consolidated under a new Strategic Services Unit that was organized under the Secretary of War, rather than the Army G-2.[9] Under the National Security Act of 1947, the Central Intelligence Agency picked up the former OSS mission as the national HUMINT manager just two years after the dissolution of the WW II spy agency. The impact of this two-year loss of continuity in HUMINT collection when OSS offices in Asia closed or transferred capabilities to the State Department was incalculable. There was another crucial difference in the structure of the CIA because, unlike the OSS, the CIA did not provide direct support to the military services. Instead, the CIA reported to the fledgling National Security Council (NSC). As a national asset, the Agency had its own budget and personnel and the mandate to gather and produce intelligence at its own discretion and at the direction of the President.[10] Yet theater commanders required HUMINT organizations dedicated to answering their priority intelligence requirements and because CIA intelligence collection focused on national requirements, theater commanders

created their own network of intelligence agents. This proved to be a haphazard approach to satisfying HUMINT collection requirements.

Army counterintelligence also underwent a substantial restructuring following the end of World War II. The Army's two standing organizations, the Counter Intelligence Corps (CIC) and the Security Intelligence Corps, consolidated in April 1946, under the Army Service Forces' director of intelligence. These two parallel counterintelligence elements, now merged into one CIC, formed numbered detachments in support of the nine service commands and the Military District of Washington. Agents from both organizations now received the same training and operated under the same regulations because the new corps recruited, trained, and administered all counterintelligence personnel. Authorizations for counterintelligence detachments resided in each division in the Army, the Armed Forces Special Weapons Project, overseas commands, and the Intelligence Division itself. Local G-2s supervised counterintelligence investigations, although the Director of Intelligence controlled the most sensitive cases.[11]

The ever-present specter of communist subversion or espionage, particularly in areas of nuclear technology, reasonably led the military to retain its counterintelligence functions after World War II. In addition to investigating subversion or espionage, the Army provided counterintelligence support to its occupation forces abroad. Although post-war Army strength had plummeted, the reduction in the Counter Intelligence Corps was modest, "falling from a high point of 5,000 in World War II to 3,800."[12] However, the relatively stable numbers hid a more serious problem. The rapid demobilization of veterans and the end of the draft led to a decline in the quality of personnel, particularly those who had education and skills born from wartime experience. This trend degraded the Army's ability to provide counterintelligence support to the

Far East Command in the months preceding the Korean War as well as the first months of the conflict.

The Far East Command received counterintelligence support from the 441st CIC Detachment, which required augmentation from the 319th Military Intelligence Company to accomplish its occupation duty mission. The 319th was a Nisei unit, with theater counterintelligence credentials, that made use of the soldier's native-language capabilities during investigations.[13] The focus on providing counterintelligence support to the occupation of Japan left the 441st little, if any, capability for regional contingencies, although the units Japanese linguists were employed in Korea. Unfortunately, the Japanese linguists were not effective in Korea. The practice of selecting personnel for intelligence duty based on an Oriental heritage or a language capability was not a sufficient selection criterion for producing effective intelligence soldiers.[14]

Forward thinkers in intelligence realized that improving the quality of support to commanders meant continuity, cohesion, effective training, and professional development for intelligence personnel. They envisioned a military intelligence corps as a body of trained personnel for the various activities of the intelligence service. However, adoption of the military intelligence corps proposal in the post-war climate of demobilization was not possible. Because the service reorganization did not create Military Intelligence as its own branch or corps, there was no central proponent to specify training tasks, the conditions for that training, or the standards expected.[15] As a consequence of this lack of branch unification, training suffered because each intelligence discipline operated its own separate school. All were in different locations. The decentralization of training continued for nearly twenty years after Military Intelligence was created as a separate branch in 1962.

An excellent example of the affects of the decentralization of intelligence training was the Cavalry school operated at Fort Riley, Kansas. The school taught a variety of courses such as photo interpretation, order of battle analysis, interrogation, and officer training designed to produce qualified G-2s and S-2s. An experienced cadre of veterans with intelligence experience initially staffed the school; however, instructor turnover was high and the quality of instructors degraded over time. Although it reflected the intention of the Calvary branch to professionalize its intelligence training, "the Calvary School was not graduating anywhere the numbers needed to provide the total force with the trained intelligence professionals that it needed to sustain combat operations."[16] As a result of the lack of central management of intelligence training, the Korean War saw critical shortages of order-of-battle analysts and photo interpreters and the overall quality of such personnel reportedly was low, as a result of poor institutional training.

The various disciplines of tactical collection and cryptography shared in signals intelligence training. The training standards remained stable in the post-war period despite significant restructuring within the SIGINT community. School locations moved, a fact that inevitably created confusion. The Army Security Agency conducted cryptologic training, assuming the mission of the former Signal Intelligence Service school at Vint Hill Farms, Virginia. The Army briefly moved that operation to Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania, and finally to Fort Devens, Massachusetts in 1951, where it remained the services' mainstay for cryptologic training for the next thirty-five years. The Signal Security Agency conducted tactical SIGINT training at both Camp Crowder, Missouri and at Fort Monmouth, New Jersey.[17]

Proprietary schools operating independently within each discipline handled training in human intelligence. Counterintelligence training continued at Fort Holabird following the closure of the Military Intelligence Training Center at Fort Ritchie. Army attachés received

training at a Strategic Intelligence School in Washington, D.C. The Army failed to systematize the language training of HUMINT soldiers at the Army Language School at the Presidio in Monterey California, resulting in only twenty Korean linguists and no Mandarin Chinese linguists in the entire Army in June 1950.[18]

Organizational inefficiency, demobilization of personnel and lack of resources severely affected the quality of trainees at various intelligence schools. A 1951 survey conducted in Korea revealed "that only 7 percent of Eighth Army soliders holding intelligence positions had either previous training or prior experience in intelligence."[19] This finding, coupled with the poor job performance of intelligence specialists in Korea, led to the creation of a Far East Command intelligence school at Camp Drake, Japan. Activated in November 1951, the school ultimately produced the trained order of battle and photo interpreter specialists needed by Eighth Army that formal training programs in the U.S. could not supply.[20] Unfortunately, the creation of the new intelligence school came almost eighteen months after the North Koreans invaded South Korea and one year after the Chinese intervention in the war. Theater and tactical commanders in Korea thus did not get the benefits of having trained intelligence analysts within their ranks.

The drawdown and dramatic restructuring of the U.S. military resulted in soldiers and officers who did not know how to perform their basic duties and responsibilities. Individual soldiers were not immediately valuable to their organizations because they arrived without needed skills. In order to compensate for the training deficiencies, units had to provide specific, retraining to intelligence soldiers, a requirement that demanded scarce wartime resources and detracted from mission accomplishment while units were engaged in fighting a determined enemy.

¹ Paul Barrett and R.B. Freeman, eds. ., *The Works of Charles Darwin* (New York: New York University Press, 1987), 147.

² *American Military History* (Washington, DC: Office of The Chief of Military History, U.S. Army, 1969), 542, http://www.army.mil/cmh-pg/books/AMH/AMH-24.htm.

³ John P. Finnegan, *Military Intelligence* (Washington, DC: Office of The Chief of Military History, U.S. Army, 1998), 113, http://www.army.mil/cmh-pg/books/Lineage/MI/mi-fm.htm.

⁴ Eric M. Hammel, *Chosin* (California: Presidio, 1981), 4.

⁵ John P. Finnegan, *The Military Intelligence Story: A Photo History* (History Office, Office of the Chief of Staff, U.S. Army Intelligence and Security Command, Fort Belvoir, Virginia, 1994), 19.

⁶ Finnegan, *Military Intelligence*, 103.

⁷ Ibid., 110.

⁸ Patrick D. Weadon, "SIGINT and COMSEC Help Save the Day at Pusan," (National Security Agency, 2001), 5, http://www.nsa.gov/korea/papers/sigint_comsec_pusan.htm.

⁹ Finnegan, *Military Intelligence*, 103.

¹⁰ Ibid., 106.

¹¹ Ibid.*,* 103.

¹² Ibid., 108.

¹³ Ibid., 108.

¹⁴ *Intelligence and Counterintelligence Problems During the Korea Conflict* (Military History Section of Headquarters, U.S. Army Forces and Eighth Army. Washington: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 1955), 29, http://www.army.mil/cmh-pg/documents/Korea/intkor/intkor.htm#cont.

¹⁵ James P. Finley, *A Brief History of U.S. Army Intelligence Training* (U.S. Army Intelligence Center & Fort Huachuca, Fort Huachuca, Arizona, 1995), 24, http://usaic.hua.army.mil/History/PDFS/trnghist.pdf.

¹⁶ Ibid., 25.

¹⁷ Ibid., 22.

¹⁸ Ibid., 229.

[19] Finnegan, *Military Intelligence*, 115.

[20] *Intelligence and Counterintelligence Problems During the Korea Conflict*, 29.

CHAPTER 4: INTELLIGENCE CAPABILITIES AT THE ONSET OF HOSTILITIES - JUNE 1950

"They were probably as contented a group of American soldiery as had ever existed. They were like American youth everywhere. They believed the things their society had taught them to believe. They were cool, and confident and figured that the world was no sweat. It was not their fault that no one had told them that the real function of an army is to fight and that a soldier's destiny—which few escape—is to suffer, and if need be, to die." [1] - T.R. Fehrenbach

The intelligence community in June, 1950 was in turmoil. Extensive reorganization, personnel reductions, equipment inadequacies, and disjointed training created a state of general unreadiness. Given the ever-present Soviet threat, it was a massive oversight for the nation's leaders to allow its intelligence forces to sink to such a dismal state of readiness in terms of doctrine, training, leadership, organization and material. The degradation of readiness created a situation that sharply undermined the ability of the intelligence community to provide support to military operations. The shortcomings of various intelligence organizations and disciplines led to poor tactical and operational outcomes on Korean War battlefields and go far to explain the failure of intelligence to predict the North Korean invasion of South Korea and the intervention of the Chinese in the war.

A primary function of intelligence is to warn of developing threats to national security. As defined by *Joint Publication 2-0*, "The indications and warning process anticipates hostile operations and provides sufficient warning to enable U.S. or allied efforts to preempt, counter, or moderate such actions." [2] America' s leaders enacted post-war policies that degraded the intelligence community's capabilities and imposed limitations, creating a situation wherein indications and warning were more a matter of happenstance than design. Lack of procedures and organizational inefficiency were also a problem. Major General Lyman, L. Lemnitzer, while on the staff of the Secretary of Defense, wrote in a memorandum to Secretary Louis Johnson,

after the outbreak of the Korean war, that lack of coordination within the Washington intelligence community was its chief weakness. Lemnitzer recommended the immediate establishment of an inter-agency procedures to ensure that officials vitally concerned were personally and promptly informed of noteworthy events, thus preventing a situation, such as had occurred in Korea, in which, "vital intelligence data pointing to an imminent attack…[was] buried in a series of routine CIA intelligence reports."[3] The consequences of a lack of indications and warning at the strategic level was that U.S. leaders did not preempt, counter, or moderate the North Korean invasion or the massive Chinese intervention in North Korea, both of which were strategic and operational surprises that nearly defeated U.N. forces.

At the operational level, there was an even bigger deficiency. *Joint Publication 2-0* defines operational intelligence as "intelligence required for planning and conducting campaigns and major operations to accomplish strategic objectives within theaters or areas of operations."[4]

General Douglas MacArthur, the operational commander responsible for Korea, developed and executed the campaign plan to achieve the nation's initial strategic objective: repelling North Korean aggression in South Korea. Despite the fact that the U.S. wanted to limit its involvement in the military conflict in Korea, American forces were engaged in heavy ground combat. Intelligence support to the troops in Korea, therefore, should have been priority number one for the intelligence community. MacArthur required the support of every national-level agency in the government, in addition to the resources he commanded, in order to maximize use of available resources, save human lives, and shorten the war. But Korea was not the top priority of the intelligence community until U.S. forces nearly suffered defeat at the Pusan perimeter.

The national intelligence community provided support to the Far Eastern Command, in peace and war, in three major areas: Analysis, Signals Intelligence, and Human Intelligence. The

Korean War predated the development of national imagery platforms, such as satellites and even the U-2. Analysis was the single most important area in which the national intelligence community could support the FEC. National leaders naturally enjoyed greater access to information concerning Asia than the Commander of the Far Eastern Command did. Every national agency developed information of potential intelligence value. One of the most important non-intelligence agencies has always been the U.S. Department of State, a rich source of political-military information. These information sources played a critical role in developing a national intelligence estimate based on all-source analysis.

By the onset of the Korean War, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) had been in operation for three years, focusing its operations in the Far East on China. Other Defense Department agencies operated their own proprietary intelligence analysis organizations; all designed to feed information to the Army G-2. Eric Hammel concludes in *Chosin* that the processes that the U.S. had for collecting information on Korea and synthesizing it into analysis may have been improperly structured and inefficient. Evidence of the imbalance in resources is the fact that the Army G-2 section, undermanned in June 1950, quickly grew to over one thousand personnel after the onset of the Korean conflict.[5]

The national SIGINT contribution to the overall collection effort on Korea was perhaps the most effective among the intelligence disciplines once the Korean conflict began. After failing to detect North Korean preparations to attack South Korea, SIGINT later did provide indicators of Chinese intervention in Korea, a reversal prompted by a variety of reasons.

The few intercept facilities in the Pacific region focused on higher priority SIGINT collection requirements, such as Chinese Communist activities and the Philippine Huk rebellion. Covering other targets would require refocusing collection assets away from these priorities.

With no specific guidance on collecting against Korea from the Far Eastern Command, AFSA concentrated on obvious items of importance, primarily the USSR and the PRC. In 1950, AFSA began an expanded effort against the People's Republic of China that included increased intercept and cryptanalysis study.[6]

AFSA's justifiable preoccupation with the Sino-Soviet threat limited the agency's coverage of secondary requirements like Korea. When North Korea invaded in June 1950, there was only one analyst at AFSA working North Korean traffic, and he did not have a Korean typewriter, a Korean dictionary, or Korean language books."[7] Consequently, while national SIGINT collection on the Chinese target fed a steady stream of Beijing-related analysis to U.S. decision-makers and intelligence agencies, no collection against Korea occurred. The potential conflict area had not made the national SIGINT priority list. SIGINT did not warn of the impending North Korean attack because SIGINT collection assets did not focus on Korea. Once the war began, AFSA was unprepared to provide the necessary technical data on North Korea to theater SIGINT collection or tactical SIGINT collection assets. This caused these collectors to begin their operations from scratch with no information from higher headquarters databases to guide their efforts

Tactical SIGINT units' responses to the North Korean invasion reflected the intelligence community's lack of tactical readiness. ASA planned to support the Korean War with a communications reconnaissance battalion at the Army-level and for each of the three corps in the theater. The 60th Signal Service Company at Fort Lewis, Washington, the tactical SIGINT unit with the highest readiness rating in the Army, was to deploy first. Readiness of the 60th proved relative and when the unit's preparations dragged on, a signal collection unit from ASA Pacific

deployed to Korea on September 18, 1950 to fill the gap. The 60th Signal Service Company finally arrived in Korea on October 9.[8]

The mobilization and deployment of these small units only hinted at the coming efforts for the SIGINT community. "The Army Security Agency was revitalized by the Korean War. Previously, most ASA assets had been concentrated at the fixed sites, performing a peacetime, strategic mission."[9] Providing support to tactical operations was a new role for the agency, requiring the activation of groups, battalions and companies to support tactical commanders. Unfortunately the units that deployed had no jamming capability and were equipped with outdated, World War II-era radios, trucks, and cryptologic equipment.[10] Clearly, the military had made little effort to develop units for effective tactical SIGINT collection or jamming. Recognizing a severe shortage of linguists, ASA scrambled to provide training in Korean and Chinese. Meanwhile, the Army deployed its only two Korean linguists to Korea to provide translation for SIGINT forces in Korea.[11] The sole Air Force SIGINT unit near Korea was the 1st Radio Squadron Mobile (RSM) at Johnson Air Force base outside Tokyo. Like its Army counterparts, it lacked both linguists and cryptanalysis capability.[12]

Severe shortages of trained military linguists were "acute and persistent" and continually plagued intelligence units in Korea.[13] The military used foreign civilians extensively to fill the linguist gap. These untrained, unvetted, local civilians posed a security risk to operations in Korea. The one-year rotation program for soldiers served to nullify efforts to build on the training that replacement military linguists had received. "The average time to serve in Korea after graduating from school was 9 1/2 months. This usable portion was further reduced when [security] clearance procedures were not instituted prior to the assignment of the individual to Korea."[14] Caucasian graduates of the Army Language School generally were not qualified

linguists; they received training in only basic conversational skills and no instruction in military terminology. Oriental heritage determined many draftees' assignment to intelligence duty. Full employment of these soldiers was often not possible because they were neither U.S. citizens nor masters of English.[15]

The Korean War saw the birth of Low Level Voice Intercept (LLVI) teams, which deployed in the summer of 1951, manned primarily by nationalist Chinese recruited in Formosa. LLVI teams, consisting of typically four to six linguists whose mission is to intercept enemy radio communications, report enemy activities, locations, and plans, and perform direction-finding against enemy radios. The LLVI teams fielded during the Korean War provided immediate tactical intelligence and were "widely heralded by maneuver commanders as valuable assets."[16] Unfortunately, these teams did not become operational until long after the Chinese had intervened in Korea.

In contrast to the complete lack of national SIGINT collection on Korea, there were some limited, national-level HUMINT collection operations ongoing in China and North Korea despite the dissolution of OSS and the turbulence created by reorganizing national HUMINT operations under the umbrella of the CIA. At the end of World War II an Army Captain, John Singlaub, trained former Korean prisoners from World War II at an outpost in Manchuria and sent them into North Korea to collect information on the Communist plans and intentions.[17] It can be surmised from the paucity of information on that HUMINT effort that its contributions to warning of the impending North Korean attack on South Korea or the Chinese intervention were negligible. The dissolution of the OSS and formation of the CIA may have created a situation in which those potentially valuable HUMINT assets went without clear collection orders or

priorities.[18] HUMINT reporting also may have gone unnoticed among the distractions created by organizational restructuring.

The HUMINT effort in Korea suffered from critical shortcomings. The newly formed Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) had an extremely limited number of agents inside China or North Korea at the outset of the conflict. Nationalists on Formosa who were running agents in China were MacArthur's biggest source of intelligence on the Chinese, but the nationalists frequently distorted the information, making it unreliable.[19] Before the onset of hostilities, the Korean Military Advisory Group (KMAG) operated a network of Korean liaison contacts that, coupled with its close relationship with the ROK, enabled the KMAG to collect information on North Korean activities. KMAG was a national asset, not subordinate to the Far East Command, and reported periodically to Washington. "KMAG, not General MacArthur, had the responsibility of securing intelligence data on Korea."[20]

American leaders often perceived the South Korean sources as "shifty, unreliable and guilty of exaggerating reports"[21] and consequently discounted the information they contained because it did not fit the FEC paradigm. To fill the gap in HUMINT collection, and measure the suspect KMAG reporting, MacArthur's G-2 for FEC, Major General Charles A. Willoughby, established the Korean Liaison Office.

As the U.S. counterattack pushed beyond the Pusan perimeter, U.S. forces experienced difficulty interrogating prisoners of war due to a lack of theater guidelines and unit standard operating procedures. On October 28, 1950, the theater switched to strategic interrogation. This was a significant change to the well-established, standard operating procedures for interrogation. Under the strategic interrogation plan, prisoners were to be screened by forward deployed interrogators whose responsibility was to identify those prisoners who likely had placement and

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access to information of operational or strategic value. The prisoners, once identified by the screening teams, would be sped to the rear area to a centrally managed, strategic debriefing center in Pusan. Expert interrogators could extract the necessary information from the high priority prisoners and relay it to the highest intelligence levels in the theater. The changes occurred at the critical time when the Chinese first-phase offensive was concluding and the timing of implementing changes to interrogation procedures may have negatively affected the ability to efficiently exploit enemy prisoners of war and derive important information about Chinese intentions.

Once the tempo of the U.S. attack stepped up, the number of prisoners multiplied by thousands- a combination that caused the entire system of handling them to fall apart. Properly tagged prisoners who arrived at the strategic debriefing center represented only two percent of the total. This made it nearly impossible for the interrogators in Pusan to determine the circumstances of capture - an essential ingredient for successful interrogation.[22] The information on properly filled-out capture tags enables interrogators to conduct efficient questioning. Most Korean War interrogations during the first six months of the conflict were largely ineffective because the questioner lacked crucial background information on prisoners.

The FEC intelligence staff had trouble processing security clearances expeditiously for intelligence personnel in Korea. Completion of background investigations, depending on the level of clearance sought, could take anywhere from six to eighteen months, and sometimes more, to complete.[23] Some intelligence staffs were undermanned due to lack of vetted personnel. In other units, personnel in jobs requiring access to national-security information had undergone only shallow background investigations consisting of only a check of local medical and personnel records – a situation that created the potential for serious security problems. As was

the case arising from the lack of trained linguists, the affects of the shortages of personnel with the appropriate security clearance cut across all of the intelligence disciplines and undermined support to commanders in the field.

Like the other intelligence disciplines, Imagery Intelligence (IMINT) lacked resources after the post-World War II drawdown and reorganization. There was a chronic shortage of trained photo interpreters, causing units to spend excessive time training new replacements. The nuances of interpreting imagery during the Korean War challenged neophyte analysts newly arrived from the U.S.[24] Training at the various imagery-interpretation schools in the U.S. did not adequately prepare the soldiers for Korea. In after-action reports, the Eighth Army G-2 offered an especially telling comment on the haphazard and poor training of imagery analysts. Although intelligence school graduates, those assigned to the Eighth Army G-2 often were not fully qualified to perform their duties because they lacked knowledge of local conditions.[25]

The demand for imagery during the Korean War was high. Offensive operations typically required daily shooting of 6000 imagery negatives at 1/5000 scale. Defensive operations routinely required daily production of 5000 imagery negatives, also at 1/5000 scale. Intelligence was unable to meet demands for imagery during the conflict.[26] To satisfy the need as best it could, Eighth Army produced 1/7000-scale imagery, which reduced the number of sorties required by almost half, but significantly degraded the resolution of the photographs. The principal restriction on achieving the output of negatives required was the lack of collection equipment in Korea. Night photography was possible only with target illumination, restricting the capability to collect imagery intelligence at night to the number of flash bombs that a B-26 could carry.[27]

Units that required aerial photographs to support planning often did not get the products they requested on time.[28] Typical request-to-delivery times for Army or Air Force imagery was eight days, often too long to be of any value to the requesting unit because of changes in the tactical situation.[29] Since Army and Air Force imagery collection was so unresponsive, some units put signal corps photographers in Army airplanes to take aerial pictures of critical areas of interest, from, because that method of collection proved more responsive than IMINT support provided by formalized intelligence sources.

Overall, national intelligence support to the Far Eastern Command in fighting the war was inadequate. Theater intelligence collection and analysis encountered severe problems in providing operational intelligence support. The same was true for tactical intelligence; ground commanders simply did not get the support needed to locate, target, and destroy the enemy.

The reasons for the disarray in the intelligence community lay in the post-war budget cutting that limited research, development and fielding of new intelligence systems and equipment. The intelligence community struggled to make do with what it had as it reorganized and trained a new generation of specialists and hoped to pass on skills acquired in World War II. But in doing so, intelligence never developed an integrated doctrine to build a common training base that leader development programs could sustain. The result was a repeat of the World War II experience in which the best that a unit intelligence officer could hope for was a pool of "gifted amateurs" rather than professional intelligence soldiers. The same held true for static, fixed-mission intelligence organizations that did not design themselves to deploy and provide tailored, contingency operations support. They lacked modern materials, and soldiers with the requisite skills, to produce effective intelligence for the commander.

Commanders from national to tactical levels felt those deficiencies. The results of this lack of adequate intelligence support were strategic surprises both when the North Koreans attacked South Korea and when the Chinese intervened in Korea in massive, overwhelming numbers. These strategic surprises led to the near tactical defeats of Task Force Smith at Pusan and elements of the U.S. X Corps at the Chosin reservoir.

[1] T.R. Fehrenbach, *This Kind of War: A Study in Unpreparedness* (New York: Bantam Books, 1991), 94.

[2] *Joint Publication 2-0: Joint Doctrine for Intelligence Support to Operations* (Washington, DC: Department of Defense. Joint Staff, 5 May 1995), IV-5.

[3] J. Lawton Collins, *War in Peacetime* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1969), 76-77.

[4] *Joint Publication 2-0*, II-1.

[5] John P. Finnegan, *The Military Intelligence Story: A Photo History* (History Office, Office of the Chief of Staff, U.S. Army Intelligence and Security Command, Fort Belvoir, Virginia, 1994), 20.

[6] David A. Hatch, and Robert Louis Benson, "The Korean War: The SIGINT Background," (National Security Agency, 2001), 9, http://www.nsa.gov/korea/ papers/sigint_background_korean_war.htm.

[7] Patrick D.Weadon, "SIGINT and COMSEC Help Save the Day at Pusan," (National Security Agency), 2, http://www.nsa.gov/korea/papers/sigint_comsec_pusan.htm.

[8] Thomas R. Johnson, "General Essay on the Korean War," (National Security Agency), 40, http://www.nsa.gov/korea/papers/essay_korean_war.pdf.

[9] John P. Finnegan, *Military Intelligence* (Washington, D.C.: Office of The Chief of Military History, U.S. Army, 1998), 114, 119, http://www.army.mil/cmh-pg/books/Lineage/MI/mi-fm.htm.

[10] Finnegan, *Military Intelligence*, 20.

[11] Ibid., 40-41.

[12] Ibid., 41.

[13] Ibid., 28.

[14] Ibid., 29.

[15] Ibid., 1-3.

[16] Ibid., 46, 54.

[17] P. K. Rose, *Two Strategic Intelligence Mistakes in Korea, 1950* (Center for the Study of Intelligence, Central Intelligence Agency: 2001), 5, http://www.odci.gov/csi/studies/fall_winter_2001/article06.html.

[18] Michael Warner, *Office of Strategic Services: America's First Intelligence Agency* (Washington, DC: Office of Public Affairs, Central Intelligence Agency, 2000), http://www.odci.gov/csi/books/oss/index.htm.

[19] Omar N.Bradley and Clay Blair, *A General's Life* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1983), 561.

[20] James F. Schnabel, *Policy and Direction: The First Year* (Washington, DC: Center Of Military History, U.S. Army, 1992), 62, http://www.army.mil/cmh-pg/books/P&d.htm.

[21] Ibid., 62.

[22] *Intelligence and Counterintelligence Problems During the Korea Conflict* (Military History Section of Headquarters, U.S. Army Forces and Eighth Army, Washington, U.S. Army Center of Military History, 1955), 33, http://www.army.mil/cmh-pg/documents/Korea/intkor/intkor.htm#cont.

[23] Ibid., 42.

[24] Ibid., 3.

[25] Ibid., 2.

[26] Ibid., 14.

[27] Ibid., 14.

[28] Ibid., 19.

[29] John G.Westover, *Combat Support in Korea* (Washington, U.S. Army Center of Military History, 1990), 102-104, http://www.army.mil/cmh-pg/books/korea/22_1_4.htm.

CHAPTER 5: REASON S BEHIND THE INTELLIGENCE FAILURE

"It is very difficult for a nation to create an army when it has not already a body of officers and non-commissioned officers to serve as a nucleus, and a system of military organization."[1] -Napoleon

The post-World War II political and military situation that shaped the national military strategy contributed significantly to the intelligence failures in the Korean War. Each intelligence discipline and program had different circumstances and problems that contributed to poor intelligence support during the war. Flawed operational and analytical paradigms directed the focus of intelligence collection and analysis. This resulted in poor intelligence support to commanders during the Korean War.

The intelligence community failed to predict the North Korean invasion of South Korea and the subsequent Chinese intervention in the Korean War. These two strategic and operational surprises occurred because the intelligence community provided neither adequate indications or warning of the impending North Korean invasion, nor of the Chinese intervention. U.S. intelligence failed in Korea, in part, because "the U.S. had written Korea out of its national defense plans, and as a result indications from Korea received less attention than those from areas considered more vital to American interests."[2] U.S. national leaders excluded Korea from critical intelligence collection because they had decided that Korea was outside the defensive perimeter of the U.S. Events in Korea hardly factored into the overall analysis of the situation in the Far East. The elimination of Korea from the national watch list and from national collection orders was the harbinger of the impending failure to predict a North Korean invasion. The intelligence community' s failure to predict the Chinese intervention represented another significant breakdown of the national warning system. Analysts did not understand the enemy' s

doctrine, tactics, capabilities, or limitations. Most importantly, they did not understand the motivations of the Chinese leaders.

These indications and warning failures meant that the intelligence community did not live up to its obligation to provide warning of impending attack to U.S. military advisors and the diplomatic mission in Korea. The surprises experienced in the Korean War exposed the weaknesses in intelligence and in the American military.[3] Like the North Korean invasion, the failure to provide adequate warning of the impending Chinese intervention had profound consequences for the protection of U.S. forces engaged in combat deep inside North Korea.

One single event, factor or cause is not responsible for the failure of intelligence to perform its mission. General Matthew B. Ridgeway, Eighth Army Commander and ultimately Commander, Far Eastern Command, stated that the Far Easter Command General Headquarters analysis of the indicators of North Korean invasion were "influenced by its conviction that all these alarums and excursions were just a normal aspect of the psychological cold war."[4] Other factors combined to create a situation in which systemic lapses occurred. Two of them were poor training and the turbulence of downsizing and reorganization. The former was not effective enough to offset the consequences of the latter.

Training given to analysts during the Korean War remained inadequate, which meant that units in the field had to screen replacements for suitability and enact their own training programs. The Eighth Army developed one such program to correct obvious deficiencies in the replacements that arrived in theater, but unfortunately race, national origins, or language capabilities, rather than aptitude, determined a soldier' s assignment to intelligence.

Accurate analysis relies on information from many sources, generally the direct result of intelligence collection operations. Intercepting and direction finding of enemy communications,

imagery, and human intelligence are the principle means used to collect such information. Each of these intelligence disciplines is subject to peculiar limitations, and each may only present a fraction of the total picture. For that reason, analysts must base threat assessments on a consideration of all sources of information and not data from only a single source.

The cornerstone of intelligence effectiveness is predictive analysis. Strategic analysis is the consideration of global, regional, and specific national trends looking at diverse political, economic, and social conditions that affect U.S. interests in those countries, regions, or perhaps globally. The failure to anticipate a North Korean invasion was a strategic intelligence failure. Operational and tactical forecasts of future enemy courses of action allow the commander to take appropriate measures to protect the force, develop his own plans, and set in motion actions to defeat the enemy. In analyzing the potential courses of action that an enemy commander can adopt, an analyst must assess the enemy' s capabilities and limitations. Taken a step further, once the analyst has identified such capabilities and limitations, he must estimate the enemy commander' s intentions. This has always been an area of considerable debate inside and outside the intelligence community. A capability to attack does not necessarily mean that an enemy will attack, but if the enemy has no capacity for offensive operations, the likelihood that he will attack is limited, no matter how much the enemy commander may wish otherwise. Conversely, merely listing capabilities does not get to the magic "so what?" often demanded by commanders. Moreover, capabilities-based assessments assume that intelligence analysts have addressed all of the enemy's capabilities. Surprises can be deadly. In the 1950s, intelligence doctrine directed intelligence analysts to determine potential enemy courses of action by analyzing enemy capabilities rather than an overall analysis of the enemy's capabilities *and* intentions. "In 1951, the field manual on Combat Intelligence cautioned commanders to be certain they base their

actions, dispositions, and plans upon estimates of enemy capabilities rather than upon estimates of enemy intentions."[5] This analytical framework was one of the reasons why analysts reached the wrong conclusions regarding the likelihood of Chinese intervention. In 1967, General Matthew Ridgeway reflected on the Korean War experience with indications and warning. "It is true that in our assessment of the Korean situation" he wrote, "we gave too much weight to our own interpretation of the enemy's intentions and too little to the facts we knew about his capability."[6] General Omar N. Bradley, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, shared this lesson he learned from the JCS misinterpretation of Chinese intentions to intervene in the Korean War when he counseled "It is the duty and responsibility of military advisors to gauge a potential enemy's capabilities rather than his intentions."[7] The pendulum continues to swing between the intentions and the capabilities wings of the intelligence community.

When looking at indications and warning intelligence, analysts often must rely on their own sense of what a reasonable outcome would be. Such an approach is risky because a foreign leader's concept of "what is rational, or what risks are acceptable, probably will not be identical to even what the most experienced U.S. analyst thinks will be the case."[8]

The intelligence community, in appraising the likelihood of Chinese intervention, fell victim to some of the pitfalls of analysis, as they apply to indications and warnings. For example, in October 1950, strategic analysts concluded that Beijing would not enter the war despite mounting evidence to the contrary. Analysts did so because, "according to the calculations of U.S. military leaders and intelligence agencies, the disadvantages of participating in the war appeared to outweigh the advantages. China apparently used a different rationale to calculate its decision."[9] Furthermore, there was a tendency within the American government to believe "that only the Soviets could order an invasion by a client state and that such an act would

be a prelude to a world war."[10] This outlook is reflected in the March 1949 National Security

Council Memorandum 8/2, approved by President Truman, which stated that the Soviets

intended to dominate all of Korea, and that this would be a threat to U.S. interests in the Far

East.[11] This line of analysis was continued in a CIA estimate of September, 1950 which

concluded that the Chinese had the capability to intervene, but they would not do so because the

political decision rested with the Soviet leaders who were not ready to gamble on a general

conflict with the U.S.[12] In that same month, a National Security Council report to President

Truman contained the same arguments.[13] The U.S. had skewed perceptions of Chinese

intentions although significant indicators were available that the Chinese were diligently building

a massive capability to attack into North Korea from Manchuria. FEC intelligence reports as

early as August, 1950 reflected an estimated 246,000 PLA and 374,000 militia troops were in

Manchuria near the Korean border.[14] The intelligence analysis made available to U.S. national-

level decision-makers overwhelmingly led the national leadership to conclude that the Chinese

would not intervene in Korea unless authorized by the Soviets.

Intelligence analysts also failed to understand the Chinese military operational art, which

caused them to miss the indicators of an imminent attack. They believed that, if the Chinese

entered the conflict, they would launch a Soviet-style offensive. Instead, the Chinese forces

conducted an infiltration, followed by a feint and a tactical withdrawal, which the Americans

misread as a retreat. A greater understanding of Chinese doctrine might have led analysts to

determine that the PRC troops conducted a reconnaissance in force and were attempting to lure

the Americans into a trap.[15]

Like the erroneous perception of the Sino-Soviet Bloc as a Soviet-directed monolith that

made Chinese intervention improbable, preconceived notions all too often determine what an

intelligence estimate will say - or what the consumer will decide it says. Intelligence analysis

during the Korean War occurred at all levels. Each tactical commander made his own estimate

of the situation, taking into account what he perceived the enemy' s composition, disposition,

strength and intentions to be. Intelligence officers at the battalion level and above, assisted by

the greater intelligence community, provided their leaders with information and their own threat

assessments on potential enemy courses of action. An examination of the estimates of the

likelihood of Chinese intervention that each of the G-2s in Korea provided their commanders

will provide additional insight into the challenges that intelligence analysts at all levels faced.

The Far Eastern Command CINC and his G-2, General Charles Willoughby, had a

significant impact on the intelligence analysis of North Korean and Chinese intentions, both

within the theater and at the national level. An examination of MacArthur, his background on

intelligence and his relationship with his G-2, is necessary for an understanding of the

atmosphere in the FEC that contributed to intelligence analysis. The FEC G-2's relationship with

his commander, and MacArthur' s own thoughts about the Chinese, affected Willoughby's

analysis of the likelihood of Chinese intervention. Willoughby had been MacArthur' s G-2 since

1941, was thoroughly loyal to him, and was one of MacArthur's intimate counselors. [16] The

evidence suggests that Willoughby, after a close association that had lasted nine years, had begun

to think like his commander – or had at least gotten into the habit of telling MacArthur what he

wanted to hear. Jack Chiles, the operations officer for X Corps commander, Major General

Edward M. Almond, an alumnus of the FEC who had observed Willoughby at close hand,

remembered: "MacArthur did not want the Chinese to enter the war in Korea. Anything

MacArthur wanted, Willoughby produced intelligence for. . . . In this case, Willoughby falsified

intelligence reports…[and] he should have gone to jail."[17] General Ridgeway's analysis of

Willoughby was not quite as harsh as the accusations Chiles' makes, but Ridgeway was convinced that, "as for the intervention of the Chinese, MacArthur simply closed his ears to their threats and apparently ignored or belittled the first strong evidence that they had crossed the Yalu in force."[18]

MacArthur, for his part, in a number of instances displayed poor military judgment and disregard for intelligence warnings. He had spent ten years, moreover, surrounding himself with men that would agree with him. "MacArthur had little knowledge of Chinese Communist forces or [their] military doctrine. He had a well-known disregard for the Chinese as soldiers, and this became the tenet of the Far Eastern Command."[19] Many observers considered MacArthur *the* military expert on the Far East and many leaders at the national level were deferential to his opinions on how to conduct affairs in the theater. MacArthur was a national icon who in October 1950 was driving toward what seemed to be certain victory in North Korea.

It is difficult to understate the affect of MacArthur's opinion on military affairs in the Far East. "General MacArthur's weakness was his incredible arrogance and vanity, which led him to surround himself with sycophants, even though some able ones."[20] With a G-2 that was "unquestioningly loyal" and a MacArthur acolyte, one can see how the G-2 could have adopted his commander's outlook on the situation despite evidence to the contrary. Indeed, one must question if the G-2 and his commander considered the evidence at all, or if they just consulted their own opinions about the likelihood of Chinese intervention, explaining away contrary evidence with their own common sense analysis. As an example of this approach, Willoughby, in a September conversation with the future Eighth Army Chief of Staff, minimized the likelihood of Chinese intervention, remarking that "if the Chinese were sensible [they] would keep out of the Korean affair."[21] The combined analysis of MacArthur and his G-2 was that "the

best time for [Chinese] intervention was past . . . and even if the Chinese decided to intervene, allied air power and firepower would cripple their ability to move or resupply their forces."[22]

Others in the military and in Washington, D.C. agreed with the FEC position, convinced that Chinese soldiers, much as Imperial Japanese forces had been perceived to have been before December 7, 1941, had substandard equipment, suffered under weak leadership, and were constrained by insufficient supplies. However, the experts failed to see the Chinese forces clearly, focusing instead on reporting that matched preconceived judgments about the Chinese military. Unfortunately those judgments were incorrect. Many of the PRC soldiers who deployed to the Korean border had recent combat experience during the Chinese civil war and were committed communist revolutionaries. While poorly equipped by Western standards, they had confident, experienced officers who were veterans of almost twenty years of war.[23]

The opinion that the Chinese would not intervene because it did not pass the common sense test of MacArthur, his G-2 and analysts in Washington fit nicely with the intelligence community's opinion that the Chinese would not attack because the Soviets, being in control of all communist affairs, would not authorize it. The FEC intelligence collection requirements are a clear indicator of the G-2's outlook on China and its relationship to the Soviet Union. From October 5-14, the FEC G-2 listed "Reinforcement by Soviet Satellite China" as a priority collection requirement, bouncing it between the number two and number one collection priority, where it remained throughout the Wake Island conference between MacArthur and President Harry Truman in mid-October.[24] "When MacArthur returned from Wake Island, he had no inkling of the CCF armies gathering in North Korea."[25] The belief that the Chinese would not attack unless authorized by the Soviets drove collection requirements and provided an explanation of how the information collected that did not fit this threat model could not be true.

The FEC G-2's reporting offers additional insight into Willoughby's analysis of the Chinese intentions. An intelligence summary dated October 14, 1950 theorized that the Soviets would not intervene in Korea because it would be inconvenient and uneconomical, but would allow the Chinese to send troops if Beijing desired. Willoughby's staff believed, however, that recent declarations by Chinese leaders threatening to enter Korea if American forces moved north of the 38th parallel were "probably in a category of diplomatic blackmail." The document concluded that the Chinese and Soviets would continue to provide diplomatic and rhetorical support for the North Koreans, but would not make "further expensive investment in support of a lost cause."[26]

The signs of impending Chinese attack began to build significantly in October and November. COMINT reporting that Chinese armies were deploying to Manchuria prompted the National Command Authority to query MacArthur about possible Chinese or Soviet Communist intervention. The massing of armies in Manchuria was not the only indications that COMINT provided of Chinese preparations to attack. Reports of orders for 30,000 maps of North Korea, orders for large amounts of medical supplies and the movement of rail transportation to the border are just a few examples provided by COMINT, beyond the buildup of troops, that strongly suggested that the Chinese were diligently building a capability and intended to attack. However, MacArthur's history of disregarding intelligence that did not fit his assessment of the situation likely drove him to minimize such signals.[27]

Ignoring COMINT and diplomatic warnings was not the only lapse on the part of the FEC G-2 and his commander. Because they lacked an understanding of the Chinese operational art, doctrine and tactics, they failed to recognize the PRC's first phase offensive in October for what it was: a probe to determine U.S. composition, disposition and reaction to attack so that the

Chinese main forces could then attack at a time and place of their own choosing. MacArthur's report to the United Nations covering the latter half of October reflected his overall analysis that the Chinese had not entered the war despite numerous indicators from COMINT, prisoners of war and battlefield reporting from U.S. units in contact with Chinese forces.[28] MacArthur's report was not the only place where he discounted the likelihood of Chinese intervention. Probably the most emphatic opinion he proffered in that regard was during his conference at Wake Island with President Truman. When the president asked him if the Chinese would send troops into Korea, MacArthur responded that the optimum time for such intervention had passed and that U.S. airpower would inflict the "greatest slaughter" if they did so. [29]

In November, after the Chinese first phase offensive had begun, General Willoughby' s analysis of the CCF divisions that had been identified in the Eighth Army and X Corps zones was that they were not really divisions, but *elements* of divisions. Later, in November, when General Doyle Hickey asked the G-2 how many Chinese troops he estimated were in Korea, Willoughby opined that each division identified was actually only a battalion of volunteers. And his explanation for the near-destruction of a regiment of the 8th Calvary by a Chinese night attack was that the regiment had failed to put out adequate security resulting in a small, violent surprise attack that overran it, scattering it during the hours of darkness.[30] Not only did the FEC G-2 completely fail to see the Chinese first phase offensive for what it was, he used his common sense analysis to explain away events that had already occurred in his own battlespace that conflicted with his preconceived notions and published reports. When interviewed after the war, Willoughby told a reporter that the Chinese crossings of the Yalu in October 1950 had been "piecemeal" and that MacArthur had ordered a continuation of the attack north to the Yalu in order to determine the enemy's "profile." [31] The G-2's own comments indicate that he simply did

not grasp the fact that over 200,000 Chinese troops had infiltrated into North Korea and had conducted probing attacks and reconnaissance in force in order to determine the composition, disposition and competence of U.S. forces as a prelude to the main attack.

Although the FEC intelligence reports produced in October and November 1950 were full of data and estimates on the capabilities of the Chinese, the reports never stated any conclusion that the Chinese would intervene.[32] Willoughby could not have been more wrong. The FEC intelligence estimate on November 6 underestimated Chinese troop strength in Korea by a factor of ten.[33] The Chinese first-phase offensive offered opportunities to make informed judgments of the Chinese intentions, but American intelligence specialists discounted the information gleaned from prisoners. Intelligence information available to FEC analysts provided factual data for inclusion into the overall analysis, yet they discounted the facts because the information did not support the preconceived conclusions in intelligence estimates of the time.

As MacArthur's G2, Willoughby "basked in the reflected glory and genius of his commander." Willoughby's analysis strongly influenced the entire FEC intelligence community and challenging the G2's opinion was the equivalent of challenging MacArthur. Thus, dissent in the intelligence community was nonexistent.[34] The affects of the FEC G-2's conclusions and the strength of Willoughby's personality affected the analysis provided by the G-2 of Eighth Army, Lieutenant Colonel James C. Tarkenton. A lieutenant colonel at thirty-four, Tarkenton was both junior and young for his position as a G-2. His World War II experience had been as the intelligence staff officer for a regiment and, unlike Willoughby, he had no high-level intelligence experience. "Tarkenton performed well in the fighting around Pusan in the summer of 1950. But despite his ability, the Army G-2 never was able to escape the sway of the FEC G-2."[35]

Not surprisingly then, the Eighth Army G-2's opinion of Chinese involvement in Korea initially mirrored General Willoughby's assessment. In November 1950, Tarkenton stated that only a few divisions of what were probably Chinese volunteers were in Korea, that they did not represent organized Chinese intervention, but were there only to defend the border approaches.[36]

Like General Willoughby and a host of other intelligence professionals, Tarkenton failed to recognize the Chinese first phase offensive for what it was because he was not familiar with Chinese operational art, doctrine or tactics. Tarkenton's analysis of Chinese intentions slightly changed as more reports from prisoner interrogations came in and the Chinese withdrew from contact at the conclusion of their first phase offensive. He reasoned that "the Chinese wanted to protect the power plants south of the Yalu River and he expected that they would dig in on a defensive line to do this."[37] Tarkenton's analysis that the Chinese purpose was to defend the Yalu river hydroelectric power plants that supplied power to Manchuria industrial plants was a regurgitation of CIA analysis, circa 20 October, that clearly influenced national-level decision making as well.[38]

The FEC assessments also strongly influenced the estimate of Chinese activity and intentions by X Corps, which failed to recognize the true nature of the Chinese first phase offensive, concluding, like Eighth Army, that the enemy reconnaissance in force had been a delaying operation and that the Chinese had withdrawn to assume a defensive posture. While recognizing the capabilities of Chinese strength beyond the border, "as late as November 24, 1950, X Corps believed that there were only two Chinese divisions to its front and that the enemy was adopting a defensive posture."[39] Strategic intelligence estimates of the day mirrored the intelligence estimates of the tactical and operational level intelligence staffs of Tarkenton and Willoughby. The National Intelligence Estimate 2/1 of 24 November stated that China had the

capability for large-scale offensive operations but that there were no indications such an offensive was in the offing.[40]

To make informed decisions about plans a commander must be able to see himself and to see the enemy. Said another way, he must understand the composition and disposition of his own forces. He must understand their morale and assess their fighting spirit before he commits them to combat. Likewise, the commander must have a clear picture of what the enemy forces are capable of and how they are disposed on the battlefield. Furthermore, he must gauge his counterpart's intentions and, particularly at strategic and operational levels, he must be able to visualize how the actions of his force will affect enemy counterparts and their decision-making process.

Chinese diplomatic dispatches and documents discovered long after the war reveal that Mao became "a very active reactor toward America' s involvement in the Korean War because of his concern for the national security of China."[41] Mao approved Kim Il Sung' s plan to attack South Korea because he was under the impression that the U.S. would not intervene, a perception he likely gained from Acheson' speech to exclude South Korea from America' s defensive perimeter and from his own experience with the U.S. during the Chinese civil war. The U.S. surprised Mao by intervening in Korea.

MacArthur and leaders in Washington failed to consider their actions through the eyes of the Chinese. Instead, MacArthur and other Far East experts concluded, using their own logic, that Beijing would not intervene in Korea because the best time for the Chinese to attack had passed, the cost of attacking would be too high and, most importantly, because the Soviet Union had not authorized it. General Willoughby had demonstrated a history of mirror-imaging in his Pacific War intelligence estimates when, for example, he wrongly had gauged the intentions of

the Commander of the Eighteenth Japanese Imperial Army. Willoughby failed to learn from this experience and during the Korean War he repeated what was a grave error for an intelligence officer.[42]

The intelligence community of 1950 had not considered that the Chinese viewed crossing the 38th parallel by U.S. forces a security threat to the newly formed government and that China was reliant on a buffer zone for her national security and North Korea constituted that zone. Consequently, the warning of intent to intervene that Beijing sent to the west through the Indian Ambassador was not political posturing, but a real warning of intent to attack if the Americans crossed the 38th parallel which US intelligence and commanders misread.[43]

Chinese leaders conducted their own analysis of their enemy commander, MacArthur. Mao's measure of him was more accurate than MacArthur's estimate of Mao and his commanding general Lin Piao. Mao also had a clear vision of what MacArthur believed Chinese strength in Korea to be, indicating that the intelligence assessments of the FEC were known to the Chinese. According to PRC documents available at the National Security Agency, "Mao was convinced MacArthur was too arrogant and complacent to make an objective assessment of the intelligence he received. Mao reportedly thought the PRC could surprise him because he would miscalculate Beijing's intentions.[44] More disturbing is the extremely accurate perception that Mao had of MacArthur's estimate of Chinese strength in North Korea. Mao was fully aware that the FEC G-2 had underestimated Chinese troop strength by a factor of ten. The Chinese leadership may have come to this conclusion in part because MacArthur issued a communiqué from Tokyo on November 6 in which he tried to color the setbacks the FEC had suffered as a result of the Chinese first phase offensive as a victory. The unintended consequence of this broadcast was that MacArthur's attempt at information operations likely provided the Chinese

with critical intelligence because the substance of MacArthur's message indicated that he was still ignorant of the extent to which the CCF had infiltrated North Korea.[45] Mao counted on this misperception to enable his forces to achieve surprise and be successful.[46]

There is evidence that the PRC had conducted a detailed analysis of the intelligence capabilities of its enemy and had developed operational security measures to counteract them. Chinese troops avoided detection by aerial observation by moving only at night, camouflaging by day, and employing extensive deception measures by using code names for their units, making them appear to be small, token units.[47] These preparations paid off handsomely for them, negating the U.S. IMINT capability and enabling the massive infantry infiltration into Korea to go undetected. The deception efforts confused U.S. intelligence as to the true nature of PRC strength during the first phase offensive, buying the Chinese crucial time to regroup and develop plans for their second phase offensive. Chinese and U.S. intelligence stand in stark contrast to each other in their ability, and effort, to understand each other's tactics, techniques and procedures. Moreover, PRC leaders capitalized on their own strengths and exploited the weaknesses of their enemy.

The purpose of Beijing's first phase offensive was to gauge American capabilities – and the Chinese commander accomplished his mission. Chinese documents captured late in November 1950 include a pamphlet entitled "Primary Conclusions of Battle Experiences at Unsan." that made recommendations for overcoming American strengths and exploiting weaknesses.[48] The measure of the U.S. forces was accurate and timely, indicating that the Chinese 4th Army Group G-2 had done his homework well and that, in the Chinese army, intelligence drove the maneuver plan.

Each of these analyses poses valid arguments. It was not one particular oversight or blunder that led to the incorrect assessment that the Chinese would not attack, but a compilation of different mistakes, all adding up to the intelligence community failure. The various intelligence disciplines each contributed its own mistakes to the mix of analysis. Signal intelligence played, arguably, the most important role in providing indicators of Chinese intentions to attack, but it faced its own challenges in 1950. The AFSA emerged only one year before the onset of the war and reorganized into the National Security Agency during the war. In addition to the friction of reorganization there was constant conflict between AFSA and the service cryptologic authorities over the control of intercept facilities. The stresses of war highlighted these divisions and weaknesses and had a negative affect on SIGINT support to the war effort.[49]

SIGINT failed entirely to identify indicators that the North Koreans would attack South Korea. In the five years before the start of the Korean War, the focus of SIGINT activities in the Far East had been the Soviet and Communist Chinese problems - a logical emphasis because of the increasing tensions of the Cold War and the fall of China to the communists. In order to provide adequate resources for these problems, targets of apparently lesser concern, such as North Korea, received virtually no attention.

The reasons the SIGINT community was looking the other way when North Korea attacked is well documented in the collection requirements that the SIGINT community was operating under at the time. The U.S. Communications Intelligence Board (USCIB) specified SIGINT collection requirements in two Monthly Intelligence Requirements lists. During May 1950, Japan and Korea were number 15 on the priority list, and the request for collection against Korea specified only Soviet activities in North Korea and the relationship between North Korea

and Communist China. The requirement lists did not address collection against the likelihood

that the North Koreans would invade South Korea despite HUMINT reports from KMAG and

KLO of numerous border skirmishes between South Korean and North Korean troops and North

Korean border incursions that indicated North Korean preparations to attack.[50] Indeed, the

reality of the situation was that virtually no collection against the North Korean target occurred

due to limited resources.[51]

For SIGINT, China was the preeminent target in the Far East. The fledgling AFSA and

ASA expanded their intercept capability vis-à-vis the PRC, deriving their collection from the few

intercept positions in the Pacific that centered on civilian rather than military emitters. In 1946,

ASA ceased collecting on Chinese military targets, which resulted in delayed reconstruction of

these military networks once the agency refocused collection on military communications.

Despite the prioritization of the Chinese target and the dedication of the scant resources available

to servicing these requirements, it "would not be until 1952 that traffic analysts could detect,

from military communications, when PRC units entered and left Korea."[52]

Analysis of the SIGINT reporting did not occur at AFSA. The intelligence community

saw the agency as a collector and processor of information, not as a producer of finished

intelligence products. AFSA produced raw intercept reports that provided critical indicators of

Chinese capabilities and intentions, but AFSA buried the importance of the reports in the details

and supplied no analysis or commentary to provide context or amplification of the significance

of the reports.[53] The lack of single-source analysis made the jobs of the all-source analysts more

difficult. With no analysis or summary reporting to guide their efforts, analysts were forced to

read every single report and attempt to place it into context with the hundreds of other pieces of

traffic they received daily. Although reports were disseminated electronically via cable to

customers in Washington as well as overseas,[54] they were not stored in filterable, electronic

databases. The intelligence analyst had to read, plot, file, and analyze each hard-copy individual

message as it came off a Teletype printer. It was thus inevitable that the intelligence community

overlooked the subtle indicators of Chinese preparations to attack as they built up over a period

of months.

Overall, the national-level SIGINT produced by AFSA was effective because it did detect

the indicators of Chinese preparations to attack and reported them in a timely manner to

consumers in Washington and the Far East. It was the lack of analysis by AFSA that hampered

the overall effectiveness of the SIGINT reporting and potentially caused crucial indicators to go

unnoticed.[55] Despite this intelligence-collection success story, analysts either missed or ignored

the indicators of an impending attack, and the result was that intelligence was able to do an

accurate post-mortem on the Chinese invasion using information it already had on hand, but was

unable to predict it.

Tactical SIGINT collection did not contribute to solving the Chinese intervention puzzle.

Ultimately, Low Level Voice Intercept teams "produced more valuable information for ground

commanders that any other source"[56] but it was not in operation with its first team until the

summer of 1951, long after the Chinese had intervened and pushed U.N. forces south of the 38th

parallel. The 60th Signal Service Company from Fort Lewis did not arrive in theater until

October 9 and did not contribute materially to the SIGINT effort against the Chinese.

Imagery provided minimal support to indications and warning intelligence during the

Korean War. The U.S. possessed no aircraft or satellite imagery programs, at the national level,

in 1950. The U-2 did not become operational until 1958 and the first satellite based IMINT

platform, the KH-4 did not become operational until 1967. With no ability to look into North

Korea or China, IMINT played no role in providing early warning of either the North Korean attack on South Korea in June 1950 nor of the subsequent Chinese intervention. The principal value of IMINT, after the onset of hostilities, was to assist tactical commanders in their planning by enhancing their ability to visualize the battlefield, beyond the maps that they possessed. Still, IMINT in support of tactical commands faced some rather severe limitations in its ability to provide indications of the impending Chinese intervention. Army IMINT platforms were restricted from over-flights into China and the IMINT sensors of the time were incapable of looking into China from North Korea. As a consequence, aerial reconnaissance was unable to provide the photo verification of Chinese activity inside North Korea that G-2s and commanders sought. Air Force IMINT platforms did not have the capability to collect at night without the use of flash bombs, and consequently were largely incapable of collecting against an enemy that moved along its infiltration routes primarily at night. Finally, ten-day delays in delivery of IMINT products were excessive, caused primarily by a lack of photo interpreters and the requirement to deliver hard copy photographs to the customer.[57]

The Army high command in Korea - from MacArthur to General Walker and General Almond, the latter two in charge of Eighth Army and X Corps respectively - was concerned about possible Chinese intervention throughout the fall and early winter of 1950. But although there was considerable discussion of the subject at the General Staff and at the national levels, the Far Eastern Command did not specifically commit the aerial reconnaissance assets that it controlled to detect Chinese movement into or inside North Korea. The Far East Air Force did not undertake visual reconnaissance missions and its photo reconnaissance missions, flown during daylight and over areas adjacent to main roads, focused on supporting the attacks on the Yalu river bridges. General Bradley remarked on the irony that orders from Washington issued

early on in the war prohibiting MacArthur from violating Chinese or Soviet borders or airspace prevented the potential confirmation of Chinese buildup and infiltration with aerial reconnaissance.[58] Consequently, the infiltration of the massive numbers of Chinese infantry went undetected from the air.[59]

"When aerial reconnaissance failed to find large bodies of Chinese troops in the northernmost reaches of Korea, that information dovetailed perfectly with the earlier conclusion that time for Chinese intervention was past," one analyst aptly has observed. "It did not consider that the aerial photos might not show small groups of the enemy well camouflaged during daylight hours."[60] Indeed, lack of specific collection against the Chinese as they massed in Manchuria and crossed into North Korea represented a significant intelligence gap that, if filled by photographic evidence, might have altered completely the analysis of Chinese intentions and allowed American commanders to take specific measures to protect their troops.

Despite opportunities for substantial contributions, HUMINT's role during the early phases of the Korean War was minimal. Before North Korea struck south, HUMINT was the only dedicated collection asset looking at the Korean target. HUMINT operations inside Korea were limited to the Korean Liaison Office (KLO) and the Korean Military Advisory Group (KMAG), a small contingent of U.S. Army personnel whose mission was to advise and train the fledgling South Korean Army. General Willoughby, the FEC G-2, recognized that he needed HUMINT in Korea, which is why he established the KLO. Although it did not conduct covert operations or operate a network of HUMINT agents, the KLO did debrief Koreans and members of governments operating in Korea on activities that were of interest to the G-2. Both the KMAG and the KLO collected information that provided indicators that the North Koreans would attack South Korea. These reports made their way to the national level, although the FEC

G-2 was not in the reporting chain of the KMAG, which reported through the State Department to Washington D.C.! Numerous South Korean officials conveyed warnings to both the KMAG and to the KLO that the North Koreans were preparing to attack, but the warnings went unheeded. General Omar Bradley, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, was concerned about the possibility of North Korean invasion and during a trip to Japan he asked the outgoing commander of the Korean Military Advisory Group, Brigadier General William L. Roberts, if the Republic of Korea Army could deal with North Korean aggression. Roberts assured him that the ROK Army was more than capable of meeting any challenge the North Koreans posed. Since Bradley knew Roberts and believed him to be a "professional soldier of good judgment," he took his word on it.[61]

U.S. intelligence often discounted information provided by Korean HUMINT sources, regarding them as unreliable because of the concern that they overstated the threat for their own benefit. Analysts frequently disregarded information regarding the impending attack of the North Koreans because they believed that the South Korean sources were reporting commonplace information regarding border skirmishes and other frequent North Korean activities along the border rather than interpreting these reports as potential indicators of attack.[62] It is possible that the distrust of Korean sources was also a significant factor later in the conflict, when the Chinese intervention was imminent, causing the Americans to discount HUMINT information derived from POW interrogations.

Once U.S. forces were on the offensive in Korea, new HUMINT opportunities presented themselves to the Far Eastern Command: Eighth Army and X Corps had POW interrogators. The FEC opened a strategic debriefing facility in October 1950 and HUMINT reporting soon provided specific indicators of the Chinese intervention as the PRC began its first phase

offensive inside North Korea. Prisoner interrogations as early as October 25 revealed that

Chinese units had crossed into North Korea. Yet, Eighth Army discounted the reports even after

three prisoners passed lie detectors, because it could find no corroborating evidence of Chinese

presence in North Korea. The consensus regarding the reports was that any PRC soldiers were

merely replacements in North Korean units.[63] Those two interrogation sources, however, did

give a clear picture of China' s capability and intention to intervene. Unfortunately, Tarkenton,

the Eighth Army G-2, followed the lead of the FEC G-2 and largely dismissed these reports. The

G-2s did not believe Chinese enlisted soldiers could possibly know about overall strategy when,

in fact, the CCF fully briefed its men.[64] This fact provides further corroboration of the assertion

that U.S. intelligence had a poor grasp of Chinese tactics, techniques and procedures in 1950.

HUMINT suffered from a lack of pre-hostility training and the force lacked the necessary

mix of linguists to accomplish its mission. At the onset of hostilities in Korea, the Army

possessed fewer than twenty Korean linguists, and when the Chinese became involved in the

conflict, the FEC had no Mandarin Chinese linguists.[65] The linguist problem continually

plagued wartime units in both HUMINT and SIGINT and it led to significant difficulties in voice

intercept operations as well as POW interrogations and clandestine HUMINT collection.

The factors that played into the intelligence community failure in Korea were numerous.

Succinctly put, U.S. intelligence did not see the Korean War coming because national political

guidance focused it on the strategically significant Sino-Soviet alliance. The post-war

drawdown, coupled with lack of investment in new technology, translated into a paucity of

collection assets for targets like pre-war Korea. Once war had begun, political and command

influence shaped, distorted, and denied intelligence emerging on the Chinese threat until it was

too late.

In the case of the Korean War, warning intelligence failed U.S. national leaders as well as tactical commanders because it did not alert them to the North Korean invasion or to the impending Chinese intervention. "Warning intelligence can and does serve tactical as well as strategic needs. It is as important to the commander on the ground with troops as it is to the decision-maker located in a Washington D.C. office with national responsibility."[66] Many indicators were present that could have warned commanders. Why were they missed?

Numerous sources of information indicated that the Chinese were preparing to attack. SIGINT furnished extremely specific indications of Chinese preparations to attack and their intent to do so, yet "analysts were too prone to transfer western political-military presuppositions into the minds of the planners in Beijing."[67] Consequently, U.S. commanders missed the opportunity to craft a campaign plan and a supporting information operations campaign, taking into account the preparations of the Chinese and their security concerns. U.S. intelligence overlooked more opportunities to identify the intentions of the Chinese, when G-2s dismissed interrogation reports of massive Chinese troop presence in North Korea with various assessments that assumed that the Chinese would not invade. Despite these numerous warnings from different sources, the JCS instructed MacArthur to continue advancing north to destroy the DPRK armed forces provided there was no threat of a major Chinese or Soviet intervention.[68] Since MacArthur was clearly pre-disposed to disregard the threat of Chinese intervention, the analysis of information at the tactical and operational level did not contra-indicate continuing the attack. These FEC intelligence estimates strongly influenced the analysis that was contained in the national-level intelligence products of the day. Thus, intelligence staffs and their commanders, at all levels, perpetuated a circular loop of misguided analysis and self-serving orders.

The national-level intelligence agencies abrogated their responsibility to conduct their own assessment of the likelihood of Chinese intervention and deferred final analysis to the judgment of the Far East Command. "We must infer that either Washington was undecided, or that its view coincided with that of the Commander in Chief, Far East, since it did not issue directives to him stating a different estimate. The conclusion, then, is that in the developing situation of November the views of the Far East Command were decisive on the military course to be taken in Korea at that time." [69] General J. Lawton Collins, the 1950 Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army, conceded that ninety percent of the intelligence information on Korea, at the Department of the Army, had came from the Far East Command.[70] The evidence strongly suggests that the intelligence community in Washington delegated, in practice, the responsibility for evaluating this strategic intelligence to a theater commander supported by tactical commands in the field. The result was that both the strategic and operational level commands misread Chinese intentions.

Indeed, MacArthur' s assessment that the Chinese were no match for the U.S. and therefore would not attack formed the analytical model through which information analysis occurred. "It had become an article of faith within the FEC, personally testified to by MacArthur, that no Asian troops could stand up to American military might without being annihilated. This attitude, considered a ' fact' within the FEC and constantly repeated to the Washington political and military leaders, resulted in the second strategic blunder - the surprise Chinese intervention in the war."[71]

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CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSIONS

Disarmament would do it if everybody would disarm but everybody won't. I'm strong for preparedness. I think the better equipped we are along military lines the less chance we have of getting into a war with some other nation.[1] -SGT Alvin York

In this country it is found requisite, now and then, to put an admiral to death, in order to encourage the others to fight.[2] Voltaire

The political-military situation and historical background present at the outset of the Korea War provide the necessary context for understanding the significance of the outcomes of the war's campaigns. The causes of the intelligence failures that occurred during the Korean War are clear when one considers the state of readiness of the U.S. military at the onset of hostilities in Korea. The capabilities, structure and national focus of the intelligence community during the period between World War II and the Korean War also affected intelligence readiness and the quality of support provided during the early phases of the war.

The post-World War II drawdown and U.S. defense policy were not the sole factors that contributed to intelligence failures in Korea. The state of readiness in doctrine, training, leadership, organization and materials in general, and specifically the preparedness of military intelligence, were critical factors in the ability of the intelligence community to predict the North Korean invasion of South Korea and the subsequent intervention of the Chinese. Indeed, each intelligence discipline and program had its own set of circumstances and problems that contributed to poor support to commanders.

Operational and analytical principles directed the focus of intelligence collection and shaped the analysis of information. Consequently, commanders received degraded support during the Korean War, as evidenced by the inability to predict the intervention of the Chinese in the war.

U.S leaders lacked adequate indications and warning of the impending North Korean invasion of South Korea, which was a failing of both strategic and operational intelligence. The immediate effect of this strategic surprise was the emergency deployment of Task Force Smith to contain the advancing North Koreans. The North Korean Army encircled the ad hoc unit near the strategic port of Pusan and nearly obliterated it. That initial disaster was not unique; intelligence support remained problematic throughout the early months of the war. Tactical commanders failed to receive timely, accurate, relevant analysis and were unable to target the enemy effectively and attack under the most favorable conditions. Surprise by the enemy at tactical, operational and strategic levels, due to poor intelligence support, temporarily reversed the course of the war while Eighth Army and X Corps extended their offensive toward the Yalu River.

The Chinese intervention surprised General MacArthur and U.S. national leaders, in part because the intelligence community was unready and did not provide adequate indications and warning. MacArthur's belief that the Chinese would not intervene, despite reporting to the contrary, led him to press his attack deep into North Korea, extending his combat forces and stressing their logistical support. The Chinese attacked in massive numbers, quickly overwhelming U.N. forces and forcing a retreat south of the 38th parallel. Chinese attacks nearly destroyed some U.N. elements and all suffered extreme losses in men and equipment.

The anatomy of how the North Korean invasion and the Chinese intervention surprised the U.S. is an interesting study in the analysis of information and the production of intelligence estimates. Unprepared for war in Korea in 1950, the intelligence community failed to provide timely, accurate predictive analysis, in part because politics drove the collection of information. The combination of poor training, lack of men and equipment, coupled with politically driven

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intelligence collection priorities and analysis of information at the highest levels was the formula for the operational disaster that resulted from surprise.

The post-World War II draw-down of the U.S. military and the dramatic restructuring created a condition wherein the military was, by and large, staffed with soldiers and officers who did not know how to perform their basic duties and responsibilities. Degraded by organizational inefficiency, the demobilization of personnel and lack of resources that also stemmed from the drawdown, the quality of soldiers produced by the various intelligence schools was low. The poor job performance of personnel in Korea led to the creation of a Far East Command intelligence school at Camp Drake, Japan to train replacements so they could function at a basic level of proficiency.

National intelligence support to the Far Eastern Command was inadequate. Theater collection and analysis also proved to have serious shortcomings in providing adequate support to tactical commanders. In the case of the Korean War, warning intelligence failed U.S. national leaders and did not provide tactical commanders with the analysis they required to protect the force. Numerous sources of information provided indicators of the Chinese preparations to attack; however, analysts used western political-military presuppositions when evaluating the threat courses of action. Indeed, MacArthur's arrogant assessment that the Chinese were no match for the U.S. and therefore would not attack formed the framework for information analysis.

Commanders felt the affects of these deficiencies at national and tactical levels of command. The results of this lack of adequate intelligence support were strategic surprise both when the North Koreans attacked South Korea and when the Chinese intervened in Korea in

massive, overwhelming numbers. The deficiencies led to Task Force Smith's nearly being

defeated at Pusan and the near-annihilation of elements of X Corps at the Chosin reservoir.

Policy and leadership deficiencies had detrimental affects that directly affected the

readiness of the intelligence community. Objective analysis did not occur and decision-makers

were not aware of critical information and had no system for considering contrary opinions.

Furthermore, the senior leaders of the military did not establish standards of readiness, and

allowed equipment to deteriorate and units to become under strength due to assignment shortages

and personnel policies. Inadequate programs of research, development, and acquisition resulted

in a loss of capability to meet mission and doctrinal requirements. Finally, the senior leaders

tolerated low quality accession and retention standards for personnel at a time when the lack of

resources and ambiguity in threat demanded higher quality standards.[3]

These post-war drawdown policies directly affected the intelligence community and its

ability to provide support to national leaders and military commanders. The Army did not create

intelligence as its own branch in the post-war reorganization and did not form as a Military

Intelligence Corps. The Army did not base training on established standards, there was no

standardized curriculum and the different branches and intelligence disciplines conducted

training in numerous different locations. Analysis training focused on assessing enemy

capabilities rather than a determination of potential courses of action based on an overall

assessment of enemy capabilities and intentions. The military also failed to train personnel in

analytical techniques or the nuances of the situation in Korea.

Intelligence personnel with operational experience gained in World War II left the service

in large numbers leaving behind an inexperienced force with a critical shortage of experienced

leaders. Troops assigned to intelligence military occupational specialties did not meet the

minimum standards for service, often assigned by the Army to intelligence due to their knowledge of a foreign language or their heritage. Soldiers frequently did not have the requisite security clearances and procedures for processing clearances were cumbersome and not suited to supporting real world operations. The number of linguists was insufficient to meet operational demands and the language training that new recruits received was only sufficient to give them a minimal working knowledge of basic conversational skills; no military vocabulary or specific military training for linguists.

Lack of funding for research and development of new intelligence systems meant that tactical forces went to war with World War II-era equipment that was outdated and poorly maintained. The intelligence community had no national imagery capability and theater IMINT platforms were limited by sensor effectiveness and operational constraints. Imagery programs suffered from a severe shortage of photo interpreters. Excessive request-to-delivery times for photoreconnaissance support resulted in most products providing little to no value added to the tactical commander.

Redesign of the national security structure created significant turbulence for the intelligence community. The National Security Act of 1947 created the CIA and dismantled the OSS, leaving critical intelligence gaps in HUMINT collection operations. SIGINT dramatically altered its support structure by creating the AFSA, which later became the NSA. Constant reorganization in time of war caused excessive personnel imbalances, expenditure of man-hours and resources with a corresponding degradation of support. Tactical intelligence units were not formed, improperly manned, and were not prepared to deploy and support contingency operations. Tactical forces lacked jamming and low-level voice intercept capability and had insufficient counter-battery artillery-detection equipment.[4]

U.S. forces and others in the U.N. command failed to predict the Chinese intervention in the Korean War resulting in surprise Chinese attacks in the Chosin Reservoir area of North Korea. U.S. forces were unprepared to react and were numerically overmatched, encircled and nearly destroyed. As a consequence of this intelligence failure the U.S. Army's 2nd Infantry Division was rendered combat ineffective; reduced to just over 50 percent strength in the fighting that occurred between November 15 and 30, 1950.[5] The First Marine Division "[between October and December 7, 1950] lost 604 killed in action, 114 who later died from wounds, 192 missing, 3,508 wounded in action and frostbite accounted for most of the 7,313 casualties."[6] The near-destruction at the Chosin Reservoir set in motion the U.N. forces' retreat south of the 38th parallel and the onset of positional defense and stalemate in Korea. This unfavorable situation ultimately led to the political defeat of the U.S. in the Korean War.

The Army of today uses the stunning losses that the U.S. military suffered in the early days of the Korean War as lessons learned so that new generations of military leaders will not make the same mistakes. In the early '90s, an oft-spoken phrase was "No More Task Force Smiths." This watchword of the day was a direct reference to the ill-equipped, untrained battalion task force that was thrown into the early days of the Korean war and was surrounded at Pusan and nearly annihilated; serving as a modern day rallying cry for better training, equipment and readiness for deployment. Indeed, current joint doctrine recognizes the need for readiness, requiring that "intelligence capabilities and skills should be established in peacetime to be available for contingencies. This applies to all intelligence disciplines."[7] It is imperative that one heeds the lessons of the Korean War concerning

intelligence readiness. The damages of strategic or operational surprise are much more expensive than the costs of maintaining a well-trained, technologically equipped, intelligence community that is capable, not only of providing indications and warning, but ready for deployment to provide quality support to field commanders in time of war.

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VITA

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