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**Cold War International History Project
Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars
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Preface

In the last years of Stalin's life, the specter of World War III never loomed larger or more corporeal than it did in 1950, in connection with Soviet support for North Korea's attempt to gain control over South Korea by military means. In the spring of that year, as Stalin and his foreign policy team decided whether to give the final go-ahead for Kim Il Sung's attack on the South, they calculated the likelihood that a Soviet-backed assault on America's client state in Korea might prompt the United States to intervene, expanding the conflict into a global war. In the end, Stalin's fears materialized as the United States did enter the conflict, along with fifteen other states fighting under the United Nations banner. To the Soviet leader's surprise, however, the danger of a wider war quickly receded as the Truman administration took pains to limit the fighting to Korea.

In early October 1950, when the tide of the war turned against North Korea and UN forces advanced across the 38th parallel in pursuit of the rapidly disintegrating Korean People's Army, Stalin again had to weigh the risk of a global war, this time against the damaging repercussions that would surely follow a North Korean defeat. Unless Chinese troops intervened, the North Korean armed forces would soon collapse, leaving the American-backed government in Seoul in control of the entire country. Such a turn of events would not only deprive the Soviet Union of the buffer Stalin believed it needed against future Japanese aggression through Korea, which was always his chief concern regarding the peninsula, but would also leave American forces on the Soviet and Chinese borders, posing an intolerable threat to the security of both communist states. Chinese intervention, however, might prompt the United States to declare war on the People's Republic and thus call into play the mutual defense treaty Moscow had signed with Beijing in February of that year. In the end, the Truman administration refrained from treating the Chinese intervention as a *casus belli*, and the stunning success of the Chinese "Volunteers" against the technologically superior American forces eliminated the immediate danger that US troops would remain along the Soviet and Chinese borders.

For the last two years of his life, Stalin was happy to keep the safely contained war going, exploring the new opportunities his adversary's restraint provided him.

The two pivotal moments in Stalin's decision-making about the war in Korea—the deliberations in early 1950 over whether to launch it and the communications with Beijing in October 1950 over how to avoid its ending in defeat—are therefore particularly important for understanding the Soviet leader's approach to the danger that Cold War tensions might lead to another world war before the Soviet Union was capable of winning it. The large collection of Korean War documents from the Presidential Archive in Moscow obtained in 1995 by the Cold War International History Project, in collaboration with the Korea Research Center of Columbia University and the Institute for Contemporary International Problems of the Diplomatic Academy of the Russian Foreign Ministry, shed considerable light on this formerly obscure decision-making process.¹ Nonetheless, important questions remained unanswered. In particular, that collection provided no explanation of what constituted the “changed international situation” that, according to Stalin's explanation to Mao Zedong in May 1950, made it possible for the Soviet Union to support the Korean campaign.² Additional documents subsequently released from the Presidential Archive and quoted at length by Russian scholars Evgenii P. Bajanov and Natalia Bajanova³ fill in some of the most important gaps, illuminating Stalin's reasoning in approving the attack and providing critical details about Soviet planning for the campaign. Quoting extensively from these documents, this essay analyzes how the new sources supplement the earlier ones to reveal more fully Stalin's approach to the prospect of premature war with the United States.

The Background

¹ A substantial portion of that collection was translated and analyzed in *The Cold War International History Project Bulletin*, Issue 5 (Spring 1995) and Issue 6/7 (Winter 1995/1996).

² See exchange of telegrams between Stalin and Mao Zedong on 13-14 May 1950, published in *The Cold War International History Project Bulletin*, Issue 4 (Fall 1994), pp. 60-61.

³ Evgenii P. Bajanov and Natalia Bajanova, “The Korean Conflict, 1950-1953: The Most Mysterious War of the 20th Century,” Working Paper, Cold War International History Project, forthcoming.

Because Stalin assumed that Japan would rearm and again threaten the Soviet Far East, using Korea as its bridgehead to the Asian mainland, he regarded the political settlement for the former Japanese colony as an important issue for Soviet security. From 1945 onward, he closely monitored US policies in the southern half of the country for signs that the Americans might be reestablishing a Japanese presence in their zone. These preoccupations were similar to those he had in Europe, where he focused on the danger of renewed German militarism and assumed that the United States would act in concert with its former enemy to threaten the Soviet Union. What was distinctive in the case of Korea, however, was that the situation there presented Stalin with a more immediate danger of war. As a liberated country, Korea had not been subject to the demilitarization undertaken in former enemy states and its division into two occupation zones geographically polarized the sharp political divide within the country. By 1950 both of the governments that had been established on the peninsula, in the wake of the failure of the occupying powers to agree on the composition of a unified government, were discussing the possibility of ending the division of the country by subduing the other half. Given the security concerns of the former occupiers, now patrons of their respective client states, the intra-Korean struggle had the potential to drag the Soviet Union and the United States into direct conflict.

This danger was foremost in Stalin's mind when Kim Il Sung first requested permission to attack the South, during the March 1949 visit to Moscow of the first official delegation from the newly-established Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK). The new sources reveal that Stalin turned down Kim's request on the grounds that the US would regard an attack on the South as a violation of its 1945 agreement with the USSR about the division of the country at the 38th parallel and would consequently be likely to intervene. Moreover, the Soviet leader regarded the question as not yet topical since American troops were still in Korea and the DPRK's armed forces were not yet superior to those of the South. He did not object to the proposal in principle, however, nor did he seem surprised by it. Apparently sharing Kim's assumption that such an operation was necessary, he regarded the issue as one of waiting for favorable circumstances. Their conversation on the subject was recorded as follows:

Kim Il Sung: Comrade Stalin, we believe that the situation makes it necessary and possible to liberate the whole country through military means. The reactionary forces of the South will never agree on a peaceful unification and will perpetuate the division of the country until they feel themselves strong enough to attack the North.

Now is the best opportunity for us to take the initiative into our own hands. Our armed forces are stronger, and in addition we have the support of a powerful guerrilla movement in the South. The population of the South, which despises the pro-American regime, will certainly help us as well.

Stalin: You should not advance to the South. First of all, the Korean People's Army does not have an overwhelming superiority over the troops of the South. Numerically, as I understand, you are even behind them. Second, there are still American troops in the South that will interfere in case of hostilities. Third, one should not forget that the agreement on the 38th parallel is in effect between the USSR and the United States. If the agreement is broken by our side, it is more of a reason to believe that Americans will interfere.

Kim Il Sung: Does it mean that there is no chance to reunify Korea in the near future? Our people are very anxious to be together again to cast off the yoke of the reactionary regime and their American masters.

Stalin: If the adversary has aggressive intentions, then sooner or later it will start the aggression. In response to the attack you will have a good opportunity to launch a counterattack. Then your move will be understood and supported by everyone.⁴

The question of favorable timing for an attack on the South soon became topical, however, as reports reached Moscow of South Korean forays into DPRK territory. Erroneously assuming that the South Korean actions reflected American intentions, Stalin reached the false conclusion that the imminent withdrawal of US forces from Korea was designed to free the Southerners to invade the North—perhaps mirroring his own rationale for withdrawing Soviet troops in late 1948. In April he instructed his ambassador in Pyongyang, Terentii F. Shtykov, to assess the accuracy of intelligence reports that the Americans would soon move their troops out of South Korea to nearby Japanese islands. “The purpose of the withdrawal,” Stalin explained, “is to give freedom of action to the South Korean Army. By that time the UN Commission will also leave

⁴ Conversation between Stalin and the governmental delegation of the DPRK headed by the Chairman of the Cabinet of Ministers of the DPRK Kim Il Sung, 7 March 1949. Cited in Evgenii P. Bajanov and Natalia Bajanova, “The Korean Conflict, 1950-1953: The Most Mysterious War of the 20th Century,” Working Paper, Cold War International History Project, forthcoming.

Korea. In April-May the Southerners will concentrate their troops near the 38th parallel. In June the Southerners will start a sudden attack on the North in order to finish the total destruction of the Northern army by August.”⁵

In reality, both patron and client in Seoul feared that the withdrawal of US forces would lead to the collapse of the newly established Republic of Korea, either through internal subversion or an attack from the North. It was this fear that led the US repeatedly to delay the withdrawal—from August to December 1948, then to March, May and finally June 1949. Moreover, while individuals within the South Korean government hoped to provoke an incident with the North in order to force the US to leave its troops in Korea, Washington was determined to avoid such an entanglement. As General W.L. Roberts, commander of the Korean Military Advisory Group (KMAG), bluntly put it during the border fighting in August, “the South Koreans wish to invade the North. We tell them that if such [an invasion] occurs, all [US] advisers will pull out and the ECA [Economic Cooperation Administration] spigot will be turned off.”⁶ American determination to avoid becoming embroiled in the intra-Korean conflict was clear enough to the Koreans that, as US Ambassador in Seoul John Muccio reported, they “contemplated the withdrawal of the US task force with genuine fear—even jitteriness in certain circles. They moved heaven and earth to have withdrawal deferred.”⁷

Despite having an extensive intelligence network in Seoul that would have known of the sharp divergence between American and South Korean intentions, Shtykov did nothing to correct his boss’ misperceptions. In his report of May 2 the ambassador noted accurately that ROK forces were being expanded with US assistance and that the government of President Syngman Rhee was taking steps to increase the combat readiness of its army, but he failed entirely to note the disparity in aims between patron and client. Instead—perhaps out of an understandable impulse toward self-protection—he merely repeated Stalin’s own conclusions, adding supporting detail.⁸

⁵ Telegram from Stalin to Shtykov, 17 April 1949. Archive of the President of the Russian Federation (APRF), Perechen 3, List 25. Also found in the Archive of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation (AVPRF), Fond 059a, Opis 5a, Delo 4, Papka 11, List 80.

⁶ Bruce Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War, Volume II, The Roaring of the Cataract, 1947-1950* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), p. 388.

⁷ Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War, Volume II*, pp. 379-384.

⁸ The text of Shtykov’s report is given in the Appendix.

Shtykov repeated his exaggerated estimate of the danger of an invasion of the North in other reports to Moscow throughout the spring and summer of 1949,⁹ further alarming the ever-suspicious Stalin. While the Soviet leader was determined to avoid being drawn into a conflict with the United States—apparently for fear he was not yet able to win it—he was also determined to retain the security buffer he had established against a future attack on the Soviet Union through Korea, goals that now appeared difficult to reconcile. His solution was to buy time by forestalling the intra-Korean conflict until a more favorable time to resolve it. He instructed Shtykov and Kim strictly to avoid provoking an assault from the South and ordered the dismantling of the Soviet naval base in Chongjin and the air force liaison offices in Pyongyang and Kanggye, in order “to demonstrate to the world our intentions, psychologically disarm the adversaries and prevent our participation in the possible war against Southern aggression.”¹⁰

After American forces withdrew from Korea in June and no invasion of the North ensued, Stalin was willing to consider a more forward strategy. In early September, after receiving a report that the South intended to occupy a portion of the Ongjin peninsula north of the 38th parallel, as well as to shell a cement plant in the northern city of Haeju, he decided to entertain Kim Il Sung’s request to mount a limited campaign to pre-empt the Southern attack and improve the DPRK’s defensive position. Kim’s plan was to launch an operation to seize the Ongjin peninsula as well as some adjacent South Korean territory, approximately up to Kaesong, thus shortening the DPRK’s line of defense.¹¹

Stalin’s decision to consider mounting this limited offensive followed a recommendation from Shtykov a week earlier that such action was militarily advisable.¹² The ambassador noted, however, that “the Southerners may have enough strength to counterattack, and then the fighting can take on a prolonged character.” He recommended against a general offensive, citing four reasons:

⁹ See Shtykov’s cables on 28 May, 2 June, 18 June, 22 June, 13 July, cited in Bajanov and Bajanova.

¹⁰ Recommendations on Korea, 2 August 1949, APRF. Cited in Bajanov and Bajanova, p. 11.

¹¹ Telegram from [Grigorii Ivanovich] Tunkin, [Chargé d’Affaires of the Soviet embassy in Pyongyang] to the Kremlin, 3 September 1949, APRF. Cited in Bajanov and Bajanova, pp. 18-19.

¹² Memorandum of Conversation of Ambassador Shtykov with Kim Il Sung and Pak Hon-yong, 14 August 1949, APRF. Cited in Bajanov and Bajanova, p. 16. The recommendations were attached to memoranda of Shtykov’s conversations with Kim Il Sung and Pak Hon Yong on 12 and 14 August during which the Koreans “again raised the issue of attacking the South, claiming that there was no choice but to solve the Korean issue through this method.”

1. At the present moment there are two states on the Korean peninsula, and South Korea has been recognized by the USA and other countries. In case of the beginning of military activities initiated by the North, Americans may interfere, not only by supplying the South with weapons and ammunition, but also by sending Japanese troops to its support.
2. An invasion of the South can be used by the USA for launching a wide hostile campaign against the USSR.
3. In the political sense an advance to the South can be supported by a majority of the population in both Korean states, but in a purely military sense the Korean People's Army (KPA) does not have as yet overwhelming superiority over the Southern army.
4. South Korea has already created a rather strong army and police.¹³

Stalin apparently accepted Shtykov's recommendation that an Ongjin campaign was worth considering, despite the inadvisability of a general offensive, for on September 11 he instructed the embassy to gather the information needed to make a decision. After receiving the subsequent report from Pyongyang, he decided against the campaign, on the grounds that "it is impossible to view this operation other than as the beginning of a war between North and South Korea, for which North Korea is not prepared either militarily or politically." Neither the DPRK's armed forces nor the partisan movement in the South was strong enough to ensure a quick victory, and a prolonged war would "create significant political and economic difficulties for North Korea" and give the Americans cause for interference.¹⁴

Earlier drafts of the Politburo resolution drawn up to implement Stalin's decision provide a fuller picture of the considerations that entered into it. In the pre-final draft, Deputy Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko and Defense Minister Nikolai Bulganin set forth the arguments against an invasion in greater detail. With regard to the political costs of military aggression, they wrote that "such an offensive initiated by the DPRK can be used by the reactionary circles to denounce the Northern government in the eyes of public opinion for aggressive intentions and a desire to drag the country into a civil war." Moreover, they presciently noted that "an advance to the South by the People's Army can give the Americans a pretext to raise this issue at the UN session, to blame the

¹³ Report from Shtykov to Stalin, 27 August 1949, APRF. Cited in Bajanov and Bajanova, pp. 16-17.

¹⁴ See Kathryn Weathersby, "To Attack or Not to Attack?: Stalin, Kim Il Sung and the Prelude to War," *Cold War International History Project Bulletin*, Issue 5 (Spring 1995), pp. 1-9.

government of the DPRK for aggression and get the consent of the General Assembly for the introduction into South Korea of American troops. As to the introduction of American troops into the territory of South Korea, it can bring about a long-term occupation of the Southern part of the country and can consequently postpone unification.”¹⁵

In an earlier draft, Gromyko and Bulganin stated more bluntly that “the Americans will certainly move their troops into South Korea, and you [Kim Il Sung] cannot stop this, you cannot even defeat the South Korean army.” In accordance with Stalin’s instruction to Kim in March that his troops could cross the 38th parallel only in case of an attack from the South, Gromyko and Bulganin concluded by acknowledging that “to be sure, you must always be ready, in case the South starts an offensive against the North, to defeat the Southern army and unite the country under the leadership of your government.” Stalin toned down this wording to a less encouraging instruction that “in case the South starts an offensive against the North you must be ready and then act according to the situation.”¹⁶ Throughout the fall, Stalin continued to attempt to forestall the outbreak of full-scale war in Korea. In October he rebuked Shtykov for allowing the DPRK to attack ROK positions along the border. “Such provocation,” he declared, “are very dangerous for our interests and can induce the adversary to launch a big war.”¹⁷

The Decision for War

The first collection of Presidential Archive documents established that in January 1950 Stalin decided that circumstances had become favorable for mounting an offensive in Korea. In response to yet another request from Kim Il Sung for permission to attack the South, on 30 January the Soviet leader informed Kim that he was “ready to help him in this matter” and that he would receive him in Moscow to discuss it.¹⁸ He still regarded the operation as highly risky, however. The new sources reveal that he sent additional

¹⁵ Draft Politburo decision dated 23 September, APRF. Cited in Bajanov and Bajanova, pp. 32-33.

¹⁶ Draft Politburo decision dated 21 September, APRF. Cited in Bajanov and Bajanova, pp. 32-33.

¹⁷ Telegram from Stalin to Shtykov, 30 October 1949, APRF. Cited in Bajanov and Bajanova, pp. 11-12.

¹⁸ Telegram from Stalin to Shtykov, with message for Kim Il Sung, 30 January 1950, APRF. Also found in AVPRF, Fond 059a, Opis 5a, Delo 3, Papka 11, List 92. For the full text see *Cold War International History Project Bulletin*, Issue 5 (Spring 1995), p. 9.

instructions to Shtykov two days later reflecting his concern over the dangers involved in such action. He ordered the ambassador to “explain to Comrade Kim Il Sung that at this point the question he wants to discuss with me must be completely confidential. It should not be shared with anyone even in the North Korean leadership, as well as with the Chinese comrades. This is dictated by the preoccupation with keeping the topic unknown to the adversary.”¹⁹

On 30 March Kim Il Sung and Pak Hon-yong traveled to Moscow for discussions with Stalin, remaining there until 25 April. In the absence of any records of these meetings, until now we have only been able to speculate about what constituted the “changed international situation” that Stalin believed made it possible to undertake the invasion and about why he insisted that the Koreans must secure Mao Zedong’s approval before the operation could proceed. The new sources illuminate these two important questions, in a report prepared by the Central Committee’s International Department summarizing the conversations Stalin had with Kim Il Sung and Pak Hon-yong during their April meetings. This summary deserves to be quoted in full:

Comrade Stalin confirmed to Kim Il Sung that the international environment has sufficiently changed to permit a more active stance on the unification of Korea.

Internationally, the Chinese Communist Party’s victory over the Guomindang has improved the environment for actions in Korea. China is no longer busy with internal fighting and can devote its attention and energy to the assistance of Korea. If necessary, China has at its disposal troops which can be utilized in Korea without any harm to the other needs of China. The Chinese victory is also important psychologically. It has proved the strength of Asian revolutionaries, and shown the weakness of Asian reactionaries and their mentors in the West, in America. Americans left China and did not dare to challenge the new Chinese authorities militarily.

Now that China has signed a treaty of alliance with the USSR, Americans will be even more hesitant to challenge the Communists in Asia. According to information coming from the United States, it is really so. The prevailing mood is not to interfere. Such a mood is reinforced by the fact that the USSR now has the atomic bomb and that our positions are solidified in Pyongyang.

However, we have to weigh once again all the ‘pros’ and ‘cons’ of the liberation. First of all, will Americans interfere or not? Second, the liberation can be started only if the Chinese leadership endorses it.

¹⁹ Telegram from Stalin to Shtykov. 2 February 1950, APRF. Cited in Bajanov and Bajanova, p. 37.

Kim Il Sung expressed his opinion that Americans won't interfere. Now that they know that the USSR and China are behind Korea and are able to help it, Americans will not risk a big war. As for Comrade Mao Zedong, he always supported our desire to liberate the whole country. Comrade Mao Zedong said on a number of occasions that after the Chinese revolution is completed, China will help us, if necessary, it will provide troops. However, we want to rely on our own forces to unify Korea. We believe that we can do it.

Comrade Stalin emphasized that a thorough preparation for war was a must. First of all, armed forces have to be elevated to an upper level of preparedness. You have to form elite attack divisions as well as create additional units. Divisions have to have more weapons, more mechanized means of movement and combat. Your request in this respect will be fully satisfied.

Then a detailed plan of the offensive must be drawn. Basically it has to have three stages. 1. Troops are concentrated in the designated areas, close to the 38th parallel. 2. The highest bodies of power in North Korea make fresh proposals for peaceful unification. These will certainly be rejected by the other side. Then, after they are rejected, a counterattack must take place. I agree with your idea to engage the adversary in the Ongjin peninsula as it will help to disguise who initiated the combat activities. After you attack and the South counterattacks it would give you a chance to enlarge the front. The war should be quick and speedy. Southerners and Americans should not have time to come to their senses. They won't have time to put up a strong resistance and to mobilize international support.

Comrade Stalin added that Koreans should not count on direct Soviet participation in the war because the USSR had serious challenges elsewhere to cope with, especially in the West. He again urged Kim Il Sung to consult with Mao Zedong and mentioned that the Chinese leader had a good understanding of Oriental matters. Stalin repeated that the USSR was not ready to get involved in Korean affairs directly, especially if Americans did venture to send troops to Korea.

Kim Il Sung gave a more detailed analysis of why Americans would not interfere. The attack will be swift and the war will be won in three days; the guerilla movement in the South has grown stronger and a major uprising can be expected. Americans won't have time to prepare and by the time they come to their senses, all the Korean people will be enthusiastically supporting the new government.

Pak Hon-yong elaborated on the thesis of a strong guerilla movement in South Korea. He predicted that 200,000 party members will participate as leaders of the mass uprising.

It was agreed that the North Korean army would be fully mobilized by the summer of 1950 and by that time the Korean General Staff, with

the assistance of Soviet advisers, will draw the concrete plan for the offensive.²⁰

Nowhere has Stalin's reasoning about the war been expressed more clearly. The key factor continued to be whether the attack would prompt the United States to intervene and thus possibly drag the USSR into direct conflict with its far more powerful adversary. That the Americans had not used force to prevent a communist victory in China suggested to Stalin that they would not intervene to forestall a similar outcome in Korea, as did Soviet acquisition of nuclear weapons. Most important, however, was the "information coming from the United States" indicating that "the prevailing mood is not to interfere." While we cannot be certain what information Stalin was referring to, the reference appears to have been to the strategic policy for the Far East adopted in late December 1949, titled NSC-48, which drew the US defense perimeter to the west of Japan and the Philippines, excluding the Asian mainland. The timing of the adoption of this new policy suggests that knowledge of NSC-48, which Stalin was in a position to obtain through his British spy in Washington, Donald McLean, convinced the Soviet leader that it was now possible to support a North Korean attack on South Korea. In mid-December he had refused Mao Zedong's request to conclude a treaty with the PRC to replace the 1945 treaty with Nationalist China, on the grounds that doing so would be a violation of the Yalta agreement and would therefore give the Americans a pretext for attempting to alter other aspects of that favorable treaty. On 6 January 1950, however, Stalin sent word to Mao that he was now ready to conclude a new treaty.²¹ He also instructed the Japanese communist party to move to a forward strategy, and recognized Ho Chi Minh's government in Vietnam. The decision on Korea was thus part of a new forward policy for East Asia as a whole, designed to fill the vacuum left by the American retreat from the mainland.

Despite the new American strategic policy, Stalin nonetheless remained worried that military action on the Korean peninsula might prompt the US to intervene. He

²⁰ Report on Kim Il Sung's visit to the USSR, March 30-April 25, 1950. Prepared by the International Department of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolshevik), APRF. Cited in Bajanov and Bajanova, pp. 40-42.

therefore made it clear to Kim Il Sung that the Soviet Union would under no circumstances send its troops to his assistance. If he needed reinforcements, he would have to rely on China to supply them. It was therefore only logical that he insist that Kim Il Sung travel to Beijing to secure Chinese approval before the campaign could begin.

The new sources indicate that Mao Zedong agreed to provide such assistance, despite some concerns about possible Japanese or American intervention. According to the report by Soviet ambassador to Beijing N.V. Roshchin, who was briefed by both the Chinese and the Koreans after Kim's discussions with Mao on 15 May, the Chinese leader approved the three-stage plan outlined by Stalin and recommended that the Koreans follow the strategy that had proved successful for the PLA. Mao argued that the KPA "must act swiftly, go around big cities not wasting time on their takeover, concentrating their efforts on destroying the armed forces of the adversary."

The Chinese leader nonetheless expressed his concern that Japanese troops might intervene in the conflict. Kim replied that this was "not very probable" but speculated that "the Americans might decide to send to Korea 20,000-30,000 Japanese soldiers." He added, however, befitting a proud veteran of the anti-Japanese guerilla struggle, that this prospect "could hardly change the situation in a serious way, because Koreans would be fighting in such a case even tougher."²² Mao then warned his eager Korean ally that the presence of Japanese troops might prolong the war, and that it was, in any case, "not so much the Japanese, as the Americans themselves who could interfere in the war[sic]."²³ Kim deflected this implied criticism by repeating Stalin's judgment that the Americans do not show any inclination to engage themselves militarily in the Far East. They left China without fighting; the same approach can be expected in Korea.²⁴

In the more encouraging version of the conversation that the Koreans recounted to Roshchin, "Mao Zedong said that the Japanese can hardly interfere in the war now. And if Americans take part in the combat activities, then China will help North Korea with its

²¹ For records of Stalin's conversations with Mao Zedong about a new treaty, see "Stalin's Conversations with Chinese Leaders," *CWIHP Bulletin*, Issues 6-7 (Winter 1995/1996), pp. 4-27.

²² Telegram from Roshchin to Stalin, 15 May 1950, APRF. Cited in Bajanov and Bajanova, pp. 51-52.

²³ Telegram from Roshchin to Stalin, 16 May 1950, APRF. Cited in Bajanov and Bajanova, p. 52.

²⁴ Telegram from Roshchin to Stalin, 2 May 1950, APRF. Cited in Bajanov and Bajanova, p. 52. Bajanov notes that Zhou Enlai repeated a similar version of the discussion on American participation in the war in Korea during a meeting with the Soviet ambassador on 2 July 1950.

troops. According to Mao Zedong, it is not convenient for the Soviet Union to participate in combat activities because it is tied by the agreement with America on the demarcation line along the 38th parallel. China is not tied by similar obligations and therefore can easily extend assistance to the North.”²⁵

Regardless of which account of these conversations is closest to the truth, it is important to keep in mind that Mao Zedong had little room to voice objections to the *fait accompli* presented by the Koreans. Having just concluded an alliance with the Soviet Union that was essential for the PRC’s economic development and national security, Mao was not in a position to refuse to grant the assistance that Stalin counted on him to provide. As if to underscore the role he expected the Chinese to play in Korea, Stalin cabled Mao after he received Roshchin’s reports that he approved of the proposed Treaty of Friendship, Alliance and Mutual Assistance to be concluded between China and North Korea. “...As soon as the big cause of the liberation and unification of Korea has been completed, the treaty should be signed. It will solidify the successes of the Korean comrades and prevent foreign interference in Korean affairs.”²⁶

Meanwhile, throughout the spring of 1950, signs multiplied indicating increasing American commitment to South Korea and to resisting communist expansion worldwide—NSC-68, a \$100 million economic and military aid package for South Korea approved by Congress in March, and visits by high-ranking American officials to Seoul.²⁷ Nonetheless, despite Stalin’s continued nervousness about the risks involved, preparations for the campaign against South Korea proceeded rapidly after Kim and Pak’s return from Beijing. On 29 May, Shtykov reported to Stalin:

Kim Il Sung informed me on the status of preparations for the offensive. At the present time most of the armaments and equipment, about which an agreement had been reached during the April negotiations in Moscow, have already arrived in the DPRK. Kim Il Sung inspected the newly formed divisions and came to the conclusion that they would be ready for fighting by the end of June.

In compliance with the order of Kim Il Sung, the Chief of the General Staff of the KPA has prepared the overall program for the

²⁵ Telegram from Roshchin to Stalin, 16 May 1950, APRF. Cited in Bajanov, pp. 52-53.

²⁶ Telegram from Stalin to Roshchin, with message for Mao Zedong, 16 May 1950, APRF. Cited in Bajanov and Bajanova, p. 53.

²⁷ See Bruce Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War, Volume II*, pp. 466-478.

offensive, which he has reported to Kim Il Sung together with General Vasiliev. The Korean leader has approved the document.

Organizational questions of the armed forces are to be completed by June 1. The DPRK army will be totally prepared to conduct combat activities in June.

Kim Il Sung noted that he was prepared to start the advance at the end of June. To postpone it further would be inadvisable because, first of all, data on the military preparations of the KPA may leak to the South, and secondly, because the rains will start in July. Kim plans to begin the movement of troops to the areas of their concentration on 8-10 June.²⁸

Soviet Generals Vasiliev and Postnikov, in Pyongyang to oversee the operation, preferred a starting date in early July, “because only by that time would the armed forces be fully equipped and prepared from the cadre’s point of view.” They agreed, however, that weather considerations made an earlier date correct.²⁹

The movement of KPA troops to their positions 10-15 kilometers from the 38th parallel began on June 12. Shtykov reported to Stalin the following day that “a special meeting was held for commanders of divisions, chiefs of staff and chiefs of artillery of the divisions and of the first echelon. At this meeting specific and concrete assignments were given to each formation. Special stress was put on keeping total secrecy of the preliminary arrangements. The adversary’s intelligence must not learn anything through ground operations or from the air.”³⁰

The operational plan for the offensive was ready by 15 June. As Shtykov reported to Stalin the next day, the advance would start in the early morning of 25 June.

At the first stage, formations and units of the KPA will begin action on the Ongjin peninsula like a local operation and then deliver the main strike along the western coast of Korea to the South. At the second stage, Seoul must be taken and the Han River put under control. At the same time, on the eastern front, North Korean troops will liberate the cities of Chunchon and Kangnung. As a result, the main forces of the South Korean army have to be encircled around Seoul and eliminated. The third stage, the final one, will be devoted to the liberation of the rest of Korea by destroying the remaining enemy forces and seizing major population centers and ports.³¹

²⁸ Telegram from Shtykov to Stalin, 29 May 1950, APRF. Cited in Bajanov and Bajanova, p. 57.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ Telegram from Shtykov to Stalin, 13 June 1950, APRF. Cited in Bajanov and Bajanova, p. 58.

³¹ Telegram from Shtykov to Stalin, 16 June 1950, APRF. Cited in Bajanov and Bajanova, pp. 58-59.

As the invasion date drew near, Stalin continued to be concerned about the possibility of American intervention. Although he approved Shtykov's request on June 20 to allow the KPA to use Soviet ships—presumably from Vladivostok or Port Arthur—for amphibious landings, he refused to allow Soviet personnel on the ships “because it may give the adversary a pretext for interference by the USA.”³² At the same time, however, the Soviet leader made a decision that greatly increased the likelihood of such interference. On 21 June he received a report from Shtykov relaying Kim Il Sung's important message that the DPRK's radio broadcast interception and intelligence sources had reported that “the Southerners have learned the details of the forthcoming advance of the KPA. As a result, they are taking measures to strengthen the combat capacity of their troops. Defense lines are reinforced and additional units are concentrated in the Ongjin direction.” As a result of these developments, Kim urged that the original plan of the offensive be modified. “Instead of a local operation at Ongjin peninsula as a prelude to the general offensive, Kim Il Sung suggests an overall attack on 25 June along the whole front line.”³³

Stalin replied the same day that he agreed “with Kim Il Sung's idea for an immediate advance along the whole front line.”³⁴ While this decision may have been sensible from a strictly military point of view, it reflected a disastrous misapprehension of how a World War II-style invasion across the South Korean border would be perceived in the West. Since Stalin had shared with his Western counterparts the trauma of a sudden, massive German attack, his failure to foresee the forebodings such an attack in Korea would immediately evoke in the minds of many of the world's political leaders is all the more striking.

Containing the War, Avoiding Defeat

³² Telegram from Stalin to Shtykov, 21 June 1950, APRF. Cited in Bajanov and Bajanova, p. 60.

³³ Telegram from Shtykov to Stalin, 21 June 1950, APRF. Cited in Bajanov and Bajanova, pp. 59-60.

³⁴ Telegram from Stalin to Shtykov, 21 June 1950, APRF. Cited in Bajanov and Bajanova, p. 60

When the one eventuality Stalin had consistently sought to prevent did in fact occur—an American intervention—the Soviet leader became extremely nervous. Not only did he attempt to distance the Soviet Union from responsibility for the invasion, but he also discussed the event in his private communications with Shtykov as though he were minimally involved in the operation. On 1 July, the day after President Truman announced that the US would send its armed forces to Korea, he anxiously wrote to his ambassador:

1. You do not report anything about what kind of plans the Korean command has. Does it intend to push on? Or has it decided to stop the advance[?] In our opinion the attack absolutely must continue and the sooner South Korea is liberated the less chance there is for intervention.
2. Communicate also how the Korean leaders regard the attacks on North Korean territory by American planes. Are they not frightened or do they continue to hold firm [?].
4. [sic] We have decided to fulfill fully by July 10 the Koreans' requests for delivery of ammunition and other military equipment. Report about this to KIM IL SUNG.³⁵

After a few days, as the US continued to refrain from directly attributing responsibility for the invasion to the Soviet Union, and thus from using the attack as a *casus belli*, Stalin regained his composure. He began energetically to manage the Soviet supply and support effort.³⁶ He also became bolder in his management of the diplomacy of the war, informing Mao and Zhou that he considered the British suggestion that the KPA withdraw to the 38th parallel “impertinent and unacceptable.” Revealing a willingness to continue the war in its present, low-risk form, and to use it to further the political aims of the three communist allies, Stalin informed the Chinese of his intention to reply that “the Korean question has become too complicated after the armed foreign intervention and that such a complex question can be resolved only by the Security

³⁵ Telegram from Fyn-Si [Stalin] to Shtykov, 1 July 1950, APRF, Fond 45, Opis 1, Delo 34, List 104. Also found in AVPRF, Fond 059a, Opis 5a, Delo 3, Papka 11, List 107. Published in *CWIHP Bulletin*, Issue 5-6 (Winter 1995/96), p. 43.

³⁶ See telegram from Fyn-Si [Stalin] to Shtykov, 6 July 1950, APRF, Fond 45, Opis 1, Delo 346, List 140. Published in *CWIHP Bulletin* Issue 5-6 (Winter 1995/96), p. 43.

Council with the participation of the USSR and China and with the summoning of representatives of Korea in order to hear their opinion.”³⁷

In late August, with American forces unable to break out of the Pusan perimeter, Stalin informed the North Korean leader that the Central Committee “salutes Comrade Kim Il Sung and his friends for the great liberation struggle of the Korean people, which comrade Kim Il Sung is conducting with brilliant success. The CC VKP (b) has no doubt that in the nearest future the interventionists will be driven out of Korea with ignominy.” Stalin also reassured Kim that he “should not be embarrassed” by setbacks in the war against the interventionists.

In such a war continuous successes do not occur. The Russians also did not have continuous successes during the Civil War, and even less so during the war with Germany. The greatest success of the Korean people is that Korea has now become the most popular country in the world and has turned into the banner for the movement in Asia for liberation from the imperialist yoke. The armies of all enslaved peoples will now learn from the Korean People’s Army the art of bringing decisive blows to the Americans and any other imperialists. Moreover, Comrade Kim Il Sung should not forget that Korea is not alone now, that it has allies who are helping it and will continue to help it. The situation of Russians during the Anglo-Franco-American intervention in 1919 was several times worse than the situation of Korean comrades today.³⁸

Whatever feelings of euphoria Stalin may have enjoyed at this moment, however, did not lead him to alter the formula he had established in April for the Korean operation; the Soviet Union would provide weapons, supplies and advisers but North Korea would have to rely on China if it needed outside forces. In October, when the KPA faced total defeat following the UN amphibious landing at Inchon, Stalin turned to China to send its promised troops, continuing to rule out a direct Soviet intervention. Still calculating that a Chinese intervention would not embroil him in a major war with the United States, he urged Mao to send immediately at least 5-6 divisions, disguised as “Volunteers,” to the 38th parallel. He seems to have been surprised and irritated when Mao demurred, dismissing Beijing’s invocation of the specter of World War III as a mere pretext for

³⁷ Telegram from Filippov [Stalin] to Zhou Enlai or Mao Zedong (via Roshchin), 13 July 1950, APRF, Fond 45, Opis 1, Delo 331, List 85. Published in *CWIHP Bulletin*, Issue 5-6 (Winter 1995/96), p. 44.

³⁸ Telegram from Fyn-Si [Stalin] to Kim Il Sung (via Shtykov), 28 August 1950, APRF, Fond 45, Opis 1, Delo 347, Listy 5-6, 10-11. Published in *CWIHP Bulletin*, Issue 5-6 (Winter 1995/96), p. 45.

inaction.³⁹ He reminded Mao that “leading Chinese comrades” had repeatedly expressed their readiness to move several armies to Korea’s support if the adversary crossed the 38th parallel. He also noted pointedly that he had understood such readiness to be due to China’s interest in preventing the peninsula from being transformed into a springboard for future aggression against China by the United States or Japan.⁴⁰

In his reply to Mao’s refusal to send troops to Korea, Stalin enumerated four reasons why China should intervene. First, the American response to the war had thus far shown that the US was “not ready at present for a big war.” Second, Japan was not capable of assisting the US since its “militaristic potential has not yet been restored.” Third, since China had the USSR standing behind it as an ally, the US would be forced to agree to peace terms favorable to North Korea that will “not give the enemies a possibility to transform Korea into their springboard.” Fourth, for the same reason, the US would have to abandon Taiwan, reject the idea of concluding a separate peace treaty “with the Japanese reactionaries,” and give up its plans to revitalize Japanese imperialism and convert the country into their springboard in the Far East. Stalin warned that, “without serious struggle and an imposing display of force” China would not be able to extract these concessions, and would not even be able to get back Taiwan.

The Soviet leader nonetheless conceded that the United States might still be drawn into a big war for the sake of prestige. China could thus be dragged in too, and with it the Soviet Union, “which is bound with China by the Mutual Assistance Pact. Should we fear this?” Stalin asked rhetorically.

In my opinion, we should not, because together we will be stronger than the USA and England, while the other European capitalist states (with the exception of Germany, which is unable to provide any assistance to the United States now) do not present serious military forces. If a war is inevitable, then let it be waged now, and not in a few years when Japanese militarism will be restored as an ally of the USA and when the USA and

³⁹ Mao responded to Stalin’s suggestion for a Chinese intervention by arguing that an intervention would most likely “provoke an open conflict between the USA and China, as a consequence of which the Soviet Union can also be dragged into war, and the question would thus become extremely large.” Telegram from Roshchin in Beijing to Filippov [Stalin], 3 October 1950, APRF, Fond 45, Opis 1, Delo 334, Listy 105-106. Published in *CWIHP Bulletin*, Issue 5-6 (Winter 1995/96), pp. 115-116.

⁴⁰ Letter from Fyn-Si [Stalin] to Kim Il Sung (via Shtykov), 8 [7] October 1950, citing the text of his reply to Mao Zedong. APRF, Fond 45, Opis 1, Delo 347, Listy 65-67. Published in *CWIHP Bulletin* 5-6 (Winter 1995/96), pp. 116-117.

Japan will have a ready-made bridgehead on the continent in the form of the entire Korea run by Syngman Rhee.⁴¹

This often-quoted passage can easily be misunderstood if taken out of context. Stalin's subsequent actions show that he had not abandoned the caution that had previously marked his strategy regarding the possibility of a major war. Indeed, when the Chinese leadership initially refused to be moved by his brave words, informing him that they would not send the troops he wanted, he was ready to give up, ordering the North Korean army to evacuate the country. On 13 October Stalin notified Kim Il Sung that "continuation of the resistance is hopeless. Chinese comrades refuse to get involved militarily. Under these circumstances you must prepare for total evacuation to China and/or the USSR. It is of the utmost importance to take all the troops and military equipment. Draw a detailed plan of activities in this connection and follow it meticulously. The potential for further struggle against the adversary must be preserved."⁴²

Moreover, when on the following day the Chinese decided to send their troops after all, prompting Stalin to revoke his evacuation order, he placed sharp limitations on Soviet military assistance to China in order to minimize the risk of provoking a direct conflict with the United States. He sent to China only four skeleton divisions of fighter planes and two of ground attack aircraft,⁴³ along with 16 training aircraft, 10 tank regiments, supply and service units, and ammunition. Soviet airplanes and tanks were to be used, moreover, only to train Chinese troops; Stalin categorically forbade their use at the front. The Soviet personnel who operated these crafts were to remain in China for the shortest time possible, returning to the USSR as soon as the training course was completed. While in China, Soviet military personnel were ordered to wear Chinese

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² Telegram from Stalin to Kim Il Sung, 13 October 1950, APRF. Cited in Bajanov and Bajanova, pp. 80-81. The next day, Shtykov reported to Stalin that Kim Il Sung responded to the message by saying that "it was hard for them, but since there is such advice they will fulfill it." Kim also asked for help from Soviet advisers in developing the plan Stalin mandated. See Telegram from Shtykov to Fyn Si [Stalin], 14 October 1950, APRF, Fond 45, Opis 1, Delo 335, List 3. Published in *CWIHP Bulletin*, Issue 5-6 (Winter 1995/96), p. 118.

⁴³ I am grateful to Mark O'Neill for pointing out that the divisions sent to China consisted of two 30-plane regiments rather than the normal Soviet division composition of three or four 45-plane regiments.

uniforms and Soviet airplanes and tanks were to be similarly camouflaged.⁴⁴ By November 1 Stalin amended his orders to allow Soviet fighter planes to cover Chinese bases near the border and protect the bridges over the Yalu River, but he forbade them to pursue American planes over enemy-held territory for fear that a downed Soviet pilot could be taken prisoner and thus expose the Soviet presence in the war.

Conclusions

The picture we are now able to draw of Stalin's management of the first months of the Korean War provides a more nuanced view of the dictator's cautious opportunism. At no point in his deliberations over the situation in Korea was he willing to allow the conflict to draw him into a direct military confrontation with the United States. On the contrary, at every juncture he took steps to prevent such an escalation. His exhortations to Mao Zedong that they need not fear a war with the US should be seen as bravado designed to cajole his ally into an intervention Stalin believed would not risk global war.

Stalin's caution was accompanied, however, by an inability to understand the different assumptions and motivations of his enemy. Failing to grasp the relationship between Washington and Seoul, he exaggerated the threat of a US-sponsored invasion of North Korea. He also failed to foresee that a World War II-style invasion of South Korea would generate widespread fear that the Soviet Union was embarking on the same kind of piecemeal aggression that had led to the recent global cataclysm. This failure led to the very intervention Stalin was attempting to avoid, and greatly strengthened the ties between the United States and its allies that he hoped to weaken. Perhaps most importantly, Stalin's assessment of the danger that the United States might intervene in Korea, or that it might expand the war beyond the peninsula once it did intervene, reveal that he interpreted US restraint in China and Korea as a weakness to be exploited rather than as a reassurance that could profitably be reciprocated. Nothing, it seems, could reassure the pathologically suspicious dictator; he could only be deterred.

⁴⁴ Council of Ministers Resolution, October 1950, Central Archive of the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation, Fond 16, Opis 3139, Delo 16, Listy 162-165. The complete text is given in the

APPENDIX

Document 1

Ciphered Telegram

Strictly Secret

From Pyongyang

I report the results of the investigation I have organized of the information about the preparation for the withdrawal of American troops and the preparations of the South Korean army for an attack on North Korea, which were pointed out in your telegram. This information was received by the department of political security of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, which is occupied with intelligence gathering in the South. However, this information, which was received by Korean intelligence at the beginning of April was not reported either to the chief of counterintelligence, who is the deputy minister, or to the minister of internal affairs, and consequently was not sent to the Korean government.

The materials received were transferred by the chief of the department of political security to our military intelligence, through which, apparently, they were also received by you.

Since this information was not reported either to the minister of internal affairs or to Prime Minister Kim Il Sung, or to our adviser at the ministry of internal affairs, I was also not informed of it.

I consider such facts intolerable, I am taking measures toward their elimination and toward putting things in the necessary order.

According to the information of our agents and the broadcasts of Seoul Radio, at the present time American and South Korean authorities are conducting negotiations about the withdrawal of American troops from South Korea. The UN Commission is also participating in these talks, which is obvious from Rhee Syngman's statement of 16 April, which stated: "...Representatives of the government of the Korean Republic and the government of the USA are presently conducting negotiations about the withdrawal of American troops from Korea. The UN Commission on Korea has been informed of this. Consultation with it will be a big help in these negotiations."

According to the statement of American ambassador Muccio on 19 April, the negotiations “will be concluded in the course of several months.” The establishment of a precise time period for the withdrawal of American troops, according to Rhee Syngman’s statement of 19 April, “will depend on how much time is needed to prepare the army of the Korean Republic.”

The minister of national defense of the South Korean government stated to correspondents that the South “has a sufficient number of troops to maintain order in the country after the withdrawal of American troops and, moreover, if North Korea attacks the South, the Army of National Defense not only can withstand it, but can also inflict a perceptible blow.”

In connection with plans for a military intrusion into the North, South Korean authorities are increasing the size of the “Army of National Defense.” According to the reports of our agents, the South Korean Army has increased from 53,600 soldiers as of 1 January 1949, to 70,000 as of the end of the first quarter [of the year].

Special attention is paid to the technical, mechanical and special troops, which have grown by 2-4 times. Measures have been taken to purge the army of ‘unreliable’ soldiers and officers. Military units are being reinforced by reactionary-minded youths. Americans are transferring to the South Koreans a significant quantity of various types of weapons and ammunition. South Korean authorities are taking measures to receive weapons on a much larger scale. This is the main purpose of Cho Byung-ok’s mission in Washington.

South Korean authorities have concentrated a large number of troops in areas adjoining the 38th parallel.

According to the information received, the total number of troops in this area has reached 41,000 persons. The South Korean authorities are paying special attention to the Pyongyang direction.

According to the report of the commander of a South Korean battalion, who is connected to the North’s intelligence service, the number of troops in the Pyongyang direction will be increased to 30,000. The plans for the operation against the North have been worked out and in the first brigade they have already been passed to the battalion commanders. The actions are supposedly planned for the month of June. In connection

with these plans the South Korean authorities are taking decisive measures to suppress uprisings in the South and to defeat completely the democratic movement.

Agents of the South have set up terrorist and subversive groups in every province in the North, which are ordered to recruit new members, conduct espionage, and draft plans for uprisings. In case military operations begin, they must carry out diversion, terror and organize an uprising. These groups receive grenades and guns from the South, and, as arrested persons confess, in May they will receive additional weapons. Such groups have been uncovered in Pyongyang (2), Haeju (1), and Sinuiju (1).

I had meetings with Kim Il Sung and Pak Hon Yong regarding all these questions and agreed on carrying out the necessary preliminary measures.

Measures have been taken to raise vigilance and strengthen the army and police of North Korea.

2/V-49 SHTYKOV

[Archive of the President of the Russian Federation, List III, pages 41-44.]

Document 2

COUNCIL OF MINISTERS USSR

RESOLUTION NO. ____

From __ October 1950 Moscow, Kremlin.

The Question of the War Ministry USSR.

The Council of Ministers of the USSR RESOLVES:

1. To obligate the War Ministry of the USSR (Com. Vasilevsky) to send to the territory of the Chinese People's Republic:
 - a) four fighter air divisions with supply and service units; in each air division to have 30 MIG-9 aircraft for each of the two fighter regiments, with a total of 62 combat aircraft in the division. In forming the indicated divisions to appeal to the 328th fighter air division of the Moscow region PVO [*Protivovozhdushnaya Oborona, Anti-Aircraft Defense*] and 144th fighter air division of the Minsk region PVO;

- b) 16 Yak-17-UTI [*uchebno-trenirovochny istrebitel, training planes*] aircraft, two planes to a regiment;
- c) one Shturmovik [ground attack] air division with supply and service units composed of two Shturmovik air regiments with 30 IL-10 aircraft in each, with a total of 62 combat aircraft in the division;
- d) one Shturmovik air regiment composed of 30 IL-10 aircraft served by an air-technical battalion.

In forming the Shturmovik air division and the Shturmovik air regiment to appeal to the 186th Shturmovik air division of the 45th Air Army of the Trans-Baikal Military District;

- e) 10 combat sets of ammunition, 10 of fuel and a corresponding number of oil for all the aircraft being sent;
- f) ten separate tank regiments with 30 T-34 tanks with 85 mm guns, 6 IS-2 tanks, and 4 ISU-122 self-propelled guns in each regiment. To have a total in the ten separate tank regiments of 300 T-34 tanks, 60 IS-2 tanks and 40 ISU-122 self-propelled guns.

To carry out the formation of the indicated ten separate tank regiments on the basis of the 5th tank division, 11th tank division and 14th mechanized division of the 6th mechanized army of the Trans-Baikal Military District;

- g) five combat sets of ammunition and five of fuel for all the tanks and vehicles sent.

2. To complete the concentration on the territory of China of the fighter air divisions by 15 December of this year, the Shturmovik air division, Shturmovik air regiment and tank regiments by 20 November of this year.
3. The task of our aviation, that which is being sent and that which is already located on the territory of China, is re-training Chinese pilots and providing cover for the largest cities of China, according to an agreement with the Chinese military command confirmed by the War Ministry of the USSR.

The use of our aviation at the front [and for covering troops and objects close to the Chinese-Korean border—this phrase marked through with a line] is categorically forbidden.

The task of our tank regiments is the training of Chinese tankists.

The use of tanks with Soviet markings at the front is categorically forbidden.

4. After the conclusion of the retraining, to transfer all materiel of the combat aviation, tanks, weapons and military technology of the four fighter air divisions, the Shturmovik air division, the Shturmovik air regiment, the tank regiments and supply and service units to the government of the Chinese People's Republic and to return the personnel of these units to the Soviet Union.
5. To obligate the War Ministry (Com. Vasilevsky), to transform by 10 November our 151st fighter air division which is located on the territory of China into two fighter air divisions of MIG-15 aircraft with supply and service units. To have in each new air division 30 MIG-15 aircraft in every two fighter air regiments, with a total of 62 combat aircraft in the division.

While forming the divisions, to continue the retraining of Chinese pilots, in accordance with the orders given earlier, and to take all measures so that one of the divisions can be quickly fitted out with Chinese pilot and technical personnel.

6. To authorize the War Ministry USSR, for the purpose of supplying the preparation of Chinese pilots and tankists, to send with the troops secret training allowances, following the Resolution of the Council of Ministers of the Union SSR of 22.3.50 No. 1146-420ss.
7. To authorize the War Ministry of the USSR to send the personnel of units going to China in Soviet military uniforms, but upon arrival in China to change into Chinese military uniforms.

To remove Soviet identification markings on airplanes and tanks before sending them and to put Chinese markings on them upon their arrival in China.

8. To commission the War Ministry of the USSR through General of the Army ZAKHAROV to resolve with the Government of the Chinese People's Republic all questions connected with the use of our air units for covering the largest cities of China and with the retraining of Chinese pilots and tankists, and also with the

- deployment and provisioning of the personnel of units on the territory of the Chinese People's Republic.
9. To disseminate in full to all personnel sent to China, Resolutions of the Council of Ministers USSR of 9 August 1949 No. 3424-1425 and of 3 October 1949 No. 4200-1743.
 10. To obligate the Ministry of Foreign Trade USSR (Com. Menshikov) to make, with the Government of the Chinese People's Republic, a corresponding calculation of expenses connected with the implementation of measures in accordance with the present Resolution.

CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS UNION SSR

I. STALIN

ADMINISTRATIVE MANAGER OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS UNION
SSR

M. POMAZNEV

[Central Archive of the Ministry of Defense, RF-A, Fond 16, Opis 3139, Delo 16, Listy 162-165. Translated by the author with assistance on military terminology from Mark O'Neill.]

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Kathryn Weathersby is a Senior Research scholar with the Cold War International History Project and coordinator of the Project's "Korea Initiative."