THE MILITARY LENS:
Doctrinal Differences, Misperception, and Deterrence Failure in Sino-American Relations

by

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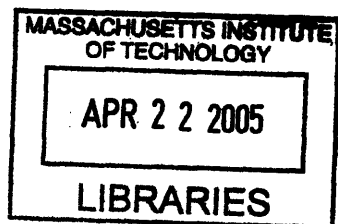<div align="right">Department of Political Science
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Abstract

Nations, because of their different strategic situations, histories, and military cultures can have dramatically different beliefs about the nature of effective military doctrine, strategy, and capabilities. This dissertation argues that when such doctrines—or "theories of victory"—differ across states, misperceptions and false optimism are likely to occur. In turn, these can impede international diplomacy and statecraft by making communication and common assessments of the balance of power more difficult. When states are engaged in strategic coercion—either deterrence or compellence—these problems can lead to escalation and war. To develop this unique explanation for the pernicious problem of false optimism, this dissertation draws on scholarship on the sources of doctrine, strategic culture, misperception, strategic coercion, and deterrence theory. It assesses the argument through case studies of attempts at strategic coercion in early Cold War Sino-American conflicts in Korea and the Taiwan Strait. The dissertation also tests the proposed theory against the conventional approach of deterrence theory that focuses on the "objective" quality of the signaling. The cases rely on process tracing using both primary and secondary sources from each side, and they support the dissertation's proposed theory in broad terms as well as in their details. The two attempts of deterrence surrounding the Korean War failed. There, the signaling between the two great powers depended heavily on each side's own doctrinal theory of victory. These different doctrinal lenses further impeded the conduct of diplomacy between the two by blurring the interpretation of those signals as well as the overall assessment of the balance of power. In the third case (deterring conflict in the Taiwan Strait), the two sides had much more similar theories of victory, and misperception and conflict were avoided. By providing a unique analytic perspective on military capability, this dissertation suggests policymakers need to carefully consider the perceptual framework regarding military doctrine of those they are trying to influence.

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A Note on Romanization

Following its common usage in the People's Republic of China, and increasingly internationally, the *pinyin* system of Romanization is used in referring to Chinese names, places, and other words. A very few phrases that are commonly transcribed in other Romanization systems are left in the more familiar format: thus, Chiang Kai-shek is not changed to pinyin (Jiang Jieshi), nor is the Kuomintang changed (to Guomindang). However, another large category of exceptions comes from quoted material and bibliographic references. For these cases, this dissertation makes use of the Romanization style chosen by the book or article in question. A few of the most common occurrences of names are listed here to reduce any confusion.

Mao Zedong = Mao Tse-tung

Zhou Enlai = Chou En-Lai

Lin Biao = Lin Piao

Nie Rongzhen = Nieh Jung-chen

Peng Dehuai = P'eng Te-huai

Ye Jianying = Yeh Chien-ying

Abbreviations

AMS: PLA's Academy of Military Science
CAS: close air support
CCF: Chinese Communist Forces
CCP: Chinese Communist Party
CIA: Central Intelligence Agency
CMC: Central Military Commission
CPV: Chinese People's Volunteers
CPVF: Chinese People's Volunteer Forces
DIA: Defense Intelligence Agency
DoD: Department of Defense
DV: dependent variable
FEAF: Far East Air Force (of the U.S.)
FEC: Far East Command (based in Tokyo)
FRUS: Foreign Relations of the United States
GMD: Guomindang (alternate Romanization for KMT)
IV: independent variable
JCS: Joint Chiefs of Staff
KMT: Kuomintang
NBDA or NEBDA: Northeast Border Defense Army
NIE: National Intelligence Estimate
NKPA: North Korean People's Army
NSC: National Security Council
PLA: People's Liberation Army
PLAAF: People's Liberation Army Air Force
PLAN: People's Liberation Army Navy
PW or POW: prisoner of war
RCT: regimental combat team
SITREP: situation report
TOE: table of organization and equipment
UNC: United Nations Command
USAF: United States Air Force
USN: United States Navy

Chapter 1. INTRODUCTION

As to war and the resources of either party, a detailed comparison will not show you the inferiority of Athens ... For our naval skill is of more use to us for service on land, than their military skill for service at sea. Familiarity with the sea they will not find an easy acquisition. If you who have been practicing at it ever since the Persian invasion have not yet brought it to perfection, is there any chance of anything considerable being effected by an agricultural, unseafaring population, who will besides be prevented from practicing by the constant presence of strong squadrons of observation from Athens?

—Pericles, exhorting his fellow Athenians to war

After the second invasion of the Peloponnesians a change came over the spirit of the Athenians. Their land had now been twice laid waste; and war and pestilence at once pressed heavy on them. They began to find fault with Pericles, as the author of the war and the cause of all their misfortunes, and became eager to come to terms with Sparta...

—Thucydides, describing the Athenians' mood two years later[1]

This dissertation explains an understudied source of misperception and false optimism in international relations. Nations have different doctrines and hold different beliefs about the nature of effective military doctrines, strategies, and capabilities. That is, they have different beliefs about how to win wars, different "theories of victory." This dissertation suggests that when these differences are large, diplomacy and signaling will be more difficult and this will lead to coercive failure and escalation or conflict. In addition to documenting this causal chain, this dissertation explains how to avoid it by

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1   Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War. The Landmark Thucydides: A Comprehensive Guide to the Peloponnesian War*, ed. Robert B. Strassler, trans. Richard Crawley (New York: Free Press, 1996), 81-2 and 123.

tailoring signals to the perceptual framework of one's adversary with regard to military

doctrine and effectiveness, to their theory of victory.

At its core, the logic of the argument is based on the difficulty of accurately

measuring power. Assessing an adversary's relative power is a critical task for nations.

At a broad level, it helps to determine the level of threat faced by one's nation, and thus

the costs and benefits of various courses of action in the foreign sphere. Understand the

cost-benefit calculations an adversary is making is also important since such calculations

play a role is shaping the adversary's behavior. Additionally, in specific crises,

understanding an adversary's intent requires interpretation of his signals. Since these

signals often rely on threats to use force, the actual deployment of military assets, or the

limited use of force, understanding these signals also requires understanding the degree

of power that they represent from the adversary's perspective. When

miscommunication occurs, attempts at strategic coercion—be they compellent and

deterrent in nature—are more likely to fail. In all these ways, then, *different theories of*

victory serve as lenses impeding the conduct of diplomacy between potential adversaries,

shaping the signaling and blurring the interpretation of those signals as well as the overall

assessment of the balance of power. Alternatively, to use a different analogy, doctrines

and theories of victory provide the language of diplomacy in cases of strategic coercion.

When the two sides speak different languages, *important signals are likely to get lost in*

translation.

This chapter outlines several aspects of this argument, laying the groundwork for

the rest of the dissertation. It begins with a discussion of the topic at a broad level,

highlighting the questions and puzzles that this dissertation addresses and the answers it

proposes. Then it outlines the remainder of the dissertation, summarizing the theory and the evidence that supports it. Finally, this chapter concludes with a brief discussion of some of the literature that this dissertation builds on and expands from: deterrence and compellence, credibility, the measurement of power, strategic culture, and the dangers of false optimism.

Question and Topic

Is war rational? If states want to minimize costs while maximizing benefits, why would they ever resort to war? Why would adversaries be unable to strike an agreement in accordance with their relative power and avoid costly military conflict? Perhaps war is best thought of as a bargaining failure; if so, how central is the role of information asymmetries in such bargaining failures? How important are misperception, miscalculation, and miscommunication in the outbreak of conflict? These questions lie at the center of important debates in political science.[2] Attempts at strategic coercion, responses to such attempts by others, decisions to cross the use of force threshold, to escalate in a limited conflict, these all depend on a state expecting some positive return from its action.[3] That assessment, in general, depends on some evaluation of the relevant military balance, perhaps conducted formally through a military net assessment

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2 For a good summary of the issues involved here, see the debate between Fearon and Kirshner. James D. Fearon, "Rationalist Explanations for War," *International Organization* 49, no. 3 (1995); Jonathan D. Kirshner, "Rationalist Explanations for War?," *Security Studies* 10, no. 1 (2000). See also Geoffrey Blainey, *The Causes of War*, 3rd ed. (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1988); Robert Powell, *In the Shadow of Power: States and Strategies in International Politics* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1999), see especially Chapter 3: "Bargaining in the Shadow of Power" and Chapter 4: "Bargaining in the Shadow of Shifting Power"; Kenneth A. Schultz, *Democracy and Coercive Diplomacy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

3 At least, positive relative to the expected alternate outcome.

or campaign analysis process or through methods that are more informal. However, as this dissertation will make clear, different actors will often analyze the same military situation differently. Further, the conduct of international diplomacy depends on the ability to send signals, and nations often use military force—explicitly or implicitly—to do this. However, again, evaluating an adversary's military signals can be more difficult in some cases than in others. Thus, this dissertation examines misperceptions and false optimism that stem from different theories of victory that can lead to coercive failure and costly uses of force.

Assessing an adversary's relative power is a critical task for nations for two main reasons. First, such assessments help to determine the level of threat facing a nation. Assessment of their adversaries' relative power also shapes nations' expectations about the outcomes of possible wars and, thus, the desirability, or lack thereof, of specific wars. Further, assessments of adversary's intent often include some assessment of their cost-benefit analysis about the future. Second, under the best of circumstances, communication between potential adversaries is difficult. When sending signals, nations need to understand how others measure power and send signals appropriate to their adversaries' perspectives. However, in circumstances where the two sides face off with different perceptions about the nature of military capability (a relatively common occurrence, as will be discussed), this can be very challenging. In international relations, this sort of miscommunication can lead to false optimism and, in turn, war.[4]

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4   On the importance of false optimism as a cause of war, see Blainey, *The Causes of War;* John G. Stoessinger, *Why Nations Go to War*, 8th ed. (New York: Wadsworth, 2001); Stephen Van Evera, *Causes of War: Power and the Roots of Conflict* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999). On the prevalence of misperception in international affairs, see Robert Jervis, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1976).

Thus, the central argument advanced in this dissertation is: when nations have different doctrines and hold different beliefs about the nature of effective military strategies and capabilities, diplomacy and signaling will be more difficult, potentially leading to escalation or conflict. There are two stages to this causal statement; each is expressed as a hypothesis in the following chapter. The first portion links the different beliefs to misperception; the second extends that to miscommunication and crisis outcomes (escalation or conflict). In the first part of this causal chain, this dissertation hypothesizes that different theories of victory should be likely to lead to an *underestimation* of one's adversary (rather than other misperceptions) due to organizational, perceptual, and cultural dynamics that lead to an exaggerated degree of confidence in the strategies and doctrines that one uses oneself. The second part of the causal chain explains how this sort of false optimism can lead to mistaken views about the overall balance of power and about the degree of intent and capability in an adversary's signals within a crisis.

Sino-American relations provide an excellent window into the phenomena of misperception, miscommunication, and false optimism caused by differences in theories of victory. Consider the period of the 1950s. Beijing ignored American threats, implicit or explicit, of nuclear attack and strategic air attacks. Mao's widely reported public views of nuclear weapons as "paper tigers" were mirrored by private comments of similar substance. Similarly, Chinese threats of intervention based on a strategy of "People's War" did not create any trepidation in Washington (at MacArthur's command in Tokyo the reaction was closer to derision). Both sides viewed the other's key military doctrine with disdain. Not only did this lead to difficulties in assessing the

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overall balance of power between the two, but it also made sending coercive signals between them very difficult. As two of the empirical chapters will show, this contributed to outbreak and escalation of the Korean War in significant ways. However, in another theater with a different strategic context—the Taiwan Strait—the nations' theories of victory were more similar. Consequently, in the third case examining deterrence in that strategic geography, there were no misperceptions nor miscommunications, and most importantly, no war.

In short, this dissertation argues that when nations hold different beliefs about the nature of effective military strategies and capabilities, diplomacy and signaling will be more difficult leading to escalation or conflict. The process of cajoling, convincing, or bribing an adversary to do one's bidding often requires sending nuanced signals regarding one's own intent and capabilities. When these signals are sent via threats to use, or the actual use of, military forces that the other side does not fully comprehend, diplomacy is impeded.

Organization of the Dissertation

This chapter has introduced the question posed and the answer proposed. It has pointed to the importance of identifying the sources of misperception that might lead to diplomatic failures in cases of strategic coercion. It has suggested different theories of victory as a possible cause. After summarizing the rest of the dissertation, this chapter will conclude by identifying a number of literatures relevant to these hypothesized answers.

The next chapter continues to develop this causal chain more rigorously. It begins by defining the universe of inquiry of the study (attempts at strategic coercion including both deterrence and compellence) and the concept used as the independent variable (theories of victory). It proceeds to ground that concept in its doctrinal and strategic context. Then, it makes use of the existing political science literatures in a number of areas to identify specific hypotheses that will flesh out the proposed causal chain based on two separate hypotheses. These hypotheses move from the sources of beliefs of theories of victory to those theories themselves, then to the difference in perceptions that they can cause, and finally to the negative international outcomes that can arise from those. These hypotheses draw on psychological and organizational dynamics that have been used before (in different ways) in the field of political science. Along the way, a number of brief examples are detailed. Chapter 2 also draws out specific empirical predictions that come from the theoretical hypotheses that can be used to evaluate them. Finally, the chapter explains the methodologies used in the dissertation (qualitative cases studies, process tracing, alternate theories, etc.) and explains the criteria used for case selection.

The rest of the dissertation focuses on three specific attempts at strategic coercion. The first two are failed attempts at deterrence that resulted in the American decision to cross the 38th parallel and the Chinese decision to support North Korea's invasion in the first place. The one successful attempt of strategic coercion by the Americans deterred China, and led it to postpone its invasion of Taiwan. Chapter 3 begins the discussion of this empirical material. Since Sino-American thinking about the two Korean War cases both depended on the same two theories of victory held by Washington and Beijing, these

are discussed in a single chapter. This chapter argues that the two sides' theories of victory were very different. At the time, American doctrine focused on using airpower and nuclear weapons to win general wars and considered mobile, integrated formations of armor, infantry, and artillery to be dominant on land. On the other hand, China expressed disdain toward atomic weapons and strategic bombing and relied instead on a "People's War" doctrine to defeat what it considered its main threat: invasion of China proper. Beijing emphasized infantry, quantity over quality, and guerrilla tactics. The two sides understood the language of military affairs quite differently, or, put another way, viewed the world through very different military lenses.

Chapter 4 makes use of this characterization of the independent variable and asks, "Did it have the hypothesized relationship with the dependent variable?" The case finds that it did. Specifically, when the United States crossed the 38th parallel, it did so after ignoring and explaining away a series of Chinese signals. Many of the signals that Beijing sent were clearly based on its own views regarding military effectiveness. The United States, with dramatically different views, did not view those signals as particularly threatening nor, therefore, credible. This case presents strong evidence that both the sending and interpretation of signals were impeded by the two sides' theories of victory. The Chinese threats to the United States simply got lost in translation and deterrence failed.

Chapter 5 looks at a different, earlier decision, with the positions of the two sides reversed. It asks, what role did the two sides' views on military affairs have on the statecraft leading up to China's decision to approve the North Korean invasion of the South in June of 1950? The chapter shows that American signals were heavily infused

with its own doctrine. While other factors were certainly important in explaining the outcome of this case, the limited data on the Chinese interpretation of the American signals does support the contention that Beijing underestimated American intent and capability in ways consistent with China's theory of victory. Particularly notable is China's surprise once the battle was joined when the PLA's substantial losses in battle forced a reappraisal of its strategy on its leaders. Beijing's theory of victory had led it to expect otherwise.

The final empirical chapter moves away from the Korean peninsula and the theories of victory discussed in the third chapter. Chapter 6 examines the U.S. deployment of the 7th Fleet to the Taiwan Strait in 1950 and the Chinese decision to postpone their planned invasion of the island indefinitely. Since the primarily military theater here is naval, with successful amphibious operations being the critical goal, it is important to understand how the two sides viewed warfare in this environment. This chapter argues that, in the wake of Chinese learning at the end of its civil war, the two sides had a broadly similar view of amphibious warfare. This shared understanding of military effectiveness meant that even though the signal that the United States sent in this case was militarily weak (very little of the 7th Fleet deployed in the short term), the Chinese understood American intent and capabilities quite clearly and adjusted their behavior accordingly.

Finally, the concluding chapter summarizes these results. The cases provide initial support for the hypotheses and suggest that additional work on them is merited. The chapter also suggests important ways that policymakers can use the insights from this dissertation to reduce the prospects for misperceptions across nations and better

advance national interests without recourse to avoidable war.   Finally, it discusses the

contributions that this dissertation makes to the field.

Situating the Project in the Existing Literature

This project fits within the existing literature in several ways.   First, it builds on

the existing understandings of when deterrence works and when it fail.   Second, its

independent variable is grounded in the concept of strategic culture.   Third, the key

causal mechanism that it relies on (in part) is an important, recognized danger in

international relations: false optimism.   Fourth, it has some (limited) implications for

spiral and security dilemma research.   In short, the dissertation integrates insights from

several literatures and speaks to a number of important debates in the field.   Each of

these areas is discussed in turn.

What We Know about Achieving Deterrence Success

Clearly, this proposed theory does not have a monopoly on possible explanations

for the failure of deterrence and compellence.[5]   Before moving on, these alternative (or,

perhaps, supplemental) explanations should also be discussed.

There is a large literature attempting to explain the success or failure of deterrence

policies.[6]   There are three key elements to the study and conduct of strategic coercion in

international relations: credibility, capability, and communication (often referred to as the

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5   The next chapter will discuss the term "strategic coercion," a blanket term that includes both of these
     and defines the universe of applicability of the proposed theory.   In general, see Lawrence Freedman,
     Strategic Coercion: Concepts and Cases (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998).

6   For good reviews, see Robert Jervis, "Deterrence Theory Revisited," *World Politics* 31, no. 2 (1979);
     Jack S. Levy, "Review Article: When Do Deterrent Threats Work?," *British Journal of Political
     Science* 18 (1989).

three Cs).[7]   Political science has long emphasized the importance of and difficulties in

assessing an adversary's credibility.[8]   Less studied but equally important for the conduct

of international diplomacy is assessing an adversary's capabilities.[9]   Least studied is the

way credibility and capability are communicated.   The work on each of these is

discussed in turn here.

Credibility and Intent

It is clear that motivations by both actors play a central role in the likelihood of

success in strategic coercion through their effects on credibility and willingness to fight.[10]

The perceived intent of both sides plays a role.   The credibility of the country making

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7   The term is often credited to Kissinger.   See Alastair Iain Johnston, "China's New 'Old Thinking':
     The Concept of Limited Deterrence," *International Security* 20, no. 3 (1995/96).

8   On the literatures on credibility and reputation, for some recent work, see Christopher Gelpi, *The
     Power of Legitimacy: Assessing the Role of Norms in Crisis Bargaining* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton
     University Press, 2003); Jonathan Mercer, *Reputation and International Politics* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell
     University Press, 1996); Daryl G. Press, *Calculating Credibility: How Leaders Assess Threats During
     Crises* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, forthcoming, 2005).   For the classics, see Thomas C.
     Schelling, *The Strategy of Conflict* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1960); Thomas C.
     Schelling, *Arms and Influence* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1966); Albert Wohlstetter,
     "The Delicate Balance of Terror," *Foreign Affairs* 37 (1959).   Between them is a substantial set of
     productive research.   For an excellent summary of that, see Levy, "When Do Deterrent Threats
     Work?."

9   For the best works on the topic, however, see John Prados, *The Soviet Estimate: U.S. Intelligence
     Analysis & Soviet Strategic Forces* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1986); William Curti
     Wohlforth, "The Perception of Power: Russia in the Pre-1914 Balance," *World Politics* 39, no. 3
     (1987); William Curti Wohlforth, *The Elusive Balance: Power and Perceptions During the Cold War*
     (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993).   Related also are the debates between Fearon and Kirshner:
     Fearon, "Rationalist Explanations for War."; Kirshner, "Rationalist Explanations for War?."   On the
     importance of measuring capability in general, see Blainey, *The Causes of War*, Chapter 3; Van Evera,
     Causes of War, Chapter 2.   For thorough, rigorous, and detailed attempts to assess power balances at
     a given time, see Joshua M. Epstein, *The Calculus of Conventional War: Dynamic Analysis without
     Lanchester Theory* (Washington, DC: Brookings, 1985); Joshua M. Epstein, "Dynamic Analysis and
     the Conventional Balance in Europe," *International Security* 12, no. 4 (1988); Barry R. Posen,
     "Measuring the European Conventional Balance: Coping with Complexity in Threat Assessment,"
     International Security 9, no. 3 (1984/85); Barry R. Posen, *Inadvertent Escalation: Conventional War
     and Nuclear Risks* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1991).

10   For the classic statement on this see, Schelling, *Arms and Influence*, Chapter 2: The Art of
     Commitment.   On the different between motivation and intent (or willingness to fight), see Charles L.
     Glaser, "Political Consequences of Military Strategy: Expanding and Refining the Spiral and
     Deterrence Models," *World Politics* 44 (1992).

the deterrent or compellent threat will be enhanced if it is believed to care a lot about the issue and if it is expected to follow through with its threat if the opponent does not comply.[11]   On the other side, highly motivated aggressors are harder to deter (or coerce) than are status quo powers.[12]

It is because of the importance of motivations that compellence is thought to be much harder than deterrence.[13]   In cases of compellence, one side is being asked to surrender something it already has.   Since people tend to care more about things they have than things they do not yet possess,[14] they are more likely to defend them forcefully.

Qualitative work also tends to emphasize the importance of credibility.   George and Smoke stress their finding that the challenger's perception of the credibility of the commitment is critical.[15]   George and Simons highlight eight key factors that lead to success of deterrent policies: clarity of objective, strong motivation, asymmetry of motivation, sense of urgency, strong leadership, domestic support, international support, fear of unacceptable escalation, and clarity of terms.[16]   Many of these are directly related to the clarity of the signal.

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11   Jervis, *Perception and Misperception*, 79ff.

12   On the role of aggressors in complicating deterrence, see James W. Davis, Jr., "The Forgotten Variable: The Role of Promises in Deterrence" (Columbia University, 1995); James W. Davis, Jr., *Threats and Promises: The Pursuit of International Influence* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000); Charles L. Glaser, "The Security Dilemma Revisited," *World Politics* 50, no. 1 (1997); Jervis, *Perception and Misperception*, 58; Jonathan Mercer, "Reputation and Rational Deterrence Theory," *Security Studies* 7, no. 1 (1997); Randall L. Schweller, "Neorealism's Status Quo Bias: What Security Dilemma?," *Security Studies* 5, no. 3 (1996).

13   See Schelling, *Arms and Influence*, 69-91.

14   See the discussion of prospect theory at footnote 9 in the following chapter

15   Alexander L. George and Richard Smoke, *Deterrence in American Foreign Policy: Theory and Practice* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1974), Chapter 17.

16   Alexander L. George and William E. Simons, *The Limits of Coercive Diplomacy*, 2nd ed. (Boulder: Westview Press, 1994), 279-91. Note that strictly speaking, George and Simons are looking at certain

Capability

Relative capability plays a role in international politics in many ways.[17]   States

choose policies toward other states based, in part, on the relative balance between them.[18]

Measuring that balance accurately is critical, as Morgenthau notes:

> As for the assessment of the power of other nations, either to overrate or to underrate it
> may be equally fatal to the cause of peace.   By overrating the power of B, A may prefer
> to yield to B's demands until, finally, A is forced to fight for its very existence under the
> most unfavorable conditions.   But underrating the power of B, A may become
> overconfident in its assumed superiority.   A may advance demands and impose
> conditions upon B which the latter is supposedly too weak to resist.   Not suspecting B's
> actual power of resistance, A may be faced with the alternative of either retreating and
> conceding defeat or of advancing and risking war.[19]

Further, states often use military forces to signal their interests and capabilities.

There is a significant amount of work making use of large-N methods to assess whether

deterrence works (or not) in general, and it has identified capability—particularly locally

deployed capability—as a primary factor of importance.[20]   That is, many scholars have

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attempts at coercive diplomacy rather than deterrence per se.   However, it is clear from George and
Simons' work (see pp. 13-15 esp.) that their assumptions are compatible with the study of the practice
of deterrence.   Clearly, compellence is a very demanding form of coercion and may require even
more of the signaling party than does deterrence itself.

17   This statement is one of few that realists, liberals, Marxists, and constructivists would all agree with, at
least in part.   For recent realist treatments that explicitly focus on power, see Dale C. Copeland, *The
Origins of Major War* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000); John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of
Great Power Politics* (New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company, 2001).   For exemplary liberal
treatments, see Robert O. Keohane, *After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World
Economy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984); Andrew Moravcsik, *The Choice for
Europe: Social Purpose and State Power from Messina to Maastricht* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University
Press, 1998).   Constructivists generally accept the role of power, but suggest that—beyond a limited
degree of 'rump materialism'—the more important questions center on what precisely constitutes
power in different cases and periods (e.g., economic wealth, the military capability to defend, the
military capability to punish, soft power, religious leadership, etc.).   See Alexander Wendt, *Social
Theory of International Politics* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 96ff.

18   Of course, other factors matter as well.   For a discussion of both the role of power in shaping the
choice between balancing and bandwagoning, and a discussion of other factors that play a causal role,
see Stephen M. Walt, *The Origins of Alliances* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1987).

19   Hans Morgenthau and Kenneth Thompson, *Politics among Nations: The Struggle for Power and
Peace*, Sixth ed. (New York, NY: McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1985), 564.

20   On the one hand, Huth and Russett argue that it works, and on the other, Lebow and Stein argue that it
does not.   See Christopher H. Achen and Duncan Snidal, "Rational Deterrence Theory and
Comparative Case Studies," *World Politics* 41, no. 2 (1989); Paul K. Huth, "Reputations and

concluded that greater capability enhances deterrence. Similar conclusions apply to

instances of compellence or other influence strategies.[21] Generally, this capability is

measured as the overall relative power between the two countries, although some variants

of the quantitative models consider only the local power that could brought to bear (that

is, forces in the area, relevant to carrying out a threat).

However, measuring power is recognized to be very difficult.[22] Policymakers

have no simple index to which they can turn.[23] General opacity in the international

system certainly plays some role here,[24] as do incentives to misrepresent.[25] The

ambiguity and capriciousness of feedback, the lack of conclusive tests, and the dynamic

Deterrence: A Theoretical and Empirical Assessment," *Security Studies* 7, no. 1 (1997); Paul K. Huth and Bruce Russett, "What Makes Deterrence Work?: Cases from 1900 to 1980," *World Politics* 36 (1984); Paul K. Huth and Bruce Russett, "Testing Deterrence Theory: Rigor Makes a Difference," *World Politics* 42 (1990); Paul K. Huth and Bruce Russett, "General Deterrence between Enduring Rivals: Testing Three Competing Models," *American Political Science Review* 87, no. 1 (1993); Richard Ned Lebow, "Deterrence: A Political and Psychological Critique," in *Perspectives on Deterrence*, ed. Paul C. Stern et al. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989).

21 Issues of relatively capability permeate Schelling, *Arms and Influence*. Also see George and Smoke, *Deterrence in American Foreign Policy*.

22 John Arquilla, *Dubious Battles: Aggression, Defeat, and the International System*, Dubious battles ed. (Washington, DC: Crane Russak, 1992); Prados, *The Soviet Estimate;* Wohlforth, *The Elusive Balance*. This is also implicitly supported in Kirshner, "Rationalist Explanations for War?," 147-150. For a timeless indictment of intelligence failures generally, see Richard K. Betts, "Analysis, War, and Decision: Why Intelligence Failures Are Inevitable," *World Politics* 31, no. 1 (1978). Noting the even more challenging problem of linking any assessment of the military balance to predictions about coercive success is Richard K. Betts, "Conventional Deterrence: Predictive Uncertainty and Policy Confidence," *World Politics* 37, no. 2 (1985).

23 For an alternate view, see the COW dataset. Daniel M. Jones, Stuart A. Bremer, and J. David Singer, "Militarized Interstate Disputes, 1816-1992: Rationale, Coding Rules, and Empirical Patterns," *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 15, no. 2 (1996). For the ongoing work on this, see "http://cow2.polisci.psu.edu/datasets.htm".

24 Blainey, *The Causes of War*.

25 Van Evera, *Causes of War*, 47, 83, 137. See also Les Aspin, "Games the Pentagon Plays: Views from the House (2)," *Foreign Policy*, no. 11 (1973); Barry R. Posen and Stephen W. Van Evera, "Overarming and Underwhelming," *Foreign Policy*, no. 40 (1980).

nature of the balance itself all deepen these problems.[26]   Further, shifts in the power

balance make assessments of relative power even more difficult, and Wohlforth

emphasizes the dangers that such situations have historically posed: "[The] four crisis

phases in the Cold War ... [were] shaped by a change in the power relationship

differently interpreted by the two sides."[27]   Andrew Marshall, the long-time head of the

Office of Net Assessment in the Office of the Secretary of Defense, noted these problems

trenchantly decades ago:

> The fact that estimating procedures [for the military balance] are so vague and
> impressionistic at one level, and so mechanical at another level, is not altogether
> surprising.   As discussed above, the conceptual problems in constructing an adequate or
> useful measure of military power have not yet been faced.   Defining an adequate
> measure looks hard, and making estimates in real situations looks even harder.[28]

Adding the effects of strategy into the mix makes analysis even more complex, leading

military establishments to rely on oversimplified "dominant indicators."[29]   Thus, the

assessment of military capability should not be viewed simply as a data collection

exercise, but rather as a complex process of interpretation that can be shaped by many

factors.   This is the approach taken by this study.[30]

Communication

Communication is the least studied of the "three Cs," as Jervis noted in 1970,

> Military and economic resources, the main instrumentalities of power, have been widely
> studied.   Less has been written about the role of diplomatic skill, and the authors of this

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26   Wohlforth, *The Elusive Balance*, 296-300.

27   *Ibid.*, 301.

28   Andrew M. Marshall, *Problems of Estimating Military Power*, P-3417 (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND, August 1966), 9.

29   Scott Sigmund Gartner, *Strategic Assessment in War* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1997).

30   Compounding these well-studied impediments, this dissertation argues, actors also bring to their assessments of power their own biases and predilections based on their own theories of victory, history, and military heterogeneity in doctrine and force structure

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> literature have rarely focused on the full range of techniques by which a state can influence the inferences others are making about it and have not explored in any detail the ways desired images, which may be accurate or inaccurate, not only supplement the more usual forms of power, but are indispensable for reaching certain goals.[31]

Studying communication per se can be complicated by the frequent use of tacit signaling by states to communicate over matters of great importance.[32] "Tacit bargaining takes place whenever a state attempts to influence the policy choices of another state through behavior, rather than by relying on formal or informal diplomatic exchanges."[33] Neither George and Simons nor Schelling (the two classics in the field of coercive diplomacy) focus on impediments to communication. Rather, they both generate a set of prescriptions at the abstract level for deterrence and compellence to succeed that focus on credibility, capability, and some assurances that the threats are contingent. Beyond commendable admonitions for "clarity" in the threat, the difficulties associated with communication are not examined in depth.[34] Yet the issues involved are complex. Jervis notes the links between perception and difficulties in communication:

> The signaling actor may try to compensate for the fact that ambiguous signals sent in an environment of noise are especially susceptible to distortion. This would be relatively easy if all actors had the same perceptual predispositions. Introspection would then permit the actor to understand the influences present when the signals were received and allow him to correct for them. But these predispositions vary and are determined by complex factors, some of which are beyond the knowledge of even the most careful and intelligent observer.[35]

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31 Robert Jervis, *The Logic of Images in International Relations* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1970), 3.

32 See discussion in George W. Downs and David M. Rocke, *Tacit Bargaining, Arms Races, and Arms Control* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1990); Jervis, *The Logic of Images*, 18-26; Schelling, *The Strategy of Conflict*. A large body of game theoretic work on tacit signaling grew out from Axelrod's pioneering work. Robert M. Axelrod, *The Evolution of Cooperation* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 1984); Robert M. Axelrod, *The Complexity of Cooperation: Agent-Based Models of Competition and Collaboration* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1997).

33 Downs and Rocke, *Tacit Bargaining*, 3.

34 See George and Simons, *The Limits of Coercive Diplomacy;* Schelling, *The Strategy of Conflict;* Schelling, *Arms and Influence.*

35 Jervis, *The Logic of Images*, 134.

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The impediments to communication caused by this sort of perceptual difference are precisely the focus of this dissertation.

Thus, deterrence and compellence can be thwarted many ways. One side may lack the capability to adequately threaten the other side. The threat might be communicated unclearly. Each side's assessment of the other's motivations might lead them to doubt its credibility. The theory proposed in this dissertation by no means contradicts any of these. It merely suggests that, in addition, differences in theories of military doctrine across the two sides will make it more difficult for them to interpret signals and assess the overall balance. *Differing perceptions about the nature of military capability across states can impede international diplomacy and statecraft by making communication—the third and least studied element of strategic coercion listed above—more difficult.* The substance of the communication in question can be related to either capability or credibility. If one does not know how one's adversary understands military power, then one also does not know how he will interpret any military signals one sends. This can lead to mistakes in communicating one's credibility. In international politics, miscommunication can lead to war, so this topic merits further research.

Culture, Strategic Culture, and Communication

The depth of the ability of culture to shape people's understanding of the world can be substantial. Some psychologists and linguists argue different ways that languages—one component of culture—treat numbers can shape basic cognitive

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processes like counting.[36]   The argument that culture shapes perceptions and political

outcomes has a long and well-respected lineage in political science.   The contributions

of political culture to the field have been particularly large.[37]   Much of this early work

aimed to explain differences in political development, and the differences in Asian

nations were often emphasized.[38]

    Beyond political culture, several other facets of culture can play a role in shaping

perception about international security issues: strategic culture, civil-military culture, and

organizational culture.[39]   The first of these is of particular interest for this project,

although the others contribute as well.   A number of scholars have productively

examined the role of culture in the study of national security affairs.[40]   In this vein,

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36   See Daniel L. Everett, "On the Absence of Number and Numerals in Piraha, Paper in Progress, 2004," Department of Linguistics, The University of Manchester; Peter Gordon, "Numerical Cognition without Words: Evidence from Amazonia," *Science* (2004); "Linguistics: Language Barrier," *The Economist*, August 19 2004.

37   For a review of recent work on the role of political culture, see Richard W. Wilson, "The Many Voices of Political Culture: Assessing Different Approaches," *World Politics* 52, no. 2 (2000).   For some earlier classics, see Gabriel Abraham Almond and Sidney Verba, *The Civic Culture; Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations, an Analytic Study* (Boston: Little Brown, 1965); Samuel P. Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1968); Arend Lijphart, *Democracies: Patterns of Majoritarian and Consensus Government in Twenty-One Countries*, Democracies ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984); Lucian W. Pye and Sidney Verba, *Political Culture and Political Development* (Princeton, N.J.,: Princeton University Press, 1965); Myron Weiner, Samuel P. Huntington, and Gabriel Abraham Almond, *Understanding Political Development: An Analytic Study* (Boston: Little Brown, 1987).   The original formulation of the term comes from Gabriel A. Almond, "Comparative Political Systems," *Journal of Politics* 18 (1956).

38   Lucian W. Pye and Mary W. Pye, *Asian Power and Politics: The Cultural Dimensions of Authority* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press, 1985); Myron Weiner, *Sons of the Soil: Migration and Ethnic Conflict in India* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1978); Weiner, Huntington, and Almond, *Understanding Political Development: An Analytic Study.*

39   Scobell suggests this list (and also includes political culture): Andrew Scobell, *China's Use of Military Force: Beyond the Great Wall and the Long March* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 4-8.

40   R. A. D. Applegate and J. R. Moore, "The Nature of Military Culture," *Defense Analysis* 6, no. 3 (1990); Arthur Hoffmann and Kerry Longhurst, "German Strategic Culture in Action," *Contemporary Security Policy* 20, no. 2 (2000); Alastair Iain Johnston, "Thinking About Strategic Culture," *International Security* 19, no. 4 (1995); Peter J. Katzenstein, *Cultural Norms and National Security: Police and Military in Postwar Japan* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1996); Peter J.

several scholars have found this concept to be useful in the study of Chinese security

policy.[41]   Constructivist scholarship has been a source of analytic rigor in the renewed

attention to the role of culture in foreign policy.[42]

This dissertation continues in the footsteps of these earlier works.   It attempts to

make use of the self-conscious attention to positivist rigor that characterizes more recent

scholarship on strategic culture.[43]   However, it focuses on a narrower form of strategic

culture than many other works.   Johnston centers his definition of the term on beliefs

regarding "the role of and efficacy of military forces in interstate political affairs."[44]   As

Katzenstein, ed., *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996); Peter J. Katzenstein and Nobuo Okawara, *Japan's National Security: Structures, Norms and Policy Responses in a Changing World* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University East Asia Program, 1993); Elizabeth Kier, *Imagining War: French and British Military Doctrine between the Wars* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1997); Jeffrey S. Lantis, "Strategic Culture and National Security Policy," *International Studies Review* 4, no. 3 (2002); Jeffrey Legro, *Cooperation under Fire: Anglo-German Restraint During World War II* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995); Jack L. Snyder, *The Soviet Strategic Culture: Implications for Limited Nuclear Operations*, R-2154-AF (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND, 1977); Jack L. Snyder, *The Ideology of the Offensive: Military Decision Making and the Disasters of 1914* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1984).   For a useful review of some of this literature from a constructivist perspective, see Theo Farrell, "Culture and Military Power," *Review of International Studies* 24, no. 3 (1998).

41   See, for instance, Alastair Iain Johnston, *Cultural Realism: Strategic Culture and Grand Strategy in Chinese History* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1995); Scobell, *China's Use of Military Force;* Zhang Shuguang, *Deterrence and Strategic Culture: Chinese-American Confrontations, 1949-1958* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1992).

42   Generally in international relations, see Gelpi, *The Power of Legitimacy;* Judith Goldstein and Robert O. Keohane, *Ideas and Foreign Policy: Beliefs, Institutions, and Political Change* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993); Ted Hopf, "The Promise of Constructivism in International Relations Theory," *International Security* 23, no. 1 (1998); Ted Hopf, *Social Construction of International Politics : Identities & Foreign Policies, Moscow, 1955 and 1999* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002); Katzenstein, ed., *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics;* John Gerard Ruggie, *Constructing the World Polity: Essays on International Institutionalization* (New York: Routledge, 1998); Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics.*

43   For the most forceful advancing of that issue, see Johnston, "Thinking About Strategic Culture."   For a response that emphasizes the difficulties of such analytic rigor in the context of mutually constitutive beliefs and behavior, see Colin S. Gray, "Strategic Culture as Context: The First Generation of Theory Strikes Back," *Review of International Studies* 25, no. 1 (1999).

44   This definition is paraphrased from Clifford Geertz, see Johnston, "Thinking About Strategic Culture," 46.   This is essentially the definition Johnston uses in his own empirical study of the role of strategic culture: Johnston, *Cultural Realism.*

will be clear below, the term "theory of victory" is used here to describe beliefs at a different level, one closer to doctrine and the operational art of military strategies and tactics. The usage in this dissertation more closely accords with that referred to by Scobell as the "organizational culture" of different national militaries.[45]

Another difference between the approach taken here and that in most recent work on strategic cultures is one of perspective: Much of the existing work focuses on explaining the sources of strategic culture or their persistence in the face of changing geopolitical circumstances. In both cases, strategic culture primarily serves as a dependent variable. Instead, this project uses strategic culture as an independent variable that might explain miscommunication and conflict. Thus, the conceptual work on strategic culture is useful as a building block here.

The argument made in this dissertation has many parallels with existing scholarship on role of culture in the social sciences. Authors who work in this area have often stressed the difficulties in communicating across different cultures in general. Indeed, there is a sizable industry of business consultants offering help in "cross-cultural communication." Linguists and anthropologists are familiar with such difficulties. Similarly, the role of culture and norms in shaping perceptions is well documented in the constructivist literature.[46] At a somewhat different level of analysis, Mark Haas argues that different national governmental ideologies can also impede communication and

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45 Scobell, *China's Use of Military Force*, 7-8.

46 See Hopf, "The Promise of Constructivism in International Relations Theory," 186-88, in particular; Katzenstein, *Cultural Norms and National Security*, espec. Chapter 5: The Self-Defense Forces and External Security; Thomas Risse-Kappen, "Collective Identity in a Democratic Community: The Case of NATO," in *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics*, ed. Peter J. Katzenstein (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 359-71; Alexander Wendt, "Anarchy Is What States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics," *International Organization* 46, no. 2 (1992).

complicate threat assessments.[47]   This dissertation applies those insights to a different

substantive area.

Finally, constructivist approaches help to explain the causal mechanism advanced

here.   Geertz defines culture as "webs of significance" created by individuals in social

settings (taken from Weber).[48]   To adapt the term to the focus of this study, when

national leaders face off across different military doctrinal cultures, they will be using

different "webs of significance" to evaluate power and signals.   A particular signal that

is significant in one strategic culture may not be understood as significant in a different

strategic culture.   This is a recipe for endemic miscommunications and

misunderstandings.

Thus, this dissertation draws on work on strategic culture and constructivism in

explaining international security outcomes.

False Optimism

Overestimation of an adversary *or* underestimation of him can cause problems in

international politics.   Many scholars have studied the various sources and dangers of

overestimation of one's opponent, as discussed below.[49]   This dissertation focuses on a

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47   Mark Haas, "Ideology, Threat Perception, and Great Power Politics through Two Centuries" (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Virginia, 2001).

48   Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 1973), 5.

49   This is a central tenet of the spiral theory and of the security dilemma.   See the discussion in the following section.   In terms of the sources of overestimation in general, several arguments are possible.   For instance, Lowi argues that there is a domestic political incentive for overselling in the United States.   See Theodore Lowi, *The End of Liberalism: The Second Republic of the United States*, Second ed. (New York, NY: W.W. Norton and Company, 1979).   Huntington argues that military leaders assess threats conservatively, that is, to maximize protection of their own forces.   Samuel P. Huntington, *The Soldier and the State; the Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations* (Cambridge,: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1957), 66.   A more instrumental view is

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separate problem—a perceptual problem caused by different theories of victory—and *this*

problem generally leads to underestimation of an adversary and its own set of negative

consequences.   That is not to suggest, however, that either underestimation or

overestimation of an adversary is in some abstract sense a larger problem in international

politics.   Both misperceptions have dangers.   Both are common.[50]

That said, the dangers of false optimism in general are well-understood to be

substantial:[51]

> This historical record suggests that false optimism is a potent and pervasive cause of war.
> False expectations of victory widely coincide with the outbreak of war.   This suggests
> that false optimism is a strong and common cause of war.[52]

There is similar agreement on the problems that can arise in deterrent situations when an

aggressor sees its adversary as being relatively weak.[53]   The implications of false

optimism for the entire deterrence success literature discussed above are clear: false

optimism will make states less likely to be successful in deterrence and compellence.

Thus it certainly merits attention.

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presented in Jane Kellett-Cramer, "National Security Panics: Overestimating Threats to National Security" (Ph.D. Dissertation, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2002).

50   On the frequency of overestimation of threats in the cold war, and reasons behind it, see Kellett-Cramer, "National Security Panics"; Richard Ned Lebow and Janice Gross Stein, *We All Lost the Cold War* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993).   For a contrary view, see Robert Jervis, "Was the Cold War a Security Dilemma?," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 3, no. 1 (2001). For a recent discussion of the prevalence of this problem in current American foreign policy, see Fareed Zakaria, "Exaggerating the Threats," *Newsweek*, June 16 2003.   On the problem of perception in general, see Jervis, *Perception and Misperception*.

51   Blainey, *The Causes of War*, Chapter 3: Dreams and Delusions of a Coming War; Stoessinger, *Why Nations Go to War;* Van Evera, *Causes of War*, Chapter 2: False Optimism: Illusions of the Coming War.   See also Arquilla, *Dubious Battles: Aggression, Defeat, and the International System*.

52   Van Evera, *Causes of War*, 34.

53   This is the primarily conclusion of the large-N work on deterrence theory.   See for instance, Huth and Russett, "What Makes Deterrence Work?." For a good review of this literature, see Levy, "When Do Deterrent Threats Work?." For other views on this issue, see Achen and Snidal, "Rational Deterrence Theory and Comparative Case Studies."; Huth and Russett, "Testing Deterrence Theory."; Huth and Russett, "Deterrence between Enduring Rivals."; Richard Ned Lebow and Janice Gross Stein, "Rational Deterrence Theory: I Think, Therefore I Deter," *World Politics* (1989).

Escalation, Spirals, and Security Dilemmas

Other important sources of escalation in international security theory are security

dilemmas and spirals.[54]   At its heart, escalation that stems from these sources comes

from false pessimism.   For the most part, this project focuses on the dangers of the

failures of deterrence and compellence; however, the first implication of this project's

theory is opacity, it is worth discussing the dangers of misperceptions that lead to the

opposite problem. [55]

The spiral model suggests that wars are caused by states over-responding to

misperceived threats and creating security dilemmas:

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54   Robert Jervis, "Cooperation under the Security Dilemma," *World Politics* 30, no. 2 (1978).   A great
       many works use this approach theoretically or to survey a range of cases.   See Alexander L. George
       and Yaacov Bar-Siman-Tov, *Avoiding War: Problems of Crisis Management* (Boulder: Westview
       Press, 1991).
           For an application of these concepts to WWI, see Laurence Davis Lafore, *The Long Fuse; an
       Interpretation of the Origins of World War I*, 2d ed. (Philadelphia, Penn.: Lippincott, 1971); Barbara
       Wertheim Tuchman, *The Guns of August*, Anniversary ed. (New York: Macmillan, 1988); Stephen
       Van Evera, "The Cult of the Offensive and the Origins of the First World War," in *Military Strategy
       and the Origins of the First World War*, ed. Steven E. Miller, Sean M. Lynn-Jones, and Stephen Van
       Evera (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991).

55   On treating spirals and deterrence failure as opposing models, there is a long-standing literature
       treating spirals and deterrence failure as opposing models of avertable conflict.   Among the earliest
       are Evan Luard, "Conciliation and Deterrence: A Comparison of Political Strategies in the Interwar
       and Postwar Periods," *World Politics* 19, no. 2 (1967); Arnold Wolfers, *Discord and Collaboration:
       Essays on International Politics* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins Press, 1962), see in particular
       Chapter 9.   The citations that have shaped the modern debate are Glaser, "Political Consequences of
       Military Strategy."; Jervis, *Perception and Misperception*, Chapter 3.. See also his Glaser, "The
       Security Dilemma Revisited."   A recent, rigorous empirical examination of the two theories
       applicability can be found in Davis, *Threats and Promises*, 20.   Other notable cites are Richard H.
       Moss, "The Limits of Policy: An Investigation of the Spiral Model, the Deterrence Model, and
       Miscalculations in U.S.-Third World Relations" (Princeton University, 1987); Martin Patchen,
       Resolving Disputes between Nations: Coercion or Conciliation? (Durham, N.C.: Duke University
       Press, 1988); Glenn Herald Snyder and Paul Diesing, *Conflict among Nations: Bargaining, Decision
       Making, and System Structure in International Crises* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press,
       1977); Paul C. Stern and others, "Deterrence in the Nuclear Age: The Search for Evidence," in
       Perspectives on Deterrence, ed. Paul C. Stern et al. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989); Philip
       E. Tetlock, "Policymakers' Images of International Conflict," *Journal of Social Issues* 39, no. 1 (1983).
       For a discussions on the differences between nuclear and conventional weapons and their bearing on
       these two theories, see Barry R. Posen, "Crisis Stability and Conventional Arms Control," *Daedalus*
       120, no. 1 (1991).   See also, his Barry R. Posen, "Competing Images of the Soviet Union," *World
       Politics* 39, no. 4 (1987).

> When states seek the ability to defend themselves, they get too much and too little—too
> much because they gain the ability to carry out aggression; too little because others, being
> menaced, will increase their own arms and so reduce the first state's security.[56]

Given the assumption (or empirical fact) of anarchy,[57] states must assume the worst and

maintain security forces to protect themselves. In situations other than perfect defense

dominance,[58] these forces will threaten others who will respond with their own build up,

thus forcing the first nation to respond in kind. This concept is very closely related to

the security dilemma—"an increase in one state's security decreases the security of

others."[59] The security dilemma is at the heart of the spiral model; and the prisoner's

dilemma is the game theoretic representation of it.[60] As Jervis notes in this model

"symmetrical beliefs produce incompatible policies"[61] and will combine with inherent

cognitive failings and misperceptions and that these will together lead to war.[62] Self-

fulfilling prophesies are likely as each nation views the other's reactive buildups as a sign

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56 Jervis, *Perception and Misperception*, 64.

57 As for which of these it is, see Stephen D. Krasner, "Compromising Westphalia," *International Security* 20, no. 3 (1996); Stephen D. Krasner, *Sovereignty: Organized Hypocrisy* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1999); Alexander Wendt, "Collective Identity Formation and the International State," *American Political Science Review* (1994); Alexander Wendt, "Constructing International Politics," *International Security* 20, no. 1 (1995).

58 This term is used here in the terms of the offense-defense literature. For the classic statement of the impact of this variable see Jervis, "Cooperation under the Security Dilemma." For an application of this to WWI, see Van Evera, "The Cult of the Offensive." For an extensive study using this variable to explain large variations in the frequency of war across time, see Van Evera, *Causes of War*.

59 Jervis, *Perception and Misperception*, 186. See also Glaser, "The Security Dilemma Revisited." The concept of the security dilemma has a long history in political science. See, for instance, John Herz, "Idealist Internationalism and the Security Dilemma," *World Politics* 2, no. 2 (1950); Jervis, "Cooperation under the Security Dilemma."

60 Jervis, *Perception and Misperception*, 67. For early discussions of the prisoner's dilemma, and applications of it to political science, see Kenneth A. Oye, ed., *Cooperation under Anarchy* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1986); Schelling, *The Strategy of Conflict*, 213ff; Snyder and Diesing, *Conflict among Nations*, 37ff.

61 Jervis, *Perception and Misperception*, 65.

62 *Ibid.*, 75.

of its inherent aggressive intent. Jervis has described a number of different explanations

for this addressing the role of cognitive failings and shortcoming in worsening spirals

(e.g., "the world is ganging up on me", "I didn't mean it that way", etc.).[63]

A simple policy prescription arises from this model: it is "often not to the state's

advantage to seek a wide margin of superiority over its adversary." The historically

grounded literatures on crisis diplomacy and crisis management making this point are

quite extensive.[64] For instance, Lebow and Stein argue that the faith of scholars and

policymakers alike in deterrence as the key to winning particular Cold War crises—and

indeed the entire Cold War—is soundly misplaced.[65] Instead careful attention to

accommodative steps accounts for the avoidance of war in these periods.

The spiral literature included a number of related themes. There is a large

literature on arms races that is formal in nature. The pioneering work in this area is

referred to as a Richardsonian model.[66] These models have been applied to stocks of

particular weapons (most often nuclear missiles) and military budgets, as well as factors

such as fatigue in each country. Beginning with Huntington, there is also a substantial

literature on the historical association of arms races with wars.[67] Crisis stability in

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63   *Ibid.*, Chapters 4-10.

64   E.g., George and Bar-Siman-Tov, *Avoiding War*.

65   Lebow and Stein, *We All Lost the Cold War*.

66   Michael D. Intriligator and Dagobert Brito, "Richardsonian Arms Race Models," in *Handbook of War Studies*, ed. Manus Midlarsky (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1989), 221.

67   To name a few: Paul Diehl and Jean Kingston, "Messenger or Message?: Military Buildups and the Initiation of Conflict," *Journal of Politics* 49, no. 3 (1987); Samuel P. Huntington, "Arms Races: Prerequisites and Results," *Policy Studies?* (1958); James D. Morrow, "A Twist of Truth: A Reexamination of the Effects of Arms Races on the Occurrence of War," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 33, no. 3 (1989); Michael Wallace, "Arms Races and Escalation: Some New Evidence," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 23, no. 1 (1979); Michael Wallace, "Armaments and Escalation: Two Competing Hypotheses," *International Studies Quarterly* 26, no. 1 (1982).

nuclear situations can be productively analyzed from this perspective.[68] In a seminal

book, Robert Axelrod examined used game theory to examine the prisoner's dilemma—a

game theoretic construct that captures the central elements of the spiral model. In this

study, he found that the optimal solution for competing in a iterated prisoner's dilemma is

a strategy of "tit for tat."[69] Refinements on this early work have taken the form of

adding uncertainty and noise into the simulation, making the real world application of

such models more robust.[70]

While much of this work is instructive, it speaks primarily to the dangers of

overestimation of an enemy and to the dangers of false pessimism (and ways to resolve

it). Both theoretically and empirically, this project has found that an underestimation of

the enemy has been the more likely consequence of differences in military doctrine.

However, as will be discussed below, opacity is also an important consequence. In

some circumstances, such opacity may tend toward an overestimation of the enemy and

an undue pessimism. In these cases, the large literature on spirals and security

dilemmas warns us of profound dangers as well.

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68   Posen, *Inadvertent Escalation.*

69   Axelrod, *The Evolution of Cooperation.* For an alternate approach to creating cooperation that does not
     require iteration, see Andrew Kydd, "Game Theory and the Spiral Model," *World Politics* 49, no. 3
     (1997): 379. For a critical view of the game theoretic application here, see George W. Downs, David
     M. Rocke, and Randolph M. Siverson, "Arms Races and Cooperation," in *Cooperation under Anarchy*,
     ed. Kenneth A. Oye (Princeton, NY: Princeton University Press, 1986). For arguments questioning
     the model's external validity see Matthew Evangelista, "Cooperation Theory and Disarmament:
     Negotiations in the 1950s," *World Politics* 42, no. 4 (1990). Broader critiques are raised in Curtis S.
     Signorino, "Strategic Interaction and the Statistical Analysis of International Conflict," *American
     Political Science Review* 93, no. 2 (1999).

70   See Axelrod, *The Complexity of Cooperation,* 38.

Parallel Arguments

A number of scholars working in some of the above areas have come to parallel

conclusions to that of the dissertation's overall argument.   However, none make it their

focus theoretically, nor subject it to thorough empirical evaluation.   Nevertheless, this

scholarship does provide an important starting point for the work presented here.

A few simply raise similar points in passing, and thus do not evaluate it

empirically in detail.   For instance, Betts provides a tantalizing critique of rationality in

international security, noting the tension of "Culture versus Coercion":

> Coercive strategies aimed at an adversary's will depend on communication.   Cultural
> blinders prevent the common frames of reference necessary to ensure that the receiver
> hears the message that the signaler intends to send.[71]

At a more general level, Jervis writes:

> Perception is laden with interpretation and theory.   Almost no inferences—perhaps none
> at all—are self-evident in the sense that all people under all circumstances looking at the
> information would draw the same conclusion.   Thus knowing how theorists read a signal
> does not tell us how the perceiver does.[72]

What Jervis calls for to overcome this problem for the understanding of signaling and

deterrence is the following:

> Scholars can then look at the image an actor is trying to project, the behaviors that it
> adopts to do so, and then, shifting attention to the perceiver, examine what influences the
> perceiver and what inferences it draws.   At the next stage we can see what the perceiver
> thinks it must do in order to send the desired message in response, what it does to reach
> this goal, and how the actor in turn judges both the other's behavior and determines how
> the other perceived its behavior.   I suspect it is rare for actors, especially adversaries, to
> understand the situation the same way, to be able to discern how the other sees them and
> their behavior, or even to know what signals are taken to be most important.[73]

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71   Richard K. Betts, "Is Strategy an Illusion?," *International Security* 25, no. 2 (2000): 28-29.

72   Robert Jervis, "Signaling and Perception: Drawing Inferences and Projecting Images," in *Political
Psychology*, ed. Kristen R. Monroe (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc., 2002), 298.

73   *Ibid.*, 310.

This dissertation implements that research strategy.[74]

There are a few pieces of research that focus on similar lines of reasoning to this dissertation in slightly different empirical contexts. There is other excellent scholarship emphasizing the role of ideational factors in coercive bargaining situations that focuses on the role "dispute settlements as normative referents."[75] Scott Sigmund Gartner emphasizes the power of organization lenses in various national security bureaucracies in shaping perceptions of success and failure in war.[76]

Lastly, in a few cases, scholars pursuing different theoretical goals have found empirical support for phenomena that are very similar to that studied in this dissertation. Mearsheimer emphasizes the role of one specific doctrine—*blitzkrieg*—in causing optimism and deterrence failure in his *Conventional Deterrence*.[77] Cohen argues that different concepts of operation and strategies led American analysts to underestimate the dangers posed by the Soviet Red Army.[78] Arquilla notes that continental powers engaging in land-sea wars often misperceive significant aspects of the conflict.[79] Finally, Shimshoni points out that states relying on qualitative advantages and surprise have a particularly difficult time deterring their adversaries. Such states cannot enhance the credibility of their threats by pointing out their own military advantages, because doing

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74 Jervis goes on to note the empirical difficulties in doing this, however, and the relatively few empirical examples of work that have pursued this time-consuming research strategy.

75 Gelpi, *The Power of Legitimacy*, 38.

76 Gartner, *Strategic Assessment in War*.

77 John J. Mearsheimer, *Conventional Deterrence* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983).

78 Eliot A. Cohen, "Toward a Better Net Assessment: Rethinking the European Conventional Balance," *International Security* 13, no. 1 (1988). See also the vigorous rebuttal by two scholars so accused in John J. Mearsheimer, Barry R. Posen, and Eliot A. Cohen, "Reassessing Net Assessment," *International Security* 13, no. 4 (1989).

79 Arquilla, *Dubious Battles: Aggression, Defeat, and the International System*.

so will erode the prospects for surprise. This point closely parallels the argument made here.[80]

This dissertation builds on many of these theorists to draw out their core, shared issues, place them in a common, general framework, and evaluate their plausibility through detailed empirical testing.

Summary

Thus, this project draws on theoretic work on strategic culture, the sources of military doctrine, the causes and dangers of misperception, and the measurement of power. Empirically, it incorporates approaches used productively in an existing body of work on crisis diplomacy.[81] It contributes to the understanding of the role of information asymmetries in leading to war as a bargaining failure,[82] but it does so by outlining a source of asymmetry that has not been studied (and one that requires unique policies to correct). If this argument is correct, it has important implications for international theorists in the areas of rationalist views of war, the roles of military doctrine in shaping international outcomes, the importance of sub-state variables in shaping international systemic outcomes, the understanding of the sources of deterrence

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80 Jonathan Shimshoni, *Israel and Conventional Deterrence: Border Warfare from 1953 to 1970* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988). See Chapter 2, note 103, below, on the differences between this dissertation (particularly the proposed H₁) and Shimshoni's theory.

81 This is a wide-ranging literature. Most notable is: George and Smoke, *Deterrence in American Foreign Policy*.

82 Fearon, "Rationalist Explanations for War."; David A. Lake and Robert Powell, *Strategic Choice and International Relations* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1999); Powell, *In the Shadow of Power*.

failure, and the importance of crisis diplomacy and statecraft.[83]   (A few other literatures

that are relevant to this project are discussed in the next chapter in detail.[84])

The dissertation's argument also has important policy prescriptions for national

leaders.[85]   Scholars have long known of the dangers stemming from "the inability of

foreign-policymakers to view events from the perspective of their adversaries."[86]   This

dissertation closely examines one important facet of miscommunication that comes from

specific perceptual differences, and suggests that the existing concern with an adversary's

views of his national interests is incomplete.[87]   In addition, national leaders must focus

on their adversary's theory of victory, recognizing that will shape its assessment of the

balance of power and its interpretation of signaling in the conduct of statecraft.   While

some steps can be taken to tailor signals to an adversary's theory of victory, in general,

this dissertation emphases the inherent difficulties of deterrence and compellence.

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83   Each of these is discussed in turn in Chapter 7: Conclusion and Implications.

84   First, the universe of cases explained by the theory is bounded by the concept of strategic coercion and limited war.   Second, many other scholars have studied this dissertation's independent variable—theories of victory—as a dependent variable. Systemic and geographic imperatives, technologic advancement, past historic practice, and organization structures and practices are all argued to play a role in shaping nation's perceptions regarding optimal doctrines.   Finally, the causal logics of the two hypotheses that the dissertation focuses on depend on organizational and psychological logics that are well established in political science.   Again, each of these is discussed in detail in the next chapter.

85   Again, the final chapter discusses these.

86   Alexander L. George, *Presidential Decisionmaking in Foreign Policy: The Effective Use of Information and Advice* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1980), 66ff.   See also Keith B. Payne, *The Fallacies of Cold War Deterrence and a New Direction* (Lexington, Kent.: The University Press of Kentucky, 2001).   In the Chinese context, a similar point is made in Melvin Gurtov and Byong-Moo Hwang, *China under Threat: The Politics of Strategy and Diplomacy* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980), 4-5.   McNamara makes a similar point in explaining the U.S. misperceptions regarding Vietnamese motivations.   Robert S. McNamara and Brian VanDeMark, *In Retrospect: The Tragedy and Lessons of Vietnam*, 1st ed. (New York: Times Books, 1995), 322.

87   See for instance, Morgenthau and Thompson, *Politics among Nations*, 587.

Chapter 2.   THEORY AND METHOD

The core of this chapter is a detailed statement of the causal argument advanced in the dissertation.   When nations have different doctrines and hold different beliefs about the nature of effective military strategies and capabilities, diplomacy and signaling will be more difficult, potentially leading to escalation or conflict.   There are two stages to this causal statement, each expressed as a hypothesis below: the first portion links the different beliefs to misperception; the second extends that to miscommunication and crisis outcomes (escalation or conflict).   The logic of each will be sketched out in turn, and then predictions are derived to allow for testing in the dissertation's empirical work. The chapter also includes an explanation of the methodology of inquiry pursued in the remainder of the dissertation.   First, however, the terms used in the theory used must be defined explicitly.

Definitions

This section defines two terms important to the project.   The dissertation uses *strategic coercion* to describe the universe of cases studied here and differences in doctrine or *theories of victory* serve as the main component of the independent variable. Each term, and its links to existing literatures, is discussed in turn.

The Project's Universe: Attempts at Strategic Coercion

This project focuses on one important way that attempts at strategic coercion can fail. This is a large universe of cases since, "the use of intimidation of one kind or another in order to get others to comply with one's wishes is an everyday occurrence in human affairs."[1] Therefore, it is important to be precise about what constitutes strategic coercion. This section discusses definitional points regarding both the goals served by such a policy and the tools and means used to advance those goals.

The Goals of Strategic Coercion

Lawrence Freedman has introduced the term "strategic coercion" which he defines as "the deliberate and purposive use of overt threats to influence another's strategic choices."[2] He adopts the term in his study as a way to subsume deterrence and compellence/coercive diplomacy, which share many similar elements, under the same umbrella concept.[3] Both can be thought of as part of a "threat based bargaining process."[4] As he notes each of these term's historical origins have somewhat artificially enhanced the difference between them.

> [Though] deterrence and coercive diplomacy ... are two sides of the same coercive coin,
> the difference between them came to be exaggerated through the research that they
> stimulated. The study of deterrence was largely concerned with the United States'

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1   Alexander L. George, "Introduction: The Limits of Coercive Diplomacy," in *The Limits of Coercive Diplomacy*, ed. Alexander L. George and William E. Simons (Boulder: Westview Press, 1994), 2. Indeed the limitation of "human affairs" may be too narrow. For discussion of similar phenomenon in other advanced primate societies, see Christopher Boehm, "Egalitarian Behavior and the Evolution of Political Intelligence," in *Machiavellian Intelligence II: Extensions and Evaluations*, ed. Andrew Whiten and Richard W. Byrne (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 342.

2   Lawrence Freedman, "Strategic Coercion," in *Strategic Coercion: Concepts and Cases*, ed. Lawrence Freedman (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 15.

3   *Ibid.*

4   Lawrence Freedman, "Introduction," in *Strategic Coercion: Concepts and Cases*, ed. Lawrence Freedman (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 3.

essentially symmetrical relationship with the Soviet Union, while coercive diplomacy
was bound up with its asymmetrical relationship with smaller powers.[5]

Different scholars use these various terms in slightly different ways, as discussed below.

In terms of the goal of the threats under strategic coercion, there is widely
understood to be a distinction between stopping someone from doing something in the
future (deterrence) and inducing them to do something that they would not have
otherwise done (compellence).[6] Schelling separates the two, emphasizing that
compellence is more difficult than deterrence.[7] Others also follow this distinction.[8]

The central difference between deterrence and compellence centers on what
psychologists refer to as the "perceptual reference point." This highlights the question
of whether the issue at stake is perceived to be something that one does not already have
or something that one already possesses. Prospect theory speaks to precisely this issue
and finds it to be a useful distinction.[9]

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5   Freedman, "Strategic Coercion," 32.

6   Somewhat more ambiguous is categorizing an attempt to stop someone from something they are
     currently engaged in doing.   Focusing on the future aspect of this behavior suggests that it is
     deterrence; emphasizing that it has already been started leads to a categorization as compellence.
     This raises precisely the point of perceptual reference points, discussed in the following paragraph.   It
     also emphasizes the difficulty in drawing clear, bright lines between the concepts, a difficulty resolved
     by considering them jointly.

7   See Thomas C. Schelling, *Arms and Influence* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1966), 69-
     91.

8   Peter Viggo Jakobsen, *Western Use of Coercive Diplomacy after the Cold War: A Challenge for
     Theory and Practice* (New York, N.Y.: St. Martin's Press, 1998), 11ff.   Robert J. Art, "The Four
     Functions of Force," in *International Politics: Enduring Concepts and Contemporary Issues*, ed.
     Robert J. Art and Robert Jervis (New York, NY: Longman Publishers, 2003).

9   For a helpful survey of this work on this in the field of international relations, see Barbara Rearden
     Farnham, ed., *Avoiding Losses/Taking Risks: Prospect Theory and International Conflict* (Ann Arbor,
     MI: University of Michigan Press, 1994).   Particularly useful in summarizing prospect theory itself is
     Jack S. Levy, "An Introduction to Prospect Theory," in *Ibid.*   For a measured assessment of the
     potential pitfalls in using prospect theory, see later in the same volume Jack S. Levy, "Prospect Theory
     and International Relations: Theoretical Applications and Analytical Problems," in *Ibid.*

Going a step further in categorizing the use of threats, George subdivides

compellence, separating two concepts: "coercive diplomacy" and, in what he refers to as

the offensive side of policy, 'blackmail strategies".[10]   For George, coercive diplomacy

aims to undo something whereas the more offensive "blackmail" tries to force the

opponent to do something completely new that it had not planned to do.   Jakobsen

provides an excellent chart to help think about these various concepts and how they relate

to each other.

Figure 2-1:   **Categorizing the Use of Threats in International Relations**
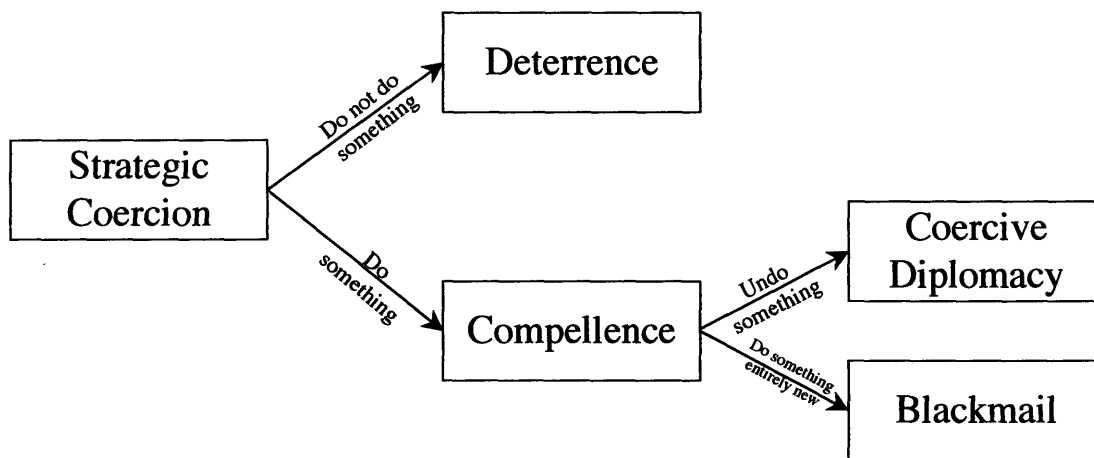
Source: Adapted from Peter Viggo Jakobsen, *Western Use of Coercive Diplomacy after the Cold War: A Challenge for Theory and Practice*. New York, N.Y.: St. Martin's Press, 1998, p. 12, Figure 2.1: "Overview of existing terms concerning the use of threats."

This builds on Schelling's dichotomy and Freedman's umbrella term, discussed above,

but adds some further detail by clarifying the two potential goals of compellence.

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10   Alexander L. George, "Coercive Diplomacy: Definition and Characteristics," in *The Limits of Coercive Diplomacy*, ed. Alexander L. George and William E. Simons (Boulder: Westview Press, 1994), 7. However, note that George's term 'coercive diplomacy' would seem to include many cases of deterrence since it includes "efforts to persuade an opponent to stop ... an action." However, he explicitly rules out deterrence cases from his definition.   (For both these points, see again George, "Coercive Diplomacy: Definition and Characteristics," 7.)   Freedman refers to this usage as "neither tenable in practice nor useful analytically".   Freedman, "Strategic Coercion," 18.   To avoid precisely this sort of confusion, the broader term coined by Freedman—strategic coercion—will be used here.

However, in practice, the boundary lines within the various forms of compellence, deterrence, and coercion are not so clear. Nearly all scholars working in the field make this point somewhere in their work. George notes the distinctions between his offensive and defensive forms of compellence are not always obvious.[11] Byman and Waxman present their views succinctly in the title of a figure: "Deterrence and Compellence Blur in Practice."[12] Another scholar points out the various subjective factors that play a role in answering the critical question of is a threat aimed at deterrence or compellence: "The answer depends on two points: the level of analysis and who defines the status quo and how. ... In any event, the deterrence-compellence ordering is problematic, if useful at all, in explaining the bargaining outcome...."[13] Others agree that the line between deterrence and compellence is not as clear as it would appear.[14]

Clearly, there is a range of tasks to which coercive tools might be applied. In order of increasing difficulty, one can try to persuade an adversary to: not do something it was planning to do, stop something it is currently doing, undo something it has recently done, or do something new that it did not want to do. Nevertheless, these seem likely to be differences of degree rather than of nature. More fundamentally, the process of weighing capabilities, creating credibility, and communicating any of those demands is

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11 George, "Coercive Diplomacy: Definition and Characteristics," 8. Jakobsen make this point rather forcefully: Jakobsen, *Western Use of Coercive Diplomacy*, 13.

12 Daniel Byman, Matthew C. Waxman, and Eric V. Larson, *Air Power as a Coercive Instrument*, MR-1061-AF (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND, 1999), 12.

13 Jonathan Shimshoni, *Israel and Conventional Deterrence: Border Warfare from 1953 to 1970* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988), 174. He expresses a similar, broader reaching concern on p. 25. Davis makes a similar point, and his model explicitly draws on prospect theory, so his finding that this central distinction is difficult to apply in the real world is instructive. James W. Davis, Jr., *Threats and Promises: The Pursuit of International Influence* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 421 (see also his discussion of related difficulties on p. 415).

14 Freedman, "Strategic Coercion," 19; Jakobsen, *Western Use of Coercive Diplomacy*, 13.

similar regardless of the goal of the coercive attempt.   Therefore, this dissertation will

not restrict its universe to any one of these concepts, but will focus on strategic coercion,

thus including both deterrence and compellence attempts.   Several in the field also make

this broader view of coercion the subject of their research.[15]

Finally, when discussing the goals of deterrence, scholars and analysts often draw

a distinction between general and immediate deterrence.[16]   General deterrence is a state

of affairs that exists between potential adversaries before a crisis.   While neither side

has made an explicit threat, both sides are aware that they must consider the other's

interests as they ponder any future action.   If general deterrence appears to be

insufficient to ensure a nation's interests, that nation may choose to make a specific

threat: "if our opponent attacks our country (or our ally), we will retaliate by doing the

following...." At this point, general deterrence has broken down and the policy being

pursued is immediate deterrence.   A similar distinction could be made on the

compellence side: some compellent attempts are made more overtly than others are.

Of course, there are potential grey areas.   Oblique threats, expressions of interest

in a region, statements that one country is monitoring the moves of another, all these fall

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15 This seems, in fact, closest to Schelling's usage of the term.   See Schelling, *Arms and Influence*, 3-5, 71.   For a sympathetic view see also Karl Mueller, "Strategies of Coercion: Denial, Punishment, and the Future of Air Power," *Security Studies* 7, no. 3 (1998): note 4.

16 This distinction was originally drawn in Patrick M. Morgan, *Deterrence: A Conceptual Analysis* (Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage Publications, 1977).   It continues to have important effects on the study of deterrence.   See, for instance, the debate over whether deterrence works, where this difference is critical to accusations of selection bias.   Christopher H. Achen and Duncan Snidal, "Rational Deterrence Theory and Comparative Case Studies," *World Politics* 41, no. 2 (1989); David Collier and James Mahoney, "Research Note: Insights and Pitfalls: Selection Bias in Qualitative Research," *World Politics* 49, no. 1 (1996); James Fearon, "Selection Effects and Deterrence," *International Interactions* 28, no. 1 (2002); Jack S. Levy, "Review Article: When Do Deterrent Threats Work?," *British Journal of Political Science* 18 (1989): 508.   For a broader discussion of selection bias in this literature, see V. Danilovic, "Conceptual and Selection Bias Issues in Deterrence," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 45, no. 1 (2001); Daryl G. Press, "Weak and Varying Selection Effects: Obstacles to Inference on Military Deterrence and Economic Sanctions, 1995," Cambridge, Mass (MIT).

short of an explicit deterrent threat that would clearly move a situation out of the realm of general deterrence and into that of immediate deterrence. Thus, these two concepts as well are better thought of as part of a continuum. Thus, when studying strategic coercion, it is important not to neglect cases that are not full blown cases of immediate deterrence but lie somewhere along the continuum toward the general deterrence ideal type. General deterrence can fail for the same reasons that immediate deterrence does: questions about capability and intent. Analysts should not ignore the potential to learn more about it. (This is particularly the case given that one prominent theorist has recently argued that general deterrence will be increasingly important in the post-Cold War world.[17])

The Tools of Strategic Coercion

If strategic coercion is the use of threats or actual force to achieve any of a broad range of goals, what more can one say about the tools used to ensure its success? Two areas are worth discussing: the use of force itself, rather than mere threats of its use, and the use of incentives versus carrots.

All students of strategic coercion in all its various forms would agree that it should be distinguished from simply forcing an adversary to do something by using overwhelming force. Rather, strategic coercion depends at least in part on threats (implicit or explicit) to achieve its goals.[18] The distinction between using military power as a means of brute force to achieve a goal and the use of threats involving military power can trace its origins (at least) to Clausewitz, who writes, on the one hand

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17 Patrick M. Morgan, *Deterrence Now* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

18 Jakobsen, *Western Use of Coercive Diplomacy*, 1.

> war is an act of force, and there is no logical limit to the application of that force. Each
> side, therefore, compels its opponent to follow suit; a reciprocal action is started which
> must lead, in theory, to extremes.[19]

On the other, he writes that "modifications in practice" in many areas impede this

tendency toward all out war. Thus, he concludes, "war is never an isolated act"; "war

does not consist of a single short blow"; and "in war, the result is never final."[20] These

factors lead to wars responding to the needs of politics:

> If we keep in mind that war springs from some political purpose, it is natural that the
> prime cause of its existence will remain the supreme consideration in conducting it...
> Policy, then, will permeate all military operations, and in so far as their violent nature
> will admit, it will have a continuous influence on them.[21]

This interjection of policy into the use of force characterizes the realm of strategic

coercion.

Another way of raising this same issue is to discuss the phenomenon of limited

war. Since most wars fall short of all-out conflict, they retain an element of

bargaining.[22] This is particularly the case for so called limited wars that made up the

bulk of American military policy during and after the Cold War.[23] Similarly, most arms

races could escalate even further or more rapidly, and thus are also examples of limited

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19 Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, trans. Michael Eliot Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton
University Press, 1989), 76.

20 *Ibid.*, 78-80.

21 *Ibid.*, 87.

22 On the ubiquity of limited wars, see Schelling, *Arms and Influence*, 126ff. Bernard Brodie, *War and
Politics* (New York,: Macmillan, 1973), 39. Richard Smoke, *War: Controlling Escalation*
(Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1977).

23 The classic study is Morton H. Halperin, *Limited War in the Nuclear Age* (New York, NY: John Wiley
& Sons, 1963). For further discussion of limited war in Cold War foreign policy, see Christopher M.
Gacek, *The Logic of Force: The Dilemma of Limited War in American Foreign Policy* (New York:
Columbia University Press, 1994). The limited wars in the post-Cold War are treated in Daniel P.
Bolger, *Savage Peace: Americans at War in the 1990s* (Novato, Calif.: Presidio Press, 1995); Ivo H.
Daalder and James M. Lindsay, *America Unbound : The Bush Revolution in Foreign Policy*
(Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 2003).

international conflict.[24]   On another dimension, scholars often write about militarized

and non-militarized crises.   Rather than sharply distinct modes of interaction, diplomatic

crises, militarized crises, limited wars, and total wars are better thought of as lying along

a continuum of conflict.   Any study of bargaining along this continuum need not shy

away from considering several different sorts of interaction for examination.   However,

excluding the bargaining that occurs within total war does seem appropriate, as it lacks

both the ability to threaten more and the fear that the other side might do more—by

definition, the combatants are already doing their utmost.   Thus, both non-militarized

crises and limited wars are to be considered in the universe of cases that this dissertation

evaluates.

Most scholars explicitly take a broad view regarding whether strategic coercion

can include some uses of force, while still distinguishing that from the pure brute force

method of military compellence.   Thomas Schelling, in a chapter entitled "The

Diplomacy of Violence," emphasizes the difference between nations getting what they

want through brute force rather than threats, intimidation, and blackmail, "between the

unilateral, 'undiplomatic' recourse to strength, and coercive diplomacy based on the

power to hurt."[25]   Pape also points out that "coercion ... [is] logically distinct from the

imposition of demands after complete military victory."[26]   He nevertheless focuses on a

class of events that are characterized by the heavy use of force, because even there, the

communicative nature of the use of force is central.   Jakobsen and Freedman both make

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24 George W. Downs and David M. Rocke, *Tacit Bargaining, Arms Races, and Arms Control* (Ann
    Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1990).

25 Schelling, *Arms and Influence*, 2-3.

26 Robert Pape, *Bombing to Win: Air Power and Coercion in War* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University
    Press, 1996), 13.

parallel points.[27]   Alexander George appears to take a somewhat more restrictive view of

coercive diplomacy, stressing the importance of threats rather than the actual use of force.

> The general intent of coercive diplomacy is to back a demand on an adversary with a
> threat of punishment for noncompliance that will be credible and potent enough to
> persuade him that it is in his interest to comply with the demand. ...   It should be kept in
> mind that coercive diplomacy is essentially a diplomatic strategy, one that relies on the
> threat of force rather than the use of force to achieve the objective.   If force must be
> used to strengthen diplomatic efforts at persuasion, it is employed in an exemplary
> manner, in the form of a quite limited military action, to demonstrate resolution and
> willingness to escalate to high levels of military action if necessary."[28]

However, as is clear from a careful reading of that passage, even here some recourse to

use of force still falls under the rubric of coercive diplomacy for George, so long as it is

aimed primarily at communication of threats of even greater violence.   Violence can

play such a communicative role in all conflicts except those that have escalated to

Clausewitz's theoretical extremes.

The approach adopted in this dissertation will follow this broad definition, widely

shared in the field that allows strategic coercion to include the uses of force so long as

they have some communicative element and are not part of a total war strategy.

Another question regarding the nature of tools to implement strategic coercion is

what exactly is threatened.   Again, there are some core, shared elements in the field.

While most work on deterrence or compellence has focused on threats to punish, other

threats are also possible.   Glenn Snyder has pointed out that military force can be used

either to deny victory to an adversary or to directly hurt him and that both of these may

useful to threaten in coercive diplomacy.[29]   Freedman argues strongly that denial

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27   Freedman, "Strategic Coercion," 20ff; Jakobsen, *Western Use of Coercive Diplomacy,* 14-15.

28   George, "Introduction: The Limits of Coercive Diplomacy," 2.

29   Glenn Herald Snyder, *Deterrence by Denial and Punishment* (Princeton, N. J.: Woodrow Wilson
     School of Public and International Affairs Center of International Studies, Princeton University, 1959);
     Glenn Herald Snyder, *Deterrence and Defense: Toward a Theory of National Security* (Princeton, N.J.:

strategies can be used both to deter and to compel.[30]   Schelling and Pape raise similar

points, and Shimshoni goes further to point out that, in conventional deterrence, the

distinction can be easily blurred.[31]   The usage adopted here will include both of these

tools of influence—punishment and denial.

Further, threats and signals can be made explicitly or tacitly.[32]   While much

attention focuses on the former, it is important not to neglect the latter for several reasons.

First, they are ubiquitous.   Arquilla finds that "tacit signals" using military forces were

used in 60 percent of the cases he studied.[33]   The entire tit-for-tat literature sparked by

Axelrod's work centers on tacit signaling.[34]   Beyond that, to some scholars, tacit signals

convey an exceptional clarity:

> Despite their lack of nuance and heavier costs, relative to verbal communication, tacit
> measures have, in theory, three great strengths.   First, if they are unsubtle, they are also
> unambiguous.   Language is rich, and its very complexity can be used to obfuscate as
> easily as to clarify.   A warship in the harbor may provoke many things but certainly not
> confusion.[35]

Thus, this study will address strategic coercion with either explicit or tacit signals.

Princeton University Press, 1961).   For a recent analysis of nuclear deterrence that considers both
deterrence by defense and deterrence by punishment, see Avery Goldstein, *Deterrence and Security in
the 21st Century: China, Britain, France, and the Enduring Legacy of the Nuclear Revolution*
(Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2000), 29ff.

30   Freedman, "Strategic Coercion," 26ff.   For a less supportive view on this point, see Art, "The Four
Functions of Force," 155.

31   Pape, *Bombing to Win*, 13; Schelling, *Arms and Influence*, 2; Shimshoni, *Israel and Conventional
Deterrence*, 15.   Pape provides an example of denial being used for coercion in the later stages of the
Korean War during the early part of the Panmunjom negotiations.   Pape, *Bombing to Win*, 140.

32   Note that here the term "signals" incorporates both Jervis' usage of "signals" and "indices."   See
Robert Jervis, *The Logic of Images in International Relations* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University
Press, 1970).

33   John Arquilla, "Louder Than Words: Tacit Communication in International Crises," *Political
Communication* 9 (1992): 163.   Also see Downs and Rocke, *Tacit Bargaining*.

34   See the discussion in the previous chapter at note 69 on Axelrod's work.

35   Arquilla, "Louder Than Words," 157.   As discussed in the rest of this dissertation, unfortunately
military signals are not always so clear-cut.

Finally, many scholars of strategic coercion focus on both incentives and threats, or carrots and sticks, as tools of policy.[36] This is theoretically attractive because both incentives and threats can manipulate the cost-benefit analysis by a potential adversary. However, this dissertation will not address incentives, while it acknowledges that they can certainly be useful in achieving a nation's goals.[37] This is done because the causal dynamic highlighted (misperceptions caused by different theories of victory) here focuses on impediments to communication of threats, primarily.[38]

Thus, for the purposes of this project, strategic coercion is defined as the process of one nation trying to convince another nation to do something it would not have done through threats (implicit or explicit) and limited uses of violence, either by opposing an

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36 David A. Baldwin, "The Power of Positive Sanctions," *World Politics* 24, no. 1 (1971); David A. Baldwin, *Economic Statecraft* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1985); David Cortright, *The Price of Peace: Incentives and International Conflict Prevention* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1997); David Cortright and Andrea Gabbitas, "Incentives for Nuclear Restraint: The Role of Inducement Strategies in Controlling Russian Tactical Nuclear Weapons," in *Tactical Nuclear Weapons: Emergent Threats in an Evolving Security Environment*, ed. Brian Alexander and Alistair Millar (Washington, DC: Brassey's, Inc, 2003); David Cortright, George A. Lopez, and International Peace Academy., *The Sanctions Decade: Assessing UN Strategies in the 1990s* (Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2000); Jakobsen, *Western Use of Coercive Diplomacy;* Robert Jervis, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1976), 590ff; Michael Laird, "Wars Averted: Chanak 1922, Burma 1945-47, Berlin 1948," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 19, no. 3 (1996): 356; Evan Luard, "Conciliation and Deterrence: A Comparison of Political Strategies in the Interwar and Postwar Periods," *World Politics* 19, no. 2 (1967): 186; Martin Patchen, *Resolving Disputes between Nations: Coercion or Conciliation?* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1988), Chapter 10; Gaines Post, Jr., "Mad Dogs and Englishmen: British Rearmament, Deterrence and Appeasement," *Armed Forces and Society* 14, no. 3 (1988); Arnold Wolfers, *Discord and Collaboration: Essays on International Politics* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins Press, 1962), see particularly Chapter 9.   Howard takes a rather different view of the role of incentives, suggesting that it is allies that need be reassured.   Michael Eliot Howard, "Reassurance and Deterrence: Western Defense in the 1980s," *Foreign Affairs* 61, no. 2 (1982/83).

37 For similar treatment, see Cortright and Gabbitas, "Incentives for Nuclear Restraint," 6.

38 That said, different theories of victory might lead to an under-appreciation of the carrot offered by an adversary.   Suppose the United States withdrew tactical aircraft from a region, but left its ground troops in place.   Nations who focused more on ground forces as sources of power would not appreciated the full incentive that the United States was trying to signal.   This too would have negative effects on international diplomacy and peace.   However, this study excludes this sort of phenomenon for simplicity's sake.

adversary's actions or punishing him.   With the caveats discussed above, this is similar

to the usage of the term by others in the field.[39]

The theory below should apply when strategic coercion is attempted.   That is,

attempts at strategic coercion are the universe of cases for the theory.   As noted above,

this is a very large set of cases as threats, implicit or otherwise, are frequent in

international politics.   It is in these cases that communication regarding intent and

assessments of the balance of power are critical issues between nations.

Doctrines and Theories of Victory

The difference between two nations' theories of victory is the independent

variable in this study.   Thus, some explicit and detailed discussions of what "theory of

victory" means and where one comes from are warranted.   Posen defines a military's

theory of victory in the following passage

> Every military organization, explicitly or implicitly, has a theory of victory, a notion of
> the combination of human and material resources and tactics that it believes is most likely
> to produce success on the battlefield.   The theory of victory is the organization's military
> doctrine.[40]

Others use the term in similar ways, with some variations.[41]

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39   In addition to the citations discussed above, see, Byman, Waxman, and Larson, *Air Power as a
Coercive Instrument*, 10; Schelling, *Arms and Influence*, Chapter 1: The Diplomacy of Violence.
Note that Schultz, while lacking a precise definition of coercive diplomacy, clearly makes use of the
broader meaning that used here.   Kenneth A. Schultz, *Democracy and Coercive Diplomacy* (New
York: Cambridge University Press, 2001).   Jakobsen uses the term "coercive diplomacy" to mean the
same thing that "strategic coercion" is used for here.   Jakobsen, *Western Use of Coercive Diplomacy*.

40   Barry R. Posen, "Measuring the European Conventional Balance: Coping with Complexity in Threat
Assessment," *International Security* 9, no. 3 (1984/85): 51.

41   The earliest citation this author is aware of is Colin S. Gray, "Nuclear Strategy: The Case for a
Theory of Victory," *International Security* 4, no. 1 (1979).   However, Gray is never explicit about
what he means by the term, although clearly there is some broader element of integration of political
goals in his version of the concept.   (Thus, Gray's version has some similarities with Posen's "grand
strategy".   Barry R. Posen, *The Sources of Military Doctrine: France, Britain, and Germany
between the World Wars* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1984), 13.)   Rosen is more explicit in
Stephen Peter Rosen, *Winning the Next War: Innovation and the Modern Military* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell
University Press, 1991), 20.   There he defines a theory of victory as "an explanation of what the next

Military strategies link force structures to political or military goals.[42] Below

that level, military doctrine sketches out a generic understanding of how elements of

military power can be used to achieve victory. Doctrine refers to a concept below

nations' grand strategies, but above their operational or tactical military strategy.[43]

Doctrines can be based on organizational frameworks, specific technologies, or more

conceptual elements.[44]

Examples from current American security policy might illuminate this discussion.

Military doctrine does not refer to the new U.S. strategies of maintaining and ensuring

global predominance and the pre-emption of threats.[45] Those more appropriately fit at

the level of a grand strategy.[46] Nor does it refer to the specific U.S. strategy of the left

hook in the first Gulf War; this is more of an operational or tactical strategy.[47] Rather,

in the context of policy today, American military doctrine is the theory of victory for

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war will look like and how officers must fight if it is to be won." For other uses of the term in similar ways, see Neta C. Crawford, "Just War Theory and the U.S. Counterterror War," *Perspectives on Politics* 1, no. 1 (2003): 10 and 17; Barry R. Posen, *Inadvertent Escalation: Conventional War and Nuclear Risks* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1991), 5 and 75.

42   Again see Posen, *The Sources of Military Doctrine*, 13.

43   For a similar definition of military doctrine, see *Ibid.*, 13, 245, n.3. Mearsheimer refers to this conceptual level as military strategy. See John J. Mearsheimer, *Conventional Deterrence* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983), 28. This dissertation's usage of the term is also consistent with that in several other studies: Deborah D. Avant, *Political Institutions and Military Change: Lessons from Peripheral Wars* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994), 3 n. 7; Elizabeth Kier, *Imagining War: French and British Military Doctrine between the Wars* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1997); Jeffrey Legro, *Cooperation under Fire: Anglo-German Restraint During World War II* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995).

44   For discussion of the first two of these, see Rosen, *Winning the Next War, passim*, but espec. 185.

45   See President George W. Bush, *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington DC: White House, September 2002). Available at http://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nss.pdf

46   Concurring that they do not belong in the category of military doctrine is Michael Ignatieff, "Why Are We in Iraq? (and Liberia? And Afghanistan?)," *New York Times Magazine*, September 7 2003, 42.

47   For descriptions of the left hook, see, for instance, Robert H. Scales, *Certain Victory: The U.S. Army in the Gulf War* (Washington: Brassey's, 1994).

conventional wars based on heavy use of airpower and precision guided munitions aimed to decapitate an adversary, followed up by heavy mechanized forces and very highly mobile infantry forces, as needed.[48] This is a conception of how the United States plans to win wars in general, of the fundamental basis of military power.

Choosing optimal doctrines and strategies is not straightforward and is better thought of as an art than a science. There is no single, optimal strategy to achieve a given goal with a given force structure.[49] Indeed, doctrines can range widely as can understandings of the fundamental basis of military power. For example, a nation might emphasize any one of the following: blitzkrieg, submarine blockade, conventional strategic bombing, intense tactical air without an associated ground force, sea control based on a battleship navy, highly trained light infantry, etc. (And indeed nations might emphasize one of these in one strategic geography and another elsewhere.) Empirically, Weigley traces more than a dozen different "ways of war" for the United States alone over its first 200 years.[50]

Building on the usage of Posen and others described above, this dissertation defines a "theory of victory" as a belief about what constitutes effective military power at a fundamental level and how it should be used operationally and tactically. It

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48   For a representative statement see *FM 3-0: Operations*, FM 3-0 (Washington, DC: Headquarters, Department of the Army, June 14, 2001); General Henry H. Shelton, *Doctrine for Joint Operations*, JP 3-0 (Washington, DC: Joint Chiefs of Staff, September 10, 2001). For an earlier example, see the 1982 edition of FM 100-5 that introduced AirLand Battle.

49   Making an even broader point is Richard K. Betts, "Is Strategy an Illusion?," *International Security* 25, no. 2 (2000).

50   Russell Frank Weigley, *The American Way of War: A History of United States Military Strategy and Policy* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1977). Note Weigley's use of the term strategy is similar to the use of "theory of victory" in this dissertation (see his definitional comments on pp. xvii-xix). However, strategy is a broad term, one used differently by many people. Therefore, it is not selected here.

includes—indeed, is centered on—doctrine, but also consists of the make up of military forces as well as some elements of grand strategy. It is a blanket term to describe a generic understanding of how to win wars. It is a mental construct, albeit one that is often informed by past empirical experience and one that clearly has tangible effects on policy. It guides the procurement of forces, shapes the doctrine with which those forces are used, and prioritizes grand strategic goals for the nation.

Other terms express similar meaning, although none has gained wide currency, and each has some limitations. Applegate refers to "military cultures" which would seem to exclude sources of such beliefs from more material factors.[51] Weigley's term "the way of war" comes very close to the meaning used here, but might be a bit broader, since it centers on grand strategic questions (which are included primarily as supplementary to doctrinal issues in the usage here).[52] Further, the term "theory of victory" also reminds us that such a perspective need not have been actually tested, that it might remain theoretical only (whereas Weigley's research is focused on the actual conduct of war). The term used here term is also similar to Builder's description of the different "concepts of war" that the various services have within the U.S. military.[53] The term "concept of operations" (or CONOPS) is also similar, although less precise as it can refer to a wide range of scales (e.g., the concept of operations for the B-2 bomber as well one for use of military force by the United States in the periphery for the purposes of

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51 Or at least it would suggest that such sources are less important than sociologic sources. This is not a fight this dissertation engages, as for its purposes, the sources of such beliefs are less relevant than their effects. See R. A. D. Applegate and J. R. Moore, "The Nature of Military Culture," *Defense Analysis* 6, no. 3 (1990).

52 Weigley, *The American Way of War*.

53 Carl H. Builder, *The Masks of War: American Military Styles in Strategy and Analysis* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), Chapter 12: The Service Concepts of War.

regime change). As noted in the previous chapter, this concept overlaps with Scobell's

"organizational culture" of the PLA in his discussion of the possible cultural influences

on China's propensity to use military force.[54] One study of recent American uses "force

structure and doctrine" to define the scope of a similar topic:

> For the armed forces, force structure and doctrine represent two critical characteristics
> that define the military capabilities upon which leaders can draw. Force structure
> incorporates doctrinal decisions and assumptions about mission execution. It
> incorporates specific mixes of personnel, equipment, organizational structure and
> assumptions about operational effectiveness. It constrains options for employing the
> military (e.g., inability of active forces to sustain themselves for long deployments
> required call up and deployment of National Guard and Reserves in Desert Storm).
> Doctrine provides the conceptual framework that relates military means to desired ends.
> [According to the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff] "Military doctrine presents fundamental
> principles that guide the employment of forces ... doctrine deals with the fundamental
> issue of how best to employ the national military power to achieve strategic ends."
> Doctrine operationalizes a theory of military action. It is the driving force behind
> training and preparation for military operations by units and the tactical and operational
> levels.[55]

Thus, the dissertation will focus on nations' broad theories of victory as well as their

narrower doctrines in its evaluation of the independent variable.

Theory

With those definitions on the table, this chapter now turns to the specific causal

chain proposed by the theory. It begins with a summary of the existing work that

explains the sources of doctrinal beliefs before moving on to the next two stages of the

causal chain proposed by the dissertation. First, differences in theories of victory should

lead to an overestimation of one's own power relative to that of one's adversary.

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54 Andrew Scobell, *China's Use of Military Force: Beyond the Great Wall and the Long March* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 7-8.

55 Richard Ariynn Lacquement, Jr., "Preaching after the Devil's Death: Shaping American Military Capabilities in the Post-Cold War Era" (Ph.D. Dissertation, Princeton University, 2000), 14-15. And as that author goes on to note, "these capabilities cannot be changed easily or quickly," thus suggesting their importance. *Ibid.*, 8.

Second, such an overestimation should lead to increased prospects for failure of strategic coercive policies and unnecessary conflict.

The Origins of Strategic and Doctrinal Beliefs

This dissertation does not explain the *sources* of different theories of victory but rather their *effects*.[56] It is nevertheless important to understand the range of influences on leaders' perceptions of optimal strategies and to be aware of indicators of their perceptions. The large literature on these topics has shown that many factors shape nations' perceptions regarding optimal strategies. This section briefly discusses four categories of these.

First, systemic and geographic imperatives can have a powerful effect forcing doctrinal innovation.[57] Military defeat punishes laggards, and the international system presents powerful incentives to find effective military solutions to strategic dilemmas. Some argue that others in the international system emulate effective military strategies under the right conditions.[58] (Different scholars note that, at least in peacetime, the

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56　This dissertation will focus on an effect of doctrine, one that has received little systematic attention. Doctrine has long been recognized to have other important effects at the geopolitical level. See, for instance, Robert Jervis, *The Illogic of American Nuclear Strategy* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984); Posen, *Inadvertent Escalation;* Albert Wohlstetter, "The Delicate Balance of Terror," *Foreign Affairs* 37 (1959). For work on the effects of conventional doctrine, see Mearsheimer, *Conventional Deterrence;* Stephen Van Evera, "The Cult of the Offensive and the Origins of the First World War," in *Military Strategy and the Origins of the First World War*, ed. Steven E. Miller, Sean M. Lynn-Jones, and Stephen Van Evera (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991).

57　The most famous argument about when this occurs is: Posen, *The Sources of Military Doctrine.* Also see Colin Elman, "The Logic of Emulation: The Diffusion of Military Practices in the International System" (Ph.D. Dissertation, Columbia University, 1999); Mearsheimer, *Conventional Deterrence;* Sten Rynning, "Shaping Military Doctrine in France: Decisionmakers between International Power and Domestic Interests," *Security Studies* 11, no. 2 (2001/2).

58　Elman, "The Logic of Emulation"; João Resende-Santos, "Anarchy and the Emulation of Military Systems: Military Organization and Technology in South America, 1870-1930," *Security Studies* 5, no. 3 (1996).

imprecision of intelligence makes such emulation very challenging.[59])   Financial

shortfalls and other resource constraints can also play a similar role in shaping a nation's

choice of strategy.   (That is, there may be situations when states are forced to choose a

strategy because is the only one they can afford.)

Second, closely related to this third image argument is the role that technologic

advancement has in leading to innovation.   When such advances occur, new options are

available to states in terms of weapons and tactics.   Sometimes, states will indeed avail

themselves to these new opportunities, shaping their views of strategy.[60]   For instance,

one historian argues that the proliferation of a variety of technologies—the railroad,

artillery, and improved personal arms—drove the adoption of general staffs, an

organizational change.[61]   The rise of general staffs, in turn, then led to new opportunities

at the strategic and operational levels.   Thus, some scholars argue, the link between

technologic innovation and change in doctrine is not necessarily linear, but rather is often

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59   Rosen, *Winning the Next War*, 61.   Rosen notes that in the first decade of the interwar period, the
      United States based its intelligence regarding Japan primarily on open sources.   This was clearly
      insufficient for guiding doctrinal innovation, as he notes. Nevertheless, both sides pursued parallel
      innovations (independently, and at great cost) in the area of carrier-based airpower.

60   For a forceful statement on the role of technology in fomenting innovation, see Martin L. Van Creveld,
      Technology and War: From 2000 B.C. To the Present, Revised and Expanded ed. (New York, NY:
      The Free Press, 1991).   For a broader look at the impact of technology, see William H. McNeill, *The
      Pursuit of Power: Technology, Armed Force, and Society since AD 1000* (Chicago, IL: University of
      Chicago Press, 1982).   For a contrary view, arguing against any deterministic role for technology in
      military affairs, see Keir A. Lieber, "Grasping the Technological Peace: The Offense-Defense Balance
      and International Security," *International Security* 25, no. 1 (2000).   For broader critiques against
      technologic determinism, see Wiebe E. Bijker, Thomas Parke Hughes, and T. J. Pinch, *The Social
      Construction of Technological Systems: New Directions in the Sociology and History of Technology*
      (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1987); Merritt Roe Smith and Leo Marx, *Does Technology Drive
      History? The Dilemma of Technological Determinism* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1994).

61   Dallas D. Irvine, "The Origin of Capital Staffs," *The Journal of Modern History* 10, no. 2 (1938).

quite complex and depends on many other factors (organizational politics, budgetary factors, etc.).[62]

A third important source of such perceptions is past historic practice. One manifestation of this is the well-known adage that 'states often prepare to fight the last war'.[63] When states have found viable strategies, they are reluctant to change them. The process of learning from history, however, is not straightforward and debates over what lesson history conveys are endemic.[64]

Fourth, organizational structures and practices can also shape doctrine by reifying the lessons of history, setting standard operating practices, and defining actors' interests. A variety of hypotheses have been introduced regarding organizational sources of innovation: the intervention of civilian leaders,[65] the nature of the institutions of civilian oversight,[66] inter-service and inter-branch rivalry,[67] continuity in the officer corps,[68] and

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62 For an outstanding set of examples of these difficulties, see I. B. Holley, Jr., "Technology and Doctrine," in *Technology and the Air Force: A Retrospective Assessment*, ed. Jacob Neufeld, George M. Watson, Jr., and David Chenoweth (Washington, DC: Airforce History and Museums Program, United States Air Force, 1997).

63 Eliot Cohen and John Gooch, *Military Misfortunes: The Anatomy of Failure in War* (New York, NY: The Free Press, 1990).

64 For a historical perspective on the role of such debates in the U.S. Army's process of learning from history, see Carol Reardon, *Soldiers and Scholars: The U.S. Army and the Uses of Military History, 1865-1920* (Lawrence, Kan.: University Press of Kansas, 1990).

65 Posen, *The Sources of Military Doctrine.*; Elman, "The Logic of Emulation".

66 Avant, *Political Institutions and Military Change;* Deborah D. Avant, "From Mercenary to Citizen Armies: Explaining Change in the Practice of War," *International Organization* 54, no. 1 (2000).

67 Owen Reid Cote, Jr., "The Politics of Innovative Military Doctrine: The United States Navy and Fleet Ballistic Missiles" (Ph.D. Dissertation, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1996); Eugene Gholz, "Systems Integration in the U.S. Defense Industry: Who Does It and Why Is It Important?," in *The Business of Systems Integration*, ed. Andrea Prencipe, Andrew Davies, and Mike Hobday (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2003); Rosen, *Winning the Next War;* Harvey M. Sapolsky, *The Polaris System Development: Bureaucratic and Programmatic Success in Government* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1972); Harvey M. Sapolsky, "On the Theory of Military Innovation," *Breakthroughs* 9, no. 1 (2000).

the historically-derived organizational culture.[69]   Much work also emphasizes the

impediments that organizations throw up to innovation.[70]   Organizations can also shape

doctrine more directly: A professionalized force has options available to it that a

conscript military does not due to the skill levels of its officers and non-commissioned

officers.[71]

Thus, the sources of theories of victory are numerous.   All of these four

categories of factors might affect a nation's theory of victory, that is, their own

understanding of how their military forces should be used to maximize their effectiveness

in the pursuit of some goal.   Again, this vast body of work is an important precursor to

this dissertation's argument, but this project does not attempt to assess the accuracy of

specific sides of the debate on the sources of military doctrine.

Since states have different factor endowments, recent histories in security affairs,

and their own national and organizational cultures, analysts should expect to find

significant variation in theories of victory across space and time.   While different factor

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68   Elman, "The Logic of Emulation".

69   Avant, "From Mercenary to Citizen Armies."; Kier, *Imagining War;* Legro, *Cooperation under Fire.*
Elizabeth Kier, "Culture and French Military Doctrine before World War II," in *The Culture of
National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics,* ed. Peter J. Katzenstein (New York, NY:
Columbia University Press, 1996).   This also seems to be at the core of the argument advanced in
Scobell, *China's Use of Military Force.*

70   That organizations retard innovation, in general, is implicit in many of the works cited above.   See
also Scott Douglas Sagan, *The Limits of Safety: Organizations, Accidents, and Nuclear Weapons*
(Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1993).

71   See for instance the discussions on French strategy in Jack L. Snyder, *The Ideology of the Offensive:
Military Decision Making and the Disasters of 1914* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1984).
Also, the role of the professionalism was critical at all levels of the German Wehrmacht, R. Ernest
Dupuy and Trevor N. Dupuy, *A Genius for War: The German Army and General Staff, 1807-1945*
(New York, NY: Nova Publications, 1995).   In current affairs, the Chinese clearly recognize this
today, see David L. Shambaugh, *Modernizing China's Military: Progress, Problems, and Prospects*
(Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002).   For discussions of China and other East Asian
states in this regard, see Eric Heginbotham, "The Fall and Rise of Navies in East Asia: Military
Organizations, Domestic Politics, and Grand Strategy," *International Security* 27, no. 2 (2002).

endowments are important to understanding the sources of the Sino-American differences,[72] in many other cases other issues are at the foundations of the differences in theories of victory. (Further, even in the context of material disparity, nations can have similar understandings of theories of victory if other factors are important.[73]) Nevertheless, this dissertation will not systematically survey the variation of this, the independent variable. At least one study concludes that there are significant differences in military cultures, even among European and North Atlantic nations:

> The results are rather unambiguous. First, it evolved that fairly large differences exist between military cultures, as discerned among the samples of student officers. For example, the cultural differences between the Canadian academy and the Italian academy are quite considerable and systematic. ... Furthermore, the dispersion among the various military academies on all cultural dimensions proved to be even larger than in the original Hofstede study of civilian employees.[74]

While the variable in question in those studies is not precisely the same as the military cultural aspects that are the focus of this dissertation, that study is suggestive of substantial and fundamental cross-national differences. Furthermore, anecdotal evidence suggests that significant differences in theories of victory across two nations are common. Throughout the remainder of this chapter, examples from the Napoleonic wars, several dyads in World War II (U.S.-Germany and France-Germany), and the Arab-Israeli war of 1973 are found to exhibit wide differences in theories of victory (and something similar seems to have existed in the Peloponnesian wars). Mearsheimer

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72 That said, clearly the cases below do not simply reduce to capability differences. In the chapters that follow, the United States is just as prone to overestimating its own capabilities as is China.

73 The cases below provide examples of this. See Chapter 6: China Postpones the Invasion of Taiwan.

74 Joseph L. Soeters, "Value Orientations in Military Academies: A Thirteen Country Study," *Armed Forces and Society* 24, no. 1 (1997): 24. The Hofstede study had focused on cross-national comparisons of workers at various IBM subsidiaries. It, too found a wide range of national differences.

notes the large doctrinal differences between the French and Germans before WWII.[75]

Arquilla argues something similar occurred in World War I and the wars of Louis XIV.[76]

Shimshoni finds evidence for a related phenomenon in the Arab-Israeli conflicts in 1954

and 1967.[77]   It likely occurs between the United States and China today.[78]   Thus, there

is some evidence that the phenomenon exists widely.

The chart below shows the link between these various factors and nations' beliefs

about theories of victory and effective strategies and capabilities as the arrow labeled

under $H_{existing\ literature}$ (really, this is best thought of as a set of—sometimes

competing—hypotheses, but for simplicity's sake, that is reduced here).

Figure 2-2:   The Theory's Precursors
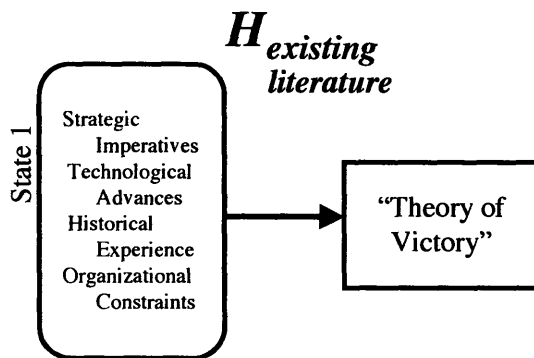
Rather than join the debate on the sources of doctrine or explain the origins of

nations' theories of victory, this dissertation will look to their effects.   Once a nation has

arrived at a set of beliefs that constitute its theory of victory, the implications are

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75   Mearsheimer, *Conventional Deterrence.*

76   John Arquilla, *Dubious Battles: Aggression, Defeat, and the International System,* Dubious battles ed. (Washington, DC: Crane Russak, 1992), 103-29.

77   Shimshoni, *Israel and Conventional Deterrence.*

78   Thomas J. Christensen, "Posing Problems without Catching Up: China's Rise and Challenges for U.S. Security Policy," *International Security* 25, no. 4 (2001).

substantial.   Scholars have long recognized the inflexibility of doctrinal thinking in

other spheres.   William Graham Sumner, a prominent sociologist and political scientist

at Yale writing at the dawn of the 20th century, wrote forebodingly of doctrines in foreign

policy:

> Now when any doctrine arrives at that degree of authority, the name of it is a club which
> any demagogue may swing over you at any time and apropos of anything.   In order to
> describe a doctrine, we much have recourse to theological language.   A doctrine is an
> article of faith.   ... A doctrine is an abstract principle; it is necessarily absolute in its
> scope and abstruse in its terms; it is metaphysical assertion.   It is never true, because it is
> absolute, and the affairs of men are all conditioned and relative[79]

As is the case for doctrines of foreign policy, so too it is with those of military affairs.

The effects of a particular doctrine are wide-ranging.   Future force procurement

decisions will be made based on that decision.   Training is geared to implement it (even

at senior levels of the military).   Political leaders will also be educated in it by the

military leadership.   Further, once incorporated into a nation's doctrine, these beliefs are

often applied to unexpected situations through the creation of standard operating

procedures that are relatively inflexible yet widely applied.[80]   As Lt. Colonel Richard

Lacquement, a professor at the Naval War College, notes,

> In the short-response time, come-as-you-are nature of most international crisis situations,
> the employment of the armed forces places critical importance on existing forces and
> their existing organizational routines (SOPs, doctrine, etc.).   The structure and doctrine
> of armed forces establishes how they operate.[81]

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79   Quoted in Hans Morgenthau and Kenneth Thompson, *Politics among Nations: The Struggle for
     Power and Peace*, Sixth ed. (New York, NY: McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1985), 585.

80   The classic statements on the role of standard operating procedures in foreign policy are: Graham T.
     Allison, "Conceptual Models and the Cuban Missile Crisis," *American Political Science Review* 63, no.
     3 (1969); Graham T. Allison, *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis* (Boston,:
     Little Brown, 1971).

81   Lacquement, "Preaching after the Devil's Death", 13.

Indeed, while military doctrine is necessary in order to rehearse and plan, once accepted

it reinforces a belief system about its own efficacy.[82]   Even sharp external shocks may

not be enough to lead to change:

> The enemy's sudden attack [at Pearl Harbor] produced no quick reorientation of
> American ideas about the use of air power.   The first impulse was to resurrect schemes
> concocted under different circumstances.   As in many other matters, so too in the use of
> air power.   Pearl Harbor was not the watershed it came to seem.[83]

This inflexibility of doctrine, coupled with its application to a wide range of policies and

issues, emphasizes its importance as a variable in and of itself.

Thus, the choice of doctrine, and more broadly a theory of victory, has important

impacts in terms of shaping the very way national leaders think about international

security.[84]   The hypotheses below outline the specific causal argument of these impacts.

Hypotheses

The literature discussed above analyzing the sources of doctrine treats doctrine as

a dependent variable.   This dissertation uses doctrine and related thinking regarding

theories of victory instead as an independent variable.   Essentially, the dissertation has a

two-part argument: differences in theories of victory lead to misperceptions; these in turn

lead to miscommunications, escalation, and conflict through deterrence failure and

coercive failure more generally.   Each is expressed as a separate hypothesis.   The first

is stated as H_1, below.

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82   In addition to the discussion below on the difficulties of innovation, Smith also discusses the rigidity
    and persistence of doctrine.   Perry M. Smith, "The Role of Doctrine," in *American Defense Policy*, ed.
    John E. Endicott and Roy W. Stafford, Jr. (Baltimore, Mary.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977).

83   Michael S. Sherry, *The Rise of American Air Power: The Creation of Armageddon* (New Haven: Yale
    University Press, 1987), 117.

84   For other effects of doctrine, see the discussion in the previous chapter regarding the overestimation of
    dangers.

Hypothesis #1

H_1: *When two nations have different theories of victory, they will be more likely to misperceive each other's capabilities relative to their own, and these misperceptions, ceteris paribus, will lead to underestimation of the adversary.*

This hypothesis has two components. The first predicts opacity as a result of differing theories of victory. The second focuses on the primary way that opacity manifests itself: underestimation. (This component also has a "ceteris paribus" assumption built in, which will be discussed at the end of this section).

The hypothesis relies on seven underlying logics. Each of these explains why H_1 is likely to hold. In cases where two nations have different theories of victory, these different logics explain why it is that nations will be prone to underestimating their adversaries. They are based on various organizational, cultural, and perceptual arguments. Each is explained in turn.

Causal Logics.

The first three logics depend primarily on the logics of organizational politics and the effects of culture on perception. The next four logics trace their roots to perceptual arguments, primarily from the psychology literature.

First, the military innovation literature suggests that organizations, and militaries in particular, are reluctant to innovate.[85] In general, organizations are reluctant to

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85 For a quick summary of these problems, plus some insightful discussion of factors that may mitigate this, see Rosen, *Winning the Next War*, espec. pp. 1-6ff. Other works that use organizational theory in international relations are: Allison, *Essence of Decision;* Morton H. Halperin, Priscilla Clapp, and Arnold Kanter, *Bureaucratic Politics and Foreign Policy* (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution, 1974); John D. Steinbruner, *The Cybernetic Theory of Decision: New Dimensions of Political Analysis* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1974). A few that focus directly on military affairs are Cohen and Gooch, *Military Misfortunes;* Edward L. Jr. Katzenbach, "The Horse Cavalry in the Twentieth Century," in *The Use of Force: Military Power and International Politics*, ed. Robert Art and Kenneth Waltz (Lanham, MD: The University Press, 1993), 180; Posen, *The Sources of Military Doctrine*, 224; Snyder, *The Ideology of the Offensive;* Jack L. Snyder, *Myths of Empire: Domestic Politics and International Ambition* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991); T. H. E. Travers, "Technology, Tactics, and Morale: Jean De Bloch, the Boer War, and British Military Theory, 1900-1914," *Journal of Modern History* 51, no. June (1979). More generally on organizational theory see

change, have trouble thinking outside of established ideas, and resist changing 'standard

operating procedures. Militaries are particularly sensitive to this since not only does

change threaten the organization, but also it involves putting soldiers' very lives at risk.

Because they denigrate innovation in their own organization, they should also discount its

value to others. This can be the case even when other countries have successfully

innovated and all that the country in question must do is to emulate others.[86]

The well-known example of the horse cavalry between the world wars in the U.S.

Army exemplifies well. Even after the carnage on the front lines of the European

battlefields at the Somme and Verdun and the success of tanks at the end of the war, a

dominant group of horse cavalry officers in the interwar period continued to insist that

the horse was a superior weapons platform to the tank because it was more maneuverable

and flexible.[87] As a result, at the outbreak of WWII in Europe, the United States had a

mere 28 tanks in service that were not obsolete.[88] Even as late as 1944, desires by

military leaders to continue emphasize high mobility precluded the deployment of heavy

armor and anti-tank weapons.[89] The merits of such a doctrine when facing German

Tiger tanks seems quite irrational in hindsight, but would have appeared justified in the

context of the prevailing understanding of cavalry doctrine at the time.

Michel Crozier, *The Bureaucratic Phenomenon* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964); Max Weber, *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization* (New York, NY: Free Press, 1947).

86 On impediments to emulation, see Elman, "The Logic of Emulation", *passim*, 101ff.

87 See *Ibid.*, 169; Katzenbach, "The Horse Cavalry in the Twentieth Century."

88 Elman, "The Logic of Emulation", 177.   Note that even these were all light and medium tanks. Note the Germans were not entirely immune from the hold of horse cavalry. Guderian writes of one of his division's "curious fear of hostile cavalry."   General Heinz Guderian, *Panzer Leader* (Cambridge, Mass.: DeCapo Press, 1996), 99.

89 Rosen, *Winning the Next War*, 188.   See also David E. Johnson, *Fast Tanks and Heavy Bombers: Innovation in the U.S. Army, 1917-1945* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1998).

Second, strategies are costly, risky endeavors. Getting them implemented is difficult and often requires military (and political) leaders to oversell their merits and denigrate alternatives.[90] For instance, "The U.S. lacked a competitive tank engine in the period before World War II, but in the absence of hard data to the contrary, the chief of the [American] Ordnance Department was able to assert in 1938 that U.S. tank engines were among the best in the world."[91] Other cases of best-case assumptions in the context of poor information regarding an adversary abound.[92] One U.S. Army general (and military historian) writes sweepingly:

> On every occasion, modern nations involved in recent small wars have overestimated the destructive power of their own forces. Inevitably, this overestimate has led to optimism and expectations greater than either men or machines could deliver. Munitions intended to destroy a conventional force may have little or no effect against an elusive, dispersed, entrenched enemy not encumbered by vulnerable heavy equipment or lines of communication. A concentrated bombardment that would shock the life out of a Western unit might have only a temporary effect on the fighting strength of a tough Third World unit inured to hardship and prepared to die for a cause.[93]

The downplaying of alternatives is similarly common in other historic periods. For instance,

> Air Corps leaders had reached a doctrinal decision by 1935 as to the efficacy of unescorted long-range strategic bombardment and were unwilling either to question that decision or even to observe technological advances that might case them to modify this doctrine...[94]

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90 For examples of denigration of alternative doctrines, see Smith, "The Role of Doctrine." On overselling at the political and to some extent grand strategic, level, see Jane Kellett-Cramer, "National Security Panics: Overestimating Threats to National Security" (Ph.D. Dissertation, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2002); Theodore Lowi, *The End of Liberalism: The Second Republic of the United States*, Second ed. (New York, NY: W.W. Norton and Company, 1979), 130ff.

91 Rosen, *Winning the Next War*, 188.

92 *Ibid.*, 194. Also see Smith, "The Role of Doctrine."

93 Robert H. Scales, *Firepower in Limited War* (Washington, DC: National Defense University Press, 1990), 289.

94 Smith, "The Role of Doctrine," 40.

All of these trends would lead to an overestimation of one's own capabilities relative to the adversary.

Third, strategic culture, as with any culture, can shape perceptions in critical ways.[95]   By creating norms and expected patterns of behavior, culture profoundly shapes one's understanding of reality.   At a very fundamental level, "culture refers both to a set of evaluative standards, such as norms or values, and to cognitive standards, such as rules or models defining what entities and actors exist in a system and how they operate and interrelate."[96]   Military cultures are known to have important effects on grand strategic preferences.[97]   On a related note, one scholar writes, "each organization employs a different informational lens to interpret these data [from their own conflicts].[98]   He goes on to argue that these assessment criteria are quite constant over time, even outlasting specific policy preferences or goals in a conflict.[99]

Theories of victory are a sort of military strategic and doctrinal culture, and thus have this type of effect on perceptions of power and signals.   Differences in such

95   See the discussion on strategic culture in the previous chapter entitled "Culture, Strategic Culture, and Communication."   Also see Ted Hopf, "The Promise of Constructivism in International Relations Theory," *International Security* 23, no. 1 (1998): 186-88, in particular; Peter J. Katzenstein, *Cultural Norms and National Security: Police and Military in Postwar Japan* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1996), espec. Chapter 5: The Self-Defense Forces and External Security; Thomas Risse-Kappen, "Collective Identity in a Democratic Community: The Case of NATO," in *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics*, ed. Peter J. Katzenstein (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 359-71; Alexander Wendt, "Anarchy Is What States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics," *International Organization* 46, no. 2 (1992).

96   Ronald L. Jepperson, Alexander Wendt, and Peter J. Katzenstein, "Norms, Identities, and Culture in National Security," in *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics*, ed. Peter J. Katzenstein (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 56.

97   Peter Feaver and Christopher Gelpi, *Choosing Your Battles: American Civil-Military Relations and the Use of Force* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2004).

98   Scott Sigmund Gartner, *Strategic Assessment in War* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1997), 3.

99   *Ibid., passim.*

cultures will lead to differences in perceptions about power and signals across countries,

precisely what this hypothesis predicts.   This will increase the chance for

misperceptions in such situations.

Fourth, leaders understand what they have had experience with.   If they lack

experience with a military weapon or strategy, then it is hard for them to understand it.

Further, if they lack advisors with experience with the weapon or strategy, this problem is

exacerbated.   One example of this comes out of John Arquilla's work on "why 'losers'

start wars."[100]   One of the answers to this question that he finds is the "imperfect

understanding of sea power and its role in land-sea war" by leaders from continental

powers.[101]   The same phenomenon can occur more generally whenever leaders lack an

understanding of their adversary's theory of victory.

Fifth, differences in military forces of a qualitative nature are harder to assess than

those of a quantitative nature.   Andrew Marshall makes a similar point:

> By far the most interesting implicit estimate of military power emerges, I would
> conjecture, from what one would call the symmetry syndrome of more standard or,
> perhaps, classical military planning.   This is the typical reaction pattern: If an opponent
> buys bombers, we tend more to increase our bomber forces, rather than to increase our air
> defense; when an opponent deploys an ABM system, we deploy an ABM system. ...
> Classical military force posture planning, I believe involved an attempt to achieve a
> posture of rough postural symmetry with the potential enemy, subject always to the often
> inadequate peacetime budgets and a variety of bureaucratic, institutional constraints to be
> discussed below.   Symmetry is defined in terms that if the enemy has so many divisions,
> the planners say we ought to have so many divisions; if he has so many naval ships of
> various classes, we should have the same proportional number; the balance of our forces
> would reflect the balance of the enemy's forces.[102]

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100 Arquilla, *Dubious Battles: Aggression, Defeat, and the International System*.   The passage quoted is
   the title of chapter 5 in the book, although that question underlies the entire project as well.

101 *Ibid.*, 121.   Note that the findings of this dissertation are almost the opposite: when a land power
   faced off against a sea power (over Taiwan), there were few mistakes, and deterrence and peace
   prevailed.   However, when a sea power faced a land power on land (in Korea) mistakes and escalation
   were pervasive.   This suggests that something deeper is at play, at least in these cases.

102 Andrew M. Marshall, *Problems of Estimating Military Power*, P-3417 (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND,
   August 1966), 10.

This is also related to an inductive conclusion that comes from a study of Arab-Israeli

conflict from 1953 to 1970.[103]   That study was structured to address the traditional

elements of deterrence theory, noting their particular difficulties in cases of conventional

conflict: relative interests, relative power, reputation, the conduct of diplomacy itself, the

potential for domestic politics to intervene, etc.   A key part of the story that the author

tells, however, was the ability of forces to adapt to threats posed by an adversary and thus

the ephemeral advantage presented by some qualitative differences.   That is,

> Because conventional forces are adaptable, divulging information in the hope of
> enhancing deterrence gives an opponent an opportunity to design around the revealed
> capabilities, so that eventually deterrence is undermined by knowledge.   Yet if the
> opponent knows too little, he will also remain undeterred.[104]

Expanding on this insight, this argument supporting H_1 emphasizes that not only

is diplomacy impeded because nations have incentives to be coy about the sources of

their power when they depend on qualitative differences, but the evaluation of qualitative

differences is simply more challenging than those based on quantitative differences.[105]

It is more difficult to think about different *sorts* of forces facing off than *different*

numbers of forces.   It is relatively easy to think about how an extra division or warship

will affect a particular military balance, especially if they are similar to a state's own

forces of that type.   However, considering the effects of a new type of tank or submarine

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103 Shimshoni, *Israel and Conventional Deterrence*, 226-28.   Shimshoni's excellent work closely
parallels the argument offered here, and this dissertation attempts to build on his useful contribution.
The approach taken here broadens the conclusions of Shimshoni's work by focusing not just on
qualitative differences in forces, but also by emphasizing that doctrinal and grand strategic differences
exhibit similar dynamics.   Shimshoni's primary conclusions focus on the role of surprise and an
emphasis on quality (over quantity) in procurement and deployment.   Qualitative differences more
generally are discussed only in passing in the conclusion.   The hope here is to build on his insights
there by explicitly designing a research program to evaluate this point.

104 *Ibid.*, 227.

105 This point is consistent with, although not made explicitly in, *Ibid.*

is much more challenging. Conducting net assessments or campaign analysis with fundamentally different sorts of forces is particularly challenging.[106]

Sixth, leaders believe their views are correct because they chose them. That is, a psychological defense mechanism of self-justification occurs. The fundamental attribution error—a concept thoroughly grounded in psychological experimental research—is closely related to this point.[107] The fundamental attribution error emphasizes that contextual justifications for choices get less emphasis than they merit. For instance, when subjects are told that a lecturer has been ordered to defend a particular position, they nevertheless believe that the subject does indeed believe the content of his speech.[108] Similarly, a particular theory of victory might be chosen for any number of reasons (as discussed above) other than functional optimality. However, once it is chosen, the context or situation that led to its selection will drift to the background, and people will tend to ignore the reasons why a militarily sub-optimal strategy might have been chosen.

> One scholar of doctrine notes precisely this phenomenon in his field of study.
>
> Social psychologists have shown that stating an idea often leads to changes in personal convictions.... Getting people to commit themselves publicly to a particular belief can lead them to *internalize* that belief. ... if 'saying is believing,' many aspects of the military's culture [and thus doctrine, in the author's mind] may have originated as politically expedient strategies.[109]

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106 Note that this component of H_1 does not predict either over or under-estimation, but only that some error in estimation will occur. The other five components of this hypothesis do support underestimation *per se.*

107 On the use of attribution theory in international relations, see Jonathan Mercer, *Reputation and International Politics* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996).

108 Erica Goode, "How Culture Molds Habits of Thought," *New York Times,* August 8 2000. For an example of political science research that utilizes this concept, see Mercer, *Reputation and International Politics.*

109 Kier, *Imagining War,* 156.

Beyond ignoring the shortcomings of one's own theory of victory, the phenomenon of

self-justification easily leads to a denigration of different views by an adversary.   In turn,

the adversary has the same beliefs about both his own and his adversary's beliefs.   Both

cannot be correct at the same time.

Seventh, psychologically, humans are predisposed to have an exaggerated sense of

themselves.[110]   Psychologists refer to this as a 'positive illusion'.   The key research

underpinning this phenomenon suggests:

> most people exhibit positive illusions in three important domains: (a) They view
> themselves in unrealistically positive terms; (b) they believe they have greater control
> over environmental events than is actually the case; and (c) they hold views of the future
> that are more rosy than base-rate data can justify.[111]

This finding is widely held in the field of social psychology: "there are at least 121

articles on perceived invulnerability and optimistic biases about risk and future life events

alone, a listing that does not include a number of relevant references on optimism as a

trait concept."[112]   Beyond that, there is increasing evidence that this phenomenon, in

some manifestation, exists across cultures,[113] including, of particular interest to this study,

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110 For the path breaking article on this topic, see S. E. Taylor and J. D. Brown, "Illusion and Well-Being: A Social Psychological Perspective on Mental Health," *Psychological Bulletin* 103 (1988).   For the book length refinement, see: Shelley E. Taylor, *Positive Illusions: Creative Self-Deception and the Healthy Mind* (New York: Basic Books, 1989).   For a recent discussion of it in light of the increasing evidence for it, and a response to some of the critiques of that have accumulated, see Shelley E. Taylor and Jonathon D. Brown, "Positive Illusions and Well-Being Revisited: Separating Fact from Fiction," *Psychological Bulletin* 116, no. 1 (1994).

111 Taylor and Brown, "Positive Illusions," 22.

112 *Ibid.*: 25.

113 See Chihiro Kobayashi, "Relationships among Self- and Other- Positive Illusions and Social Adaptation," *Japanese Journal of Interpersonal and Social Psychology*, no. 2 (2002).   Also, see the interesting work on exaggerated positive views of one's close personal relationships in Japanese cultures (rather than an enhanced view of one's person) in Yumi Endo, Steven J. Heine, and Darrin R. Lehman, "Culture and Positive Illusions in Close Relationships: How My Relationships Are Better Than Yours," *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 26, no. 12 (2000).

Chinese culture.[114] This psychological phenomenon has already been productively

applied to the study of international conflict.[115] From the perspective of this dissertation,

it should lead to underestimation of the adversary.

However, this effect will occur whether or not the theories of victory are similar

or different. Thus, on first glance, it would not seem to speak to the hypothesis

introduced above. Thus, regarding this last psychologically derived argument (and to

some extent the fourth point as well), some additional discussion is necessary. There

are reasons to expect them to be particularly pronounced in cases of different theories of

victory. That is because in many circumstances, cognitive errors will be overcome:

> [G]roups of at least seven or eight decisionmakers (and probably as few as two, three or
> four), especially across time, would correct cognitive biases made by one individual, or
> the group would at least override an individual's error even if the individual persevered in
> his or her cognitive misperception—the group would refuse to make the same simple
> error as a particular individual. Further, most individuals would correct their errors if
> they were made aware of them.[116]

However, there are situations when it will be easier to correct such biases and some

situations that will make it harder to do so.

When a state compares its own capabilities to an adversary's, if they are similar in

nature, such exaggerations would seem harder to sustain. However, differences in the

nature of capabilities (or strategies) should allow for a wider range of dissonance.

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114 V. S. Y. Kwan, M. H. Bond, and T. M. Singelis, "Pancultural Explanations for Life Satisfaction:
Adding Relationship Harmony to Self-Esteem," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 73
(1997). Also see the discussion in Michael Harris Bond, Virginia S. Y. Kwan, and Chun Li,
"Decomposing a Sense of Superiority: The Differential Social Impact of Self-Regard and Regard for
Others," *Journal of Research in Personality* 34 (2000).

115 Dominic D.P. Johnson, *Overconfidence and War: The Havoc and Glory of Positive Illusions*
(Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2004); Dominic D.P. Johnson, Richard W. Wrangham,
and Stephen Peter Rosen, "Is Military Incompetence Adaptive? An Empirical Test with Risk-Taking
Behaviour in Modern Warfare," *Evolution and Human Behavior* 23 (2002); Richard W. Wrangham,
"Is Military Incompetence Adaptive?," *Evolution and Human Behaviour* 20 (1999).

116 Jane Kellett-Cramer, "9/11, Exaggerating Threats and the Poverty of Psychological Theories for
Explaining National Misperceptions," in *ISA Annual Meeting* (Portland, Ore.: 2003), 12.

Scholarship in the psychology literature has noted, "it is often hard to distinguish reality from illusion.   This is especially difficult when one is dealing with people's interpretations or subjective perceptions of stimuli and events that do not have a sure, physical basis."[117]   When both sides are operating under similar theories of victory, assessments of one's opponents forces and plans will be less subject to "interpretations or subjective perceptions" than if the two sides have very different theories of victory.   As noted above, there is no objectively rational strategy or doctrine; they are more art than science.[118]   Thus, correcting one's own bias or that of others will be more challenging in such cases where the differences between how the two sides view effective war making reduce the clear basis upon which assessments might be made.

Summary.
The graphical representation above in Figure 2-2 can be expanded to include this hypothesis as shown in the flow chart below.

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117 Taylor and Brown, "Positive Illusions," 22.

118 Again, see Betts, "Is Strategy an Illusion?."

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Figure 2-3:   The Causal Chain of H₁

$$H_{existing\ literature} \qquad\qquad H_1$$

State 1

Strategic Imperatives
Technological Advances
Historical Experience
Organizational Constraints

→ "Theory of Victory" → (Mis)perception of your/adv.'s military power

State 2

Strategic Imperatives
Technological Advances
Historical Experience
Organizational Constraints
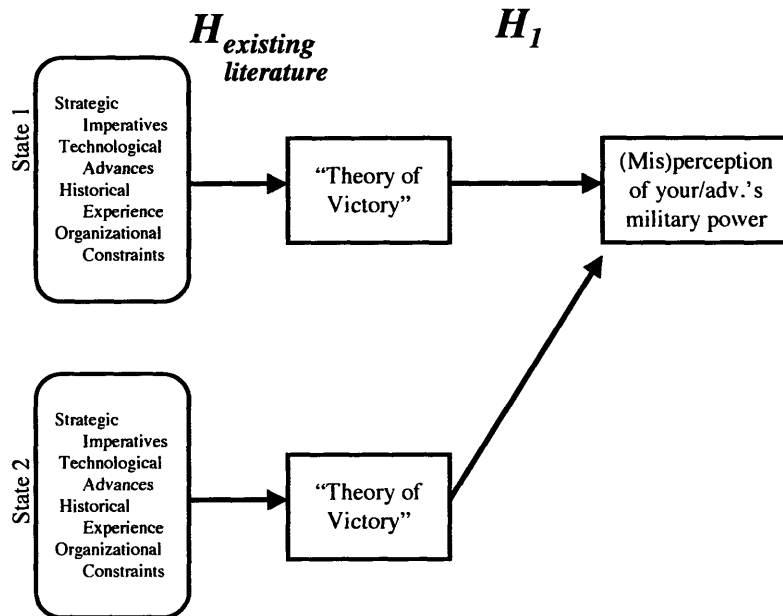
→ "Theory of Victory"

This figure moves first from the sources of doctrines and theories of victory to them. Then, when those theories differ substantially, they can interact across nations leading to differences in perception between them.

Complications and Extensions.

For the theory to be correct, it is not necessary for all of these seven factors to hold in a particular instance.   Any one of them will lead a state to perceive an adversary's capabilities as being relatively weaker than the adversary itself views them to be.   Their relative absence will decrease the likelihood of the miscommunications and differences in perception that this hypothesis predicts.   Thus, when nations have relatively similar theories of victory, both sides are more likely to understand coercive threats similarly.[119]   (Of course, strategic coercion or coercive diplomacy can fail for

---

119 Shimshoni makes a similar observation within one of his cases, but does not develop it.   He describes the better prospects for clear communication between Jordan and Israel in the mid-1950s than in 1948 because both sides had a lengthening and relatively intense history of small-scale border raids.   This made it easier for each side to understand the implications of other's moves in this regard.   However, it is unclear to what extent Shimshoni views that as caused by learning about the other side's intent or

many reasons other than miscommunication, for instance, if the two sides both care deeply about a particular issue.[120])

Note also that the latter five rationales will all apply to cases where innovation has not occurred, but where one adversary has nevertheless chosen a strategy different from that of its opponent. Budgetary reasons or factors particular to a local strategic geography might cause this. (Indeed, there is already recognition that power assessments in the former circumstances is particularly difficult: "The elusiveness of the balance of power is intensified by the differences in states' resources."[121])

This hypothesis predicts a difference in perception between the two sides regarding each other's capabilities. Nevertheless, it is important to point out that this hypothesis is not predicting misperception by one of parties *per se*. Clearly, if there is a difference of perception and an objective reality,[122] then one of two sides is misperceiving the situation (and thus this dissertation will generally use the language of "misperception"[123]). However, this hypothesis is agnostic as to which of the two sides is correct and which is wrong. Indeed, it is quite possible that both sides are misperceiving the actual situation. Measuring power and capabilities is inherently

---

whether the shared understanding of doctrine and tactics made signaling easier. See Shimshoni, *Israel and Conventional Deterrence*, 65.

120 Again, see the discussion in the previous chapter on deterrence failure in general.

121 William Curti Wohlforth, *The Elusive Balance: Power and Perceptions During the Cold War* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993), 305.

122 Contrary to some critical theorists, this dissertation takes the approach that there is a reality that is generally knowable or observable. For the alternate view, see, for instance, Hayward R. Alker, *Rediscoveries and Reformulations: Humanistic Methodologies for International Studies* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

123 Jervis does the same thing, avoiding the question of who is right and focusing on the differences in perception. See Jervis, *Perception and Misperception*, 29.

difficult.[124]   Judging which side perceives correctly and which is not (in cases where the

two sides' perceptions differ) is a complex task, and it is not the goal of this

dissertation.[125]   Rather, the goal here is to focus on the effects of different perceptions,

regardless of which side is correct.

The theory also does not make predictions regarding the perceptions of offense or

defense dominance.   Again, this is clearly a very important variable in the study of

international security.[126]   However, the theory proposed here does not make any

predictions about proneness to offensive ideologies.   Rather, it suggests that under

circumstances of doctrinal differences, states will be overconfident regarding their own

forces compared to those of the adversary regardless of whether they expect offense or

defense to be more important in future conflicts.

Opacity, Inflation, and Underestimation.

Each of those seven factors supports the overall hypothesis, suggesting that

differences in theories of victory can lead to misperceptions regarding an adversary's

military power.   Thus, all support the opacity component of the hypothesis.   Most go

further to also explain why, *ceteris paribus*, one should expect that opacity to lead to an

underestimation.

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124 Again, that is the conclusion of a large body of work.   See footnote 22, in the previous chapter.   That
would suggest that such dual misperceptions are relatively common.   Measuring that—the frequency
of dual misperceptions—is not the goal of this dissertation, which has not been designed to do that
effectively.

125 That said, given that in many cases these misperceptions result in violent conflict, the objective reality
of the power balance and the efficacy of specific theories of victory can be measured.

126 See Snyder, *The Ideology of the Offensive;* Van Evera, "The Cult of the Offensive."; Stephen Van
Evera, "Offense, Defense, and the Causes of War," *International Security* 22, no. 4 (1998); Stephen
Van Evera, *Causes of War: Power and the Roots of Conflict* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999).

This is not to say that in all circumstances the opacity that comes from the difference in theories of victory will lead to underestimation. In some cases, threat inflation, or overestimation, may be more likely.

For instance, motivated biases will often trump other factors. Thus, in the 1970s and 1980s, elements of the U.S. military were able to make use of the opacity that came from the differences in theories of victory between the United States and the Soviet Union to inflate the Soviet threat, leading to increased budgets.[127] While opacity might make such threat inflation easier, when organizations are strongly motivated to exaggerate a threat they will often find a way to do so, regardless of the clarity with which analysts might see the world.[128] The role of such motivated biases is well studied.[129] In cases where such motivated biases are high, they will dominate the more subtle effects being examined here and will play a major role in shaping the eventual perception regarding the adversary.

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127 Posen, "Measuring the European Conventional Balance."

128 A recent example is the second Bush Administrations concerns with Iraq's connections to Al Qaeda in 2003 that were widely viewed as fallacious by civilian analysts (and indeed many governmental bureaucrats as well). No opacity was at work here, just motivated bias by the neoconservative elements in the political leadership. See Chaim Kaufman, "Threat Inflation and the Failure of the Marketplace of Ideas: The Selling of the Iraq War," International Security 29, no. 1 (2004).

129 For recent work, see Kellett-Cramer, "National Security Panics"; Kellett-Cramer, "9/11, Exaggerating Threats and the Poverty of Psychological Theories for Explaining National Misperceptions."; Van Evera, Causes of War, Chapter 6. For earlier works, see Model III in Allison, Essence of Decision. For the classic statement of the way in which bureaucracies can pursue their motivated biases, see Halperin, Clapp, and Kanter, Bureaucratic Politics and Foreign Policy, espec. Chapter Nine: Maneuvers to Affect Information. For more specific work on the role of military biases for offensive operations, in part due to their effects on budgets, see Posen, The Sources of Military Doctrine; Snyder, The Ideology of the Offensive.

Similarly, some argue that there is a general pressure in international relations at the systemic level toward conservatism.[130]   Such conservatism will be prudent in an uncertain and anarchic world.   To the extent this is true, this would thus lead to pressure toward overestimation of the adversary.   This too can be thought of as a form of "motivated bias".

This study has not been designed to assess the relative impacts of these two sorts of misperceptions in international affairs (that is, motivated bias toward threat inflation and the organizational and cognitive based hypothesis above leading to underestimation). Rather, it aims to sketch out a plausibility probe of the less studied of these, that is, the way in which differences in theories of victory can lead to chronic underestimations of the adversary, *ceteris paribus*.   Thus, it makes predictions about very specific circumstances when pressure for overestimation (coming from neo-realism's anarchy, budgetary competition, or elsewhere) will face a countervailing dynamic working in the opposite direction due to the organizational, cultural, and psychological factors listed above.

Examples.
An excellent example of the phenomenon described by the above hypothesis occurred in the early part of World War II as the United States considered how to face Germany on the plains of Europe.   There, American beliefs about the nature of armored warfare led to a set of policy decisions that hurt it when battle was joined.   Elman's description of the issues involved summarizes the point well:

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130 Such a logic sits at the heart of Mearsheimer's argument that great powers strive for power maximization rather than power balancing.   John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company, 2001).

> With respect to U.S. tanks, the belief that tank vs. tank combat could be avoided, combined with a continuing stress on mobility, led to an almost complete reliance on medium tanks.   It was quickly recognized that light tanks were of little use on the modern battlefield.   In addition, official American doctrine had no place for slow, heavy tanks that could take on German Panthers and Tigers.   Although it was recognized that Sherman medium tanks would be unequal to German heavy tanks in a fight, official policy held that such combat was a matter of choice not necessity.   This policy rested on two errors.   The first was relying on tank destroyers, which with the exception of a few later and more powerful models, were unequal to the task.   The second was the mistaken belief that tank vs. tank combat was an option that the U.S. ground forces could choose to decline at their convenience.   The fact was that tanks *did* fight tanks, and the U.S. tanks were not very good at it.

> In short, between 1941 and 1946, U.S. reactions were heavily influenced by pre-existing organizational sub-cultures, and by the results of decades of bureaucratic infighting.[131]

It was only after the defeats at the Battle of the Bulge in 1945 that the United States began experimenting with heavier tanks on the battlefield, even though they had engaged Tigers (Panzer Mark VI) as early as 1943 in Tunisia.[132]

Beyond the lack of hardware, the United States had doctrinal problems as well. The U.S. Army had been slow to come to accept the role for an independent armor force. As late as 1939, official doctrine stated, "As a rule, tanks are employed to assist the advance of infantry foot troops, either preceding or accompanying the infantry assault echelon."[133]   Before the 1941 Louisiana Maneuvers, armor was an integral part of either

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131 Elman, "The Logic of Emulation", 102-3.

132 Jonathan M. House, *Combined Arms Warfare in the Twentieth Century* (Lawrence, Kan.: University Press of Kansas, 2001), Chapter 5: The Complexity of Total War, 1942-45.

133 Quoted in George S. Patton and Martin Blumenson, *The Patton Papers, 1885-1940* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1972), 1048.

Cavalry or Infantry units.[134]   Even officers later identified with armor breakthrough

battles still firmly supported horse cavalry in 1940.[135]

The result of these limitations of hardware and doctrine was straightforward: As

Elman writes, "The Germans destroyed a lot of American tanks."[136]   In this case, the

American theory of victory, as manifested through weapons purchases and doctrinal

thinking, led to an underestimation of the enemy that resulted in substantial losses and

casualties.

Guderian similarly shows the link between a difference in doctrine across nations

and an assessment of the balance of power between them:

> Despite possessing the strongest forces for mobile warfare the French had also built the
> strongest line of fortifications in the world, the Maginot Line.   Why was the money
> spent on the construction of those fortifications not used for the modernization and
> strengthening of Frances mobile forces?   The proposals of de Gaulle, Daladier and
> others along these lines had been ignored.   From this it must be concluded that the
> highest French leadership either would not or could not grasp the significance of the tank
> in mobile warfare.[137]

For Guderian here, the differences in doctrine between France and Germany lead him to

deprecate the quality of leadership on the other side.[138]

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134 For discussion of this period, see Jonathan M. House, *Toward Combined Arms Warfare: A Survey of 20th-Century Tactics, Doctrine, and Organization* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 1985); Johnson, *Fast Tanks and Heavy Bombers*.Johnson notes that there had been a brief period when independence of the Armor arm was possible, through the "Mechanized Force," but that "interbranch frictions, most notably the opposition of the chief of infantry" led MacArthur to quash that organizational creativity.   *Ibid.*, p. 116.

135 Patton is an excellent example.   See Patton and Blumenson, *The Patton Papers, 1885-1940*, 1034, *inter alia*.

136 Elman, "The Logic of Emulation", 103.

137 Guderian, *Panzer Leader*, 94-6.

138 It is certainly arguable that this judgment was correct.   However, the maligning of the Maginot Line in military history seems excessive.   It achieved its operational goal of deterring a German attack directly across the French-German border.   The attack of May 1940 went *around* the Maginot Line and was successful in no small part due to luck.   (Ernest R. May, *Strange Victory: Hitler's Conquest of France* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2000).)   Furthermore, the key point here is that the perception of the adversary was heavily influenced by the difference between the two sides' doctrines.

As Napoleon weighed his strategy against the British at the dawn of the 19th

century, he too made a number of underestimations attributable to the vastly different

approaches to warfare that the British and French held at the time.   Sea power had many

advantages at the time:

> In brief, six times as many guns of much heavier caliber, could be transported daily by
> Nelson's fleet as by Napoleon's army, at one-fifth of the logistic cost and at five times
> the speed.[139]

Yet, Napoleon's inability to understand British prowess at naval warfare caused him to

repeatedly overestimate his own capabilities relative to the British.   In 1805 his

"grandiose plan"[140] to invade England had many problems that stemmed from his limited

understanding of naval affairs:

> Although Napoleon could impose a ruthlessly enforced timetable for the grand army's
> marches from Boulogne to Austerlitz, he could not so order the movements of wind
> driven ships.   The ocean was not the "drill-ground" he assumed it to be and his plan
> took little account of the difficulties of evading the blockading British[141]

Similarly, he was convinced that flat bottom boats would be sufficient for the crossing:

"the channel, he declared, 'is a ditch one can jump whenever one is bold enough to try

it.'"[142]   His overconfidence was directly related to his ignorance about warfare at sea:

> [Napoleon] not only sustained a larger strategic vision than any of his subordinates could
> frame; he was also driven by a far more powerful resolution, all the stronger because his
> ignorance of the sea dissolved the difficulties that they—and Villeneuve in
> particular—knew to lie between the vision and its realization.

His resulting defeat was legendary: "Trafalgar was, in short, a massacre."[143]

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139 John Keegan, *The Price of Admiralty: The Evolution of Naval Warfare* (New York, N.Y.: Viking, 1989), 48.

140 David Gates, *The Napoleonic Wars, 1803-1815* (New York, NY: Arnold Publishing, 1997), 103.

141 Richard Woodman, *The Sea Warriors: Fighting Captains and Frigate Warfare in the Age of Nelson* (New York, NY: Carroll and Graf Publishers, 2001), 173-74.   Similarly, Keegan writes: "Napoleon the general might have found ways of defying winter on land...Napoleon the admiral could not command the waters."   Keegan, *The Price of Admiralty*, 20.

142 Tom Pocock, *The Terror before Trafalgar: Nelson, Napoleon, and the Secret War* (New York, NY: W.W. Norton and Company, 2003), 90, see also 95.

These examples highlight the importance of doctrinal and strategic thinking on power assessments; that is, they underscore the first hypothesis, linking doctrinal differences to perception. The next hypothesis (and the examples that follow it) suggests the importance of this type of effect on international security.

Hypothesis #2

The second component of the dissertation's logic is expressed as H_2.

> H_2: *An underestimation of an adversary's capabilities—that comes from H_1—can lead to deterrence and coercive failure, escalation, and conflict because it complicates (H_{2A}) assessments of the balance of power and (H_{2B}) interpretation of the adversary's signals.*

This hypothesis explains the ways in which false optimism leads to war by highlighting two distinct, but interacting, causal chains: one pertains to capability, the other to intent.

First, underestimation of an adversary's capabilities leads to a misunderstanding of the overall military balance (H_{2A}). As Jervis notes, "Since the interpretation of indices depends on theories, perceivers are likely to go astray when these are incorrect."[144] This can lead the underestimating nation to think that it is stronger than it really is. As a result, that nation may pursue more assertive policies than it would have if it correctly estimated its adversary's capabilities. This can lead to failures of strategic coercion and unnecessary conflict. A large body of work on the causes of war has suggested this causal chain.[145] This is the first possible outcome highlighted by H_2.

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143 Keegan, *The Price of Admiralty*, 100.

144 Robert Jervis, "Signaling and Perception: Drawing Inferences and Projecting Images," in *Political Psychology*, ed. Kristen R. Monroe (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc., 2002), 304.

145 Again, see Geoffrey Blainey, *The Causes of War*, 3rd ed. (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1988), Chapter 3: Dreams and Delusions of a Coming War; John G. Stoessinger, *Why Nations Go to War*, 8th ed. (New York: Wadsworth, 2001); Van Evera, *Causes of War*, Chapter 2: False Optimism: Illusions of the Coming War.

Second, when a nation underestimates an adversary's capabilities, then signals

that the adversary sends using its own capabilities will look relatively weak to the first

nation (H_{2B}).   Nations often use such signals to communicate the degree of their

interests.[146]   Indeed such signals appear attractive because they promise exceptional

clarity.[147]   However, the universal clarity of military signals should not be overstated.

When nations have different views about the efficacy of the adversary's forces and

strategies, such signals about depth of interests will be hard to interpret.   A warship in

the harbor is clear to states that know what that represents.   However, for states with no

background in naval warfare, the meaning is less clear, as the related examples below

suggest.   At a broad level, Van Evera makes a similar point:

> States rarely exaggerate their own will, but they often underestimate the enemy's.   As a
> result, they misjudge the endurance or the materiel that each will commit to the war,
> seeing an illusory balance in their own favor.   This fosters false expectations of
> victory.[148]

The logic of this causal chain of H_2 specifies a specific source of the misperception that

Van Evera writes of, that is, difficulties in signaling by the two sides during attempts at

strategic coercion.

Both causal chains—misperceptions of the overall military balance or

miscommunications of the depth of one side's interest—can result in the failure of

coercive diplomacy.   *Worse, they have the potential to interact.*   States expect their

adversaries to make decisions based on cost-benefit analyses, and this will affect one

state's understanding of the other side's intent.   That is, if state A thinks its adversary,

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146 Arquilla, "Louder Than Words," 163.   See also Downs and Rocke, *Tacit Bargaining*.

147 Arquilla, "Louder Than Words," 157.   See the discussion above regarding implicit coercive threats on
page 59.

148 Van Evera, *Causes of War*, 25.

state B, believes a particular conflict will lead to B's own destruction (an assessment

made on capability grounds), then first state, A, is likely to expect restraint by B (a

judgment about the adversary's intent). State A is likely to make this judgment about

how A thinks B sees the outcome of the future conflict on the basis of A's own theory of

victory. However, in B's actual assessment, B is likely to use its own theory of victory

to make that determination, and the two side's theory of victory might be quite distinct.

Intentions always must be informed by the costs and benefits of pursuing specific goals.

The problem is, however, each side makes such cost-benefit calculations using its own

theory of victory to enlighten their analysis.

When strategic coercion fails, violence is often the result as states follow through

on their deterrent or compellent threats for both reputational and intrinsic reasons.[149]

Thus, this hypothesis predicts the potential the militarization of a crisis or an escalation of

an existing conflict.[150]

Examples.
Several examples of this second hypothesis leap from the annals of military

history. In 1973, Israeli assessments of the balance of power between themselves and

the Arab states suggested a wide margin of comfort. Less than two months before the

devastating attacks that began the Yom Kippur War, the Israeli Defense Minister

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149 On the role of reputation in international politics, see Alexander L. George and Richard Smoke, *Deterrence in American Foreign Policy: Theory and Practice* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1974), 523-26; Mercer, *Reputation and International Politics;* Daryl G. Press, *Calculating Credibility: How Leaders Assess Threats During Crises* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, forthcoming, 2005).

150 For scores of examples of the link between failures of coercive diplomacy and war see the large deterrence and deterrence failure literature. E.g., George and Smoke, *Deterrence in American Foreign Policy.* George H. Quester, "Some Thoughts on 'Deterrence Failures'," in *Perspectives on Deterrence*, ed. Paul C. Stern et al. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989). Alexander L. George and William E. Simons, *The Limits of Coercive Diplomacy*, 2nd ed. (Boulder: Westview Press, 1994); Paul W. Schroeder, "Failed Bargain Crises, Deterrence, and the International System," in *Perspectives on Deterrence*, ed. Paul C. Stern et al. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989).

concluded, "The balance of forces is so much in our favor that it neutralizes the Arab considerations and motives for the immediate renewal of hostilities."[151]   That same summer, then Deputy Prime Minister and heroic general from the War of 1948, Yigal Allon suggested, "Egypt had no military option at all."[152]

However, the Israeli estimates were substantially incorrect, as the initial Egyptian advances in the Sinai showed.   Two key differences between the Egyptians and the Israelis were central to this overconfidence.   Egypt had made good use of mobile surface to air missiles (particularly the SA-6 system) and had integrated man-portable anti-armor weapons (Sagger and RPG-7s) in their infantry formations.   These weapons and the associated doctrinal changes allowed the Egyptians to make substantial gains.[153] "At least half of the first attacking Israeli planes were shot down by the unexpectedly accurate and devastating Egyptian antiaircraft fire."[154]   One of the front-line IDF armored brigades lost nearly all of its 100 tanks to infantry forces.[155]   These two innovations reduced key Israeli military advantages.

This example highlights the way in which different theories of victory can lead to underestimation of the adversary's capabilities by complicating assessment of the balance of power (as predicted by H_{2A}).   The Israelis did not understand the changed Egyptian

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151 Quoted in Trevor Nevitt Dupuy, *Elusive Victory: The Arab-Israeli Wars, 1947-1974*, 3rd ed. (Dubuque, Iowa: Kendall/Hunt Publishing, 1992), 406.

152 Ritchie Ovendale, *The Origins of the Arab-Israeli Wars*, 3rd ed. (New York, NY: Longman, 1999), 191.

153 In this case, the weapons themselves were critical.   Thus, it is important to keep the focus on a "theory of victory" rather than the more limited doctrine.

154 Dupuy, *Elusive Victory*, 419.

155 *Ibid.*

capabilities and how they would fit in their overall theory of victory. That, in turn, led

to mischaracterizations of the overall balance of power in Jerusalem.

World War II again provides several examples of this phenomenon. One

historian describes its occurrence in the outbreak of war in the west: French and British

leaders made no effort to understand how or why German thinking might differ from

theirs.[156] Guderian also provides an excellent example of the other phenomenon

highlighted in this hypothesis, that of inferring intent of the adversary through the lens of

one's own doctrine (H_{2B}, above). He writes,

> But so far as the French leaders were concerned, we were amazed that they had not taken
> advantage of their favorable situation during the autumn of 1939 to attack, while the bulk
> of the German forces, including the entire armored force, was engaged in Poland. Their
> reasons for such restraint were at the time hard to see. We could only guess. Be that
> as it may, the caution shown by the French leaders led us to believe that our adversaries
> hoped somehow to avoid a serious clash of arms.[157]

Here, Guderian is inferring French intent or motivation from French action. Of course,

that is commonplace. What is of interest from this dissertation's perspective is that the

action in question—French inaction—seems clearly based on the theory of victory that

held sway in the Hotel de Brienne (that is, one that had neglected the offensive potential

for blitzkrieg warfare). This link between a perception regarding the adversary's theory

of military to his intent is precisely the point of the hypothesis.[158] A policy taken

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156 May, *Strange Victory*, 480.

157 Guderian, *Panzer Leader*, 97.

158 And, as noted above, while one of the two sides must be misperceiving the situation, the theory
    advanced in this dissertation is making no predictions about which side that is. Rather, it makes use
    of the difference in perception between the two sides. In terms of this specific case, while the usual
    historiography of the Battle of France would suggest that Guderian was right, and that the Maginot line
    should not have been emphasized as much, some scholars would point out that it played a key role in
    deterring Hitler's attack prior to May 1940. Again see May, *Strange Victory;* Mearsheimer,
    Conventional Deterrence.

primarily because of a particular doctrine communicates a mistaken view of French intent to Germany.

Summary of the Entire Theory

For international communication to be effective, both sides must understand the language of diplomacy. When that language depends on military threats, different theories of victory can lead to problems in translation and thus, unnecessary conflict. In order to send an effective signal to an adversary, nations have to understand how that adversary will interpret the signal. Military measures often are taken to express will or intent. This demands that nations understand their adversary's perceptual framework. When a nation sends a deterrent or coercive signal by using military force, or the threat of it, the perceptual framework through which an adversary will interpret the signal depends on its views of what constitutes effective military strategies and capabilities. When these views are substantially different across nations, the signals will be difficult to interpret. Because of the tendency to overstate one's own power, in general (as outlined in H_1), the signals will be too weak to appropriately shape the adversary's views, leading to deterrence or coercive failure and thus escalation or conflict.[159]

Before concluding this discussion of the theory, it is useful to return to expand on Figure 2-2 and 1-3 to show how these three elements fit together. Figure 2-4, below, works from the sources of beliefs of theories of victory to those theories themselves, then to the difference in perceptions that they can cause, and finally to the negative international outcomes that can arise from those. Again, this project focuses on the

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159 Of course, strategic coercion can fail for many reasons other than miscommunication, for instance, if the two sides both care deeply about a particular issue. Again, see the discussion in the previous chapter.

middle link primarily, and to a lesser extent the final link. H_2 and especially $H_{existing}$

$_{literature}$ have already been the subject of much research, thus the primary value added from

this dissertation will come from testing H_1.

Figure 2-4: The Complete Causal Chain

$$H_{existing} \qquad H_1 \qquad H_2$$
literature

State 1
Strategic Imperatives
Technological Advances
Historical Experience
Organizational Constraints

→ "Theory of Victory" → (Mis)perception of your/adv.'s military power

H_{2A}: Harder to assess overall balance of power

H_{2B}: Military signals will look weaker

Coercion Failure and Escalation

State 2
Strategic Imperatives
Technological Advances
Historical Experience
Organizational Constraints

→ "Theory of Victory"

To make this causal discussion complete, it should be noted that if there is a

difference in theories of victory, then *both* sides will likely have their perceptions of the

other's military power affected. This should lead to both sides underestimating their

adversary in an overall power sense and to underestimate the signals that the other sends

using its capabilities.[160] Thus, a complete version of the causal flow chart above would

include the effects on *both* states, as shown below.

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160 Again, these underestimations are relative to the perceptions of the other side in terms of both the
overall balance and the strength of the signals it intends to send.

Figure 2-5: The Interaction of Both States' Perspectives
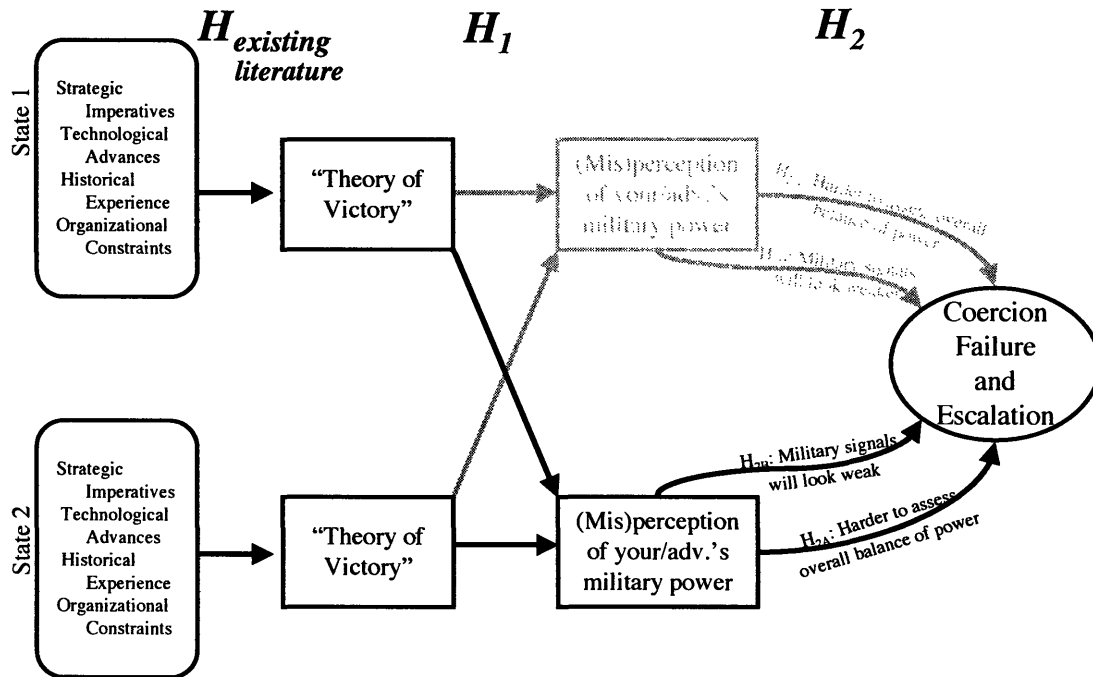
To reduce the complexity, it will be easier to use the earlier figure (Figure 2-4) when considering the logic of the theory.

Research Methodology

These two hypotheses will be evaluated through the study of several cases. This section describes the grounds for choosing the specific cases after outlining several aspects of the research methodology, including a discussion of specific empirical predictions of the general theoretical hypotheses, consideration of alternate explanations, the manner in which each case is approached, and coding criterion.

Predictions

These two hypotheses lead to eleven specific predictions that should be apparent in the empirical record. These are essentially indicators of the validity of the theory and

can be used to test it.[161]   They are grouped here into several different categories.   First,

perceptions about war and the balance of power should exhibit underestimation of the

enemy and overconfidence regarding a state's own capability.   Second, signaling and

judgments about intent should be conducted through the lens of one's own theory of

victory.   Third, actors should be surprised once reality contradicts their perceptions.

Finally, extreme values on the independent variable (at either an individual or national

level) should lead to extreme outcomes.   Specific predictions in each of these categories

are listed below.

Perceiving the Balance of Power and the Nature of War

1) Differences in theories of victory should correlate with states underestimating an adversary's capabilities, *ceteris paribus*.   Conversely, similarities in beliefs should correlate with states having more accurate assessments of each other's military capabilities, *ceteris paribus*.

2) Before conflict, leaders of states with different theories of victory should denigrate the other side's theory of victory relative to their own.

3) Leaders of states with different theories of victory should not have nuanced discussions of the merits of their adversaries' strategies, nor recognize that their adversaries' financial and strategic situations mandate their choice of strategy.

4) Each side should believe that battles will be dominated by factors emphasized by its own theory of victory.

Signaling and Intent Issues

5) When signaling to the other side, each side should send signals that make use of forces in accordance with its own theory of victory.

6) A state's assessment of its adversary's intent should depend, in part, on the first state's understanding of the adversary's cost-benefit analysis.   Furthermore, that understanding will likely be incorrect because the first state will assess costs and benefits differently than its adversary when the two sides have different theories of victory.

7) Leaders of states with different theories of victory should downplay the likelihood of the other side getting involved in a conflict or in further raising the stakes in it.

Perceptions Meet Reality: Surprise!

8) Actual battle outcomes, when they occur, should deviate further from leaders' expectations when nations have more different theories of victory guiding their forces.

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161 Stephen Van Evera, *Guide to Methods for Students of Political Science* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997).

(a) In cases where one side forced the battle on the other, the side taking the initiative should be surprised at its difficulties on the battlefield.

(b) In cases where both sides pursued battle, both sides should be surprised at their difficulties.

(c) More generally, any leader who believes s/he has a viable strategy in the context of the current conflict should be surprised at its (relative) shortcomings when battle is actually joined.

(d) Leaders often have incentives to conceal their surprise, so it may manifest itself as hastily reinforcing or last minute changes in strategy.

9) Leaders should be surprised about the degree of adversary interest in an issue when the signaling over the issue made use of military forces (or threats about them) that are different than their own. (Indeed, they may ascribe aggressive motives to the other side because of this.)

Extreme Values on IV Lead to Extreme Indicators

10) Larger differences between the two states' theories of victory should correlate with a larger or more frequent underestimation of the adversary's capability.

11) Leaders (both political and military) deeply versed in their own theory of victory should be more likely to misperceive and miscalculate than leaders less imbued with that particular view.

Investigation of the empirical record in the cases is centered on these predictions as well as the hypotheses more generally. These predictions focus on relatively operationalized factors stemming from the hypotheses, and thus ease the task of assessing the theory's validity. To the extent the cases do align with these predictions, the dissertation's hypotheses are supported.

Again, per the discussion preceding Figure 2-5, since these logics should apply to both sides, the predictions should as well. Thus, both sides ought be surprised at how difficult military operations are, at their adversary's intent, etc.

(These predictions, along with the hypotheses they support, are reprinted on a single page at the end of this chapter for easy reference.)

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Additional explanations

Clearly, this proposed theory does not have a monopoly on possible explanations

for failures of strategic coercive attempts.   The previous chapter, in the section entitled

"What We Know about Achieving Deterrence Success," discussed a number of alternate

insights.   It will be useful to draw on these to create a baseline for comparison with the

proposed theory.   If the proposed theory provides no "value-added" in terms of

increased accuracy of prediction over the existing theories, then they ought be

sufficient.[162]   The roles of several of these various alternate factors are suggested in the

chart below, using the graphical framework introduced above.

Figure 2-6:   The Complexity of the Real World
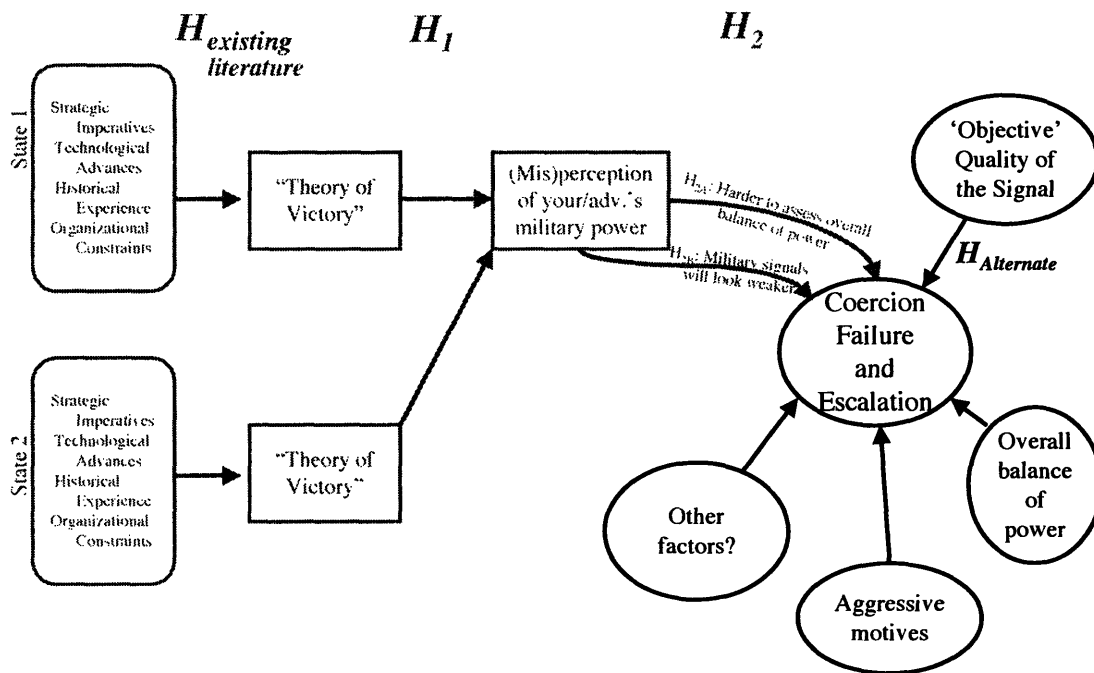
The argument that the "'objective' quality of the signal" is key to coercion

success or failure represents the most important elements conventional wisdom about

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162 For other factors that contribute to a theory's utility to the field see Gary King, Robert O. Keohane, and Sidney Verba, *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1994); Van Evera, *Guide to Methods.*

assessing the prospects for success in strategic coercion.[163]   Therefore, this will be used

as an Alternate Hypothesis (and is labeled as such on the figure).   Stated precisely, the

hypothesis that will be tested is:

> $H_{Alternate}$: *Weak signals are more likely to lead to coercive failure and escalation while strong signals are more likely to lead to coercive success.*

This simple version of the basic deterrence logic will be used to incorporate arguments

about strength or weakness of the coercer's capabilities (both local and global) as well as

the clarity of the signal.

This Alternate Hypothesis will be used to evaluate the proposed theory; it will

serve as a foil for the approach that focuses on the difference in the theory of victory.

Thus, this dissertation conducts a Lakatosian three-cornered test.[164]   Does consideration

of the doctrinal differences allow us to predict coercive failure better than focusing on the

"objective" size and quality of the signal alone?   While labeled an *Alternate* Hypothesis,

the proposed theory of doctrinal differences should be thought of as additive rather than

strictly alternative.   That is, it seems quite clear that the Alternate Hypothesis has some

validity.   The question is, will accuracy of explanation and prediction be significantly

increased by consideration of the hypotheses suggested here in addition to the Alternate

Hypothesis?   The increase in accuracy must be significant since by adding additional

factors to consider the complexity of the entire undertaking increases.   Thus, the

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163 Again, see the discussion in the introduction chapter on the three Cs.

164 Imre Lakatos, "Falsification and the Methodology of Scientific Research Programmes," in *Criticism and the Growth of Knowledge*, ed. Imre Lakatos and Alan Musgrave (Cambridge, England: University Press, 1970).   For a discussion on Lakatos and three-cornered tests that suggests an alternate way to understand his contributions, see Elman, "The Logic of Emulation", Appendix Two.   The usage used here remains consistent with the standard usage in the field.

dissertation's theory sacrifices parsimony in the hopes of gaining accuracy.[165] This research design evaluates that aspiration.

Beyond that, complexity of the real world, as shown by the above discussion of the myriad of influences on the success of strategic coercion, should lead to modesty in claims. There are many sources of misperceptions and this dissertation focuses only on a single one. Nevertheless, it is an important one, for reasons outlined in both the introduction and conclusion chapters.

Case Procedure

For each of the cases, the dissertation uses congruence tests, process tracing within the cases, and the method of differences across the cases to evaluate the hypotheses and associated predictions.[166] Predictions derived from the hypotheses allow for detailed process tracing to assess the causal force of the theory in the case material. Assessing these various ancillary predictions of the theory generally requires examination of leaders' statements, policies implemented, and reactions to the adversary's behavior. Process tracing within cases can provide relatively robust grounds to assess the validity of a theory as it characterizes not only macro-level outcomes but micro-level processes

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165 On the value of the latter, see Van Evera, *Guide to Methods;* Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (McGraw-Hill Publishing, 1979).

166 On the former, see the discussion on case studies in Arend Lijphart, "Comparative Politics and the Comparative Method," *American Political Science Review* 65, no. 3 (1971): 691-93. On its utility for theory building, see Harry Eckstein, "Case Study and Theory in Political Science," in *Handbook of Political Science*, ed. Fred I. Greenstein and Nelson W. Polsby (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1975); Arend Lijphart, "The Comparable-Cases Strategy in Comparative Research," *Comparative Political Studies* 8, no. 2 (1975). Also see the discussion of the comparative method in Lijphart, "Comparative Politics and the Comparative Method," 685-91. For a contemporary discussion of the merits of qualitative approaches, see King, Keohane, and Verba, *Designing Social Inquiry*, 209-12.

by which the outcomes occur and judges whether these correspond with the theory's predictions.[167] The data requirements for this methodology are, thus, substantial.

After a brief summary of the relevant history, each case begins with an *evaluation of the two nations' beliefs* regarding doctrine and effective military strategies. Drawing on existing work on strategic beliefs and doctrine,[168] the cases use contemporaneous writings on strategy, tactics and doctrine, as well as the make up of military forces to code this, the independent variable. Within the cases, the strategic contexts of importance at different periods vary. Thus, the relevant beliefs are not always the same across cases and must be coded accordingly.

Next, each case assesses the *signaling* involved in a particular period. That is, what was the nature of the signaling? Did it depend on implicit or explicit threats of the use of force? Was the force in question easily comprehensible to the other side?

The last of these questions obviously begins to bring the responding side, and the following section in each case formally takes that up by assessing the *interpretation* of the signals explicitly. How well were the signals interpreted? Did the responder's theory of victory impede this process?

Finally, any evidence relevant to either side's *post-event evaluation* (that is, from after the attempt at strategic coercion fails or succeeds) is assessed. Was either side surprised by the difficulties their forces faced? About the degree of opposition from their opponent? These questions are suggested by the predictions section above, and will help to ascertain the accuracy of the theory in these cases.

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167 On the merits of process tracing, see Alexander L. George and Andrew Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences* (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, forthcoming, 2004).

168 See the citations at and following note 14 in this chapter.

Coding Theories of Victory (the IV)

Theories of victory are likely to vary across nations and across time. The

various sources of doctrine, as discussed above, are one set of influences; additionally,

nations might have different goals or different national interests. In order to describe

the differences between any two theories of victory (that is, the independent variable for

H_1), it is useful to be familiar with the range of possible beliefs at a general level.

For this purpose, many factors can be used to compare nations' theories of victory.

One dimension is clearly the make up of the forces: are the actual components of forces

between two nations similar? Do both have an air force, for instance? If so, does a

similar mix of fighter and bombers characterize them both? Several dimensions are

useful in coding this dimension: manpower based versus technology and machine-based

(i.e., labor versus capital); maneuver versus firepower and fortifications; preferences for

quantity over quality; emphasis on one service over another; reliance on particular

platforms within services; etc.

A second dimension looks directly at the military doctrine tactics planned for with

a given set of forces. That is, a force made up of approximately 80 divisions with some

2500-3000 tanks might concentrate their tanks or spread them out across the army.[169] A

doctrine might emphasize flanking maneuvers or head-on attacks (or similarly, mobility

versus positional warfare). Offensive strategies might be preferred to defensive ones.[170]

One force might be optimized to attrit an adversary across the entire front, while another

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169 This was the case for the two sides in the opening days of WWII in Western Europe. On May 10, 1940 on the Western Front, the British and the French together deployed 3074 tanks to the German deployment of 2439, and the allies deployed 93 first line divisions to the Germans' 76. May, *Strange Victory*, 477-78.

170 Again, for arguments on this point, see Posen, *The Sources of Military Doctrine;* Snyder, *The Ideology of the Offensive;* Van Evera, "The Cult of the Offensive."; Van Evera, *Causes of War.*

might aim to secure an initial breakthrough and exploit it.[171]   Yet another dimension

would look to the political goals that military force is aimed to advance. [172]   Will

victory be secured by reducing the relative power of the adversary's military or will the

adversary's society and economy itself be punished?

Evaluating questions such as these allows the difference in theories of victory to

be coded in each case.   The examples above serve as a starting point for that evaluation,

although in specific cases, other elements also play a role.   Clearly, the potential

variation is very large.   At different periods and in different theaters, some of the

questions will be more important than others.   Each case goes to substantial lengths to

characterize accurately the appropriate theory of victory for the conflict in question.

The two sides' writing on strategy, tactics and doctrine, as well as their make up

of military forces, are used to evaluate these and to code the differences between two

nations' theories.   Even in authoritarian countries, there is a significant amount of

material available on such doctrinal and strategic debates in the public sphere.[173]   Those

sources, as well as selected declassified (or leaked) documents will be used.

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171 See Mearsheimer, *Conventional Deterrence*, 67-133.

172 This tends to get close to the concept of a grand strategy.   See Posen, *The Sources of Military Doctrine*, 13.

173 This was the case even for the Soviet Union during the peak of the Cold War.   "Careful sifting of a very rich open Soviet military literature can contribute great to [the study of Soviet concepts of operations].   Senior Soviet officers, in far larger numbers than their Western counterparts, write reams of history and contemporary military analysis.   Despite the stultifying and false character of their ideological framework, which makes these works tiresome to read and frequently hard to accept, they merit study"   (Eliot A. Cohen, "Toward a Better Net Assessment: Rethinking the European Conventional Balance," *International Security* 13, no. 1 (1988): 212.)

Case Selection

Three Sino-American cases from the early cold war test these hypotheses in this

dissertation.   The cases focus on particular stages within crises in which critical

decisions were being made regarding the future.   In particular, they focus on the

outcome of attempts at strategic coercion.   This focus on crisis periods is warranted

since the hypotheses center on the difficulties in signaling and interpretation, and crises

are often periods of intense communication between the two sides.   Thus, these cases

are data rich.

The three cases evaluated in this dissertation are:

a) The United States decision to cross the 38th parallel,

b) China's earlier approval of North Korea's invasion of the South, and

c) The Chinese decision to postpone the invasion of Taiwan in the face of the
American deployment of the Seventh Fleet to the Taiwan Strait.

All three occur in 1950, which permits the extensive data collection and detailed analysis

that the research procedure outlined above requires.   The first two attempts at strategic

coercion were not successful and resulted in avoidable escalations of conflict.   In the

third attempt, strategic coercion was successful, and the great powers avoided expansion

of their conflict to another theater.

These three cases focus on several of the most important strategic coercive

attempts that could have succeeded in this period.   That is, there were other coercive

attempts (discussed below), but they failed because the basic national interests of one (or

really both) of the two parties involved were fundamentally in conflict, rather than some

misperception.   Miscommunication did not cause the other escalations, and a better

understanding of the two sides' interests and plans would not have avoided them.   There

is widespread agreement that such cases are not usefully studied in a deterrence or strategic coercion framework.[174]

Undoubtedly, there are other theories that contribute to the understanding of the Korean War in general, and these decisions in particular. Bipolarity in general meant that conflict between the east and west was very likely in this period.[175] Security dilemmas certainly contribute to the understanding of China's behavior,[176] as does window theory (i.e., the Korean War presented either a window of vulnerability or opportunity for China).[177] This dissertation is not designed to determine which of these different approaches (or others) best explains the Korean War. Rather, it tests two different theories against each other to probe *their* validity more generally.

(Indeed, some of these alternate theoretical approaches complement that taken here in terms of providing a rich explanation for the Korean War. International relations scholarship emphasizes the particularly acute dangers posed by states motivated by *both*

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174 This is the point of Oye's admonition: "When you observe conflict, think Deadlock—the absence of mutual interest—before puzzling over why a mutual interest was not realized." Kenneth A. Oye, "Explaining Cooperation under Anarchy: Hypotheses and Strategies," in *Cooperation under Anarchy*, ed. Kenneth A. Oye (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1986), 7. See also Matthew Evangelista, "Cooperation Theory and Disarmament: Negotiations in the 1950s," *World Politics* 42, no. 4 (1990).

175 This is a theme in John Lewis Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of Postwar American National Security Policy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982); Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*.

176 Allen Suess Whiting, *China Crosses the Yalu: The Decision to Enter the Korean War* (New York, NY: Macmillan, 1960).

177 Christensen highlights several elements consistent with this logic in Thomas J. Christensen, *Useful Adversaries: Grand Strategy, Domestic Mobilization, and Sino-American Conflict, 1947-1958* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1996), 153-76. See also his forthcoming book manuscript: Thomas J. Christensen, *Worse Than a Monolith: Alliances in U.S.-PRC Security Relations* (forthcoming).

insecurity and greed.[178]   Arguments using the logics of the security dilemma and closing

windows explain sources of Chinese insecurity.   The theory presented in this

dissertation contributes to the explanation of greed: Chinese leaders expected victory to

be cheap.)

The Merits of the Chosen Cases

There are several reasons why these three cases are particularly attractive for

study.   These different crises within an individual conflict can be considered a 'set of

crises.'   By selecting such closely related cases, the analyst can immerse himself in the

history and culture of the countries involved.[179]   Doing so allows him to "reduce the

'property space'" and create "comparable cases" in Lijphart's terms.[180]   This is

particularly important given the substantial requirements with regard to data collection

that assessing this theory requires (as noted above).

Sino-American interaction presents excellent cases for study as plausibility probes

for this theory since, in two of the cases, the two sides had such vastly dissimilar

perspectives on military power: faith in People's War was at its height in this period in

China, whereas the United States was heavily dependent on airpower, capital intensive

ground forces, and nuclear weapons.   Thus, two of the cases have extreme values in the

independent variable, and examining instances of strategic coercion that occur under

those conditions should be useful.[181]   Nevertheless, these cases also provide a relatively

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178 Charles L. Glaser, "Political Consequences of Military Strategy: Expanding and Refining the Spiral
    and Deterrence Models," *World Politics* 44 (1992).

179 On the importance of such immersion, see King, Keohane, and Verba, *Designing Social Inquiry*, 37ff.

180 Lijphart, "Comparative Politics and the Comparative Method," 687.

181 Van Evera, *Guide to Methods*, 43.

easy test (or a hoop test). If the theory does not provide explanatory value here, it should not be expected to elsewhere.

Additionally, across the entire set of cases, there is variation in the value of the independent variable as in the third case there is a low value on the difference of theory of victory. As King, Keohane and Verba write, "Selecting observations for inclusion in a study according to the categories of the key causal explanatory variable causes no inference problems."[182] Thus, choosing cases because they vary in the independent variable is a useful research strategy.

Thus, these cases jointly allow a degree of *both* empirical thoroughness and methodologic rigor that other cases, more widely separated in time or space, would not.

Another reason why these Sino-American cases are important to study is that they will provide particular relevance for modern American foreign policy for two reasons. First, both then and now, the United States faces an adversary that is substantially behind in technologic terms. It will be clear from subsequent chapters that this is a central element of the cases. Today, the United States is vastly ahead of any potential adversary.[183] It seems likely that some lessons drawn from an earlier period with a similar difference might have particular relevance for current American foreign policy.

Second, Sino-American relations continue to be fraught with tension and occasional recourse to attempts at strategic coercion.[184] Further, many scholars argue

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182 King, Keohane, and Verba, *Designing Social Inquiry*, 137.

183 For a convincing discussion of just how far ahead the United States is, see Stephen G. Brooks and William C. Wohlforth, "American Primacy in Perspective," *Foreign Affairs* 81, no. 4 (2002).

184 On the general tension in the relationship, see David M. Lampton, *Same Bed, Different Dreams: Managing U.S.-China Relations, 1989-2000* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001); James Mann, *About Face: A History of America's Curious Relationship with China, from Nixon to Clinton* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1999). On the most recent occurrence of coercive diplomacy between

that culture and ideology play important roles in shaping Chinese foreign policy in general.[185]   Learning more about the ways in which miscommunications and misperceptions occurred to the two in the past can help us to avoid them in the future. This is critical for the avoidance of nuclear and large-scale conventional war in an era where some prognosticate a long-term competition between these two countries.[186] Even if the phenomenon examined here lacks general applicability, the United States has overestimated its own capabilities in the past, and seems likely to do so in the future. This merits examination.

Cases Not Chosen

Two important events in this period are coercive attempts that had no chance of success.   Thus, they are not treated as cases.   First, the U.S. decision to intervene in the war in late June could not have been deterred by the Chinese: nothing the Chinese could have threatened would have changed the American calculus.   Washington, at that point, already expected the Chinese (and possibly the Soviets) to get involved in the war.[187]

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the two, see Robert S. Ross, "The 1995-96 Taiwan Strait Confrontation: Coercion, Credibility, and the Use of Force," *International Security* 25, no. 2 (2000).

185 John W. Garver, *Foreign Relations of the People's Republic of China* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1992); Melvin Gurtov and Byong-Moo Hwang, *China under Threat: The Politics of Strategy and Diplomacy* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980); Melvin Gurtov and Byong-Moo Hwang, *China's Security: The New Roles of the Military* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1998); Michael H. Hunt, *The Genesis of Chinese Communist Foreign Policy* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1995); Lucian W. Pye and Mary W. Pye, *Asian Power and Politics: The Cultural Dimensions of Authority* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press, 1985); Ross Terrill, *The New Chinese Empire: And What It Means for the United States* (New York: Basic Books, 2003).

186 Dale C. Copeland, *The Origins of Major War* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000); Avery Goldstein, "The Diplomatic Face of China's Grand Strategy: A Rising Power's Emerging Choice," *The China Quarterly*, no. 168 (2001); Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics;* Fareed Zakaria, "China: Appease ... Or Contain?   Speak Softly, Carry a Veiled Threat," *The New York Times*, February 18 1996.

187 On American expectations that China and the Soviets would get involved in the early days of the war, see several different primary sources: "Memorandum of National Security Council Consultants' Meeting, Thursday, June 29, 1950," in United States Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the*

Given that, there is nothing more the Chinese could have threatened, and indeed there is

no evidence that the Chinese even attempted deterrence at that point.

Second, the U.S. attempt to deter Chinese intervention after Washington had

crossed the 38th parallel was unlikely to succeed for several reasons.   First, the Chinese

viewed any American presence in that part of Korean an inimical to their interests[188] and

when they entered the war, they seem to have expected large-scale war with the United

States to ensue.[189]   Thus, deterrence failure is not the primary explanation for the

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United States, 1950, vol. I: National Security Affairs; Foreign Economic Policy (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1977), 327-8.   "Memorandum of Conversation, by Mr. Frederick E. Nolting, Special Assistant to the Deputy Under Secretary of State (Mathews)," June 30, 1950, in United States Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1950*, vol. VII: Korea (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1976), 258.   Chace has a direct quote from Acheson and Paige has a direct quote from Truman, both supporting this point.   James Chace, *Acheson: The Secretary of State Who Created the American World* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1998), 287; Glenn D. Paige, *The Korean Decision, June 24-30, 1950* (New York, NY: Free Press, 1968), 248.   Note that the Wake Island meeting of October 15, 1950, where American concerns (expressed by Truman, among others) regarding Chinese entry are much more pronounced, occurs much later than this early point in time.   At that point, the question was whether to push northward, not whether or not to intervene in the first place.   See the discussion on this issue in the cases that follow.

188 The key piece of evidence here comes from a telegram Mao drafted to send to Stalin.   毛泽东、"关于决定派军队入朝作战给四斯大林的电报"、1950 年十月二日、<<建国以来毛泽东文稿>>、第一册:9/1949-12/1950(北京:中央文献出版社、1987)第 539 页.   Mao Zedong, "Telegram to Stalin regarding the decision to send troops to Korea for combat", October 2, 1950, Mao Zedong's Manuscripts Since the Founding of the State (Beijing, Central Party Documents Publishers, 1987) p. 539.   For the most thorough advocation of this argument, see Thomas J. Christensen, "Threats, Assurances, and the Last Chance for Peace: The Lessons of Mao's Korean War Telegrams," *International Security* 17, no. 1 (1992).   For a broadly concurring view, that emphasizes the key decisions were all taken in October as the United States approached the 38th parallel and not later as they approached the Yalu, see Scobell, *China's Use of Military Force*.

189 For the argument that China expected its entry to lead to a wider war, see Christensen, *Useful Adversaries*, 163-74. Sergei Goncharov, John Lewis, and Litai Xue, *Uncertain Partners: Stalin, Mao, and the Korean War* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1993), 159, 181, and 194; Hunt, *Chinese Communist Foreign Policy*, 188. Zhou Enlai, "Resisting U.S. Aggression, Aiding Korea and Defending Peace," October 24, 1950, reprinted in Zhou Enlai, *Selected Works of Zhou Enlai*, 1st ed. (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press: Distributed by Guoji Shudian, 1981), 62.   Chen Jian is the best-known proponent of the argument that *any* American involvement on the peninsula would lead to Chinese intervention.   Chen Jian, *China's Road to the Korean War: The Making of the Sino-American Confrontation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 128, 139, 143, 148, 173.

eventual entry of Chinese forces; rather, the logic of the security dilemma is.[190]

However, the Chinese optimism about the conflict that the second case (Chapter 5)

outlines did likely play some supporting role here. However, it would have reduced the

prospects for deterrence success and done so in ways that are similar to the failings

discussed in the second case. Thus, it need not be expounded upon at length separately.

Thus, in these two other cases, difficulties in communication and assessing the

balance of power are unlikely to have had a large effect. In the other three cases Sino-

American cases from this period, there is at least the potential for such an effect; thus,

they merit examination here.

Other cases from outside the early Cold War Sino-American conflict, however,

would likely speak to the issues raised by the hypotheses but are suboptimal for testing

for other reasons. The German views of Blitzkrieg might be contrasted with the French

views of static defense leading up to May of 1940. However, these differences,

important as they are, are not as large in scale as are those in the Sino-American case.[191]

The first U.S.-Iraq war also has some important differences in terms of modern precision

guided munitions, airpower, etc., but it is too recent to get good information out of even

the U.S. government, let alone the Iraqi archives. The Arab-Israeli conflicts of 1967 and

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190 See the discussion in the previous chapter entitled "Escalation, Spirals, and Security Dilemmas." For discussion of the Chinese entry into the Korean War as explained by the security dilemma, see Chapter 5. Allen Whiting was the original proponent of this view. Whiting, *China Crosses the Yalu.*

191 For traditional views on this issue, which emphasize the relatively advanced nature of the German tactical innovations see Marc Bloch, *Strange Defeat; a Statement of Evidence Written in 1940* (New York,: Octagon Books, 1968), 36-68; Williamson Murray, *The Change in the European Balance of Power, 1938-1939: The Path to Ruin* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1984), 30-45; Williamson Murray and Allan Reed Millett, *A War to Be Won: Fighting the Second World War* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2000), Chapter 2; Williamson Murray and Allan Reed Millett, eds., *Military Innovation in the Interwar Period* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996). In contrast, May emphasizes the similarities between the militaries. May, *Strange Victory.*

1973 in particular, but perhaps also in 1948, also exhibit a large degree of this difference

in doctrines and beliefs.   These have been examined productively from a similar

perspective to that of this dissertation,[192] and it is worthwhile to see if a broader

theoretical approach will travel geographically to Asia.

The following chapter begins that task.

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192 Shimshoni, *Israel and Conventional Deterrence*.

Theory Summary Sheet
Hypotheses

H_1: When two nations have different theories of victory, they will be more likely to misperceive each other's capabilities relative to their own, and these misperceptions, *ceteris paribus*, will lead to underestimation of the adversary.

H_2: An underestimation of an adversary's capabilities—that comes from H_1—can lead to deterrence and coercive failure, escalation, and conflict because it complicates (H_{2A}) assessments of the balance of power and (H_{2B}) interpretation of the adversary's signals.

$H_{Alternate}$: Weak signals are more likely to lead to coercive failure and escalation while strong signals are more likely to lead to coercive success.

Predictions

Perceiving the Balance of Power and the Nature of War

1) Differences in theories of victory should correlate with states underestimating an adversary's capabilities, *ceteris paribus*. Conversely, *similarities* in beliefs should correlate with states having more accurate assessments of each other's military capabilities, *ceteris paribus*.
2) Before conflict, leaders of states with different theories of victory should denigrate the other side's theory of victory relative to their own.
3) Leaders of states with different theories of victory should not have nuanced discussions of the merits of their adversaries' strategies, nor recognize that their adversaries' financial and strategic situations mandate their choice of strategy.
4) Each side should believe that battles will be dominated by factors emphasized by its theory of victory.

Signaling and Intent Issues

5) When signaling to the other side, each side should send signals that make use of forces in accordance with its own theory of victory.
6) A state's assessment of its adversary's intent should depend, in part, on the first state's understanding of the adversary's cost-benefit analysis. Furthermore, that understanding will likely be incorrect because the first state will assess costs and benefits differently than its adversary when the two sides have different theories of victory.
7) Leaders of states with different theories of victory should downplay the likelihood of the other side getting involved in a conflict or in further raising the stakes in it.

Perceptions Meet Reality: Surprise!

8) Actual battle outcomes, when they occur, should deviate further from leaders' expectations when nations have more different theories of victory guiding their forces.
    a. In cases where one side forced the battle on the other, the side taking the initiative should be surprised at its difficulties on the battlefield.
    b. In cases where both sides pursued battle, both sides should be surprised at their difficulties.
    c. More generally, any leader who believes s/he has a viable strategy in the context of the current conflict should be surprised at its (relative) shortcomings when battle is actually joined.
    d. Leaders often have incentives to conceal their surprise, so it may manifest itself as hastily reinforcing or last minute changes in strategy.
9) Leaders should be surprised about the degree of adversary interest in an issue when the signaling over the issue made use of military forces (or threats about them) that are different than their own. (Indeed, they may ascribe aggressive motives to the other side because of this.)

Extreme Values on IV Lead to Extreme Indicators

10) Larger differences between the two states' theories of victory should correlate with a larger or more frequent underestimation of the adversary's capability.
11) Leaders (both political and military) deeply versed in their own theory of victory should be more likely to misperceive and miscalculate than leaders less imbued with that particular view.

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Chapter 3.   FACING OFF OVER KOREA: COMPARING THEORIES OF VICTORY

The next two chapters examine cases of the U.S. decision the cross the 38th parallel into North Korea and Mao's decision to support North Korea's invasion.   These two cases depend on a similar assessment of the two sides' military capabilities.[1] Therefore, it will be simpler to assess the independent variable, that is the differences between the two sides' theories of victory, jointly for those cases.   This chapter does that.

It begins with an examination of American thinking about military effectiveness, before turning to China's views and contrasting the two.   The conclusion summarizes the very large differences between the two countries' theories, thus making explicit the coding for this period.

The U.S. Theory of Victory on Land

The generic American theory of victory in 1950 centered primarily on the use of strategic bombing and atomic weapons in a general war context.   Beyond this, American strategic thought emphasized the utility of tactical airpower, mechanized forces, and combined arms in the event of conventional war.   Each of these emphases is discussed below.

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1   The third case, Mao's decision not to attack Taiwan in that same year, involves a rather different military calculation, and so the independent variable is treated entirely separately in its chapter.

Strategic Bombing in General ...

One of the key beliefs for American policymakers was the perceived effectiveness of strategic bombing in general. This view traced its roots to the pre-WWII era and had changed little over time.

> An understanding of American air power and of the problem of aerial warfare can be achieved only in the context of cultural and intellectual history. The ways people have thought about air power proved so remarkably consistent, despite rapidly changing technology over a half-century, that a mere recital of a particular invention or an individual bombing raid sheds little light on the appeals and uses of air power. The bomber in imagination is the most compelling and revealing story.[2]

Beliefs about the lessons of WWII reified this belief: "Immediately after the war, it appeared relatively certain that strategic bombing would be an integral part of any proper military effort."[3] This perception came out of the "formative common experience" held by senior military leaders from the previous world war.[4] The Strategic Bombing Survey, conducted at the behest of President Roosevelt, came to simple, sweeping conclusions: "Allied air power was decisive in the war in Western Europe."[5] Indeed, even aside from atomic weapons, discussed below, the Air Force continued to foresee a important role for *conventional* strategic bombing: "Many targets were not appropriate for scarce and

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2   The consistency and causal importance of these beliefs is the story told in Michael S. Sherry, *The Rise of American Air Power: The Creation of Armageddon* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), x. See also Pape's discussion of the awe with which strategic bombing was held. Robert Pape, *Bombing to Win: Air Power and Coercion in War* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996), Chapter 4 and 8.

3   Christopher M. Gacek, *The Logic of Force: The Dilemma of Limited War in American Foreign Policy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 31.

4   Michael Howard, as cited in *Ibid.*, 30-31.

5   *United States Strategic Bombing Survey, Summary Report (European War)*, (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, September 30, 1945), 16. The report on the Pacific War was similarly positive. *United States Strategic Bombing Survey, Summary Report (Pacific War)*, (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, July 1, 1946).

expensive atomic weapons anyway, and a requirement would continue for conventional

bombing forces."[6]

... And Atomic Weapons Specifically

Integral to and intertwined with the beliefs regarding the efficacy of strategic

bombing was a confidence in the utility of atomic weapons. This thoroughly permeated

national security thinking at the time. The Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombs had

important effects on American thinking about the usefulness of nuclear weapons: "the

advent of atomic weapons and the image of the mushroom cloud surely strengthened the

vague perception that strategic bombing would remain a deadly aspect of war."[7]

While Dulles's New Look strategy, which publicly emphasized nuclear weapons

over every other sort of armament through its reliance on "massive retaliation," was not

to become policy until a few years later, even at this point, nuclear weapons were at the

core of American thinking about international conflict in general.[8]

> Strategic bombing with atomic weapons had been at the core of U.S. war plans ever since
> the military began thinking seriously about the prospects of armed conflict with the
> Soviet Union.... Comparatively, atomic weapons were cheap, and Truman accepted
> plans and approved budgets that made the United States dependent on their use should
> war erupt.[9]

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6   Conrad C. Crane, *American Airpower Strategy in Korea, 1950-1953* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2000), 16-17.

7   Gacek, *The Logic of Force*, 31.

8   McGeorge Bundy, *Danger and Survival: Choices About the Bomb in the First Fifty Years* (New York: Random House, 1988), 230.

9   Melvyn P. Leffler, *A Preponderance of Power: National Security, the Truman Administration, and the Cold War* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1992), 323.

The Joint Outline Emergency War Plan of October 1949 called for attacks on over a hundred Soviet cities with multiple weapons on most and a reserve of over 70 weapons.[10] Similarly, long term planning in 1949 was also assuming that nuclear weapons would be at the center of warfare:

> At the close of 1949 the Joint Staff drew up Dropshot, a long-term procurement plan for a hypothetical war in 1957. ... Dropshot proposed ending the war as soon as possible, and that meant a massive atomic campaign. It proposed up to 435 atomic bombs for use in the first month against industrial and military targets in the Soviet Union and its satellites.[11]

The Navy was trying to secure a role for itself in delivering nuclear weapons as a way to ensure its relevance for the defense of the country,[12] and even Army generals were emphasizing the centrality of retaliatory strategic bombing to American grand strategy at this time.[13] Kennan had unsuccessfully tried to wean U.S. policy away from nuclear weapons and toward a conventional defense of Europe, but had been rebuffed by Acheson.[14] This emphasis on nuclear exchanges prevented consideration of other forms of warfare.

> Some kind of air-atomic war dominated strategic thinking, and all the more so with the continued slashing of nonatomic forces. The Joint Chiefs gave no attention to any strategic alternatives. For instance, they never took up a State Department view in 1948 and 1949 that the United States should have highly mobile divisions to fight limited wars of containment, not atomic wars of annihilation or conquest.[15]

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10 David Alan Rosenberg, "The Origins of Overkill: Nuclear Weapons and American Strategy, 1945-1960," *International Security* 7, no. 4 (1983): 16.

11 George W. Baer, *One Hundred Years of Sea Power: The U.S. Navy, 1890-1990* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1994), 313. While the war game focused on 1957, not 1950, as it was conducted in 1949, it does illustrate the thinking about what constituted important weapons on the eve of the Korean War from the perspective of the American military leadership.

12 *Ibid.*, 296-97. There were however contrary arguments also being made within the navy at the time. See Baer, *One Hundred Years of Sea Power*, 304.

13 William Whitney Stueck, *The Road to Confrontation: American Policy toward China and Korea, 1947-1950* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1981), 155-56.

14 Leffler, *A Preponderance of Power*, 329.

15 Baer, *One Hundred Years of Sea Power*, 302-3.

A survey of American doctrine of the Korean War period concluded, "Americans, including the government, succeed[ed] in convincing themselves that the atomic bomb was a sovereign remedy for all military ailments."[16]

It is important to emphasize that the reliance in doctrine on strategic bombing and atomic weapons was pervasive.   As the last two quotes in the paragraph above make clear, the atomic arsenal was not thought of as solely relevant to World War III.   Rather, analysts felt it would be useful in general, in any conflict.   As discussed below, there was little nuanced consideration of "limited war," making this oversimplification easier to sustain.

The American arsenal was impressive.[17]   At its core were 369 atomic warheads, ready to be loaded on long-range bombers.[18]   The higher efficiency of the atomic bombs after completion of the "Sandstone" research program had allowed the United States to produce 63 percent more warheads with the same stockpile of fissile material, which had

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16   Russell Frank Weigley, *The American Way of War: A History of United States Military Strategy and Policy* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1977), 382.   More generally on this point, see Chapter 15: "The Atomic Revolution".

17   On the tendency of American military and strategic leaders to regard any size arsenal as too small, see Rosenberg, "The Origins of Overkill."   An arsenal of several hundred weapons has been regarded as more than adequate for a number of nuclear powers over the past several decades.   See Avery Goldstein, *Deterrence and Security in the 21st Century: China, Britain, France, and the Enduring Legacy of the Nuclear Revolution* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2000).

18   See the Natural Resources Defense Council's web page at www.nrdc.org which has historical data on both American and Soviet nuclear arsenals.   While the precise month of this figure (369 warheads) is not apparent from the NRDC database, the previous year's figure (of 235 warheads) suggests that a significant arsenal existed throughout the year of 1950.   Similarly, Leffler suggests an arsenal of "a little under 300 in June 1950."   Leffler, *A Preponderance of Power*, 324.

Finally, DOE provides similar, although slightly smaller, numbers.   It lists 170 weapons available in 1949 and 299 in 1950, and also notes that there were 264 warheads built in 1950, and some 135 warheads retired (which includes weapons taken out of service to be modified into more efficient designs in subsequent years).   The total megatonage available in 1950 is just under 10 megatons. See "DOE Facts: Summary of Declassified Nuclear Stockpile Information", Department of Energy, Office of the Press Secretary, Washington, DC (1994) available online as of July 15, 2004 at http://www.osti.gov/html/osti/opennet/document/press/pc26.html.

meant a recent surge in the quantity of bombs.[19] Further, according to several analysts, "by January 1949 actual and foreseen shortages of bombers and bombs had begun to be alleviated."[20] Overall, SAC was beginning to improve substantially on its late 1940s position across the board in integration of capabilities.

> By 1950, the command operated 225 atomic bomb carrying aircraft (including B-29s, B-50s, and 34 B-36s), flew 263 combat ready crews, and was training forty-nine more. Eighteen bomb assembly teams were fully qualified, and four would be added by June.[21]

Even pessimists were forced to conclude that by August of 1949, "Strategic Air Command began to achieve a measure of deterrent capability."[22] Nevertheless, on January 31, 1950, the President Truman had decided to move forward even further in this area by publicly beginning research on the thermonuclear bomb.[23] The Soviets' ability to respond against the American homeland at this time was extremely limited.[24]

Atomic strategy at this point focused on strategic bombing rather than tactical battlefield attacks. While development of large artillery guns for use with atomic weapons had begun in late 1949, tactical weapons were not available in significant numbers until mid-1952.[25] Nevertheless, the tactical use of nuclear weapons had also

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19 Gacek, *The Logic of Force*, 33; Richard Rhodes, *Dark Sun: The Making of the Hydrogen Bomb* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1995), 320.

20 Gacek, *The Logic of Force*, 33. See also Rosenberg's discussion which contrasts the period from 1945-48, when weapons and delivery systems were scarce, to the period after 1949 when those limitations relaxed significantly. Rosenberg, "The Origins of Overkill."

21 Harry R. Borowski, *A Hollow Threat: Strategic Air Power and Containment before Korea* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1982), 191.

22 *Ibid.*, 187.

23 Bundy, *Danger and Survival*, 197.

24 Roger Dingman, "Atomic Diplomacy During the Korean War," in *Nuclear Diplomacy and Crisis Management*, ed. Stephen Van Evera (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1990), 116.

25 Mark A. Ryan, *Chinese Attitudes toward Nuclear Weapons: China and the United States During the Korean War* (Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 1989), 141, 138.

been considered and studied.   Atomic weapons were expected to in many cases

substitute for shortfalls in conventional armament.[26]   For instance, one study "led the

JCS to task the Strategic Air Command in the fall of 1949 with the 'retardation of Soviet

advances in Western Europe.'"[27]   Further, once the Korean War broke out atomic use

was repeatedly discussed.[28]   When MacArthur, the battlefield commander, proposed

using nuclear weapons in December of 1950, he sent to Washington "a list of retardation

targets which he considered would require 26 bombs ... [including] 4 bombs to be used

on invasion forces and 4 bombs to be used on critical concentrations of enemy air power,

both targets of opportunity."[29]   (Interestingly, some of the other "retardation targets"

apparently included locations within China.[30])

     Thus, in the United States the utility of atomic weapons was thought to ubiquitous.

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26   Steven L. Rearden, *The Formative Years, 1947-1950*, 3 vols., vol. 1 (Washington, D.C: Historical Office Office of the Secretary of Defense, 1984), 445.

27   Rosenberg, "The Origins of Overkill," 16.   Note that the arsenal the United States had at the time was far from ideal for this sort of targeting.   Nevertheless, the weapons could have been used in a tactical setting, had the President so ordered.

28   See Dingman, "Atomic Diplomacy During the Korean War," 119, 124 n. 48, and 130-31.

29   Quoted from an Army archival source (a G-3 report) in Rosemary Foot, *The Wrong War: American Policy and the Dimensions of the Korean Conflict, 1950-1953* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985), 114-5.   See also Gacek, *The Logic of Force*, 58. Ryan, *Chinese Attitudes toward Nuclear Weapons*, 38.   The Air Force also felt atomic weapons would have been valuable in an interdiction role during the retreat of the Eighth Army.   John W. Dower, *War without Mercy* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1986), 701.

30   Again see Foot, *The Wrong War*, 115.

General War

Closely related to this emphasis on nuclear weapons at the time was a near exclusive focus on general war rather than limited war.[31] "A school of detailed writings about limited war did not appear until the 1950s."[32] This led American strategists to avoid worrying about how to win a local, limited war of containment (which would have very likely involved a heavy focus on enhancing conventional capabilities) and to rather focus on ensuring the apocalyptic, general war would be devastating to the Soviets.

> Having prepared in the late 1940s for general war, the government and the services were caught off guard by the North Korean attack in June, Defense Secretary Louis Johnson admitted in ht he first top-level conference on the crisis that his department had no war plan for Korea and thus no recommendation. The Joint Chiefs as well did not attempt formal estimate of the military situation in Korean, and they were not sure what would be required to mount United States military operations in the area.[33]

NSC-68 began to address this by alluding to the prospect of limited wars, but it had not developed sophisticated analysis to consider such prospects.[34] One military historian characterized the thinking at the outset of the Korean War as follows

> So ingrained was the American habit of thinking of war in terms of annihilative victories, that occasional warnings of limited war went more than unheeded, and people, government, and much of the military could scarcely conceive of a Communist military thrust of lesser dimensions than World War III.[35]

Thus, American strategic thought remained centered on general war.

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31 Bruce Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War: The Roaring of the Cataract, 1947-1950*, vol. 2 (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1981), 161; Gacek, *The Logic of Force*, Chapter 2: Patterns in America's Use of Force Before the Korean War.

32 Gacek, *The Logic of Force*, 37.

33 Richard K. Betts, *Soldiers, Statesmen, and Cold War Crises*, Morningside ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), 154, see also 17.

34 See NSC-68, in United States Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1950*, vol. I: National Security Affairs; Foreign Economic Policy (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1977). See also Samuel F. Wells, Jr., "Sounding the Tocsin: NSC 68 and the Soviet Threat," *International Security* 4, no. 2 (1979).

35 Weigley, *The American Way of War*, 382-83.

Heavily Armed, Mechanized Ground Forces

In terms of ground force doctrine in general, mechanized and combined arms were viewed as optimal for conventional forces in general by the United States.   Again, the point of this section is to describe the *general doctrinal perspective* towards armor and combined arms held by the U.S. military.   In some cases, specific geographic areas would not have the equipment to fully implement that doctrine.   Nevertheless, the leadership nationwide would be still be indoctrinated by the theory of victory, so it is important to understand its characteristics.

The standard "table of organization and equipment" (TOE, the list of equipment allotments for generic military units and how they are organized) in 1950 had 143 tanks in each of America's eight *infantry* divisions.[36]   This was only slightly lower than the number of tanks deployed in Soviet *armored* units of the same size at the end of World War II.[37]   The U.S. Army also had a dedicated armor division, a cavalry division, at least four armored cavalry regiments, and six independent regimental combat teams that would have also been heavy in terms of allotment of armor.[38]

In terms of stockpiles army-wide, there were even more tanks available than the TOE would suggest: there were enough tanks for each division to be equipped with 300,

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36   Clay Blair, *The Forgotten War: America in Korea* (New York: Times Books, 1988), 48, note.   The divisions in the Far East Command were substantially less well endowed in this regard, having only 22 tanks assigned to each infantry division and a small detachment of armor available to corps and army level commands.

37   Typically, Soviet armored corps were regarded as the equivalent of Western (or German) divisions during WWII.   These were generally armed with 165-195 tanks; thus, the American infantry units were a quarter lighter than Soviet armored units.   See Williamson Murray and Allan Reed Millett, *A War to Be Won: Fighting the Second World War* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2000), 286; R. J. Overy, *Why the Allies Won* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1996), 211.

38   James F. Schnabel, *United States Army in the Korean War*, vol. 3 Policy and direction: the first year (Washington, DC: Office of the Chief of Military History United States Army/GPO, 1972), 43-4.

with a similar number available for replacement use and parts.[39] Additionally, "machine

guns and towed artillery were in plentiful supply," although more modern heavy

equipment was less abundant.[40] At the time of the Korean War "the average American

infantry division had a third more artillery than its World War II predecessor."[41] Note

however, that even these comparatively large endowments were viewed as insufficient at

the time from the U.S. Army's perspective, thus underlining the depth of their beliefs in

the utility of mechanization and armor in general.

Combined Arms and Close Air Support

Beyond quantity of equipment, the doctrine of combined arms emphasized the

value of integrating multiple types of capabilities in military operations to take advantage

of their synergies. The U.S. Army of WWII had increasingly integrated heavy weapons

to every level of its force structure, swapping infantry units for heavy weapons units at

the company and platoon levels.[42] Training emphasized flexibility, combined arms, and

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39 Author's calculations based on data from *Ibid.*, 43-46. Schnabel list the following holdings for what
was a 10 division army at the time:

	Serviceable	Unserviceable
M-24 Chaffee (light tank)	<900	2557
M-4A3 Sherman (medium tank)	1826	1376
M-46 Patton (newest medium tank)	319	N/A
Total	*<3045*	*3933*

(Note this excludes holdings of the M-26 Pershings, for unknown reasons.) While these were mostly
WWII vintage tanks, so was the T-34 used by the North Koreans. The forces available to MacArthur
lacked the relatively large armor component that would imply, as discussed in Chapter 5; however, the
point here speaks to the culture of the military in general.

40 *Ibid.*, 46.

41 Eliot Cohen and John Gooch, *Military Misfortunes: The Anatomy of Failure in War* (New York, NY:
The Free Press, 1990), 182.

42 On the eve of the American entry into WWII, the U.S. Army undertook a major organization change,
moving from a square divisional structure (with four regiments) to a triangular divisional structure
(with three regiments). This change was first tested at a large scale at the famous Louisiana
Maneuevers. Jonathan M. House, *Toward Combined Arms Warfare: A Survey of 20th-Century*

jointness. The primary organizational structure for the army at the outbreak of the

Korean War, the regimental combat team or RCT, was a direct descendant from the late

WWII innovation of the combined arms task forces that integrated armor, artillery, and

infantry at the battalion and regimental levels.[43] These continued to be emphasized at

the time in the Asian theater: "Divisions were directed to complete RCT field exercises

and develop effective air ground combat procedures."[44] This focus on combined arms

permeated the American ground forces at all levels. In general, it gave even infantry

units an armored punch and significant mobility.[45]

The utility of close air support (CAS) to augment ground forces was another

lesson from the WWII experience. Indeed, the doctrinal manuals still in use in 1950

derived directly from the history of that period:

> Close air support as practiced in Korea was rooted in Field Manual (FM) 31-35, Air-
> Ground Operations. First published in August 1946, this manual distilled the lessons
> and procedures learned by the Army's 12th Army Group and the Army Air Force's Ninth
> Air Force primarily in Europe during World War II.[46]

While the Air Force had focused its efforts on strategic bombing, the other services

emphasized CAS, and indeed, during the Korean War "tactical support from Navy and

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Tactics, Doctrine, and Organization (Fort Leavenworth, KS: U.S. Army Command and General Staff
College, 1985). As part of this organizational shift the units got heavier: "a heavy wapons company
replaced a rifle company in each battalion, and a weapons platoon replaced a rifle platoon in each
company." John H. Bradley, The Second World War: Asia and the Pacific, ed. Thomas E. Griess, 3
vols., vol. 2 (Wayne, NJ: Avery Publishing Group, 1989), 24.

43 Eric Heginbotham, "Military Learning," Military Review 80, no. 3 (2000).

44 Schnabel, United States Army in the Korean War, 55.

45 Again, it is true that the units deployed in the Far East Command were understrength and did lack
some of their organic transport assets and much of their organic armor. However, the point here is
that the culture of the American doctrinal thinking about war, the theory of victory in general, focused
on these elements.

46 William T. Y'Blood, Down in the Weeds: Close Air Support in Korea (Washington, DC: Air Force
History and Museums Program, 2002), 1.

Marine Corps aircraft was excellent."[47]   That said, the Air Force did not completely

abandon the CAS mission.[48]   In early discussions regarding the appropriate American

response to the North Korean attack, this belief was clear.   U.S. Navy officers

> wanted an immediate 'fly-over' of American airplanes for psychological effect while the
> aggressors pondered the terms of the Security Council resolution... The [U.S.] Air Force
> was considering the possibility of sending tactical air unit to South Korean airfields, a
> move which would involve the commitment of ground forces to protect the bases, but the
> Navy believed that the situation was 'made to order' for carrier based air power."[49]

American ground forces not only expected their air forces to defend them from

the enemy's planes, but CAS was integral to their views on joint operations.   Indeed,

General Ned Almond, MacArthur's Chief of Staff and latter commander of X Corps, was

a strong proponent of CAS over the use of airpower in its more strategic roles.[50]   Even

the Air Force was not exempt: the B-29, an Air Force owned airframe typically used for

strategic attacks, was used in the CAS role during the war.[51]

Other Doctrinal Influences

In Korea, the additional strategic concept of isolating the battlefield influenced

American thinking.   American strategy in Italy as well as island hopping in the Pacific

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47 Weigley, *The American Way of War*, 384.   On the Air Force's abandonment of the tactical air role in this period, see Crane, *American Airpower Strategy in Korea, 1950-1953*, 21-22.   Also commending the role of the Navy in providing CAS, see John R. Bruning, *Crimson Sky: The Air Battle for Korea* (Dulles, Va.: Brassey's, 1999), 83.

48 While the Air Force chaffed at requirements to serve at the behest of ground commanders throughout WWII and in the Korean War, there was constant pressure for it to do so.   Indeed, in the opening days of the Korean War nearly all air strikes were made in direct support of ground forces (to the clear chagrin of senior Air Force leaders):   "FEAF was directed to employ its aerial predominance in close support of ground units to the exclusion of all else.   This absolutely precluded a proper interdiction program."   (Quoted from a USAF Historical Study by William W. Momyer, A. J. C. Lavalle, and James C. Gaston, *Airpower in Three Wars* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1983), 190, see also 188.)

49 Glenn D. Paige, *The Korean Decision, June 24-30, 1950* (New York, NY: Free Press, 1968), 136, note 137.

50 Y'Blood, *Down in the Weeds*, 6-7.

51 *Ibid.*, 11.

carried key lessons for peninsular Korea.[52]   In the Italy campaigns during WWII, the

United States relied on a sequence of amphibious landings in Sicily, Solarno, Anzio,

etc.[53]   This allowed the United States to take full advantage of the strategic mobility that

its dominant Navy provided.   Both in Italy and in the Pacific, the United States focused

also on isolating the battlefield through the use of airpower and naval forces, thus

limiting the adversary's ability to resupply and reinforce.   Tactical and operational

interdiction were key strategies here.   The American leaders were confident these tactics

would apply easily and decisively in Korea.

Thus, the American theory of victory had several elements.   Across all of these,

however, was one essential element: a substitution of capital for manpower.[54]   This is

something scholars have identified in American military policy across a wide span of

time.

> Observers [of the American civil war] noted that the Americans would rarely close with
> the enemy but chose instead to fight at ranges of a quarter mile or more and throw
> enormous quantities of lead at each other, often for hours without end.   What these
> observers witnessed first hand has become immutably associated with the American way

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52   Weigley, *The American Way of War*, 385.

53   Thomas B. Buell *et al.*, *The Second World War: Europe and the Mediterranean*, ed. Thomas E. Griess, 3 vols., vol. 1 (Wayne, NJ: Avery Publishing Group, 1989), 227ff.

54   While it is common to bemoan the state of the American military budget in 1950 (thus suggesting that even capital was not being provided to the U.S. military), that concern needs to be put into context. The following chart shows budgets for several great powers in 1949 and 1950.   The United States and the Soviet Union are on a rough par.   Beyond that, U.S. spending dwarfed the rest of the world.

	China	France	U.K.	U.S.	Russia
1949	$2.0 b	$1.2 b	$3.1 b	$13.5 b	$14.0 b
1950	$2.6 b	$1.5 b	$2.4 b	$14.6 b	$15.5 b

Data Source: "National Material Capabilities" (version 2.1), Correlates of War Project, The University of Michigan, Principal Investigators: J. David Singer and Melvin Small, originally created July 1990, updated April 1999.

of war—the willingness of Americans to expend firepower freely to conserve human life.[55]

With these various beliefs—strategic bombing, nuclear weapons, combined arms—the United States was to face off against China in northeast Asia. The contrast between the two could hardly be greater.

China's Theory of Victory on Land

As the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) shifted their focus from their own violent rise to power to the emerging international Cold War, they faced an adversary in the United States that maintained a military radically different from its own. The People's Liberation Army (PLA) had just emerged victorious from two decades of civil war and a seven-year fight against Japan. In both conflicts its adversary was better equipped and often more numerous. These experiences left it with a robust set of strategic beliefs that it incorporated into its theory of victory.

Much of the evidence in this section comes from doctrinal discussions within the PLA. As such, it is heavily laced with Maoist propaganda, and it is tempting to write it off as such: Actual military leaders would not follow such guidance, would they? To do so would simply ignore the critical power that Maoist ideology held over China, even at this early date.[56] During the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, Maoist thought was elevated further, nearly to the status of a religion. In the pre-Korean War period, the worship of Mao did not rise to that level; nevertheless, it is important not to overstate the

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55 On the more general American tendency to substitute firepower for manpower, see Robert H. Scales, *Firepower in Limited War* (Washington, DC: National Defense University Press, 1990), 3-4, *inter alia.*

56 While there was some variation of beliefs between Mao and a few leaders who were less supportive of his views, on balance, there was widespread acceptance of Mao's views within the senior leadership. The role of dissenting views is discussed later in this chapter and also in Chapter 6.

contrast between the periods.[57]   Indeed, some argue this earlier period is the true high

point of belief in Maoist People's War.[58]   As Zhang Shuguang argues in his persuasive

Mao's Military Romanticism these ideas profoundly shaped policy.[59]   Indeed, China's

evolving military culture continues to shape Beijing's foreign and security policy today.[60]

Other scholars agree on the importance of Maoism to security policy and doctrine:

> Western scholars tend to mock the notion of "man over weapons." ...   It is easy in
> retrospect to dismiss what was in actuality the enormously stifling effect of Maoist
> doctrine on innovated thinking in the Chinese officer corps.   When Liu [Shaoqi] gave
> his lectures in the early 1950s, Mao's military thought had not yet ascended to the
> biblical proportions it would assume in the 1960s.   Nonetheless, Liu had to struggle
> against an incipient Maoist orthodoxy in attempting to turn the attention of younger
> officers to problems about which Maoist thought offered little but dismissive (albeit
> morale boosting) aphorisms.[61]

Similarly, Ellis Joffe, while conceding that Maoist "doctrine is merely a rationalization,"

goes on to emphasize the substantial effects that such ideas—particularly when they are

grounded in a long history that supports them—can have on shaping people's

perceptions.[62]   In a slightly different issue-area, but one that had many parallels to that

discussed here, Lucian Pye writes that "political culture continues for many reasons to be

singularly important in shaping Chinese politics" and speaks of "the special importance

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57   On this historiography, see Edward L. Dreyer, *China at War, 1901-1949* (London; New York:
Longman, 1995).

58   See Zhang Shuguang, *Mao's Military Romanticism: China and the Korean War, 1950-53* (Lawrence,
Kans.: University Press of Kansas, 1995).

59   *Ibid.*

60   Li Nan, *From Revolutionary Internationalism to Conservative Nationalism: The Chinese Military's
Discourse on National Security and Identity in the Post-Mao Era*, Peaceworks No. 39 (Washington,
DC: U.S. Institute of Peace, May 2001).

61   Evan A. Feigenbaum, *China's Techno-Warriors: National Security and Strategic Competition from the
Nuclear to the Information Age* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2003), 22.

62   Ellis Joffe, *Party and Army: Professionalism and Political Control in the Chinese Officer Corps, 1949-
1964* (Cambridge,: East Asian Research Center Harvard University Distributed by Harvard University
Press, 1965), 50-52.

of political culture for understanding China."[63]   Finally, the PLA put Maoist doctrine

into practice in a number of tangible ways, as this section will show.

The Chinese beliefs regarding the nature of warfare began with an assessment of

the likely threat they would face (general invasion) and a view on the appropriate way to

deal with that (lure them in deep).   Mao downplayed the importance of nuclear weapons

and emphasized the role of People's War and infantry forces more generally.   These are

the doctrinal beliefs that the Chinese People's Volunteers[64] took with them into battle in

Korea.   The following sections will describe each of these points.

Fear of Invasion, But Confidence in Strategic Value of Hinterland

Across a long span of history, Chinese leaders had frequently faced adversaries

aiming to conquer all of China.[65]   In the wars against the Guomingdang (GMD) and the

Japanese, the communists had faced an existential threat, one that aimed to occupy the

entire area of the Chinese empire.   Chinese writing throughout this period emphasized

this threat, as Segal notes:

> A military operation designed to control all China was of great concern to CCP strategists,
> in large measure because the Communists' campaigns against Chiang Kai-shek as well as
> the Japanese dealt with just such a problem.   Thus, it is not surprising that more than
> any other threat to China, the problem of general invasion is the one most
> comprehensively analyzed.[66]

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63   Lucian W. Pye, *The Spirit of Chinese Politics*, New ed. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1992), ix.

64   The People's Volunteers was the name given to the PLA units that deployed to Korea to provide a veneer of separation between them and Beijing.   Beijing exerted complete and direct control over these forces.

65   William W. Whitson and Zhenxia Huang, *The Chinese High Command: A History of Communist Military Politics, 1927-71* (New York, NY: Praeger, 1973), 459.   As Whitson and Huang note, this threat predates the communist era by epochs.

66   Gerald Segal, *Defending China* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 48-49.

Mao maintained this threat perception during the Korean War, with one Chinese scholar

writing that Mao had expressed fears that Japanese might deploy troops to the Korean

peninsula.[67]   Indeed, these views regarding the nature of the threat to China (a land

invasion and occupation) likely remained in place at least until 1961.[68]   While at one

level this appears to parallel American concerns regarding general (rather than limited

war), the focus of the two was fundamentally different: China was worried about an

invasion of its own territory, whereas the United States was concerned about the conquest

of Europe and the potential for a nuclear exchange.

Because of this concern, and because of the relative weakness of China, Chinese

general strategic thinking emphasized the policy of "trading space for time"[69] by "luring

the enemy in deep."[70]   Chinese doctrine recognized that China had a vast hinterland into

which its military could withdraw.   The CCP had pursued this strategy with eventual

success against the Japanese in WWII,[71] and Mao repeatedly wrote of the value of this

strategy in the war in that conflict.[72]   The main point of Mao's famous "On Protracted

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67   宋连生,<<抗美援朝在回首>>(昆明:云南人民出版社,2002)。 Song Liansheng, *Recollections on the Korean War*   (Kunming: Yunnan People's Press, 2002), 170-71.

68   Alice Langley Hsieh, "China's Secret Military Papers: Military Doctrine and Strategy," *The China Quarterly*, no. 18 (1964): 84.   Indeed, arguably, Chinese threat perceptions today continue to be shaped by the legacy of this period.   See Chen Jian, *Mao's China and the Cold War* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2001), Epilogue: The Legacies of China' Cold War Experience.

69   See Mao Tsetung, "Problems of Strategy in China's Revolutionary War [December 1936]," in *Selected Military Writings of Mao Tse-Tung* (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1966), 133; Mao Tsetung, "Strategy for the Second Year of the War of Liberation [September 1, 1947]," in *Selected Military Writings of Mao Tse-Tung* (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1966), 329.

70   Mao Tsetung, "Problems of Strategy in China's Revolutionary War [December 1936]," 113.

71   Dick Wilson, *China's Revolutionary War* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1991), Chapter 5: Invasion and Chapter 6: Battle Lines Drawn.

72   Mao Tsetung, "Problems of Strategy in Guerrilla War [May 1938]," in *Selected Military Writings of Mao Tse-Tung* (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1966), 155,167.

War" (written in May of 1938) is to describe this strategy.[73]   Indeed, he continued to

advocate avoiding positional war in the civil war through late 1947, favoring instead

mobile, guerilla warfare that avoided preoccupation with controlling territory.[74]

That history shaped views about the future.   "Mao made it plain that in defeating

an invader, geography was China's first ally...   The essential principle that China's

vastness aids the defender and allows space to be traded for time, is an accurate one."[75]

One specialist on Chinese security concurs:

> To sum up, China's physical geography suggests that defending China, while not easy, is
> by no means impossible.   Land invasion—the only fundamental threat to China's
> national security—is made difficult by aspects of topography.   While China is
> vulnerable to certain border challenges or seaborne threats, its geography makes it easier
> to defend rather than attack "core China."[76]

This concept was not just theoretical for the communist leadership; in late 1949,

the Chinese took steps to implement the strategies called for by this aspect of their theory

of victory.

> In order to respond to this, instead of maintaining a positional defense along the coast, the
> Chinese Communists also decided to build an in-depth defense—a defensive zone of
> several layers with forces deployed in such a way to maneuver and reinforce on another.
> ...   This was an essential element of traditional Chinese strategy: *houfazhiren*, to gain
> mastery by striking only after the enemy has struck.[77]

As a result, China did not need to preemptively attack any would be aggressor but rather

could await the onset of war with some security that this patience would not jeopardize

73 Mao Tsetung, "On Protracted War [May 1938]," in *Selected Military Writings of Mao Tse-Tung* (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1966), espec. at 215ff.

74 Mao Tsetung, "The Present Situation and Our Tasks [December 25, 1947]," in *Selected Military Writings of Mao Tse-Tung* (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1966), 349.   Note that this is quite late in the war as the KMT was to begin to rapidly crumble early in 1948.

75 Segal, *Defending China*, 48-49.

76 *Ibid.*, 14.

77 Zhang Shuguang, *Mao's Military Romanticism*, 47.   For a similar view on early Chinese strategy, see Harlan W. Jencks, *From Muskets to Missiles: Politics and Professionalism in the Chinese Army, 1945-1981* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1982), 259-60.

China's overall security.[78]   Even in the case of nuclear war, China's strategy would

center upon "drawing American ground forces into China's interior."[79]   At a tactical

level, the CCP had utilized this approach many times during the civil war, and once the

Korea War broke out, they turned to it again:

> Peng suggested to Mao that UN forces be lured into preset 'traps' as far north as possible
> so that individual UN units would be extended with longer supply lines and thus be more
> easily isolated and destroyed.   Mao quickly approved the plan.   Peng instructed that
> each CPVF [Chinese People's Volunteer Force] army would withdraw its main force
> farther north but leave one division 'to conduct mobile and guerilla warfare...to wipe out
> small enemy units while engaging and luring larger enemy units to the trap.[80]

Thus, Mao and the other Chinese leaders felt that they had a solid approach to the

main type of threat they perceived from the outside.

Views on Atomic Weapons

*The atom bomb is a paper tiger that the U.S. reactionaries use to scare
people.   It looks terrible, but in fact it isn't.   Of course, the atom bomb
is a weapon of mass slaughter, but the outcome of a war is decided by the
people, not by one or two new types of weapon.*

—Mao Zedong, 1947[81]

Mao's well-known statements that nuclear weapons were mere "paper tigers" may

have been more bravado than representative of his true beliefs.   Nevertheless, when

compared to American perceptions, throughout the early part of the Cold War he did

view them as relatively weak weapons.[82]   In their well-regarded history of China's

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78   Segal, *Defending China*, 14.

79   Chen Jian, *Mao's China and the Cold War*, 189.   As discussed below, this commentary occured in the
late 1950s, but on this point there is a large degree of consistancy across time in Mao's thinking.

80   Yu Bin, "What China Learned from Its 'Forgotten War' in Korea," in *Mao's Generals Remember Korea*,
ed. Li Xiaobing, Allan Reed Millett, and Yu Bin (Lawrence, Kan.: University Press of Kansas, 2001),
15.

81   Quoted in Sergei Goncharov, John Lewis, and Litai Xue, *Uncertain Partners: Stalin, Mao, and the
Korean War* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1993), 23.

82   *Ibid.*

nuclear program, Lewis and Xue conclude: "For Mao in the late 1940s, the strategic calculus was clear. The struggle against imperialism could be intensified and need not be intimidated by the American nuclear threat."[83]

Mao and his colleagues held their pejorative views of atomic and nuclear weapons over a sustained period, as a number of strong pieces of evidence show.[84] For instance, in an internal debate in July 1948, Mao and Zhou argued for the weakness and irrelevance of nuclear weapons for important global security affairs.[85] Even as late as 1961, some members of the Chinese leadership were still downplaying the importance of nuclear weapons. One of the most senior military leaders, and a member of the standing committee of the Military Affairs Committee (the most powerful body in the PLA and the PRC),[86] stated "Although atomic bombs are very powerful they can only be used to destroy the centers and the economic reserves of the opponent during the strategic bombing phase...."[87]

Other pieces of evidence come from conversations that Chinese leaders had with the Soviets. In one such exchange, not only did Zhou Enlai suggest that the Communist nations should not fear a nuclear war, he went so far as to discourage Soviet retaliation in

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83   John Wilson Lewis and Litai Xue, *China Builds the Bomb* (Stanford, Cal.: Stanford University Press, 1988), 7.

84   The consistent nature of these beliefs is important as it suggests that confidence in the Soviet alliance and the extended deterrence it might have provided is not critical in shaping this view. Both before 1949 and after the late 1950s that support would have looked rather weak.

85   Ryan, *Chinese Attitudes toward Nuclear Weapons*, 20.

86   Note that in both the transitions from Deng Xiaoping to Jiang Zemin and from Jiang to Hu Jintao, chairmanship of this committee was the last title that the outgoing leader retired from, attesting to its importance.

87   Quoted in Hsieh, "China's Secret Military Papers," 90.

the event of tactical nuclear weapons usage against China by the United States.[88]   He

went on with bravado:

> Inflicting blows on the offshore islands, the PRC has taken into consideration the
> possibility of the outbreak in this region of a local war between the United States and the
> PRC, and it is now ready to take all the hard blows, including atomic bombs and the
> destruction of cities.[89]

In another case, Khrushchev's memoirs recall Mao's pejorative views of the aftermath of

nuclear war expressed in 1955-56: "[W]ar is war.   The years will pass, and we'll get to

work producing more babies than ever before."[90] In yet another instance in September

1958, Mao had also advised the Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko on how to respond to a

war between the United States and China.   Chen Jian summarizes:

> The Chinese chairman, according to Gromyko, stated that if the Americans were to
> invade the Chinese mainland or to use nuclear weapons the Chinese forces would retreat,
> drawing American ground forces into China's interior.   The chairman proposed that
> during the initial stage of the war, the Soviets should do nothing but watch.   Only after
> the American forces had entered China's interior should Moscow use "all means at its
> disposal" (which Gromyko understood as Soviet nuclear weapons to destroy them).[91]

It is also very clear that nuclear weapons did not receive serious analytical study

in China until well after the period under study in the rest of this dissertation.   Chinese

consideration of the dangers of nuclear weapons in the Korean War was extremely

simplistic.[92]   Even beyond that, before 1955 there had been no formal study of what

atomic weapons could do against China.   Only in July of that year did the top 200

leaders in the CCP finally receive a briefing on the subject.   Even this was only a scant

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88   Chen Jian, *Mao's China and the Cold War*, 71 and 189.   Note these discussions occurred in the late
     1950s, at which point the Chinese had significantly hardened their views of nuclear weapons.   That
     Zhou would nevertheless discourage Soviet retaliation at that late point only emphasizes how little he
     feared nuclear weapons in general.

89   *Ibid.*, 189.

90   Quoted in Lewis and Xue, *China Builds the Bomb*, 66.

91   Chen Jian, *Mao's China and the Cold War*, 189.

92   See the discussion in the following chapter.

25 pages long, covering different aspects of nuclear war, such as what the weapons could

do to cities, to forces in the field, etc.[93].   Before 1957, the PLA had not engaged in

training that would allow it to survive a nuclear attack.[94]   As late as 1961, the Chinese

discussions of U.S. nuclear doctrine appear exceedingly simplistic.[95]

Finally, Mao's recent military experiences in general likely colored his views on

nuclear weapons in particular and the threats they posed to Chinese cities.   He wrote of

the irrelevance of cities to the communist strategy in 1947:

> When we abandoned many cities on our own initiative in order to evade fatal blows from
> superior enemy forces and shifted our forces to destroy the enemy when he is on the
> move, our enemies were jubilant.   They took this to be a victory for them and a defeat
> for us.   They became dizzy with this momentary 'victory'. ...But now with the lapse of
> time, Chiang Kai-shek and his U.S. masters began to change their tune.   Now all our
> enemies, domestic and foreign are gripped by pessimism.   They heave great sighs, wail
> about a crisis, and no longer show any sign of joy. ...They had overestimated their own
> strength, underestimated the strength of the revolution and rashly unleashed the war, and
> so were caught in their own trap.   Our enemy's strategic calculations failed
> completely."[96]

His thinking on the dangers of atomic weapons descended from precisely that sort of

thinking.   Cities were not important to CCP strategists.   The words of the acting Chief

of Staff during the Korean War exemplified this in September 1950: "After all, China

lives on the farms.   What can atom bombs do there?"[97]

Before moving on, it is important to discuss an important alternate view regarding

Mao's thoughts on nuclear weapons.   Mark A. Ryan, in his 1984 book, *Chinese*

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93   Interview with Shen Zhihua, Beijing, September 2002.   Shen is one of only a few historians of
Chinese foreign policy outside the government and government-controlled research centers who has
access to the Chinese archives.

94   Lewis and Xue, *China Builds the Bomb*, 217.

95   See Hsieh, "China's Secret Military Papers," 84.

96   Mao Tsetung, "Our Present Situation and Our Tasks [Report to the Central Committee of the CCP,
12/25/1947]," in *Selected Military Writings of Mao Tsetung* (Beijing, PRC: Foreign Language Press,
1972).

97   Quoted in Segal, *Defending China*, 100.   The original source is Panikkar's autobiography.

Attitudes toward Nuclear Weapons, presents a somewhat dissenting view from the picture

painted above.[98]   The overall tenor of the book is to argue that the Chinese, contrary to

their public statements, recognized the importance of nuclear weapons.   Ryan

summarizes the Chinese views before the Korean War as follows:

> An overview of the CCP reaction to nuclear weapons during 1945-49 finds that the CCP,
> even before gaining power, became extremely interested in nuclear weapons and perhaps
> realized earlier than most groups or nations some of the profound implications of the new
> technology.[99]

Ryan's evidence on the post-Korean War period is strong.   However, he himself notes

that evidence on Mao's private position in this early period is quite slim.   In particular,

Ryan notes the limitations of his key source on the question: "Halperin goes on to

summarize the impact of these Yan'an debates without, however, offering any

documentation for how he came to know of the debates, or, for that matter, how he knew

what was going on 'in the back of his [Mao's] mind.'"[100]   Indeed, continuing his

thinking regarding the pre-Korean war period, Ryan notes,

> The public, surface tone of reaction, that of disparagement, was quickly set by Mao.
> This disparagement was in part a defensive, propagandistic reaction to a hard new reality
> and in part, a natural corollary of deeply held ideological and historical tenets regarding
> the ultimate superiority of men over weapons.   These tenets were reinforced through
> survival and victories against the much better armed Japanese and KMT armies, and in
> the decades to come the nuclear-armed United States would assume a role analogous to
> that of those earlier foes. [101]

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98   Ryan, *Chinese Attitudes toward Nuclear Weapons.*

99   *Ibid.*, 21.

100   *Ibid.*, 18.   The Yan'an debates are said to have taken place during the civil war (in approximately
1946), long before the CCP gained power, while it was holed up in the Red Army's redoubt deep in the
interior of Northwest China.

101   *Ibid.*, 21.

Ryan is right to be cautious about assuming that true beliefs differ from those expressed in public.[102] He is also right to emphasize the constraining role of ideology. While Ryan presents clear evidence that by the early 1950s Mao's China was well on its way to recognizing the importance of nuclear weapons, his position on the period of interest to this study—May and October 1950—is more nuanced.

Ryan's view recognizes the legacy of Maoist ideology. When his discussion is coupled with the evidence presented above which included private statements by Mao, reports from senior military leaders, and discussions of the state of knowledge regarding weapons, a fairly strong case can be made: On balance, there is significant evidence that at the time of the outbreak of the Korean War, Mao and the senior Chinese leadership substantially denigrated the utility of nuclear weapons in comparison to their western counterparts.

People's War

In the wake of the Communist victory in the civil war, the focus of Chinese tactical and operational doctrine was on a form of "People's War" that encapsulated "a vision of a highly politicized guerrilla army."[103] As one security studies expert puts it: "The Chinese were different not simply by virtue of the inferior equipment ... but more generally, by virtue of a different approach to warfare."[104] Blending both tactics and

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102 Indeed, Lucian Pye argues that in Confucian cultures, and China's in particular, public statements are a better representation of an actors true beliefs than private statements that can be easily disavowed. Pye contrasts this with Western views that see private statements as less influenced by incentives to appease various audiences. See Pye, *The Spirit of Chinese Politics*, 248.

103 Jencks, *From Muskets to Missiles*, 69.

104 Eliot A. Cohen, "'Only Half the Battle': American Intelligence and the Chinese Intervention in Korea, 1950," *Intelligence and National Security* 5, no. 1 (1990): 143.

strategic level thought,[105] Mao's military philosophy emphasized guerilla warfare and the

strategic depth that China' geography provided.[106] It had many specific components.

Individual Tactics

Perhaps the main emphasis of People's War was on morale and manpower over

material. As Mao succinctly pronounced, "Weapons are an important factor in war, but

not the decisive factor; it is people, not things, that are decisive."[107] Similarly, he wrote,

"the richest source of power to wage war lies in the masses of the people."[108] Zhang, a

Chinese scholar who has carefully studied Maoist doctrine, expands on this statement,

summarizing Mao's thinking:

> Mao firmly believed that a weak army could win in a war against a strong enemy because
> he was convinced that "man" could beat "weapon." Given Mao's confidence in a
> human being's *subjective capability* to determine defeat or victory in war, the CCP
> chairman *romanticized* military affairs. Yet as he calculated the probability of victory
> for a weak army, he found his theory logical, realistic, and plausible.[109]

Whitson, a leading scholar of the PLA, refers to this disparagingly as an "infantry small-

arms syndrome."[110]

For Mao, it was not just sheer numbers (although these were clearly important),

but the motivation of his soldiers that would guarantee victory. He had written that the

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105 Whitson and Huang, *The Chinese High Command*.

106 People's War also had a strategic component that fit into Marxist revolutionary thought, but this is not
relevant to the study at hand. On the tactical and strategic elements of People's War, see Chen-Ya
Tien, *Chinese Military History: Ancient and Modern* (Oakville, Ontario: Mosaic Press, 1992), 223ff.
On the role of the strategic elements of Chinese ideology and how they too impeded communication
between China and other countries who had different visions, see Mark Haas, "Ideology, Threat
Perception, and Great Power Politics through Two Centuries" (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of
Virginia, 2001).

107 Mao Tsetung, "On Protracted War [May 1938]," 219.

108 *Ibid.*, 261.

109 Zhang Shuguang, *Mao's Military Romanticism*, 29. Italics in the original.

110 Whitson and Huang, *The Chinese High Command*.

Chinese people would have the advantage in the war against Japan since China's "advantages lie in the progressive and just character of her war."[111]   Mao thought the Japanese soldier to be inferior, not for racist reasons, but because their "weapons are not in the hands of politically conscious soldiers."[112]   Similarly, he wrote,

> We must make full use of this move, political mobilization, to get the better of him.
> This move is crucial; it is indeed of primary importance, while our inferiority in weapons
> and other things is only secondary.[113]

In addition to bolstering the morale of one's own troops, another benefit of fighting for a just cause was that it would make the PLA attractive for potential defectors, who played an important role throughout China's civil war.[114]

In addition to these factors, a few other emphases should be mentioned.   Mao stressed the centrality of surprise in People's War.   While he recognized that it certainly also played a role in conventional warfare as well, "there are fewer opportunities to apply it [in conventional battles] than there are in guerrilla hostilities.   In the latter speed is essential."[115]   Another important element for Mao was concentration of forces while on the offensive, but dispersal while on the defensive.[116]   Finally, Maoist People's War emphasized the importance of troops reducing their logistical requirements substantially by providing for their own sustenance while in the field and by relying on simple means for shelter.   These factors meant that threats to logistical lines (posed by airpower or fast

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111 Mao Tsetung, "On Protracted War [May 1938]," 197.

112 *Ibid.*, 259.

113 *Ibid.*, 228.

114 E.g., Odd Arne Westad, *Decisive Encounters: The Chinese Civil War, 1946-1950* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2003), 201.

115 Mao Tse-tung, *On Guerrilla Warfare*, trans. Samuel B. Griffith (New York: Praeger, 1961), 97.

116 Tien, *Chinese Military History*, 238ff.

moving ground forces) would be likely to be downplayed since logistics in general were

perceived to be less important.

Integration of the Various Tactics

Weaving together these various strands of People's War theories, Mao's emphasis

on guerilla tactics counseled: "The enemy advances, we retreat; the enemy camps, we

harass; the enemy tires, we attack; the enemy retreats, we pursue."[117]   In practice, this

meant that Chinese operations were characterized by the

> ... use of relatively untrained and under-armed soldiers against a more sophisticated
> enemy.   By using impressive deception and stealth the Chinese overcame technological
> inferiority.   By using remarkable mobility, mostly by foot over rough terrain, the
> Chinese overcame logistical inferiority.[118]

Mao's large, high morale forces would be used to concentrate large numbers of

forces to overwhelm or annihilate entire enemy units.   He wrote,

> In every battle concentrate an absolutely superior force (two, three, four, and sometimes
> even five or six times the enemy's strength), encircle the enemy forces completely, strive
> to wipe them out thoroughly, and do not let any escape from the net.[119]

Whitson and Huang's *The Chinese High Command*, a definitive survey of the PLA,

suggests that this particular pronouncement represented not only Mao's strategic thought,

but a consensus of the senior military leadership at the time.[120]

This strategy had been used many times with great success during the civil war.[121]

The west referred to it as a "human wave" or "human sea" tactic.[122]   Chinese communist

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117 Mao Tsetung, "Problems of Strategy in China's Revolutionary War [December 1936]," 111.

118 Segal, *Defending China*, 101.

119 Mao Tsetung, "The Present Situation and Our Tasks [December 25, 1947]," 349.   On the importance
of this document to Maoist thought, see Whitson and Huang, *The Chinese High Command*, 492.

120 Whitson and Huang, *The Chinese High Command*, 492.

121 For examples, see Dreyer, *China at War, 1901-1949;* Wilson, *China's Revolutionary War.*

122 Joffe, *Party and Army*, 11.

forces would gather four or five times as many troops as their opponent, or even more.

They would surround the opponent (often by luring them to the end of a long supply line)

and utterly destroy his forces.   This was ambush on a very large scale.   These tactics

substituted for more complex "fire and maneuver" infantry practices that have dominated

infantry warfare in the west since WWI.   The Chinese communist forces lacked the non-

commissioned officers necessary to lead such challenging tactics.[123]   Cohen describes

the Chinese tactics as follows:

> [The Chinese] attacked mainly by night, using large quantities of hand grenades, light
> machine gun and mortar fire ... from very close ranges.   They usually approached from
> the rear, after drawing enemy fire by sniping and bugle or pipe music.   Operationally,
> the Chinese had a more supple approach...:   feinting, probing, or withdrawing ... in
> order to test enemy reactions or to confuse and intimidate them [124]

Similarly, a military historian describes the PLA's tactics during the Korean War:

> Since the CCF had no close air support, no tanks, and very little artillery, it specialized in
> fighting under cover of darkness.   The whistles, bugles, and horns were not only
> signaling devices (in place of radios) but also psychological tools, designed to frighten
> the enemy in the dark and cause him to shoot, thereby revealing the position of men and
> weapons.   The fighting tactics were relatively simple: frontal assaults on revealed
> positions, infiltration and ambush to cut the enemy's rear, and massed manpower attacks
> on the open flanks of his main elements.   War correspondents were to describe the
> attacking waves of the CCF as a "human sea" or "swarm of locusts."[125]

This theory of victory was substantially different from the heavy, combined arms focus of

the American forces.

Implementation in Practice

These doctrines were not just theoretical for the Chinese but were put into

practice throughout the military.   In terms of capabilities, the PLA was an exceptionally

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123 Whitson and Huang, *The Chinese High Command*, 13.   While the material shortcomings discussed
   elsewhere also limited Chinese strategic choice in other areas, with regard to fire and maneuver tactics,
   simple technology had allowed for German infantry infiltrations at the end of WWI.   The Chinese
   could have pursued something similar, if only they had had sufficient small unit leadership.

124 Cohen and Gooch, *Military Misfortunes*, 177.

125 Blair, *The Forgotten War*, 382.

large, under-equipped force.   Late in the civil war it had grown quite rapidly: "from

475,000 regulars in mid-1945 to 1,278,000 in mid-1946 and 1,9500,000 a year later.

Despite the windfall in Manchuria [of captured Japanese weaponry], these troops were

not well armed."[126]   Indeed, for equipment throughout the late part of the civil war, the

communist forces relied on captured weapons whether from the KMT or the Japanese.[127]

By the outbreak of the Korean War, it remained a large infantry force, of over 5 million

men in some 250 divisions, still very poorly outfitted.[128]   One military analyst writes

> In terms of equipment, the Chinese Communist Army of 1950 was primitive by any
> standards.   It has been compared to an army of 1914, without the trucks and the artillery,
> primarily an army of infantrymen.   There were few trucks, little artillery, very limited
> communication (particularly via radio), no air support, and no antiaircraft defense.
> Logistical support in the civil war had been provided by the local population.[129]

Another scholar emphasizes its backwardness in these, and other, areas,

> On the eve of the Korean War, the PLA remained an infantry army with acute
> deficiencies in heavy artillery, armored vehicles, and ammunition.   Military officers still
> lacked technological know-how as well as familiarity with operational tactics such as
> coordination of joint operations, armor-infantry-artillery team work, and close air support.
> There was, at that time, no sign of plans to modernize and regularize the PLA.[130]

Indeed, as they entered the Korean War, many Chinese noted that their armament did not

even reach North Korean standards, let alone western ones.   "Colonel Wong [a Chinese

liaison office to the North Korean military] noted that, by Chinese standards, the North

Koreans themselves had been magnificently equipped by the Soviets."[131]   In the

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126 Dreyer, *China at War, 1901-1949*, 317.

127 *Ibid.*, 318.

128 Patrick C. Roe, *The Dragon Strikes: China and the Korean War, June-December 1950* (Novato, CA: Presidio, 2000), 415.

129 *Ibid.*, 417.

130 Melvin Gurtov and Byong-Moo Hwang, *China under Threat: The Politics of Strategy and Diplomacy* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980), 33.

131 See Russell Spurr, *Enter the Dragon: China's Undeclared War against the U.S. In Korea, 1950-51* (New York: Newmarket Press, 1988), 16.   See later discussion on the awe with which the Chinese officer views the North Korean communications equipment and weaponry.   *Ibid.*, 16ff.

standard TOE for divisions from China and North Korea, the latter had nearly twice as

many light machine guns, three times as many heavy machine guns, and six times as

many trucks.[132]   On the other hand, China held the advantage in horses and mules.[133]

The PLA was well configured to implement a People's War strategy.

By the later stages of the Korean war, the PLA was able to arm this poorly

equipped force with substantial amounts of advanced material from the Soviets.

However, at the time that the decisions were being made regarding the outbreak and

participation in the war, no such capabilities existed.   More importantly, the doctrinal

lenses that the associated doctrine would have brought were absent as well

The PLA Air Force

While it is not necessary to evaluate each service individually, it is worth

describing the People's Liberation Army Air Force (PLAAF) briefly, given the

importance that that service plays in American strategic thought of the time.   Simply put,

there was little history of any airpower in the Chinese Communist military history.   The

CCP had faced a substantial air force in its GMD opponents in the civil war: "the

inventory of the Nationalist air force expanded to over a thousand aircraft by the end of

the war."[134]   Nevertheless, the communists, themselves, never had an air force of any

consequence, and the senior leaders consistently demeaned the value of it.

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132 Charles R. Shrader, *Communist Logistics in the Korean War* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1995), 93, table 5.2.

133 *Ibid.,* 95.

134 Zhang Xiaoming, *Red Wings over the Yalu: China, the Soviet Union, and the Air War in Korea,* 1st ed. (College Station, Tex.: Texas A&M University Press, 2002), 17.

Before 1937, the communist forces had only possessed two planes, and by the

beginning of the long march (October 1936), neither was flying.[135]   This fledgling air

force was disbanded a number of times before 1945: by attrition in the early 1930s, by

the arrest of all the members of the Xinjiang Aviation unit in a political purge in 1942, by

financial pressure in 1943 (which forced the student pilots to "terminate their studies and

cultivate the land or work in shops"), and by bureaucratic fiat in 1945.[136]   Throughout

this period, material factors clearly restrained the communists from considering a modern

air force, but Mao's attitude helped ameliorate the perceived costs of this.

> In June 1950, while discussing the air force issue with other Chinese leaders, an
> emotional Mao remarked that the Communist way to deal with enemy airpower was to
> 'not fear death, but be brave, and dare to sacrifice lives.'   The hardships Mao
> experienced during his revolutionary career unquestionably contributed to his
> determination to build a strong air force when the time came.   However, his experiences
> also influenced him to maintain the view that the human factor could overcome the
> machine.[137]

Thus, in addition to financial reasons for the slow growth of the Chinese air force, Mao's

attitude also played a role.

Once the Chinese began to create their own air force, several factors continued to

ensure a very different approach to airpower from the Americans.   The Chinese

exported a People's War philosophy from the ground-based, guerilla context that it had

originated.   This manifested itself in several ways.   First, the early Chinese doctrine

regarding air power viewed it as primarily a defensive asset, as a component of People's

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135 Of one of those planes, Zhang writes "The Red Army had no choice but to dismantle the airplane and
    hide it in a remote mountain area.   Local people unearthed the plane in 1951 and turned it over to the
    government."   *Ibid.*, 19.

136 *Ibid.*, 19, 21, and 23, respectively.

137 *Ibid.*, 28.   See the discussion in 廖国良,李士顺, 徐焰<<毛泽东军事思想发展史>>(北京:解放军
    出版社,2001). Liao Guoliang, Li Shishun, and Xu Yan, *The Development of Mao Zedong's Military
    Thought* , Revised ed. (Beijing: The People's Liberation Army Press, 2001).

War in the sky.[138]   This was in sharp contrast to the usage of airpower by nearly every

great power in the second world war.

Second, morale of pilots was emphasized far beyond any justifiable degree:

> In the military tradition of the Chinese Communists, CCP military leaders regarded the
> human factor as one of the most important elements of victory or defeat.   Even though
> the U.S./UN forces had higher-quality equipment and technology, they believed that a
> weak force like the CPV [Chinese People's Volunteers] could discharge its duties in
> Korea and overwhelm superior enemy forces if its soldiers maintained high morale in
> combat.   Following this military tradition, PLAAF leaders were convinced high morale
> could make the young inexperienced Chinese pilots brave, an important factor that would
> help them improve combat efficiency and cope with other war-related difficulties.
> Throughout the Korean War, the Chinese air force placed much emphasis on morale and
> political mobilization to improve combat efficiency.[139]

In short, "the PLAAF still believed in the efficacy of its man-over-weapons doctrine.

Young Chinese pilots would be able to defeat the enemy, they argued, because they had

come from ground forces accustomed to difficult situations and were willing to sacrifice

themselves for China."[140]   One of the official histories of the Chinese air force extolled

the virtues of the bravery and valiance of the Chinese pilots and concluded: "The

experience of the People's Volunteer Air Force in the war to resist America and support

Korea revealed a single truth for all to see: Under the conditions of modern warfare,

human factors are the determining factor for victory or defeat."[141]   Unfortunately,

however, such emphasis on morale, bravery, and élan was to be found ill-suited to

modern air combat:

> Inflated combat morale, while welcomed, also caused anxiety among Chinese pilots, who
> were eager to redeem themselves with personal glory and individual success.   The basic
> principles of air operations—teamwork, protecting each other, and tactics—were often

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138 Zhang Xiaoming, *Red Wings over the Yalu*, 48 and 103.

139 *Ibid.*, 178.

140 *Ibid.*, 205.

141 王定烈,主编,<<当代中国空军>>(北京:中国社会科学出版社,1989). Wang Dinglie, *Contemporary China's Air Force*   (Beijing: Contemporary China Publishing/Chinese Social Science Press, 1989), 207.

ignored.   According to PLAAF records, five of eight regimental commanders were
killed in action over Korea because of their brashness.[142]

Third, the Chinese continued to deemphasize training and education.   While this

might be appropriate for a guerilla or light infantry army, it posed significant problems

for the development of an air force.   The poor education level of the Chinese soldiers

impeded the communists' ability to create a viable air force throughout the revolutionary

period.[143]   The education problems that had made pilot training difficult before 1949

continued after liberation, even when they relied on the Soviets for training their pilots.[144]

Indeed, the Chinese often viewed the Soviet training standards for pilots as too rigorous,

suggesting a rather low emphasis on the quality of training coming from their own

leadership.[145]

In sum, the Chinese air force exhibits sharp contrasts with that of the United

States.   It played a minor role in PLA thinking about warfare, and even that small role

was characterized by a different understanding of airpower than the United States had.

Dissent among the Chinese Leadership and other Caveats

There were dissenters to this Chinese theory of victory, and there were contrary

trends in Chinese military history.   While the characterization above is accurate in

describing the dominant element in CCP military thought, it is worthwhile to consider

some of the exceptions to this overall trend.

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142 Zhang Xiaoming, *Red Wings over the Yalu*, 179.

143 See *Ibid.*, 17-27 *passim*, which emphasizes the student pilots' "limited reading and writing skills" (p. 26).

144 *Ibid.*, 41, 119-120, and 181.

145 *Ibid.*, 44.   In a later period, as the Chinese began to develop their air force more significantly in the latter stages of the Korean War, they chose to rely on Soviet doctrine, thus again presenting a contrast from the American approach.   Zhang Xiaoming, *Red Wings over the Yalu*, 27.

A number of PLA leaders who had been trained for extensive periods at the

Yunnan Military Academy or at the Whampoa Military Academy did not buy into the

People's War thinking.   In both locations they would have been was exposed to

Japanese and German military science.[146]   Yunnan Military Academy was notable for its

high quality in the waning days of the Qing Dynasty.   Whampoa was the military

institute created by Sun Yat-sen and led by Chiang Kai-shek that created the first

professional army in post-dynastic China.   These academies stressed much more the role

of firepower, professionalized divisional-level leaders, the utility of the technical

branches, and many other concepts at odds with Maoist People's War.   The role of

leaders with such backgrounds are discussed in the cases.

In the latter stages of the civil war, People's War no longer had a monopoly on

Chinese strategic thought.   Whitson writes that in 1947 Chinese doctrine represented a

compromise between the Maoist "peasant ethic" and Soviet and (Westernized) warlord

strategies.[147]   Additionally, by the end of the civil war, battles had become much more

conventional.[148]   However, this is generally the case after 1948, when the tide of the

civil war swung dramatically in the favor of the CCP.   The lessons from this period

would seem primarily relevant to future "mopping up" campaigns, not to wars against the

most dangerous adversaries.   Further, even at this period, the PLA remained a very

poorly mechanized force with regard to artillery and tanks, especially in comparison to

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146 Dreyer, *China at War, 1901-1949*, 124.   Jencks, *From Muskets to Missiles*, 39.

147 Whitson and Huang, *The Chinese High Command*, 89 and Chapter 11: Strategy and Tactics.

148 Dreyer, *China at War, 1901-1949*, 353. Whitson and Huang, *The Chinese High Command*, 82ff. For discussions by Mao of strategies that appear relatively conventional, see Mao Tsetung, "On Protracted War [May 1938]," 245-47; Mao Tsetung, "Problems of Strategy in China's Revolutionary War [December 1936]," 105.

the KMT.[149]   For instance, in the pivotal HuaiHai Campaign in late 1948, the CCP faced

a force of similar size to that of its own, but one in which "most of whom were better

trained and better equipped than the CCP forces."[150]   The disparity in aircraft was even

wider, as discussed above.   Thus, it is important not to overstate the importance of these

late battles in terms of their lasting legacy on CCP thinking.

Sources of Chinese Doctrine

As suggested above, the PLA's doctrinal and strategic beliefs have many sources.

Many of these elements can be traced to Sun Tsu and other sources of classical military

thought in Chinese history.[151]   Clearly, some strategies were not chosen freely but

were—in part—forced on them by external pressure.[152]   Similarly, the backwardness of

the Chinese economy has played a role:

> The persistence of the "People's War" concept, of the commissar system, and, indeed, of
> the whole "Maoist" approach to military affairs, has been largely a result of China's
> relatively low level of industrial development.[153]

However, some elements trace their roots to centuries of factor endowments in the

Chinese civilization.   The views regarding the importance of manpower had a long

history in Chinese military thought.[154]   The reliance on defections for victory, and

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149 See Mao's own concerns regarding tanks and aircraft in Mao Tsetung, "Carry the Revolution through
to the End [December 30, 1948]," in *Selected Military Writings of Mao Tse-Tung* (Beijing: Foreign
Languages Press, 1966), 384.

150 Westad, *Decisive Encounters*, 206.

151 Although, as with many classic strategic texts, there are many different lessons that could be drawn
from Sun Tsu.   Georges Tan Eng Bok, "Strategic Doctrine," in *Chinese Defence Policy*, ed. Gerald
Segal and William T. Tow (London: Macmillan, 1984), 5; Tien, *Chinese Military History*, 212ff.

152 Dreyer, *China at War, 1901-1949*, 321.   Echoing this is Hsieh, "China's Secret Military Papers."

153 Jencks, *From Muskets to Missiles*, 26.

154 Tien, *Chinese Military History*, 214-15.

therefore the importance of the justness of one's own cause, also can trace its roots

through millennia of Chinese history.   Whitson refers to many elements of People's War

as stemming from a "peasant ethic" of warfare, as distinct from the other major

influences on Chinese strategic thought: warlordism and Soviet advisors and training.[155]

Further, recent history reified these ancient themes.   Many of these strategies had

stood them in good stead against the better-armed and better-equipped KMT in the civil

war.[156]   Mao had consistently argued on behalf of these strategies throughout that

conflict.[157]   Immediately before the collapse of the KMT forces, he wrote, "but none of

these efforts can save the Chiang Kai-shek bandit gang from defeat.   The reason is that

our strategy and tactics are based on a People's War; no army opposed to the people can

use our strategy and tactics."[158]   Immediately after the collapse of his civil war

adversaries, Mao explained the victory by virtue of the People's War strategy.[159]   These

views remained dominant in the PLA for years to come.   In 1961, one of the most senior

military leaders of the PLA wrote confidently "if there is a war within three to five years,

we will have to rely on hand weapons ...   In the even event of war within the next few

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155 Whitson and Huang, *The Chinese High Command, passim*, espec. 22-23.

156 For Mao's view on the better equipped KMT army, and ways to overcome it, see Mao Tsetung, "Problems of Strategy in China's Revolutionary War [December 1936]," 95ff.

157 *Ibid.*, 112-13, 141.

158 Mao Tsetung, "The Present Situation and Our Tasks [December 25, 1947]."

159 Mao Tsetung, "On the Great Victory in the Northwest and on the New Type of Ideological Education Movement in the Liberation Army [March 7, 1948]," in *Selected Military Writings of Mao Tse-Tung* (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1966), 358-59.

years we can defeat the enemy by using close combat although we have no special

weapons.[160]

Finally, the organizational culture of the Chinese military certainly played some

role:

> For many reasons, the Soviet and Chinese armies have not responded to the technological
> imperative the same way.   Perhaps the most important single factor has been the
> makeup of the respective officer corps.   By the outbreak of the Chinese civil war, PLA
> officers were tested, experienced, and thoroughly reliable both politically and military.
> ...   During their civil wars, both the Soviet and Chinese communists engaged in a type
> of warfare which was more concerned with winning over populations than with
> destroying enemy forces.   The "dual-command" system of a military commander and a
> coequal political commissar can work very well in such a situation.[161]

This organizational structure could be expected to oppose any attempt at fundamental

reform.

Thus, the Chinese theory of victory traces its roots to a number of factors:

material and strategic constraints, historical legacies, and organizational politics.

Summary

Based on all this recounting, the evidence strongly supports a characterization of

the two countries facing each other with *very large differences in their theories of victory.*

China and the United States faced each other with vastly different military capabilities

and beliefs about how best to use them.   The two sides' views on nuclear weapons can

only be described as opposites.   The beliefs regarding tactical air and combined arms on

the U.S. side and People's War on the Chinese side are also far, far apart.   The

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160 Marshal Yeh Chien-ying, quoted in Hsieh, "China's Secret Military Papers," 85.   See also pp. 84 and
   90.

161 Jencks, *From Muskets to Missiles*, 25.

independent variable here is one of two very different views about the nature of warfare. The two nations' theories of victory could hardly be more distinct.

Beyond the discussion above, one can argue that the two sides faced each other not only with different theories of victory but that they faced off across different technologic ages or eras. In Van Creveld's classic description of the links between *Technology and War*, he presents a typology of four different ages that summarize the development of militarily relevant technology since 2000 BC. From these descriptions, it seems clear that China and the United States not only had different theories of victory, but were facing each other across different historical stages (the Chinese being in the Ages of Machines whereas the United States would be better placed late in the subsequent Age of Systems).[162] At a very fundamental level, the two sides faced off with different militaries.

Looking forward to the two Korean War chapters, while each case has the same IV broadly speaking, there are differences of emphasis. The most relevant portion of the independent variable in the chapter immediately following this one (Chapter 4) focuses on relatively narrow elements that are specific to combat in the Korean Peninsula. That is appropriate for the decision being studied in that chapter: the United States' crossing of the 38th parallel. Chapter 5 relies on the general, very broad level thinking by both sides regarding the nature of conflict to assess the Chinese decision to support the North Korean invasion. This broad level thinking is centrally relevant for the decision to go to war in a general deterrence situation. Nevertheless, a full characterization of either side's theory of victory includes elements of both levels of thinking (that is, the

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162 Martin L. Van Creveld, *Technology and War: From 2000 B.C. To the Present*, Revised and
   Expanded ed. (New York, NY: The Free Press, 1991).

general war and the specific regarding ground combat in Korea). Regardless of whether one is talking about general thinking about the nature of warfare of the specifics of ground force doctrine, the final coding is the same, of widely distinct theories of victory between the two countries.

The dissertation now turns to examining the tragic effects of this difference.

Chapter 4. THE UNITED STATES CROSSES 38ᵀᴴ PARALLEL (CASE STUDY #1)

The previous chapter summarized the vast differences in the American and Chinese theories of victory. In early 1950, the United States emphasized the utility of airpower and nuclear weapons in general wars and relied on mobile, integrated formations of armor, infantry, and artillery for ground combat. The contrast with the Chinese was acute. Beijing expressed disdain toward atomic weapons and strategic bombing and relied instead on "People's War" to defeat what it considered its main threat: invasion of China proper. Lightly armed, poorly trained soldiers confident in Maoist ideology were central to Chinese thinking. The two sides viewed the world through different military lenses. This chapter examines the effect of the large value of the theory's independent variable on the outcome of a Chinese attempt at strategic coercion.

After the North Korean attack on June 25, 1950, the United States rapidly rushed to aid the collapsing South Korean forces. Initial hopes that a mere commitment of American forces would be enough to lead to a change of heart in Pyongyang, Moscow, and Beijing were dashed as the North Korean offensive continued apace.[1] Throughout the summer of 1950, the ground war went poorly for the United States and consisted of a long retreat back to the Pusan Perimeter. After that line solidified in early August, the

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1   James A. Field, *History of United States Naval Operations: Korea* (Washington: U. S. Govt. Print. Off., 1962), 42.

subsequent Inchon landings of September 15 were a resounding success, forcing the

United States to consider more directly its plans regarding crossing the 38th parallel and

its goals for North Korea.   The Chinese sent a large number of signals—both explicit

and implicit—to the United States, warning it against continuing its offensive.

Washington, however, downplayed the significance of these signals believing that the

Chinese would not get involved, and the Americans drove north.   The eventual attack by

the PLA in November fundamentally altered the course of this conflict as well as

hardening the Cold War writ large.[2]   This section outlines the role that the two sides'

theories of victory played in this colossal miscalculation.

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2   Robert Jervis, "The Impact of the Korean War on the Cold War," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 24, no.
     4 (1980).

Figure 4-1:   The American Offensive in Korea, Fall 1950[3]
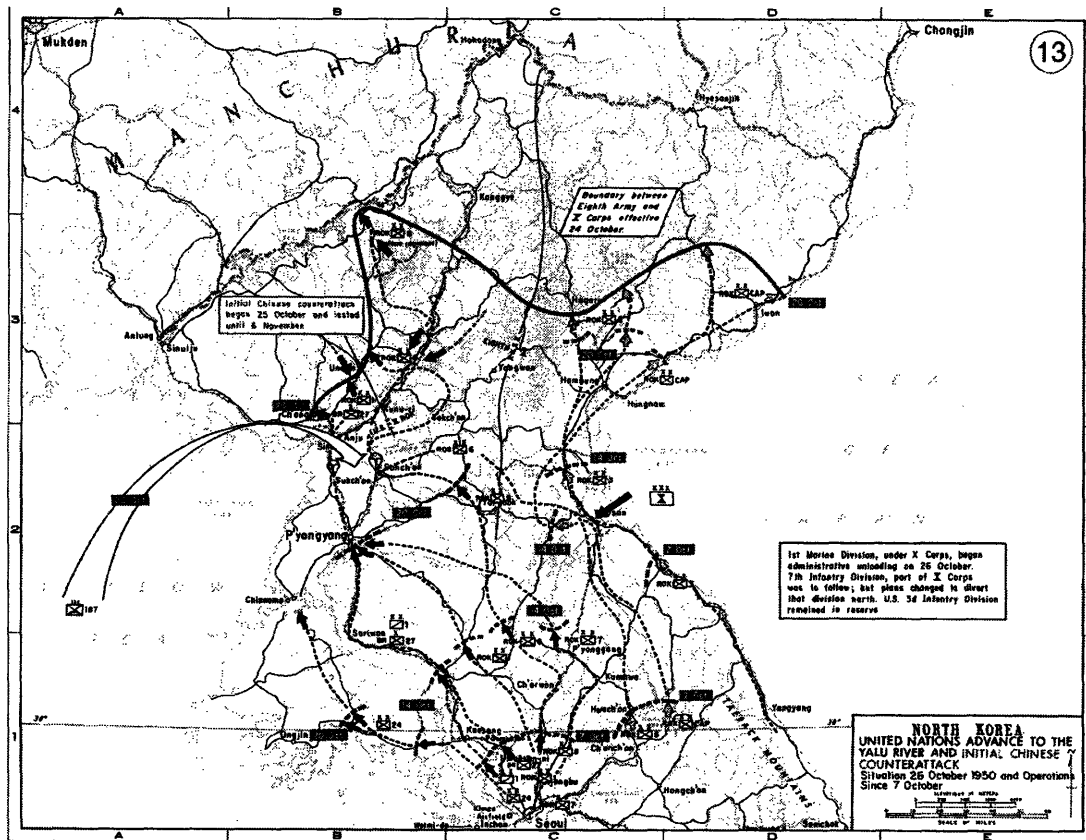
Historical Background

While this is not the place for extensive historical background,[4] it is important to

emphasize that the U.S. decision to cross the 38th Parallel was contingent on a belief that

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3   Source: Department of History, Atlas Collection, U.S. Military Academy.   Available online at
     http://www.dean.usma.edu/history/web03/atlases/atlas%20home.htm.

4   See the excellent summaries found in Bruce Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War: Liberation and
     the Emergence of Separate Regimes, 1945-1947*, vol. 1 (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press,
     1981); Bruce Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War: The Roaring of the Cataract, 1947-1950*, vol.
     2 (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1981). Chen Jian, *China's Road to the Korean War:
     The Making of the Sino-American Confrontation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994);
     William Stueck, *The Korean War: An International History* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press,
     1995); William Whitney Stueck, *The Road to Confrontation: American Policy toward China and
     Korea, 1947-1950* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1981).   A thorough literature
     review through the early 1990s can be found in Rosemary Foot, "Making Known the Unknown War:
     Policy Analysis of the Korean Conflict in the Last Decade," *Diplomatic history* 15, no. 3 (1991).

the Chinese and Soviets would not get significantly involved if it did so.[5]   This was clear

from the orders that MacArthur received, among many other sources.   However, once

the United States crossed the 38th Parallel, the opportunities to avoid a Sino-American

war were severely constrained.   As the Chinese finalized their decisions about

intervention in early October, the U.S. crossing of the 38th parallel loomed large in their

deliberations.   Thus, the signaling and interpretation regarding this issue was very

consequential.   If this dissertation's theory deepens the understanding of this

catastrophic error, it teaches something valuable.

The U.S. advance against North Korea moved very rapidly beginning in early

September.   Planning for crossing the 38th parallel began only days before the actual

Inchon landings took place.   "The decision [to cross the 38th] was embodied in NSC-81,

written mostly by Rusk, which authorized MacArthur to move into North Korea if there

were no Soviet or Chinese threats to intervene."[6]   NSC-81/1 was dated September 9,

1950 and was approved and ordered implemented by the President on September 11,

1950.[7]   It permitted crossing the 38th for the purposes of destroying the retreating North

Korean forces, although not for the general occupation of North Korea.[8]   Nevertheless,

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Updating that is Allan R. Millett, "The Korean War: A 50-Year Critical Historiography," *The Journal of Strategic Studies* 24, no. 1 (2001).

5   Note this is clearly not the case for the U.S. decision to intervene in Korea in the first case when much thinking focused on Korea as but the first foray in a global communist offensive.

6   Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War, Vol. 2*, 711.

7   National Security Council, "Report by the National Security Council to the President (September 9, 1950)," in *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1950*, ed. United States Department of State (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1976), 716.   See also Melvyn P. Leffler, *A Preponderance of Power: National Security, the Truman Administration, and the Cold War* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1992), 377.

8   The key language is: "The United Nations forces have a legal basis for conducting operations north of the 38th parallel to compel the withdrawal of the North Korean forces behind this line or to defeat these forces."   National Security Council, *"F.R.U.S.*, 1950, Vol. 7," 716.   The document makes no

NSC-81 did pave the way for the general invasion of North Korea, while putting that

decision off at the time:

> It would be expected that the U.N. Commander would receive authorization to conduct
> military operations, including amphibious and airborne landings or ground operations in
> pursuance of a roll-back in Korea north of the 38th parallel, for the purpose of destroying
> the North Korean forces, provided that at the time of such operations there has been no
> entry into North Korea by major Soviet or Chinese Communist forces, no announcement
> of intended entry, nor a threat to counter our operations militarily in North Korea.[9]

On October 1, MacArthur called on the North Koreans to surrender in sweeping terms,

directing the following message to them "I ... call upon you and the forces under your

command, in whatever part of Korea situated, forthwith to lay down your arms and cease

hostilities under such military supervisions as I may direct."[10] Obtaining no such

response, MacArthur received final authority to cross the border on October 2. [11]   By

October 3, "the ROK I Corps was well inside North Korea on the east coast."[12]   Four

days later, the UN passed its "go anywhere" resolution, and the first U.S. troops crossed

on that same day.   Throughout these moves toward the North, it is very clear U.S.

policymakers were making contingent decisions based on the expectation that China and

the Soviet Union would not get involved in a significant way.[13]

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distinction between ground forces and air or naval forces so long as the Chinese and Soviets have not
entered.

9   *Ibid.*

10   Malcolm W. Cagle and Frank Albert Manson, *The Sea War in Korea* (Annapolis, Mary.: Naval
Institute Press, 1957), 117; Thomas J. Christensen, "Threats, Assurances, and the Last Chance for
Peace: The Lessons of Mao's Korean War Telegrams," *International Security* 17, no. 1 (1992): 131-32;
James F. Schnabel, *United States Army in the Korean War*, vol. 3 Policy and direction: the first year
(Washington, DC: Office of the Chief of Military History United States Army/GPO, 1972), 193.

11   While NSC-81/1 was approved on September 11, MacArthur's orders implementing it were not sent
until September 27, and he did not receive final authority to cross the border until October 2.   In part,
this delay was due to the change in leadership at the Pentagon, with Marshall taking over for Johnson
who had resigned.   Schnabel, *United States Army in the Korean War*, 181.

12   *Ibid.*, 202.

13   *Ibid.*, 178.

At about the same time, the Chinese side was making its final decisions. There had long been a belief in the United States historiography regarding the Korean War that the Chinese decision to intervene came as a result of American troops directly threatening Chinese territory as they neared the Yalu.[14] It is now clear that this was not the case and indeed that there was little chance for peace between the two once the United States crossed the 38th parallel (as discussed below).[15] Indeed, the Chinese had had serious concerns once the United States stabilized its lines in South Korea, much earlier.

> The Politburo discussion [of August 4] and Mao's telegram demonstrate unmistakably that the CCP leadership had seriously considered sending troops to assist North Korea in fighting the UN forces in early August, more than one month before the Inchon landing.[16]

Once Mao heard of the Inchon landings and of the United States regaining the initiative, he seems quite firm in his own mind regarding the necessity of intervention.[17] Other Chinese leaders agreed that mere defense of the Yalu was not enough:

> Nie's talks [of early August with senior military leaders of the NEBDA] demonstrated clearly that the purpose of China's military preparations had gone beyond the simple defense of the Chinese-Korea border.[18]

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14 For the classic statement in this vein, see Allen Suess Whiting, *China Crosses the Yalu: The Decision to Enter the Korean War* (New York, NY: Macmillan, 1960).

15 For the argument that any U.S. presence north of the 38th parallel was inimical to Chinese national interests, see Christensen, "Threats, Assurances, and the Last Chance for Peace," 136-37.

16 Chen Jian, *China's Road*, 143.   At the end of August, a group of senior PLA officials held a meeting in which they anticipated the Inchon landings. (See discussion in Chapter 6.)   While there is no evidence that the Chinese had expected this in early August, the Chinese were anticipating the prospect of an American victory as necessitating their involvement.   From the evidence available, it is unclear what would have constituted such a victory: merely the successful defense of the South or rollback in the North.   Christensen suggests that the Chinese were already anticipating the crossing of the 38th at this point.   See Thomas J. Christensen, *Useful Adversaries: Grand Strategy, Domestic Mobilization, and Sino-American Conflict, 1947-1958* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1996), 157.

17 Chen Jian, *China's Road*, 161.

18 *Ibid.*, 139.   Nie Rongzhen was the acting head of the PLA.

By early October, the situation worsened appreciably from the Chinese perspective.   As

the UN called for the North Koreans to capitulate on October 1, Chinese intelligence

reports from the front painted increasingly bleak pictures:

> On October 1, an intelligence report reached Beijing indicating that U.S./UN vanguard
> units had begun crossing the 38ᵗʰ parallel.   Twenty-four hours later, another report
> confirmed that American troops were moving into North Korea in large numbers.[19]

In a secret report given to the Chinese Peoples Consultative Conference, Zhou Enlai

echoed this point "New dispatches of October 1 and 2 indicated that U.S. troops had

already crossed the 38ᵗʰ Parallel and that the South Korean army had penetrated far north

of it."[20]   (Note that according to American records, as discussed above, these two reports

were false, but what matters here is China's perception of reality.)

Finally, the Chinese leaders undertook their fateful decision.   On October 2, an

enlarged session of the Politburo Standing Committee met to discuss Chinese policy.

Mao summarized the decisions taken there in a telegram he drafted to send to Stalin[21]:

> Under the present situation, we have decided that on October 15 we will begin
> dispatching the twelve divisions that have been transferred in advance to south
> Manchuria.   They will locate themselves in appropriate districts of North Korea (not
> necessarily all the way to the 38ᵗʰ parallel).   While they do combat with the enemy who
> dares to advance and attack north of the 38ᵗʰ parallel, in the first period fighting a
> defensive war to destroy small enemy detachments and gaining a clear understanding of
> the situation, they will await the arrival of Soviet weapons the equipping of our Army;

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19   Zhang Shuguang, *Mao's Military Romanticism: China and the Korean War, 1950-53* (Lawrence, Kans.: University Press of Kansas, 1995), 77-78.

20   Zhou Enlai, "Resisting U.S. Aggression, Aiding Korea and Defending Peace," October 24, 1950, reprinted in Zhou Enlai, *Selected Works of Zhou Enlai*, 1st ed. (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press: Distributed by Guoji Shudian, 1981), 61.

21   Note, however, that as best one can tell, the telegram was not sent.   For the actual telegram sent, see "Document 12: Ciphered telegram from Roshchin in Beijing to Filipov [Stalin] 3 October 1950 conveying 2 October 1950 message from Mao to Stalin" in Alexandre Y. Mansourov, "Stalin, Mao, Kim, and China's Decision to Enter the Korea War, September 16-October 15, 1950," *Bulletin of the Cold War International History Project*, no. 6-7 (1995/96): 114.   On the utility of this drafted telegram for scholarship in general, see Chen Jian, "Commentaries: Comparing Russian and Chinese Sources: A New Point of Departure for Cold War History," *Bulletin of the Cold War International History Project*, no. 6-7 (1995/96); Christensen, *Useful Adversaries*, 159ff.

and then [they will] coordinate with the Korean comrades a counterattack, destroying the invading American army.[22]

On October 4, the full Politburo met to ratify Mao's decision. After contentious and inconclusive debate,[23] it reconvened the next day. At Mao's instructions, Peng Dehuai spoke forcefully in support of intervention: "Peng's speech transformed the mood of the meeting, and the discussion now centered on the advantages of sending troops to Korea."[24]

The key element in this hardening in Chinese policy was the U.S. crossing of the 38th parallel.[25] For instance, a report written by the senior commanders of the regional command of the PLA nearest the North Korean border, the Northeast Border Defense Agency (NEBDA), in late August had counseled patience. It had "suggested that the best timing for entering the war might be when the UN forces had counterattacked back across the 38th parallel, because this would put China in a politically and militarily more favorable position to defeat the enemy."[26]

While Mao's leadership was paramount in October (Lin Biao, and others, were opposed to intervening[27]), the aggressive U.S. policy eased his burden in securing wide support for his preferred policy:

> Mao might not need to yield to the different opinions held by his colleagues, but it would have been foolish for him not to take them into consideration. In fact, unless China's

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22 Christensen, *Useful Adversaries*, 272. See also Chen Jian, *China's Road*, 176.

23 Odd Arne Westad, *Decisive Encounters: The Chinese Civil War, 1946-1950* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2003), 322. See the discussion of the following chapter on some of this dissent.

24 Chen Jian, *China's Road*, 184.

25 For one of the earliest arguments that this was the case, see Christensen, "Threats, Assurances, and the Last Chance for Peace."

26 Chen Jian, *China's Road*, 152.

27 *Ibid.*, 153. Again, see more on the dissenters in China in the following chapter.

> territorial safety were directly threatened by the Americans, Mao would have had
> difficulty in convincing the party and the Chinese people of the necessity to intervene in
> Korea.[28]

Not only was Mao constrained by the views of his fellow leaders in Beijing, he had to

consider the attitudes of those allied leaders in North Korea and the Soviet Union.[29]   It

was not until the UN troops crossed the 38th parallel that the North Korean's formally

requested assistance from China.[30]

In the early Cold War, the evidence available strongly supported the argument

that war might still have been avoided once the United States crossed the 38th parallel had

MacArthur kept his forces from approaching the Yalu River.[31]   Based on evidence made

available only more recently, it is increasingly clear this was not the case.   Indeed, some

argue that mere American entry into South Korea in June and July of 1950 was enough to

make war with the United States hard to escape.[32]   While this remains contentious, there

is increased agreement that once the United States crossed the former border between

North and South Korea, there was little opportunity to avoid war.[33]   Even the lull in

fighting in November is now understood to be a tactical military trap rather than a

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28   *Ibid.*, 155.

29   *Ibid.*, 160.

30   *Ibid.*, 171.

31   Most famously, this is the argument of Whiting, *China Crosses the Yalu.*

32   This is the argument of Chen Jian, *China's Road.*

33   The earliest advocate of this point in English is Christensen, "Threats, Assurances, and the Last Chance for Peace."   See also Christensen, *Useful Adversaries*, 163-74. Sergei Goncharov, John Lewis, and Litai Xue, *Uncertain Partners: Stalin, Mao, and the Korean War* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1993), 159, 181, and 194; Michael H. Hunt, *The Genesis of Chinese Communist Foreign Policy* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1995), 188; Andrew Scobell, *China's Use of Military Force: Beyond the Great Wall and the Long March* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2003).   Zhou Enlai, "Resisting U.S. Aggression, Aiding Korea and Defending Peace," October 24, 1950, reprinted in Zhou Enlai, *Selected Works of Zhou Enlai*, 62.

diplomatic signal.[34]   There was no lost chance at the "narrow neck" of the Wonsan-Pyongyang corridor.   American forces anywhere in North Korea, not just on the Yalu, sparked the Chinese insecurity.   The security dilemma was extremely severe at this point, and it would have been hard to imagine the Chinese escaping its grasp.[35]

By mid-October, both sides had made their key decisions.   Chinese troops began crossing the Yalu River on October 18, 1950.[36]   The armies of the United States and China were destined to meet in North Korea.

Signaling by China

There were a large number of Chinese signals aimed directly at the United States in this case.   Thus, this is clearly a case of immediate deterrence (rather than general deterrence).[37]   This section will begin by surveying the public and private diplomatic signals sent, and then examine the parallel military signals that the Chinese undertook.

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34   See 陶文钊、 <<中美关系史(1949-1972)>>(上海:上海人民出版社、 1999).   Tao Wenzhao, *History of Sino-American Relations, 1949-1972*   (Shanghai: Shanghai People's Press, 1999), 32; Yu Bin, "What China Learned from Its 'Forgotten War' in Korea," in *Mao's Generals Remember Korea*, ed. Li Xiaobing, Allan Reed Millett, and Yu Bin (Lawrence, Kan.: University Press of Kansas, 2001), 15.

35   Precisely using the security dilemma language is Barry R. Posen, "The Chinese Intervention in Korea: A Case of Inadvertent Escalation" (Draft Manuscript, MIT, 1989).   One can array scholars moving northward up the peninsula as to where the line was that the United States could not cross without provoking the Chinese to entering the war.   At the water's edge (that is, outside of Korea) is Chen Jian.   Moving northward, Christensen and Scobell argue the line was at the 38th.   Posen suggests it is at the narrow neck, and Whiting argued it was at the Yalu.   This author's sense is that the evidence available at this point favors the 38th parallel.

36   Russell Spurr, *Enter the Dragon: China's Undeclared War against the U.S. In Korea, 1950-51* (New York: Newmarket Press, 1988), 117.

37   See the discussion in the introductory chapter at note 13 for this distinction.

Diplomatic and Public Signals

Propaganda served (and serves) many purposes for the Chinese regime,

addressing both domestic and international audiences.[38] The propaganda department

recognized the importance of the Korean War for domestic politics of the Chinese

Communist Party (CCP):

> This is an important event at the present time. The United States has thus exposed its
> imperialist face, which is not fearsome at all but is favorable for the further awakening of
> the Chinese people and the people of the whole world. All over China, we have to use
> this opportunity to echo Foreign Minister Zhou's statement and to start a widespread
> campaign of propaganda, so that we will be able to educate our people at home and to
> strike firmly the arrogance of the U.S. imperialist aggression.[39]

However, following the withdrawal of Stuart in 1949, the United States had no formal

lines of communication with the Chinese, so propaganda was also important as a means

of international communication.[40] Public statements were the primary residual means of

direct communication between China and the West. This certainly exacerbated the

problems in communication the two sides faced.

Initially, immediately after American intervention in the Korean War, Chinese

signals were rather mild. At the level of public diplomacy, the restraint was notable:

"China's initial public reaction demonstrated its caution, watchfulness, and explicitly

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38 Jonathan D. Spence, *The Search for Modern China*, 1st ed. (New York: Norton, 1990), 514-519.

39 "Instruction, General Information Agency, 'On the Propaganda about U.S. Imperialists' Open
Intervention in the Internal Affairs of China, Korea, and Vietnam,' 29 June 1950" in Zhang Shuguang
and Chen Jian, eds., *Chinese Communist Foreign Policy and the Cold War in Asia: New Documentary
Evidence, 1944-50* (Chicago, Ill.: Imprint Publications, 1996), 153. Note this instrumental use of the
crisis parallels Mao's use of other crises in Sino-American relations. See Christensen, *Useful
Adversaries*, Chapter 6: Continuing Conflict over Taiwan: Mao, the Great Leap Forward, and the 1958
Quemoy Crisis.

40 Yuan Ming, "The Failure of Perception: America's China Policy, 1949-50," in *Sino-American
Relations, 1945-1955: A Joint Reassessment of a Critical Decade*, ed. Harry Harding and Ming Yuan
(Wilmington, Del.: SR Books, 1989), 145.

defensive posture."[41]   In late July, the weekly *World Culture* wrote: "China also had

adopted the principles of non-intervention in Korea's domestic affairs ... the Soviet

Union, each new democratic state, and all peace loving peoples in the world sympathize

with Korean people's liberation movement but that does not imply that they should

intervene with arms."[42]   However, by the week of July 17-24, 1950 a "Hate the U.S."

campaign began in China[43] and "August marked the start of [China's] more aggressive

stance" in terms of propaganda.[44]

Indeed, by the end of the summer, the Chinese diplomacy as well had shifted,

from a policy of searching for negotiated solutions (i.e., supporting the Soviet peace

initiative in early August) to explicitly threatening the United States that it would

intervene.   These warnings began in late September.[45]   Initially, China made two rather

oblique warnings.   First,

> On 20 August Chinese foreign minister Zhou Enlai sent a message to the United Nations
> that deviated from past statements emanating from Beijing in its emphasis on Korea
> rather than Taiwan.   Because "Korea is China's neighbor," Zhou declared, "the Chinese
> people cannot but be concerned about the solution of the Korean question."[46]

Within a week of that warning (on August 26th), a Chinese magazine stated more

explicitly that China viewed the Korean question as a potential security threat.[47]   Later,

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41   Zhang Shuguang, *Deterrence and Strategic Culture: Chinese-American Confrontations, 1949-1958*
     (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1992), 90.

42   Quoted in Peter Lowe, *The Origins of the Korean War*, 2nd ed. (London; New York: Longman, 1997),
     211.

43   Stueck, *The Korean War*, 52.

44   Rosemary Foot, *The Wrong War: American Policy and the Dimensions of the Korean Conflict, 1950-
     1953* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985), 79.

45   Rosemary Foot, *A Substitute for Victory: The Politics of Peacemaking at the Korean Armistice Talks*
     (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1990), 26.

46   Stueck, *The Korean War*, 64.

47   *Ibid.*

> On September 25, Nieh Jung-chen, acting chief of staff of the PLA, told [Indian
> Ambassador to Beijing] Panikkar that the Chinese would not "sit back with folded hands
> and let the Americans come up to the border."[48]

Zhou Enlai chimed in on 30 September, stating, "The Chinese people absolutely will not tolerate foreign aggression, nor will they supinely tolerate seeing their neighbors being savagely invaded by the imperialists."[49]   On October 3, the Chinese stepped up their diplomacy one more time:

> Even more dramatic was Chou En-lai's late-night meeting with Panikkar on October 3 in
> which the Chinese premier made it unmistakably clear that if U.S. troops crossed into
> North Korea, Chinese contingents would enter the war.   'The South Koreans did not
> matter,' Chou explained, 'but American intervention into North Korea would encounter
> Chinese resistance.'[50]

On October 10,[51] the government mouthpiece newspaper, the Renmin Ribao, published a statement relaying Zhou's Foreign Ministry warning issued that day:

> The American war of invasion in Korea has been a serious menace to the security of
> China from its very start ... *The Chinese people cannot stand idly by* with regard to such
> a serious situation created by the invasion of Korea by the United States and its
> accomplice countries and to the dangerous trend toward extending the war...The Chinese
> people firmly advocate a peaceful solution to the Korean problem and are firmly opposed
> to the extension of the Korean war by America and its accomplice countries.   And they
> are even more firm in folding that *aggressors must be answerable for all consequences*
> resulting from their frantic acts in extending aggression.[52]

Blair interprets this as "very close to a declaration of war."[53]

Beyond these diplomatic warnings, throughout this period Beijing tried to project a view of itself as a strong nation that should not be trifled with.   Beijing tried to ensure

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48   Foot, *The Wrong War*, 79.

49   Schnabel, *United States Army in the Korean War*, 197.

50   Foot, *The Wrong War*, 79.

51   Although by this time, both South Korean and American troops had already crossed the border.   They
     would have had to retreat to abide by the warning at this point, although this would seem quite possible
     given the scale of the conflict that was to follow.

52   Emphasis added.   Quoted in editorial comments in United States Department of State, *Foreign
     Relations of the United States, 1950*, vol. VII: Korea (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing
     Office, 1976), 914.

53   Clay Blair, *The Forgotten War: America in Korea* (New York: Times Books, 1988), 340.

that its own domestic situation was in order so that it would not convey an image of weakness to the Americans.[54] It also played up the role of the Sino-Soviet Alliance as another way to emphasize the dangers of threatening it.[55]

Thus, throughout this period, diplomatic warnings were numerous and—over time—increasingly robust and clear.

Military Signals and Policy

In addition to this signaling using various diplomatic and public sources, "the Chinese reinforced that policy with active preparations for military intervention in Korea."[56] Chinese military moves had begun quite early. As Mao explained several years later to a Soviet delegation, "After the war broke out, we first shifted three armies and later added another two, putting a total of five armies on the edge of the Yalu River."[57] The Central Military Commission (CMC) is the institution that both exerts control over the military for the CCP as well as integrates military and political decision-making.[58] As discussed at length in chapter 6, the CMC meeting of July 7 had ordered forces redeployed from Fujian to Manchuria.[59] At CMC meetings from August 7

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54 Zhang Shuguang, *Deterrence and Strategic Culture*, 93.

55 *Ibid.*, 95.

56 Stueck, *The Korean War*, 64.

57 廖国良,李士顺, 徐焰<<毛泽东军事思想发展史>>修订版(北京:解放军出版社,2001). Liao Guoliang, Li Shishun, and Xu Yan, *The Development of Mao Zedong's Military Thought* , Revised ed. (Beijing: The People's Liberation Army Press, 2001), 372.

58 It is something akin to the American NSC with more military input. See Tai Ming Cheung, "The Influence of the Gun: China's Central Military Commission and Its Relationship with the Military, Party, and State Decision-Making Systems," in *The Making of Chinese Foreign and Security Policy in the Era of Reform, 1978-2000*, ed. David M. Lampton (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2001).

59 Zhang Shuguang, *Mao's Military Romanticism*, 59. Chen Jian, *China's Road*, 132.

through the 10, Chinese leaders continued to lay the groundwork for defensive

deployments to the Korean-Chinese border, including significant troop deployments.[60]

The forces gathered there were to number 225,000 by the end of the summer.[61]   These

were reinforced further as the United States solidified the Pusan perimeter in early

August when Mao,

> ... informed his generals in the northeast that they must be prepared to fight within a
> month.   Later in August he extended the period of preparation to the end of September,
> but he also called for twelve armies to be stationed along the Yalu, and an increase of
> eight over his order of early July.[62]

These decisions percolated through the Chinese chain of command, with the PLA Chief

of Staff writing,

> North Korea would very likely experience a setback and some complications in the war.
> Thus, according to the CMC's decision, I telegraphed an order to the strategic reserve
> forces on August 5: "Complete all the necessary preparations within this month.   Be
> ready for the order of new movement and engagement."[63]

These strategic reserve forces consisted of three multi-division armies.

As the Inchon landings approached, Chinese preparations intensified even further.

On August 23, Mao and Zhou Enlai "decided to reiterate to the NEBDA that no matter

what the difficulties, all preparations for operations should completed by the end of

September."[64]   In early September, the Chinese moved the headquarters of the crack 4th

Field Army to Shenyang so that it would be closer the North Korean border.[65]   Logistics

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60   Chen Jian, *China's Road*, 136.

61   Zhang Shuguang, *Deterrence and Strategic Culture*, 91.

62   Stueck, *The Korean War*, 65.   See also Edwin Palmer Hoyt, *The Day the Chinese Attacked: Korea,*
1950: The Story of the Failure of America's China Policy, Paragon House pbk. ed. (New York, N.Y.:
Paragon House, 1993), 72; Zhang Shuguang, *Deterrence and Strategic Culture*, 91-2.

63   Nie Rongzhen, "Beijing's Decision to Intervene," in *Mao's Generals Remember Korea*, ed. Li Xiaobing,
Allan R. Millett, and Yu Bin (Lawrence, Kan.: University Press of Kansas, 2001), 40.

64   Chen Jian, *China's Road*, 148.

65   Spurr, *Enter the Dragon*, 70-71.

preparations were made at the same time.[66]   China sent military observers to North

Korea to assess the tactical situation in late September.[67]

Clearly, many of these steps were taken to create the material conditions that

would allow the Chinese to intervene.   However, such military moves also had

communicative goals and served to bolster the diplomatic warnings that were being

issued, as summarized above.   Most historians of the period treat these military moves

as having such communicative goals.   (E.g., both Allen Whiting and Zhang Shuguang

clearly view the movement of forces as intentional, deterrent signals by Beijing.[68])   Mao

had a practice of doing precisely this, that is, using military deployments to send deterrent

signals to the Americans.   As discussed in the following chapter, Mao believed that his

large deployment of troops to coastal regions in Northern China in 1949 had deterred the

United States from getting involved in the civil war in its waning days.

> In his [Mao's] view the deployment of a large number of the PLA forces had compelled
> the Americans to evacuate their positions in China and had thus forestalled direct U.S.
> armed intervention in 1949.[69]

(Mao's fears in the civil war were reasonable, given the role the U.S. had played on the

mainland in support of the KMT.[70])   In that case, there is direct evidence that the

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66   Charles R. Shrader, *Communist Logistics in the Korean War* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1995), 170.

67   Chen Jian, *China's Road*, 163.

68   Whiting, *China Crosses the Yalu*, 64-67; Zhang Shuguang, *Deterrence and Strategic Culture*, 90-94.

69   Zhang Shuguang, *Mao's Military Romanticism*, 54, see also 13-33.

70   American troops had finally withdrawn from Mainland China in June of 1949.   (U.S. forces declined from over 100,000 in 1945 to 4,000 in 1948 before finally being completely withdrawn in June of 1949.)   While there had been some skirmishing between the Red Army and U.S. Marines (leading to a total of over forty American casualties) in the late periods of the Chinese Civil War, the last   · significant action occurred in April of 1947.   (See Henry I. Shaw, Jr., *The United States Marines in North China, 1945 - 1949* (Washington, D. C. 20380: Historical Branch, G-3 Division, Headquarters, U. S. Marine Corps, 1968).)   For a recent treatment of the U.S. role in supporting and running guerilla

Chinese leadership viewed its military moves as both communicative as well as enhancing capability. For instance, the Central Military Committee emphasized the deterrent nature of the deployment "with [these preparations we can dissuade the United States from realizing its ambition of armed intervention [in China]"[71]

According to the conventional wisdom in the deterrence literature, tested here as the Alternate Hypothesis, these strong signals should have had a high probability of leading to deterrence success. However, these signals—large-scale infantry deployments—were heavily imbued with the Chinese theory of victory. This is precisely the outcome predicted by the dissertation (Prediction #5: "When signaling to the other side, each side should send signals that make use of forces in accordance with their own theory of victory.") Despite both sets of signals (at the diplomatic and military levels), the United States crossed the 38th parallel, leading to the Chinese involvement. The following section outlines the U.S. perception of the strong Chinese signals and explains why they were not understood.

Interpretation by the United States

How did American decisionmakers interpret these threats? Were they even aware of them? What role did their beliefs about the nature of war play? This section answers these questions.

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operations against coastal China after 1951 see Frank Holober, *Raiders of the China Coast: C.I.A. Covert Operations During the Korean War* (Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 1999).

71 Zhang Shuguang, *Mao's Military Romanticism*, 36.

The primary conclusion in Washington and at MacArthur's headquarters in Tokyo was that China would not intervene (supporting Prediction #7 which suggests leaders will downplay the likelihood of the adversary getting involved). At the Wake Island meeting on October 15, only a few weeks before the first battle with PLA, Truman and MacArthur discussed this issue explicitly.

> When Truman asked him [MacArthur] to comment on the likelihood of Communist China's entering the war, MacArthur said that his answer was 'speculative,' but he guessed 'very little.' Of the 300,000 Chinese troops in Manchuria, he continued, 'Only 60,000 could be gotten across the Yalu River, and if they tried to get down to Pyongyang, there would be the greatest slaughter.'[72]

(In that exchange, as in many instances discussed in this dissertation, the assessments of capability and intent by the Chinese were intertwined, each mutually supporting the other.) The two leaders later claimed to agree entirely on the situation in the region.

This section examines a range of reasons for this confidence. It begins by addressing the conventional argument that the messenger of several of the signals (Ambassador Panikkar) was not trusted. This argument generally is used to bolster the Alternate Hypothesis, which centers on the objective quality of the signal as explanations for deterrence success or failure. If the signals were not clearly sent, then the Alternate Hypothesis would indeed predict the resulting deterrence failure. However, as will be shown, this is not the case; Panikkar is not to blame for the deterrence failure.

The section goes on to show that the military threats were heard in Washington, but that they simply were not viewed as threatening. The subsequent section evaluates the acute and pervasive surprise that the U.S. leadership felt when the Chinese did in fact intervene and did so at great cost to American soldiers and marines.

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72 Dennis D. Wainstock, *Truman, Macarthur, and the Korean War* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1999), 67-68.

Role of Panikkar

In the conventional wisdom, Beijing's message did not get through to Washington because of the latter's mistrust of the chosen messenger, the Indian Ambassador stationed in Beijing, Kavalam M. Panikkar. The argument goes that he was viewed as a self-promoter and a communist sympathizer in Washington.[73] Britain was also said to view him as unreliable.[74]

However, Panikkar's reliability was not as suspect as the later historiography would have it. Although the United States was looking to find alternate lines of communication to use with Beijing,[75] it had long used India as a way to send signals to Beijing.[76] It had also looked to India as a way to receive messages from Beijing.[77] Indeed, Panikkar, himself, had long been used as a conduit for information from Beijing. Only a few days before his first warning, he had been suggesting, based on conversations with Zhou Enlai and other forms of information, that China would not intervene, and this message was treated seriously in the United States.[78] After the outbreak of war between the United States and China, Washington continued to use Indian emissaries as intermediaries to Beijing.[79] Beyond this history of using Panikkar and India as conduits,

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73 Foot, *The Wrong War*, 79.

74 Lowe, *The Origins of the Korean War*, 215.

75 See the concerns expressed in "Memorandum by the Director of the Office of Chinese Affairs (Clubb) to the Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs (Rusk)," October 26, 1950 in *F.R.U.S., 1950, Vol. 7*, 1000-02.

76 Foot, *The Wrong War*, 83.

77 Dean Acheson, *Present at the Creation: My Years in the State Department* (New York, NY: Norton, 1969), 452.

78 This occured on September 21, 1950. Stueck, *The Korean War*, 90.

it is indisputable that the warnings were conveyed to Washington: "The State Department

got word of this threat early the following day."[80]

Further, it was not only isolated warnings from Panikkar that got through, but

rather a wide range of sources of information. One report in early September gives

essentially the same warning that was repeated frequently later. In it, the Consul

General in Hong Kong received a letter purporting to reproduce discussions of a "Peking

conference," including the following from Zhou Enlai: "When asked [about the] position

of China should North Korean troops be pushed back to Manchurian border, Chou [Zhou

Enlai] replied China would fight [the] enemy outside China's border and not wait until

enemy came in."[81] Other sources abounded: "From Hong Kong and Taibei, word did

filter into the State Department that Beijing would commit troops to Korea if U.S.

soldiers advanced north of the 38th parallel."[82] Similarly,

> Indications of Chinese intentions grew increasingly disturbing. On [September 29], the
> State Department received word, indirectly through the embassy in Moscow, that the
> Dutch chargé in Beijing believed Chinese officials were considering military intervention
> in Korea if U.S. troops entered the North. On 2 October Wilkinson in Hong Kong sent a
> partial text of a Zhou Enlai speech of 30 September, which included the assertion that
> "the Chinese people absolutely will not tolerate foreign aggression nor will the supinely
> tolerate seeing their neighbors being savagely invaded by foreigners..."[83]

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79 Nehru was used as late as the Panmunjom negotiations. Robert Pape, *Bombing to Win: Air Power and Coercion in War* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996), 166. During the early part of the war, the Indians were used several times. See "Memorandum by the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs (Merchant) to the Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs (Rusk)," November 16, 1950 in *F.R.U.S., 1950, Vol. 7*, 1164.

80 Stueck, *The Korean War*, 94, see also 91.

81 "The Consul General at Hong Kong (Wilkinson) to the Secretary of State (September 5, 1950)" in *F.R.U.S., 1950, Vol. 7*, 698.

82 Stueck, *The Korean War*, 90.

83 *Ibid.*, 93-94. That warning, somewhat sanitized for classification purposes, can be seen at Central Intelligence Agency, "Document 197. ORE 58-50 Excerpt, 12 October 1950, Critical Situations in the Far East," in *Assessing the Soviet Threat: The Early Cold War Years*, ed. Woodrow J. Kuhns (Washington, DC: Central Intelligence Agency, 1997).

The report from the Moscow embassy was also passed through the CIA, suggesting that it too, got wide distribution in the U.S. government.[84]   Beijing's final and most ominous warning noted above, from the Foreign Ministry on October 10, clearly found its way to senior leaders in Washington.[85]   All these messages corroborated Panikkar's warnings, and yet they too were ignored.

When Panikkar conveyed messaged Washington wanted to hear, it listened. When he passed on messages that Washington did not want to hear, it labeled him as unreliable.   Panikkar's warnings were not the only ones being ignored.   His role in the miscalculations is not causal.

Ignorance of the Military Signals Was Not an Excuse

Throughout this period, not only was the United States aware that the Chinese were engaged in diplomatic signaling through Panikkar and many other sources, but it was also aware that Beijing was conducting heavy military movements in the region. American ignorance of these moves cannot account for the failure of Chinese signals.

A few examples will serve to make the case on the military side: "U.S. intelligence picked up the steady movement of Chinese forces northward toward Korea..."[86]   General Charles Willoughby, MacArthur's G-2 or intelligence officer, estimated on July 3 that "the Chinese had stationed two cavalry divisions and four armies

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84 Central Intelligence Agency, "Document 197. ORE 58-50 Excerpt, 12 October 1950, Critical Situations in the Far East."

85 "Memorandum of Conversation, by the Ambassador at Large (Jessup) (October 12, 1950)," in *F.R.U.S., 1950, Vol. 7*, 931.   In that document, Jessup's transmits a message from the British foreign service dated October 11 referring to the Chinese statement of the day before.

86 Stueck, *The Korean War*, 65.

in Manchuria."[87]   This would have been a force totaling approximately 140,000 men.

By the end of August, he announced "... sources have reported troop movement from

Central China to Manchuria for sometime which suggest movements preliminary to

entering the Korean theater."[88]   At that point, he estimated that some 246,000 soldiers

were in Manchuria, and 80,000 were in the village of An-tung, just across the Yalu.[89]

Following Inchon, Willoughby raised his estimate of Chinese forces in Manchuria to

450,000.[90]   His staff reported that there were some 38 divisions in Manchuria on

October 4.[91]

While many of these Chinese moves might have been explained away as

defensive deployments, some specifics are less easily dismissed.   On October 5,

Willoughby prepared a Daily Intelligence Summary (DIS). This was the key intelligence

document put out by Willoughby's office and,

> contained the raw data for MacArthur's intelligence assessment.   The DISs, which could
> be 30 pages long and frequently longer, contained detailed accounts of the day's fighting
> in Korea, a good deal of political material on all countries in the FEC region (including
> Japan and China), as well as special appreciations and order of battle annexes.[92]

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87   Schnabel, *United States Army in the Korean War*, 198.   See also Foot, *The Wrong War*, 79.

88   This is a summary of the contents in "Daily Intelligence Summary #2913 (August 31, 1950)," as
described in General Charles Willoughby, "The Chinese Communist Potential for Intervention in the
Korean War (Undated)", p. 2, The Charles A. Willoughby Papers, Box 10, Military History Institute
Library, U.S. Army War College, Carlisle, Penn.

89   Schnabel, *United States Army in the Korean War*, 179.

90   *Ibid.*, 199.

91   See "Joint Daily SITREP, No. 99 (October 4, 1950)," in *Joint Daily Sitrep Collection*, (Carlisle, Penn.:
Military History Institute Library, U.S. Army War College, 1950).   This collection consists of the
daily situation reports for the entire Far Eastern Command.

92   Eliot A. Cohen, "'Only Half the Battle': American Intelligence and the Chinese Intervention in Korea,
1950," *Intelligence and National Security* 5, no. 1 (1990): 132.   Cohen notes "Three copies of the DIS
were sent every day to Washington by courier from Tokyo taking three to five days, apparently, to
arrive there.   Another 54 copies went by registered mail" (p. 146, note 7).   Beyond that, the State
Department staff on the ground in South Korea had access to Eighth Army and X Corps intelligence
reports as they were produced.   They often cabled summaries of these to Acheson in Washington.

This particular DIS was immediately telexed to Washington; in it, Willoughby noted that

many of these troops were massing at border crossings:

> ... A build-up of Chinese forces along the Korean-Manchurian border has been reported
> in many channels, and while exaggerations and canards are always evident, the potential
> of massing at the Antung and other Manchurian crossing appears conclusive.   This mass
> involves a possible 9-18 divisions organized into 3-6 armies of the total strength of 38
> divisions and 9 armies now carried in all Manchuria ... the potential exists for Chinese
> Communist forces to openly intervene in the Korea War if UN forces cross the 38th
> Parallel.[93]

There were also some reports in the American bureaucracy in Washington of Chinese

forces crossing the Yalu on October 5.[94]   By mid-October, Willoughby was reporting

that scores of divisions were being forward-deployed, not just moved to Manchuria in

general: "Intervention is a decision for war, on the highest level, i.e., the Kremlin and

Peiping.   However, the numerical and troop potential in Manchuria is a *fait accompli*.

A total of 24 divisions are disposed along the Yalu River."[95]   Two weeks later, his staff

estimated the number of forward-deployed divisions along the river to be twenty-nine.[96]

Throughout this period, the United States remained confident in its ability to

monitor the movements of the Chinese through Air Force reconnaissance and intelligence

assets.[97]   When convoys were sighted coming south from the border (a very common

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See, for instance "The Charge in Korea (Drumright) to the Secretary of State (November 1, 1950),"
reprinted in *F.R.U.S., 1950, Vol. 7*, 1022.

93   "Daily Intelligence Summary #2948 (October 5, 1950)," quoted in Willoughby, "The Chinese
Communist Potential for Intervention in the Korean War (Undated)", p. 3.   The Daily Intelligence
Summary of 4 days later reinforced that conclusion.   See also Schnabel, *United States Army in the
Korean War*, 200.

94   Schnabel, *United States Army in the Korean War*, 200.

95   "Daily Intelligence Summary #2957 (October 14, 1950)," quoted in Willoughby, "The Chinese
Communist Potential for Intervention in the Korean War (Undated)", p. 3.

96   "Daily Intelligence Summary #2971 (October 28, 1950)," summarized in *Ibid.*, p. 4.

97   Wainstock, *Truman, Macarthur, and the Korean War*, 88.

occurrence[98]), the standard operating procedure was to continue to monitor the road with aircraft, thus guaranteeing information. For instance:

> The most significant enemy activity was the unconfirmed sighting of extensive vehicular convoy movements south, toward and through, Pyongyang. Constant air surveillance of the routes between Sariwon and Sunchon is now being maintained.[99]

While these reports were never confirmed, prisoner of war |POW| reports by the end of October were presenting a picture of at least small-scale infiltration.[100] General Almond, commander of X Corps, even personally interrogated some of the Chinese prisoners.[101] Nevertheless, these reports never led to a fundamental rethinking of strategy at the military level, let alone the geo-political level.

Other intelligence sources, outside of the military chain of command, also echoed these reports through State reports that originated in Moscow, Hong Kong, and Taibei, as well as through the reporting of other allied nations' foreign ministries and military attaches. For instance, "Earlier intelligence reports had indicated that, since July, sizable Chinese ground forces had been moving into Manchuria from distant regions of the country."[102] The CIA, in a major survey regarding the prospect of Chinese entry in early September 1950 also noted the enormous force in Manchuria:

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98 Such reports litter the SITREPs beginning in September and continuing through the Chinese offensives. See, for instance "Joint Daily SITREP No. 69 (September 4, 1950)," "Joint Daily SITREP No. 98 (October 3, 1950)," "Joint Daily SITREP No. 102 (October 7, 1950)," etc., all in *Joint Daily Sitrep Collection*.

99 "Joint Daily SITREP No. 99 (October 4, 1950)," in *Ibid*.

100 See "Joint Daily SITREP, No. 124 (October 30, 1950)," in *Ibid*. In this SITREP, summaries of recent POW interrogations are reported, including discussion of a 5,000 person convoy crossing one of the Yalu Bridges and the presence of several units at regimental strength (including artillery).

101 Lt. General Edward M. Almond, "Personal Notes of Lt. Gen. E. M. Almond Covering Military Operations in Korea, Sept 1950-July 1951, p. see entry for October 30, 1950, The Edward M Almond Papers, Box: "Korean War," Military History Institute Library, U.S. Army War College, Carlisle, Penn.

102 Stueck, *The Korean War*, 90.

> Following the fall of Manchuria there were approximately 565,000 Military District [MD] troops in Manchuria (including 165,100 ex-Nationalists), and possibly 100,000 to 125,000 of these MD troops have now been integrated into the regular army and organized as combat forces. These units, as well as the remaining MD troops, probably are Soviet-equipped. In addition, reports during the past three months have indicated a considerably increase in regular troop strength in Manchuria. It is estimated that the major elements of Lin Piao's 4th Field Army—totalling [sic] perhaps 100,000 combat veterans—are now in Manchuria and are probably located along or adjacent to the Korean border, in position for rapid commitment in Korea.
>
> Approximately 210,000 Communist regulars under Nieh Jung-chen's commander are presently deployed in the North China area. Some of these troops have been reported enroute to Manchuria.[103]

Even more ominously, "Washington also received a report, based on air reconnaissance, of a large mechanized convoy moving into North Korea from Manchuria."[104] There were also signs of Communist air forces massing north of the Yalu on October 18:

> The Commanding General, FEAF, has reported the observation ... of 75-100 aircraft at Antung Airfield, Manchuria. The observation of this unusually heavy concentration of aircraft was made by six crew members of an aircraft from the 31st Strategic Reconnaissance Squadron. ... The aircraft on Antung were spaced in six rows of 14 aircraft each, and there were additional aircraft scattered around the airfield.[105]

When follow up reconnaissance flights sortied, they found the airfield empty.

Indeed, in some cases the intelligence was falsely suggesting the Chinese had already entered North Korea in the days immediately before the United States crossed the 38th Parallel. Two separate Daily Intelligence Summaries (DISs) for the UN Command made this point. The first on October 3 "reported some evidence that twenty Chinese communist divisions were in North Korea and had been there since September 10."[106]

The second on October 5 "noted the purported entry into North Korea of nine Chinese

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103 Central Intelligence Agency, "Document 190. Intelligence Memorandum 324, 8 September 1950, Probability of Direct Chinese Communist Intervention in Korea," in *Assessing the Soviet Threat: The Early Cold War Years*, ed. Woodrow J. Kuhns (Washington, DC: Central Intelligence Agency, 1997), 434-35.

104 Stueck, *The Korean War*, 93-94. It appears this was conveyed on October 4, 1950.

105 See "Joint Daily SITREP, No. 114 (October 19, 1950)," in *Joint Daily Sitrep Collection*. See also Robert Frank Futrell, *The United States Air Force in Korea, 1950-1953*, Rev. ed. (Washington, D.C.: Office of Air Force History United States Air Force, 1983), 217-19.

106 Schnabel, *United States Army in the Korean War*, 199.

divisions."[107] Based on evidence from the Chinese side, it is clear these reports are false, and indeed, it appears the DIS did not find the reports to be entirely convincing (and the reports convey that). Nevertheless, they were included in the final reports and would have shaped American leader's understandings at the time.

Again, while some of this evidence might have been explained away as primarily defensive deployments, not all of it could. The massing of troops at border crossings is a clear sign of offensive capability. Reports of troops (even when false) in North Korea is another sign of the same. Moving large numbers of troops to forward positions does not make sense for a military force geared toward defense. Finally, the numbers were simply of a scale that should have raised eyebrows. At the time that Chinese troop numbers in Manchuria were thought to be nearly half a million, the total U.S. force on the Korean Peninsula was less than 150,000.[108]

All the while, MacArthur continued to insist that there was no sign of "present entry into North Korea by major Soviet or Chinese Communist Forces."[109] Even at a much a later point, once the Chinese forces engaged the U.S. forces in North Korea, the United States continued to ignore important evidence such as prisoners-of-war who spoke

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107 *Ibid.,* 200.

108 Blair suggest that at the end of October X Corps had some 50,000 U.S. soldiers with something just over 100,000 in Eighth Army (the latter includes both the Commonwealth Brigade and 1-2 Korean divisions. Blair, *The Forgotten War,* 366-67.   Using a different methodology: at the time of the Inchon landing, including the landing force, there were 6 divisions plus approximately 3 unattached task forces of brigade strength, in Korea, which suggests approximately 140,000 troops.

109 MacArthur made this statement on September 28, 1950.   Schnabel, *United States Army in the Korean War,* 188.

Chinese and claimed to be from large Chinese units that were not known to be in

Northeast China, let alone North Korea.[110]

The point here is, while the numbers were often somewhat lower than actual

Chinese deployments, American decisionmakers had access to estimates from a variety of

sources that were approximately correct regarding the scale and pace of Chinese

deployments.[111]   They simply did not find them threatening.   The CIA's summary

statement of October 12, 1950 illustrates these blinders well:

> Despite statements by Chou En-lai, troop movements to Manchuria, and propaganda
> charges of atrocities and border violations, there are no convincing indications of an
> actual Chinese Communist intention to resort to full-scale intervention in Korea.[112]

One wonders what evidence would have been convincing to the CIA if statements by

senior leaders, troop deployments of enormous scale, and preparing the populace through

propaganda were not.   A similar reaction existed within the theater.   General Ridgway

wrote later,

> 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.[113]

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110 Wainstock, *Truman, Macarthur, and the Korean War*, 79.   Indeed, even more interestingly, the later prisoners of war reports in mid-November—those suggesting that the Chinese were withdrawing after their First Campaign—were given credence.   Thus, when the reports fit the bias of underestimating the enemy, they were heard.   Otherwise, they were ignored.

111 Cohen makes precisely the same point: "Although FEC [the Far Eastern Command] consistently underestimated the number to troops actually in Korea ... it tracked the buildup in Manchuria more accurately.   FEC estimated that regular forces (i.e., excluding district troops and militia) totaling 116,000 men in July had grown to 217,000 men in early August and grown to at least 415,000 and possibly 463,000 by early November.   Ironically, then, FEC intelligence had a better grasp of the size and disposition of Chinese forces not in contact with UN troops in Korea, than of those who actually were."   Cohen, "'Only Half the Battle'," 133.

112 Central Intelligence Agency, "Document 197. ORE 58-50 Excerpt, 12 October 1950, Critical Situations in the Far East," 450.

113 Matthew B. Ridgway, *The Korean War: How We Met the Challenge: How All-out Asian War Was Averted: Why Macarthur Was Dismissed: Why Today's War Objectives Must Be Limited*, 1st ed. (Garden City, N.Y.,: Doubleday, 1967), 67.   There is no question that Mao and the Chinese leadership did their best to minimize the signs of their presence in Korea, particularly in November of 1950.   Nevertheless, as shown above, the United States did have information of substantial forces in

It is important to point out that this wide range of evidence was reaching a wide range of people in the American leadership. Certainly, MacArthur was highly motivated to move northward. However, Ridgway suggests the biases were not just confined to MacArthur, but were endemic throughout the U.S. military:

> But it was not just the High Command [MacArthur's HQ] who refused to read the clear meaning of the mounting evidence. Typical of the reluctance of all our troops, even the lower ranks to take the Chinese threat seriously was the reaction of the forces positioned in and around the village of Unsan, just north of the Chongchon River, and about sixty miles south of the Yalu, at the end of October. Reports came in from several different quarters concerning the presence of large concentrations of Chinese troops. ... [Ridgway then chronicles *seven* different such reports at the tactical level] ... Still the United States command was reluctant to accept this accumulating evidence.[114]

Ridgeway continues, describing the cavalier attitude at various army, corps, divisional, and even regimental levels. It seems a stretch to argue that MacArthur's attitude would have overrode potential concerns throughout his command structure. Beyond that, the CIA reports went to a wide audience in Washington and Tokyo. Clearly, the reports that were trickling up through the foreign embassies would reach the Secretary of State. This multitude of intelligence streams cannot be explained away by invoking MacArthur's incentives to ignore them. The blinders were worn much more widely. The next section explains why that was the case.

People's War Was Not Threatening

So, if Panikkar's credibility cannot account for the failure of communication, and if the United States knew of the Chinese military signals, what does account for the catastrophic deterrence failure? American leaders heard the Chinese warnings, but they just did not find them—underpinned as they were with a People's War strategy—to be

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Manchuria. Further, as discussed below, the early signs from the first offensive at the end of October and early November were systematically ignored.

114 *Ibid.*, 52-53.

particularly threatening.   Evidence from a variety of sources bears this out and strongly

supports the link between different theories of victory and underestimation (H_1) as well as

several of the theory's component predictions.   In this case, differences in theory of

victory did correlate with underestimation (Prediction #1).   Leaders did denigrate their

adversary's theory of victory (Prediction #2), did not have nuanced discussions of their

adversary's strategy (Prediction #3), and believed that Washington's view of warfare

would be dominant on the battlefield (Prediction #4).   Further, the very large difference

in the theories of victory led to large and frequent underestimations (Prediction #10).

This section will summarize the strong, process tracing evidence on these points.

At a narrow level, American views of Chinese doctrine as ineffective clearly

shaped the assessments of Chinese capabilities:

> The JIC [Joint Intelligence Committee] also considered that the past combat experience
> of the PLA soldiers was inappropriate to the operations in Korea.   Their previous
> fighting had involved "hit and run" guerilla tactics; they had never met "a well-trained
> force with high morale equipped with modern weapons and possessing the will and the
> skill to use those weapons."   In addition, China had "practically no capability" of
> reinforcing or supporting the North Korean navy and not much in the way of an air force
> either.[115]

Similarly, on October 12 the CIA noted, "The Chinese Communist ground forces,

currently lacking requisite air and naval support, are capable of intervening effectively,

but not necessarily decisively, in the Korean conflict."[116]   That report goes on to develop

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115 Foot, *The Wrong War*, 81.   The JIC report was dated July 6.

116 Central Intelligence Agency, "Document 197. ORE 58-50 Excerpt, 12 October 1950, Critical
Situations in the Far East," 450.   Other instances of CIA denigration of Chinese capabilities in general
can be found at Central Intelligence Agency, "Document 186. Weekly Summary Excerpt, 28 July 1950,
Soviet/Satellite Intentions," in *Assessing the Soviet Threat: The Early Cold War Years*, ed. Woodrow J.
Kuhns (Washington, DC: Central Intelligence Agency, 1997).

this point, "Open intervention would be extremely costly unless protected by powerful

Soviet air cover and naval support."[117]

Figure 4-2:   B-29s attacking Chinese position in North Korea[118]
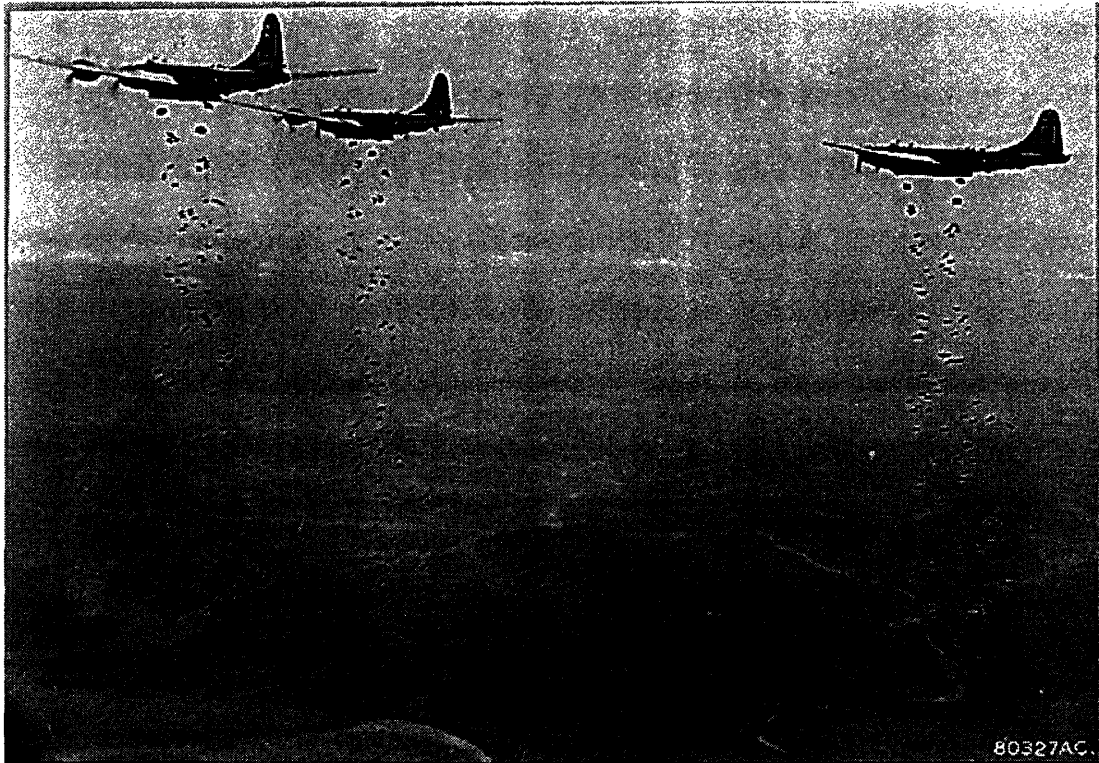
Cohen makes the point that the successes of the USAF earlier in the conflict,

against the North Korean forces, biased the view of airpower's utility later.   He

describes studies coming out of the Far East Command on the Air Force campaigns

against the North Koreans in the first phase of the war, as they attacked down the length

of the peninsula.

> A rather different line of reasoning led to qualified confidence in FEC.   Beginning in
> early October FEC analysts published in the Daily Intelligence Summary post-mortems

117 Central Intelligence Agency, "Document 197. ORE 58-50 Excerpt, 12 October 1950, Critical
Situations in the Far East."

118 Source: ARC Identifier: 542229 (ca. 01/1951); Still Picture Records LICON, Special Media Archives
Services Division (NWCS-S), National Archives at College Park.

on the campaigns against the NKPA.   These retrospective analyses suggested that a
massive air interdiction campaign, coupled with close air support of American troops
during the previous summer had played a critical role in the destruction of the NKPA. ...
These findings—based largely on interrogation of NKPA prisoners—paved the way for
MacArthur's blithe remark to President Truman at Wake Island, "if the Chinese tried to
get down to Pyongyang there would be the greatest slaughter."

This growing –and, one must say, solidly based—faith in the efficacy of close air support
and air interdiction of enemy lines of communication colored not only MacArthur's
command decisions, but the nature of supporting intelligence assessment.   ...   This
overconfidence in the efficacy of air power would color FEC's estimates of Chinese
military effectiveness and the Chinese strategic calculus until after the launching of the
second Chinese attack in November.[119]

Cohen's suggestion that the U.S. confidence in airpower affected the American

assessment of Beijing's strategic calculus is precisely the argument of this dissertation.

The Daily Intelligence Summary for 12 October, read by the president, explained

why it did not expect Chinese entry:

The Chinese Communists undoubtedly feared the consequences of war with the United
States...   In the unlikely event that the Chinese entered the war without the benefit of
Soviet naval and air support, they were bound to suffer costly losses ...   This report
agreed with many others that from a military standpoint, the most favorable time for the
intervention had passed.[120]

Again, this assessment of intent that comes from estimations of capabilities is predicted

by H_{2B} and Prediction #5.

As mentioned above, an RB-29 from the 31st Strategic Reconnaissance Squadron

had sighted a large deployment of MiGs near the Yalu on October 18 that disappeared the

next morning.   However, this datum, too, was explained away:

Stratemeyer [the air force commander in theater] certainly did not believe that the
Chinese meant to use these fighters to attack his planes since they had not done so when
the observation aircraft, an easy target, had come close.   "I believe it especially
significant," he told Vandenberg, " that, if deployment for possible action in Korea were
under way, it would be highly unlikely that aircraft would have been positioned to attract
attention from south of the border."[121]

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119 Cohen, "'Only Half the Battle'," 138-39.   See also Eliot Cohen and John Gooch, *Military Misfortunes:
The Anatomy of Failure in War* (New York, NY: The Free Press, 1990), 178, *passim.*

120 Summarized in Schnabel, *United States Army in the Korean War*, 201.

121 *Ibid.*, 231. See also Futrell, *The United States Air Force in Korea, 1950-1953*, 217-19.   Interestingly,
it appears that the planes were lined up on the airfield in Antung without the benefit of revetments for

Here Stratemeyer is projecting his own understanding of military doctrine on to the

Communist forces. He concludes the Communists were bluffing because he would have

ensured the secrecy of his own deployment had he been on the other side.

Similarly, the U.S. discussions of its own capability vis-à-vis the Chinese exuded

confidence. Even well into the main Chinese intervention in late November, the Chief

of Naval Operations was suggesting, "the Chinese were probably afraid of attacks on

their cities and might hold off for that reason."[122] As noted in the previous chapter, Mao

and the other senior Chinese leaders had long been cavalier about the vulnerability of the

Chinese cities.

Not only was People's War not viewed as threatening, but also the prospect of

limited war was downplayed, if considered at all. As one contemporary intelligence

officer argues, an important reason for the massive intelligence failures leading up to the

war was that the United States conflated war with the Chinese in Korea with general war

against the Soviets.[123]

protection, another incomprehensible aspect from an American perspective.

It is unclear precisely the nature of these planes, although data from the Chinese and Soviet side suggest it was a deployment of Soviet Air Force MIG-15s (or, possibly, MIG-9s). The first large scale transfer of planes from the Soviet Union to China occurred on October 14, and it seems unlikely that they would have been deployed a mere 4 days later. See Zhang Xiaoming, *Red Wings over the Yalu: China, the Soviet Union, and the Air War in Korea*, 1st ed. (College Station, Tex.: Texas A&M University Press, 2002), 61 and 84ff. The Soviets had been deployed in the area and were used along the Yalu throughout November and December. Only in late March 1951 did the Soviets become heavily involved in the air war (from bases in both North Korea and China). See Zhang Xiaoming, *Red Wings over the Yalu*, Chapter 6: Soviet Air Operations in Korea.

122 Philip Jessup, "Memorandum of Conversation, by the Ambassador at Large (Jessup) (December 1, 1950)," in *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1950*, ed. United States Department of State (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1976), 1280.

123 See P.K. Rose, "Two Strategic Intelligence Mistakes in Korea, 1950," *Studies in Intelligence*, no. 11 (2001). Note that Rose seems to downplay the degree of cooperation that *did* exist among the various communist countries. More recently available evidence from those countries has deepened the understanding of that cooperation. Still, Rose's treatment of the U.S. analysis process is excellent.

> The United States was caught by surprise because, within political and military
> leaderships circles in Washington, the perception existed 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.   Washington was confident that the Soviets were not ready to take such a step, and,
> therefore, that no invasion would occur.[124]

This, too, is consistent with the perceptions stemming from the American theory of

victory.   As noted in the previous chapter, there was a near exclusive focus on general

war, and—until after the Korean War—little consideration of the particular nature of

limited wars.

All of these assessments were precisely what this dissertation's theory would

predict.   Washington viewed Chinese military signals through the lens of American

strategic beliefs and doctrine, leading it to underestimate their significance.   The

hypothesis linking the misperception of an adversary's signals to the underestimations of

them that come from differing theories of victory (H_{2B}) is strongly supported here.

China Had Already Missed Its Chance

Another major contributor to the American tendency to ignore the evidence of

Chinese intent and capability to intervene was the timing of the Chinese signals.[125]   In

short, many believed that China had already missed its best chance to intervene.   This

perception was heavily dependent on American strategic perspectives regarding optimal

strategies.   In the American view, the best time to intervene would have been when the

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124 *Ibid.*: 3.

125 Along these lines one CIA operative has recently argued that the United States ignored signs of the
Chinese troop deployment because of its belief that Chinese intervention would be equated with
general war, a situation they did not foresee as likely.   *Ibid.*   As discussed in the previous chapter,
the United States was heavily focused on the prospect for general war between the United States and
the Communist nations.   That author summarizes similar information to that presented above, but is
less able to document the link between the ignoring of that evidence (which certainly occurred) to the
specific American expectation of intervention only in the context of general war.

United States' back was to the wall at Pusan, and it was most vulnerable.[126]   American

strategic doctrine would have suggested an attack at that point to pursue a complete

victory.[127]   Willoughby, MacArthur's intelligence officer, put it succinctly in October:

"The auspicious time for intervention has long since passed."[128]   Even signals from

foreign embassies were discounted on these grounds.   For instance, the American

ambassador in Russia, Alan G. Kirk, used this line of argument to undermine the signals

he had received from contacts in Moscow regarding the likelihood of Chinese entry if the

United States crossed the 38th parallel:

> In commenting on this information, Kirk says he finds it difficult to accept these reports
> as authoritative analyses of Chinese Communist plans.   He takes the line that the logical
> moment for Communist armed intervention came when the UN forces were desperately
> defending a small area in southern Korea and when the influx of an overwhelming
> number of Chinese ground forces would have proved a decisive factors.[129]

The CIA made the same point in its own summary analysis under the heading "Factors

Opposing Chinese Communist Intervention" by arguing: "From a military standpoint the

most favorable time for intervention in Korea has passed."[130]   Thus, "policymakers in

Washington simply did not believe Beijing's warnings" because—viewed through the

American perceptual lens—the militarily advantageous time to intervene had already

passed.[131]   The official Army history of the war concurs on this point.[132]

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126 Foot, *The Wrong War*, 80; Stueck, *The Korean War*, 110-11.

127 See Weigley's discussion of the "Grant" strategy that was prevalent at this time in U.S. Army circles
which counsels utter annihilation of the enemy through mass and concentration.   Russell Frank
Weigley, *The American Way of War: A History of United States Military Strategy and Policy*
(Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1977), 312.

128 Wainstock, *Truman, Macarthur, and the Korean War*, 77.

129 Central Intelligence Agency, "Document 197. ORE 58-50 Excerpt, 12 October 1950, Critical
Situations in the Far East."

130 *Ibid.*, 450.   And note that the general conclusions of this study, as noted elsewhere, did not expect
Chinese entry.

131 Chen Jian, *China's Road*, 169-170.

In China, other factors seemed more important in timing their intervention. Some sources of delays on the Chinese side stemmed from difficulties in logistics and intra-alliance coordination issues.[133] However, if the Americans inferred anything from this, they mistook a limitation in capabilities for a signal of intent. But more fundamentally, as noted above, the Chinese strategic thinking emphasizing the value in waiting until the U.S. supply lines were long, precisely the opposite of the American view.[134] A report written by the senior commanders of the NEBDA in late August made clear the differences in Chinese thinking. It "suggested that the best timing for entering the war might be when the UN forces had counterattacked back across the 38th parallel, because this would put China in a politically and militarily more favorable position to defeat the enemy."[135] Other Chinese sources concur, emphasizing long vulnerable supply lines of the United States as they moved north.

> Chinese behavior should not have puzzled those familiar with Mao's strategy in previous wars. A key point in Maoist thought was the trading of space for time. The ideal moment to attack an enemy of superior firepower came when its forces advanced beyond their major supply bases into rugged terrain lacking easily defensible lines of transportation and communication.[136]

(To some extent, this misperception can be viewed as a difference in perspective about intent: the United States viewed Chinese motivations as primarily offensive, thus suggesting that the best time to attack would be at the high tide of the North Korean offensive. Had the United States considered the prospect for defensive motivations

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132 See Schnabel, *United States Army in the Korean War*, 277.

133 On the former see Chen Jian, *China's Road*, 148. On the latter see Thomas J. Christensen, *Worse Than a Monolith: Alliances in U.S.-PRC Security Relations* (forthcoming).

134 Chen Jian, *China's Road*, 152.

135 *Ibid.* Also see Zhang Shuguang, *Mao's Military Romanticism*, 76.

136 Stueck, *The Korean War*, 112.

driving Beijing, would it have been less prone to make this assumption about the optimal timing for the Chinese attack? Perhaps, but even this question emphasizes the doctrinal blinders that the United States wore. For the Chinese, "luring the enemy in deep" was an offensive strategy. Beyond that, some in the United States did consider the prospect for insecurity in China, thus suggesting they were not unaware of the potential needs for a defensive strategy.)

This is excellent evidence for the theory. The Chinese, because of their views on warfare thought the best time to intervene militarily would be as the United States moved north, with long supply lines. "Lure them in deep." The United States thought the best time for the Chinese to have intervened would have been earlier, when American forces were pinned down. These different perspectives shaped each side's policy, and through that, the American assessment of the meaning of Chinese signals and thus their intent. Both sides expected their view of warfare to be borne out on the battlefield (Prediction #4) nor was there any attempt to have a nuanced discussion of the adversary's thinking on the same issue (Prediction #3).

Dissenting Views from Outside the Military Leadership

Some American analysts did better at assessing the signals from China than others. While the CIA was often wrong, it was rarely as extreme as the Pentagon in its cavalier appraisal of the Chinese threat. Writing in early November, the Agency concluded that "The Chinese Communists ... main motivation at present appears to be to establish a limited "cordon sanitaire" south of the Yalu River."[137] On November 24, the day before

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137 "Memorandum by the Director of the central Intelligence Agency (Smith) to the President," November 1, 1950, in *F.R.U.S., 1950, Vol. 7*, 1025. See also the CIA's NIE of November 8, 1950.

the Chinese attacked in force, the CIA submitted yet another NIE on the prospect for

Chinese intervention in which it became increasingly cautious: "It is estimated that [the

Chinese Communists] do not have the military capability of driving the UN forces from

the peninsula, but that *they do have the capability of forcing them to withdraw to*

defensive positions for prolonged and inconclusive operations."[138]

Interestingly, the senior China analyst at the Department of State, Edmund

Clubb,[139] was able to interpret many of these signals remarkably well even at a very early

date.   Writing after the first battle that destroyed the 8th Cavalry (discussed in detail

below) but before the large-scale Chinese attacks of late November, he joined the debate

over the true intent of the Chinese.   He is worth quoting at length.   After noting that

there was now undisputable evidence that the Chinese were directly involved in fighting,

he goes on to warn that Chinese intent was not likely to be limited.

> It seems unlikely that the Chinese Communists would be prepared to venture into the Korean theater in such a limited manner as would confront them with the danger of being promptly bloodied and thrown out by the force which they themselves had consistently characterized as a "a paper tiger".   The recrudescence of Chinese Communist propaganda whipping up enthusiasm of the Chinese people for "resistance to aggression in Korea" would appear to indicate that a large effort may be involved.   ...   The move of intervention would be designed, in short, to achieve some real measure of victory. Although firm information to reach conclusions is still lacking, therefore, it would be hardly safe to assume other than that (1) the Chinese Communists, if they are intervening directly in Korea, propose to do so in considerable force ...[140]

"Memorandum by the Central Intelligence Agency: National Intelligence Estimate, Chinese Communist Intervention in Korea," November 8, 1950, in *F.R.U.S., 1950, Vol. 7*, 1101--6.

138 Emphasis added.   "Memorandum by the Central Intelligence Agency: National Intelligence Estimate, Chinese Communist Intervention in Korea," November 24, 1950, in *F.R.U.S., 1950, Vol. 7*, 1220-22. The latter, emphasized part, is substantially stronger than the Pentagon discusisons throughout the month of November.

139 Clubb was later purged from State in the McCarthy era.   For an interesting discussion of this period, see Paul G. Pierpaoli, *Truman and Korea: The Political Culture of the Early Cold War* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1999).

140 "Memorandum by the Director of the Office of Chinese Affairs (Clubb) to the Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs (Rusk)," November 1, 1950 in *F.R.U.S., 1950, Vol. 7*, 1023-25.

Clubb also made similar points in a number of memos in early November.[141]   Others at

State expressed views similar to Clubb's.[142]   Even mid-level officials there

recommended great caution.[143]   Indeed, even Acheson seemed more able to recognize

the Chinese threats for what they were than the military leadership was.[144]

Leaders who are outside the military or are not well versed in strategic thinking

should be less vulnerable to the pernicious effects of biases from various theories of

victory (as suggested in Prediction #11).   This appears to be such a case: Clubb and

others at State (and to a lesser extent, others outside the Pentagon) were far more correct

than the military leaders at the Pentagon and in the field, described above.   Even though

most of these assessments came too late to avoid the escalation of the war (although had

they been listened to, the U.S. defeats would have been lessened), their differences with

contemporary military officials are notable and are explained by this dissertation's theory.

Summary

It was thus that a range of military and diplomatic warnings did not lead to deep

introspection in Washington over the prospects of Chinese involvement.   In a recent

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141 E.g.,   "Memorandum by the Director of the Office of Chinese Affairs (Clubb) to the Assistant
Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs (Rusk)," November 4, 1950 in *Ibid.*, 1038-41.   Cohen
echoes this point regarding Clubb's views; see Cohen, "'Only Half the Battle'," 141.

142 "Memorandum by the Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs (Barrett) to the Assistant
Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs (Rusk)," November 3, 1950, in *F.R.U.S., 1950, Vol. 7*,
1030.   "Draft Memorandum by Mr. John P. Davies of the Policy Planning Staff," November 7, 1950
in *F.R.U.S., 1950, Vol. 7*, 1078-85, espec. 1078-79.

143 Foot points out that Livingston Merchant and U. Alexis Johnson both recommended caution.   Foot,
The Wrong War, 80.

144 "There is no doubt but that Chi[nese] military intervention is substantial, there is no reason to suppose
that it will not increase, and that very serious political and military implications are thereby raised."
Dean Acheson, "The Secretary of State to the Embassy in the United Kingdom," November 6, 1950, in
F.R.U.S., 1950, Vol. 7, 1052.   Note that this statement occurs after the smaller scale Chinese offensive.

book on the senior American leadership in the war, one scholar summarizes the American

analysis in mid November 1950:

> Despite the high number of American casualties, China's increased bellicosity, and the
> CCF presence in North Korea, both the U.N. Command and Washington downplayed the
> threat of large-scale Chinese intervention.   Although it had shifted from the academic to
> the serious, said MacArthur, full-scale Chinese intervention appeared "unlikely."   On
> whether the Communists had made a decision to mount a full-scale offensive, said the
> CIA, all available evidence remained inconclusive.   Washington knew neither how
> many Communist Chinese were in North Korea, said Bradley, nor their military objective.
> "Our people," said General Charles D. Palmer later, "didn't want to accept the fact that
> the Chinese were there in force."   Washington preferred, added Willoughby, "the opiate
> of wishful thinking, the myopic resignation of the ostrich."[145]

Eliot Cohen comes to a similar conclusion:

> The failures—or more accurately, semifailures—in warning and order of battle
> intelligence have received a good deal of attention from students of the Chinese surprise
> attack in 1950.   Another more serious and generally ignored type of intelligence failure
> occurred, however; failure to gauge the enemy's way of war, his methods, strengths, and
> weaknesses.   It is in the picture of the enemy held by U.S. forces in the Far East that we
> find one of the chief sources of the failure of the winter of 1950.[146]

The United States crossed the 38th parallel not due to a lack of information about the size

of the Chinese force or its intentions (as the Alternate Hypothesis would have predicted),

but rather because Washington was unable to evaluate the signals because of biases that

derived from beliefs about the effective use of military power.   This strongly supports

the link between the misperception from differing theories of victory and the faulty

interpretation of the adversary's signals (H_{2B}) as well as providing support for the link

between those misperceptions and assessments of the general balance of power (H_{2A}).

Post-Event Evaluations by the United States

Several of the theory's secondary predictions center on post-event evaluations

from the two sides.   In particular, was there a degree of surprise regarding the enemy's

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145 Wainstock, *Truman, Macarthur, and the Korean War*, 81.

146 Cohen and Gooch, *Military Misfortunes*, 176.

intent (Prediction #9) and the effectiveness of his military forces and doctrines once the war was joined (Prediction #8)?   The following sections develop answers to these questions.   So firm were American beliefs about Chinese intent that the initial reaction to the PLA's entry—both on the ground in Korea and up the chain of command—was one of *denial*.   The next section goes on to document American surprise at the effectiveness of the Chinese forces through, among other pieces of evidence, contemporary evaluations during the war and post-war changes in American forces and strategies.

Initial Reactions of Denial

The thickness of the blinders worn by the U.S. decisionmakers is illustrated by their initial reaction to the Chinese intervention.   This section presents evidence on both the tactical and strategic levels; then some dissenting voices from these appraisals are discussed.   As with the Chinese side in the previous case, this material supports the dissertation's theory in many areas.   First, it further bolsters the case for the hypothesis linking differing theories of victory to underestimation (H_1).   It also supports several of the predictions linking this underestimation of the adversary to perceptions of the overall balance of power, the denigration of the adversary, and the simplistic discussions of his strategies (Predictions #1-3).   The large difference between the two countries' theories of victory should and did lead to large scale and high frequency of misperceptions (Prediction #10).   Beyond that, the evidence presented here links the flawed interpretation of the Chinese signals to the underestimations of capability that the theory predicts (and thus supports H_{2B} and the associated Prediction #7).   Even in the face of hard evidence to the contrary, American leaders continued to believe that the Chinese

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would not intervene.   Lastly, there is significant evidence that the Air Force in particular

assumed that the tactics and doctrines from its theory of victory would be key to winning

battles on the ground (thus supporting Prediction #4).

Tactical Level Over-Confidence

Tactically, there were many miscalculations.   Even after the Chinese First

Offensive destroyed a South Korean division and severely damaged several other South

Korean regiments, Eighth Army intelligence was estimating only 2,000 Chinese soldiers

in its sector, grouped in two regiments.[147]   As POW reports accumulated after the

beginning of that offensive, the U.S. commanders faced some disturbing information: the

number of different large units that the prisoners claimed to be from was high.   Rather

than conclude from this that the Chinese had a sizable force in country, the intelligence

staff of Eighth Army offered this novel interpretation to Washington in a cable on

November 1 (as passed on by the State Department):

> On basis [of] information obtained from Sino prisoners[,] which of course [is] subject to confirmation[,] 8th Army Intelligence considers there now [to be] two Sino regiments, [and it is] possible a third, in [the] 8thArmy sector of North Korea.   Appears these units were formed by taking one battalion each of six divisions said to constitute [the] Sino 39th and 40th Armies, deployed along Manchurian-North Korean border.
> ...
> Information from [the] 10th Corps area indicates a total of 18 Sino prisoners [have been] taken through October 31.   It is believed these Chinese come from units of Sino Communist 42nd Army .
>
> 8th Army Intelligence is of [the] view, with which Embassy [is] inclined to concur, [that the] Sino Communists will avoid overt intervention [148]

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147 Blair, *The Forgotten War*, 378.   These reports were from October 30 and 31, 1950.

148 Note the terse prose is typical of cables.   "The Charge in Korea (Drumright) to the Secretary of State (November 1, 1950)," reprinted in *F.R.U.S., 1950, Vol. 7*, 1022.

The more straightforward, and in retrospect accurate, conclusion would have been that

the three Armies had moved in themselves, en masse.[149]

The first significant engagement between the U.S. forces and the PLA came in

early November.[150]

> As darkness fell on the night of November 1, CCF troops hit the 8th Cavalry Regiment of
> the 1st Cavalry Division near Unsan.   As their blaring bungles and screeching whistles
> 'startled' the Americans, they attacked with mortars, grenades, and rifle and machine-gun
> fire, surrounding some units and forcing others to retreat through the hills.   After two
> days of fighting, the Chinese had "effectively destroyed the 8th Cavalry Regiment."[151]

The official Army history records flatly that the Regiment was "very roughly handled."[152]

An American General in Korea on a fact finding mission concluded "the Chinese had

destroyed the 8th Cavalry Regimental Combat Team."[153]   Ridgway notes that the

regiment "lost more than half its authorized strength at Unsan, and a great share of its

equipment, including twelve 105–mm. Howitzers, nine tanks, more than 125 trucks, and

a dozen recoilless rifles."[154]

Even when Chinese became heavily involved with the U.S. forces, American

perceptions of confidence were hard to shake.   The story of the destruction of the 8th

Cavalry itself unfolds as a series of underestimations of the enemy.   The Regiment

originally deployed wearing summer uniforms "believing [their] assigned task would be a

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149 The command and control difficulties of selecting individual battalions from different divisions and
   reconstituting them under new regimental leadership would have been severe.   The whole point of
   having divisional headquarters units is a recognition that battalions are not so easily plugged in to
   different command structures.

150 The offensive began a few days earlier, on October 25, although initially only South Korean units were
   hit.   See Blair, *The Forgotten War*, 371.

151 Wainstock, *Truman, Macarthur, and the Korean War*, 77.

152 Schnabel, *United States Army in the Korean War*, 235.

153 Quoted at *Ibid.*, 257.

154 Ridgway, *The Korean War*, 59.

simple power punch through a thin NKPA line, followed by a one- or two-day dash to the Yalu, then a return to the home base in Japan by Thanksgiving Day."[155]   In the days before the Chinese attack, its 3rd Battalion, deployed on point, was "casually disposed" in a valley rather than in surrounding high ground, and the battalion commander ignored suggestions to move toward that safer position.[156]   Only after the Regiment was completely cut off was it ordered to withdraw, and by that time, its plan to do so "had no chance of succeeding."[157]   An attempt to use another heavily reinforced regiment to open a corridor to Unsan, where the 8th was holed up, was jauntily ordered as the following situation report (SITREP) conveys: "Other elements of the 5th RCT are enroute to assist the 8th U.S. Cavalry RCT."[158]   However, this effort, too failed in the face of surprisingly strong Chinese opposition.   The very next day the SITREP's tone is more pessimistic: "Heavy resistance from strong enemy forces prevented the 5th and elements of the 7th U.S. Cavalry RCT's from reaching the 8th U.S. Cavalry RCT (-) which was isolated by a hostile envelopment in the Unsan area."[159]   Only then was it clear that the 8th had been destroyed as a functioning formation.

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155 Blair, *The Forgotten War*, 380.

156 *Ibid.*, 381.

157 *Ibid.*, 383.

158 "Joint Daily SITREP, No. 128 (November 2, 1950)," in *Joint Daily Sitrep Collection*.

159 "Joint Daily SITREP, No. 129 (November 3, 1950)," in *Ibid.*   See also Blair, *The Forgotten War*, 384.

Figure 4-3:   The UN Advance Meets the PLA (First Offensive)[160]
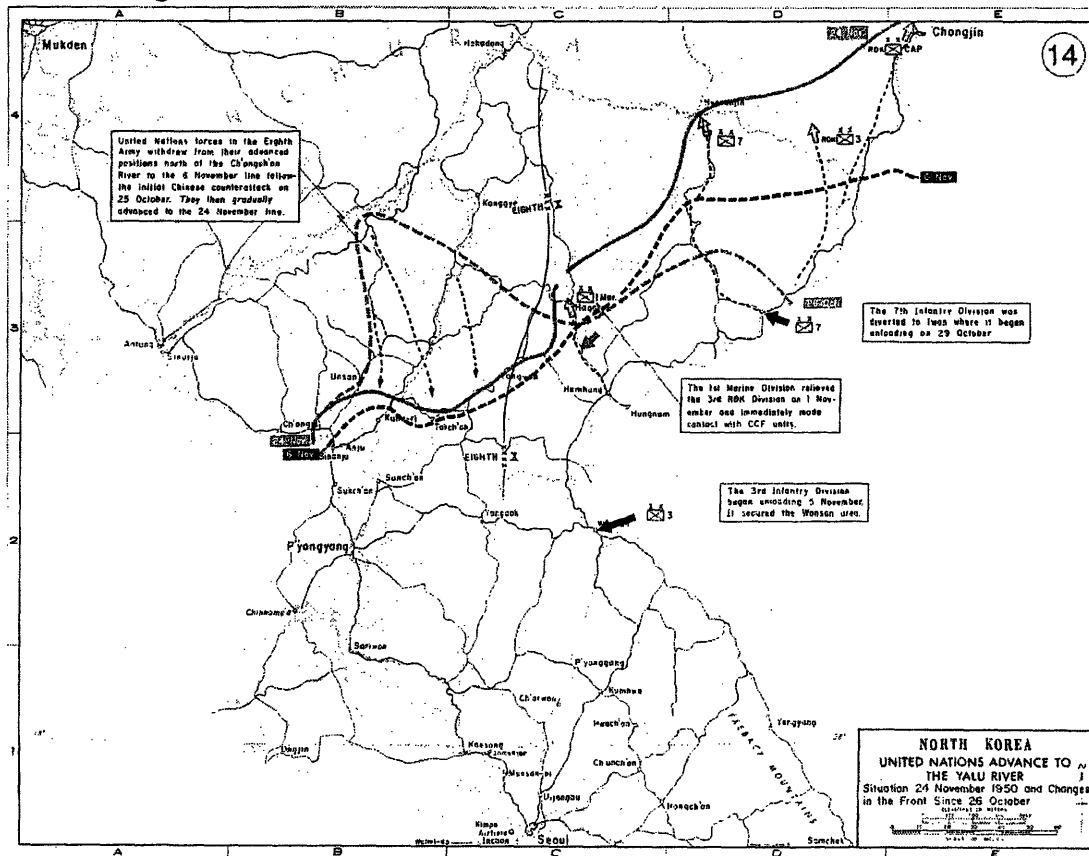
The confusion was not limited to the 8th Cavalry.   Corps commanders across

North Korea were "profoundly puzzled" by the situation they faced.[161]   Chinese troop

formations were not even shown on operational maps until November 6, 1950.[162]   On

November 12, the X Corps intelligence chief took stock of the recent battles and reports

of significant Chinese forces to his north and northwest, but nevertheless was confident

of his units ability to remain on the offensive and victorious:

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160 Source: Department of History, Atlas Collection, U.S. Military Academy.   Available online at
     http://www.dean.usma.edu/history/web03/atlases/atlas%20home.htm.

161 Blair, *The Forgotten War*, 450.

162 See *Joint Daily Sitrep Collection*.   The first time Chinese units show up is in "Joint Daily SITREP,
     No. 128 (November 6, 1950)."   At that point three units are listed: the 55th, 56th, and 124th divisions.

Three unconfirmed reports from different sources have indicated the buildup of enemy strength in the northeaster section of Korea, in the vicinity of Hoeryong and Chongjin. The reports claim that large Chinese Communist units are present in this area.   Should this information be true, it would indicate a significant increase in the enemy's capabilities on the east coast avenue of approach to the Korean border

...

Conclusions:

a. The enemy will, if strongly attacked, continue his retreat to the north,[163]

Two days later, Quinn's optimism continued to show in his reports:

Several recent unconfirmed reports, primarily from civilian sources, indicate a possible concentration and build up of enemy forces in the area west and southwest of Choshin Reservoir.   Considerable number of CCF troops have been reported in this locality and air observers have sighted at least one convoy moving southwest from Yudam-ni toward Chang-ni. ....   The enemy is in position to attempt a penetration of the UN front between the X Corps and Eighth Army, although such an operation would be faced by extremely difficult cross country movement.   The enemy's capability to launch an attack against the X Corps from the west is restricted by the mountainous terrain through which such an attack would have to be made.   Winter weather will still further limit this capability.[164]

The most Quinn is willing to allow is that the Chinese might be driven by a need to

forage for supplies, and be forced to attack: "The enemy has demonstrated his ability to

cross difficulty ground, and the cold and lack of food may encourage him to attack in

order to obtain supplies."[165]   Quinn's overall, optimistic conclusions about the prospects

for the X Corps offensive at the end of his report remained unchanged.

By November 25, on the eve of the second Chinese offensive, again Quinn shows

an awareness of the buildup of the Chinese, but retains an almost Panglossian confidence.

In terms of awareness of the enemy, he reports:

Additional indications of a CCF buildup on the west flank of X Corps in the Sachang-ni Yongdong-ni sector have been received. ... All of this evidence tends to substantiate the statements of civilians, refugees, PWs [prisoners of war], deserters and other sources that

163 G-2 (Colonel William Quinn), "Headquarters X Corps, Periodic Intelligence Report #47 (November 12, 1950)", Military History Institute Library, U.S. Army War College, Carlisle, Penn.   In the next day's report, Quinn downplays reports of Chinese soldiers in rear areas.

164 G-2 (Colonel William Quinn), "Headquarters X Corps, Periodic Intelligence Report #50 (November 15, 1950)", Military History Institute Library, U.S. Army War College, Carlisle, Penn.

165 Ibid.

> strong reinforcements, including large numbers of CCF have been recently moving into
> the area between Sachang-ni and Choshin Reservoir.[166]

He the briefly mentions this force's offensive potential buried in the analysis of his report,

but his final conclusions omit any mention of risk:

> Conclusions:
> a. Enemy forces in the western sector of the X Corps zone will attempt to defend
> generally along the line Chagangjin-Yudam-ni-Sachang-ni. If forced to withdraw, they
> will take up new defensive positions in the Chiang-no redoubt area.[167]

While suggesting they have the capability to defend (although even here he hints that

they will not be able to hold the line again the X Corps), he does not emphasize that they

also have a dangerous offensive capability.

Quinn's boss, General Almond, shared that optimism. On the morning of

November 28, after the Chosin Reservoir battle had begun, he blustered to his

commanders:

> The enemy who is delaying you for the moment is nothing more than remnants of
> Chinese divisions fleeing north. ... We're still attacking and we're going all the way to
> the Yalu. Don't let a bunch of Chinese laundrymen stop you.[168]

Immediately Almond ordered an offensive into the teeth of the waiting Chinese. In the

Chosin Reservoir battle that followed two marine regiments were cut off and a "rescue"

task force of brigade strength suffered 40 percent casualties.[169]

Soldiers on the ground had taken their cues from their leaders.

> On the night of November 25 Eighth Army was almost casually disposed. The men had
> two successful days of combat under their belts; the task lying ahead did not appear to
> hold great danger. Few men took the precaution of digging foxholes in the frozen
> ground.[170]

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166 G-2 (Colonel William Quinn), "Headquarters X Corps, Periodic Intelligence Report #60 (November 25, 1950)", Military History Institute Library, U.S. Army War College, Carlisle, Penn.

167 *Ibid.*

168 Quoted in Blair, *The Forgotten War*, 462.

169 *Ibid.*, 508 and 520.

170 *Ibid.*, 440.

The next day, the main Chinese attack pushed the Eighth Army into the longest retreat in

American military history.

During the retreat of Eighth Army along the western side of the peninsula, there

was a real danger of its line of retreat being cut. However, the American forces realized

this only belatedly. General Dutch Keiser, commander of the 2nd Infantry Division had

trouble believing he had been outflanked by Chinese soldiers without motor transport.

> Keiser continued to misread his situation grossly. He persisted in the belief that the
> roadblock was shallow or "local," that with a concerted "push" and with FEAF help it
> could be overcome, that the road beyond the block was "clear."[171]

As a result, his 2nd Division suffered over 30 percent casualties.[172] Within days, Keiser,

his assistant, and several of his regimental commanders were fired.[173]

Strategic Level Over-Optimism

Both Tokyo and Washington continued to grossly underestimate the threat posed

by the Chinese, even after the mauling of the 8th Cavalry in the first days of November.

The View from Tokyo.
MacArthur was initially unruffled by the early defeat:

> The eventual response from Tokyo was, however, one of irritation and impatience at
> Walker's failure to move forward on schedule. No matter how thoroughly convinced
> the 1st Cavalry Division might have become that the Chinese had entered the war in force,
> the Commander in Chief [MacArthur] persisted in a mood of renewed optimism.[174]

Indeed, on November 4, he exuded confidence regarding the low likelihood that the

Chinese would intervene in spite of the mauling a regiment under his command had just

received.[175] By the sixth, however, he was pleading for permission to bomb bridges and

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171 *Ibid.*, 482.

172 *Ibid.*

173 *Ibid.*, 497.

174 Ridgway, *The Korean War*, 59.

175 Wainstock, *Truman, Macarthur, and the Korean War*, 82.

supply lines near the Chinese border.[176]   By the ninth, he had stopped debating Chinese

intent; he now assumed they were going to intervene in force.   But he continued to

believe in his own robust capabilities, particularly in the ability of airpower to "interdict

Chinese reinforcements from Manchuria and to destroy those already in Korea."[177]

However, as soon as the Chinese pulled back, in the tactical lull between their First and

Second Offensives, MacArthur's confidence returned.[178]

His intelligence reports were, indeed, ambiguous.   Chinese units are not listed on

the Daily Joint SITREP maps until November 6, and the narrative of these reports only

refers to generic "enemy forces" as the attackers against the 8th Cavalry and the ROK

units.[179]   Some reports suggested only a minimal Chinese presence in North Korea,[180]

while others implied a larger force.[181]   MacArthur sided with the former, concluding in

mid-November that he was facing

176 Schnabel, *United States Army in the Korean War*, 243-44.

177 Wainstock, *Truman, Macarthur, and the Korean War*, 84.

178 See Schnabel, *United States Army in the Korean War*, 251.   This tactical lull was intended to create precisely that sense.   Again see 陶文钊、<<中美关系史>>   Tao Wenzhao, *History of Sino-American Relations* , 32; Yu Bin, "What China Learned (2001)," 15.   It is notable how readily the United States fell into the trap.

179 "Joint Daily SITREP, No. 128 (November 6, 1950)," in *Joint Daily Sitrep Collection.*   Note Posen finds a similar phenomenon in a different set of daily reports (identified as "United Nations Command, GHQ, G-3 Operations Reports" available from British archival force; note these have a slightly different correlation between date and numbering, suggesting a different set of reports although their content overlaps heavily).   See Posen, "The Chinese Intervention in Korea: A Case of Inadvertent Escalation", 58, note 73.

180 One report suggested two Chinese divisions (thus some 15,000 troops) "The Consul General at Hong Kong (Wilkinson) to the Secretary of State," October 27, 1950 in *F.R.U.S., 1950, Vol. 7*, 1003-04. Another put the number even lower at 2,000. "The Chargé in Korea (Drumright) to the Secretary of State," October 31, 1950 in *F.R.U.S., 1950, Vol. 7*, 1018-19.

181 One report from Korea put elements of two different armies (a formation approximately equal to an American corps) in North Korea.   "The Chargé in Korea (Drumright) to the Secretary of State," October 30, 1950 in *F.R.U.S., 1950, Vol. 7*, 1014.

certainly no more than 30,000. ... They could not possibly have got more over with the surreptitiously covert means used.   If they had moved in the open, they would have been detected by our Air Forces and our Intelligence.[182]

In fact, his own intelligence at the time was estimating the "accepted" Chinese strength in North Korea to be 51,600 and "probable total" to be 76,800.[183]   In the context of this early defeat followed by ambiguous evidence, MacArthur nevertheless eagerly anticipated the beginning of his offensive: "this should for all practical purposes end the war."[184]   (One military historian's disparaging reference to this statement is suggestive of the degree of overconfidence that MacArthur possessed: "Seldom in any war had a commanding general so foolishly revealed his hand."[185])

Both MacArthur and his intelligence officer attributed their apparent success at forestalling further defeats through November to UN airpower.[186]   MacArthur's pronouncement on 24 November, literally the day before the second Chinese attack exudes such confidence.   "My air force for the past three weeks, in a sustained attack of model coordination and effectiveness, successfully interdicted enemy lines of support from the north so that further reinforcement therefrom has been sharply curtailed and essential supplies markedly limited."[187]

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182 "Memorandum of Conversation, by the Ambassador in Korea (Muccio)," November 17, 1950 in *Ibid.*, 1175.

183 See "Joint Daily SITREP, No. 133 (November 13, 1950)," in *Joint Daily Sitrep Collection*.

184 Schnabel, *United States Army in the Korean War*, 273.

185 Blair, *The Forgotten War*, 435.

186 Schnabel, *United States Army in the Korean War*, 275.

187 MacArthur was likely basing this conclusion on the tactical lull between the Chinese First and Second Offensives aimed to create precisely this sort of overconfidence.   For MacArthur's quote, see *Ibid.*, 277-78.   At that point in time, there is no evidence MacArthur feared that the troops he believed were cut off posed any fundamental danger to his command.   That was to change in the days to come.

Air Force commanders shared similarly biased views. The official Air Force history asserted: "Red China's Fourth Field Army was suffering frightful losses from Fifth Air Force attacks and from Eighth Army ground fire." However, since that force went on to retake the South Korean capital, the official history had to go on, allowing that somehow "it had enough strength to rout American ground forces defending Seoul."[188] (The surprise of that author at the Chinese capabilities is almost palpable.[189] One can imagine their reaction: "What? The enemy's army was still able to defeat us after we'd hit them with everything we had. Inconceivable! They must be willing to tolerate horrendous losses.")

Intelligence was a persistent problem for the MacArthur's command. As late as December 26, the United States had no real idea how many Chinese troops it was facing:

> No one yet had a good idea of how many CCF troops had been committed to Korea or if the CCF had crossed the 38th Parallel in full force to invade South Korea. On the Eighth Army situation maps, Ridgeway remembered, the CCF was depicted merely by a large red "goose egg" with "174,000" scrawled on its center. The true figure was closer to 300,000.[190]

This was despite a truly massive intelligence gathering effort that had amassed some 27,643 photographs from aerial reconnaissance efforts.[191] Again, the American confidence in their reconnaissance technology was to lead them to underestimate their adversary

188 Futrell, *The United States Air Force in Korea, 1950-1953*, 279.

189 One is reminded of the demonization and dehumanization of the enemy that Dower chronicles in a different war across race lines. John W. Dower, *War without Mercy* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1986).

190 Blair, *The Forgotten War*, 569.

191 Futrell, *The United States Air Force in Korea, 1950-1953*.

Just as the destruction of the 8th Cavalry in late October and early November had

occurred through a *series* of underestimations of the enemy, the strategic retreats of

Eighth Army and X Corps exhibited *repeated* miscalculations.   Initially, following the

renewed Chinese attacks in late November, Eighth Army was to hold a line running east

from Sinanju, some 70 miles from the Yalu River (and the border with China).   Days

later, it was to hold at Pyongyang, a further 50 miles south.   Its next stopping point was

near the 38th parallel, but again it was forced to displace, surrendering Seoul for the

second time in the war.[192]

Similarly, X Corps went from (1)   being ordered to counterattack to relieve

pressure on Eighth Army to (2) defending a defensive line in the Hamhung-Wonsan

sector on November 30 to (3) withdrawing completely from North Korea on Christmas

Eve.[193]   Twenty-five years after the fact, General Almond, commander of the X Corps,

still had trouble coming to terms with the mobility of the light Chinese forces on foot:

> I have already said that the gap between the two forces [X Corps and Eighth Army] was
> interrupted by a difficult mountain range or series of mountain ranges and no road system
> between.   It would have been impossible for any force to break the gap and supply itself
> except by air which the Chinese didn't possess.[194]

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192 For the detailed narrative of the retreat, see Blair, *The Forgotten War*, Part 8: Disaster and Retreat.
Also see Futrell, *The United States Air Force in Korea, 1950-1953*, Chapter 8: Two Months of Defeat
and Retreat.

193 Blair, *The Forgotten War*.   Note that the JCS at least was less overly optimistic regarding X Corps
than MacArthur's command by the end of November.

194 Captain Thomas G. Fergusson and Lt. General Edward M. Almond, "Interview with General Almond:
Transcriptions of the Debriefing of General Edward M. Almond by Captain Thomas G. Fergusson
(Interview Section 4), 1975," p. 70, The Edward M Almond Papers, Box: "Recollections and
Reflections," Military History Institute Library, U.S. Army War College, Carlisle, Penn.

Of course, breaking the gap was precisely what the PLA's 42nd and 38th Armies did.[195]

Blair, in the definitive military history of the United States in the Korean War,

summarizes the blinders that inhibited MacArthur's vision:

> By November 28 it must have been clear to Douglas MacArthur that he had blundered
> badly in Korea. The wine of victory had turned to vinegar. In a broad sense, Inchon
> had become another Anzio. He had been outsmarted and outgeneraled by a "bunch of
> Chinese laundrymen" who had no close air support, no tanks, and very little artillery,
> modern communications, or logistical infrastructure. His reckless, egotistical strategy
> after Inchon, undertaken in defiance of war warnings from Peking and a massive CCF
> buildup in Manchuria, had been an arrogant, blind march to disaster. What must have
> been even more galling and humiliating was that MacArthur was on record with everyone
> from the president on down as unequivocally assuring that the CCF would not intervene
> in Korea in force, and if it did he would "slaughter" it with his air power. His
> considerable intelligence-gathering apparatus had scandalously failed to detect or
> interpret the massive scope of the CCF intervention. His air power had abjectly failed to
> "slaughter" any appreciable number of CCF or even to knock out all the Yalu bridges.[196]

As an aside, clearly some of the scale of the American defeat in November and

December can be blamed on the specific operational strategies that MacArthur chose.

In particular, two decisions stand out. First was the withdrawal of X Corps from

Inchon and its reinsertion on the opposite side of the peninsula at Wonsan. This had the

effect of slowing the pursuit of the retreating North Korean forces, leading to the need to

chase them all the way to the Yalu with a large American force. It also divided the U.S.

force dangerously. Second, once redeployed MacArthur did not demand that the X

Corps make contact with the Eighth Army to its west. Rather, he relied on the rugged

mountain terrain to serve as a defensive obstacle protecting his force. These two

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195 For description of the Chinese strategy here, see 沈宗洪,孟照_ ,等<<中国人民志愿军抗美援朝战
史>>(北京:军事科学出版社、版次 1990、印次 1999)。   Shen Zonghong, Meng Zhaohui, and
others, *The History of the War to Resist America and Support Korea by the Chinese People's Volunteer
Army* (Beijing: Military Science Press, 1999), 29-37.

196 Blair, *The Forgotten War*, 464.

decisions dramatically worsened the rout when the Chinese pressed their Second

Offensive.[197]

What is interesting from the perspective of this dissertation is that those two

"mistakes" were deeply rooted in the American doctrine of the time.   The standard

operating procedure for an offensive in peninsular terrain focused on a series of flanking

amphibious landings.[198]   The United States had pursued this strategy in Italy, the

Philippines, and elsewhere in WWII.   MacArthur's use of X Corps was a textbook

application of this.   Second, with regard to the absence of a link up of the two main

American forces in North Korea, again the treatment of the rugged mountain terrain as a

relatively impassible obstacle came straight out of American doctrinal thinking.   Not

only was there no major supply route through this area, but also tactical mobility of

mechanized forces would have been highly constrained.   The United States did not

carefully consider that the Chinese forces might view the terrain much less forbiddingly.

Thus, American doctrine even informed the mistakes the Americans made in Korea, and

the doctrinal differences between China and the United States amplified their scale.

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197 See *Ibid.*

198 See the discussion in Chapter 3.

Figure 4-4:   The Rout in North Korea (The Chinese Second Offensive)[199]
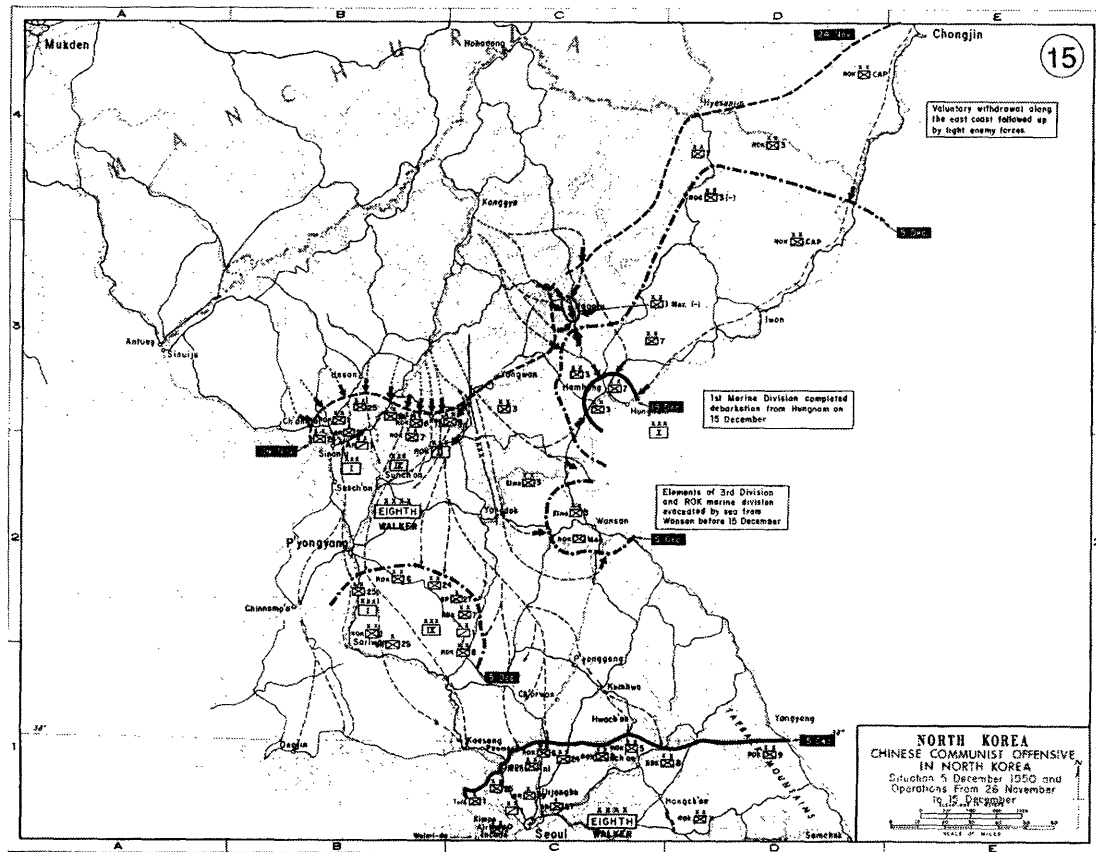
Clearly much of the evidence presented above focuses on MacArthur.   However,

some focuses on other leaders in theater, and the following section focuses on the view

from outside his command entirely.   This evidence cannot be simply explained away by

blaming MacArthur's uniquely extreme views.   Eliot Cohen comes to similar

conclusions in his analysis of the misperceptions in the Korean War:

> Attempts to pin the blame for the intelligence failure (which was only part of a large
> operational failure) on one individual vastly oversimplify, and in some respects distort,
> the nature of the intelligence failure in Korea.[200]

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199 Source: Department of History, Atlas Collection, U.S. Military Academy.   Available online at
http://www.dean.usma.edu/history/web03/atlases/atlas%20home.htm.

200 Cohen, '"Only Half the Battle'," 129.

In short, a range of commanders in the Far East found it very difficult to change

its prior beliefs about the likelihood of Chinese intervention and their capabilities if they

did intervene.   The Chinese were able to use these blinders very effectively as they

prepared their surprise attack in late November.   Escaping the lens that the American

theory of victory imposed proved to be very difficult.

The View from Washington.

The situation in Washington was little better.   One can almost hear the

bewilderment in the voice of the Army Chief of Staff on October 31: "the intervention

was conforming to none of the patterns envisaged by the Joint Chiefs in their studies and

in their directives to General MacArthur."[201]   Other examples of difficulties in adjusting

to the new situation abound.

Initially, and in spite of evidence to the contrary, the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS)

continued to express a modicum of confidence.   In a memorandum to the Secretary of

Defense on November 9 (that is, after the loss of the 8th Cavalry), they suggested that

absent Soviet action, the United States could not be pushed out of Korea by China.[202]

They specifically noted that a defensive line short of the Chinese-Korean border could be

held without any reinforcements.   However, they also concluded "The Chinese

Communists are presently in Korea in such strength and in a sufficiently organized

manner to indicate that unless withdrawn they can be defeated only by a determined

military operation."[203]   To remedy that some, although apparently not substantial,

reinforcement would be needed: Elsewhere they refer to the need for "some augmentation

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201 Schnabel, *United States Army in the Korean War*, 234.

202 "Memorandum by the Joint Chiefs of Staff to the Secretary of Defense (Marshall)," November 9, 1950, in *F.R.U.S., 1950, Vol. 7*, 1117-21.

203 *Ibid.*, 1120.

of military strength in Korea" if the goal was to "force the action to a successful

conclusion in Korea."[204] Further, these flag officers suggested no change in the standing

orders under which MacArthur was operating. This implies that little had changed in

their minds and their overall military confidence remained, despite a substantial degree of

uncertainty.[205] Cohen writes that after the First Offensive

> The Defense Department was more sanguine [than Edmund Clubb at State[206]],
> acknowledging that a limited intervention was underway but denying evidence of
> "indications of psychological preparation for war in Korea" [by the Chinese]
> ...
> Washington authorities, notably the JCS, seemed to believe that as long as direct clashes
> along the Yalu could be avoided, so too could war with China—hence proposals by the
> Army Chief of Staff, General J. Lawton Collins, that MacArthur stop five miles from the
> border.[207]

A series of meetings between senior representatives from the Departments of

State and Defense, generally including both secretaries, all the Joint Chiefs, and often

several service secretaries took place beginning in late November. These provide an

excellent window on the perspective of the top leadership in Washington. On

November 21, only days before the main Chinese attack but well after the sting of the

first offensive, several of the Joint Chiefs were optimistically discussing the positioning

of a line that could be held just shy of the Yalu River.

> [Army Chief of Staff] General [Lawton] Collins suggested that General MacArthur, after
> the attack is well launched and is succeeding, could announce that it was his intention
> only to go forward to destroy the North Korean units and that he intended to hold the
> high ground overlooking the Yalu with ROK forces, assigning the rest of the UN forces
> to rear areas.[208]

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204 *Ibid.*

205 *Ibid.*, 1121.

206 See discussion below in this chapter.

207 Cohen, "'Only Half the Battle'," 140-43. He cites a telegram from the Army Chief of Staff to
MacArthur in the first passage.

208 Philip Jessup, "Memorandum of Conversation, by the Ambassador at Large (Jessup) (November 21,
1950)," in *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1950*, ed. United States Department of State

Similarly, at the same meeting, General Marshall expressed continued enthusiasm for

supporting MacArthur's planned offensive.[209]   Others rejected the consideration of a

cease-fire a sign of weakness.[210]

After the main Chinese offensive began in late November, the American

leadership belatedly began to shift its view.   Several examples are illustrative.   First, a

day after the main Chinese offensive began, the United States understanding of the

magnitude of the problem it faced remained exceedingly poor: X Corps was ordered to

continue with a previously planned offensive of its own in the hopes that it would relieve

pressure on 8th Army.[211]   Within days not only was such thinking considered childish by

the JCS, but also there were serious concerns regarding the ability to extract X Corps.[212]

In a later session of the State-Defense group on December 1, the military leaders

switched to talking about holding a few enclaves.[213]   Third, rather than rejecting

consideration of a cease-fire out of hand as they had on November 21, representatives

from Defense and State had a long conversation about what would be required in this

regard to make such an agreement palatable on December 1.[214]

(Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1976), 1206-7.   Also optimistically discussing the details of this line were Generals Bradley and Vandenberg.

209 *Ibid.*, 1204-7.

210 *Ibid.*

211 Blair, *The Forgotten War*, 456.

212 Regarding such plans as childish, see *Ibid.*, 472.   Regarding concerns over the safety of X Corps as a whole, see General Bradley's comments in "Memorandum of Conversation, by the Ambassador at Large (Jessup)," December 1, 1950 in *F.R.U.S., 1950, Vol. 7*, 1223.

213 Jessup, "Memorandum of Conversation (Jessup) 12/3/50," 1278.

214 "Memorandum of Conversation, by the Ambassador at Large (Jessup)," December 1, 1950 in *F.R.U.S., 1950, Vol. 7*, 1223-34.   It was the center of attention again at the subsequent meeting Philip Jessup, "Memorandum of Conversation, by the Ambassador at Large (Jessup) (December 3, 1950)," in

One of the clearest examples of the American inability to contemplate Chinese

involvement despite clear signals to the contrary came in the November 21 meeting of the

joint State-Defense group.   Throughout the meeting there was no *mention of the*

possibility of China increasing its forces and initiating a massive attack on the U.S.

force.[215]   To emphasize, this meeting occurred after it was quite clear that the Chinese

had a large force deployed in Manchuria, had at least some forces inside of North Korea,

and had already dealt a large American unit a severe defeat.   The meeting was one of the

few opportunities for all the senior leaders in charge of American security policy to get

together in the same room.   Despite this, no one thought it worthwhile to bring up the

prospect of large-scale Chinese involvement.   Again, as noted above in a different

context, ignorance of the data was not an excuse.   Leaders in Washington were getting

timely copies of MacArthur's "Daily Intelligence Summaries" or DISs.[216]   Later, when

the joint State-Defense group met again, a few days after the full scale Chinese attack had

occurred, Acheson, seemly somewhat chagrined, made clear that previous discussions

had not raised the prospect of the situation that they were now facing:

> Secretary Acheson opened the discussion by referring to the desire to resume the very
> useful session which had previously been held.   It was now necessary to consider the

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Foreign Relations of the United States, 1950, ed. United States Department of State (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1976).

215 Jessup, "Memorandum of Conversation (Jessup) 11/21/50," 1204-8.

216 Many of the important DISs were telexed immediately by MacArthur's headquarters.   (See, for instance, Willoughby, "The Chinese Communist Potential for Intervention in the Korean War (Undated)", p. 3.)   Beyond that, the State Department staff on the ground in South Korea had access to Eighth Army and X Corps intelligence reports as they were produced.   They often cabled summaries of these to Acheson in Washington.   See, for instance "The Charge in Korea (Drumright) to the Secretary of State (November 1, 1950)," reprinted in *F.R.U.S., 1950, Vol. 7*, 1022.   As noted earlier in the chapter, in the worst case the DISs would arrive by courier some 3 to 5 days after being published.   (Cohen, "'Only Half the Battle'," 146, note 7.)

contingency which had not been covered in the previous discussion; namely, what to do in case the offensive failed.[217]

Either the note taker (Ambassador Philip Jessup) or Acheson is a master of understatement.   Previous sessions of the senior foreign and military policymakers of the United States government had managed to ignore the possibility of a Chinese attack despite significant evidence that one was, a the very least, possible.   That such a prospect had been imminent at the previous meeting must have been simply unthinkable to them.

Change over Time

By the end of November, the signs of a Chinese intervention in force were too large for even MacArthur to ignore.   After his back-and-forth at the beginning of the month, he had settled into a confident frame of mind through mid-November.   However, once the PLA's second campaign began at the end of the month, he was to send near hysterical requests for more troops.[218]   At home in Washington, senior Army officials began to consider the prospects for a complete withdrawal from the peninsula.[219]

A month after that, in early January 1951, General Ridgway was forced to abandon Seoul.[220]   By this point, the JCS, again contradicting their earlier assessment as

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217 Jessup, "Memorandum of Conversation (Jessup) 12/3/50," 1276.

218 Schnabel, *United States Army in the Korean War*, 274-75.

219 *Ibid.*, 298.

220 *Ibid.*, 309.   For a less negative view see Christensen, *Useful Adversaries*, 173n; Jonathan D. Pollack, "The Korean War and Sino-American Relations," in *Sino-American Relations, 1945-1955: A Joint Reassessment of a Critical Decade*, ed. Harry Harding and Ming Yuan (Wilmington, Del.: SR Books, 1989), 225n.

the Chinese intervention capabilities had become too clear to deny, "concluded that the

Chinese Communists had enough strength to drive MacArthur out of Korea."[221]

Surprising Difficulties in Implementing Strategies

One problem for the United States was that it found that missions it had expected

to face were more difficult than expected.   "The B-29 attacks on the key bridges in

North Korea demonstrated both the difficulty of hitting such point targets and the

enemy's growing ability to bypass and repair damaged bridges."[222]   Hitting troops on the

move also proved problematic:

> Each day at dawn the Chinese concealed their mobile equipment in ravines, under bridges,
> and in other carefully hidden positions along the main supply routes.   Such targets were
> exceedingly difficult to locate and harder to destroy.[223]

Because of these difficulties, the Air Force shifted its emphasis to hitting supply centers,

(known to civilians by a different name: cities).[224]   Yet, this was no panacea, as this

strategy, too, did not prove as effective as the Air Force had expected initially.[225]

More generally, the Air Force found its doctrine poorly designed to combat a light

infantry-based army.[226]   Close air support missions were plagued with problems,

particularly those strikes conducted by the Air Force.[227]   Dr. Robert Stearns, an

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221 Schnabel, *United States Army in the Korean War*, 310.

222 Futrell, *The United States Air Force in Korea, 1950-1953*, 224.

223 *Ibid.*, 263, 703.   One might have thought this same message would have been learned in WWII.

224 *Ibid.*, 226.

225 Conrad C. Crane, *American Airpower Strategy in Korea, 1950-1953* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2000), 79.

226 One tactic the Air Force was forced to rely on was the bombing of villages it "knew" to be inhabited by enemy fighters.   *Ibid.*, 67.

227 Dennis E. Showalter, "The First Jet War," *Military History Quarterly* 8, no. 3 (1996): 71.   On the relative advantage with regard to CAS held by the Marines, see Crane, *American Airpower Strategy in Korea, 1950-1953*, 62.

independent, academic evaluator appointed by the Secretary of the Air Force, provided a

generally positive preliminary assessment of the service's performance at the end of 1950.

However, he did note some interesting shortcomings: "He did concede that joint

doctrine and communications had to be improved, and a better antipersonnel air weapon

would be useful against masses of enemy manpower."[228]   Similarly, while using animals

and porters as their primary logistics train certainly had drawbacks for the CPV, it also

had advantages: "the relative invulnerability of marching troops to enemy air and

armored attack."   Beyond that, "indeed the lack of motorized transport was something

of an advantage in that it permitted off-road movement over difficult terrain and thus

increased the ability of the CCF to avoid detection and attack by UNC air forces."[229]

The Air Force faced substantial challenges trying to find Chinese troops who used

"excellent camouflage discipline ... in the heavily wooded mountainous terrain."[230]

Further, in this conflict, with less emphasis on logistics by the enemy, airpower aimed at

interdiction was bound to have less effect.[231]   Note this is precisely the sort of limitation

this dissertation's theory would predict: the air force was poorly prepared for a sort of

adversary that it did not expect to fight.

This raised specific problems: the official air force history entitled one section on

the use of heavy bombers in October, "General O'Donnell Runs Out of Targets."[232]

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228 Crane, *American Airpower Strategy in Korea, 1950-1953*, 61.

229 Shrader, *Communist Logistics in the Korean War*, 143 and 173, respectively.

230 Futrell, *The United States Air Force in Korea, 1950-1953*, 228.

231 Even the official Air Force history admits as much.   See *Ibid.*   See also Pape, *Bombing to Win*, 145.
A more appropriate strategy would have focused much more on close air support rather than deep
interdiction.

232 Futrell, *The United States Air Force in Korea, 1950-1953*, 205.

Beyond that, moreover, the destruction of the original target set had been of only limited utility: One scholar of strategic bombing concluded that by the end of that month they had "achieved no perceptible effect on the course of the war."[233]

MacArthur's assessment of the utility of airpower declined dramatically over time. According to one of MacArthur's planning officers at the time, General Wright, "this belief in the effectiveness of air power was one of General MacArthur's greatest weaknesses in dealing with the Chinese."[234] By 3 December, a mere week after he had expressed such confidence about the role that airpower had played in cutting off Communist logistics, MacArthur had changed his tune dramatically. He now argued that the terrain did not favor American predominance in the air and on the sea, seemed to have a new respect for Chinese mobility on foot across rough terrain, and expressed concerns that his forces were at risk.[235] (The Chinese continued to surprise the United States with their tactical mobility on foot well into the summer of 1951.[236])

Chinese Reactions Made Missions Even Tougher

Not only were anticipated missions more difficult than expected, but the Chinese tactics also created problems for the United States. Because American planes, particularly the vaunted B-29, were ill-suited for night strike operations,[237] the Chinese soon developed a preference for night movements which meant that U.S. air strikes

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233 Pape, *Bombing to Win*, 145. That said, the Chinese certainly felt the American airpower was imposing costs. See the discussion in the following chapter.

234 Schnabel, *United States Army in the Korean War*, 278.

235 *Ibid.*, 281.

236 *Ibid.*, 389.

237 Crane, *American Airpower Strategy in Korea, 1950-1953*, 42.

became rather ineffective and flares had to be used to attempt to remedy this.[238]   By May

of 1951, these problems were becoming even more pronounced as the Chinese further

adapted to the Americans.   "[I]t was becoming increasingly difficult to locate and strike

enemy interdiction targets in daylight.   The CCF and NKPA were beginning to

implement even more effective camouflage discipline and habitually moved their men

and vehicles into cover and concealment during the daytime and moved only at night."[239]

The tenacity of the Chinese response to the American campaign was impressive:

> The Navy, Marines, and Fifth Air Force were all assigned separate sectors to bomb.
> Roads were cratered, tetrahedral tacks were dispersed to puncture tires, and delayed-
> action and butterfly bombs were dropped to discourage repairs.   Results again were
> disappointing.   Enemy repair crews exploded the harassing charges with rifle fire or
> accepted the casualties necessary to fill the craters.   Sometimes they just bypassed
> blockages on secondary roads.   ...   [E]nemy countermeasures soon turned the tide.
> The communists built duplicate highway bridges across key waterways and cached whole
> bridge sections near important crossings so repairs could be completed quickly[240]

Additionally, the vulnerability of the B-29s had been emphasized by the destruction of an

attacking formation in October 1950: three B-29s were shot down, five were seriously

damaged, and only one returned unscathed.[241]   Following that, a decision was made:

"Pending more effective fighter cover to protect the bombers against the increasing

number of Communist MIG fighters, the B-29 attacks on bridges and other facilities in

the northwestern corner of Korea were suspended on 12 April 1951."[242]

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238 Cagle and Manson, *The Sea War in Korea*, 380-83.

239 Shrader, *Communist Logistics in the Korean War*, 180.

240 Crane, *American Airpower Strategy in Korea, 1950-1953*, 83.

241 *Ibid.*, 86.

242 Shrader, *Communist Logistics in the Korean War*, 179.

Not only did American offensive airpower strategy not live up to expectations against the vastly different Chinese forces they faced, but also even defensive counter air (DCA) missions found an unexpected challenge:

> Night heckling raids by wood and fabric PO-2 biplanes were becoming [in Fall of 1951] quite a nuisance. The "Bed Check Charlies" were almost impossible to detect, even with radar, and one managed to damage F-86s at Kimpo with two small bombs on 23 September. The Air Staff was concerned that the enemy's ability to "operate with slow obsolete biplanes almost at will" showed a serious weakness in Far East Command air defenses.[243]

One manifestation of this is apparent in comments from the deputy head of logistics for the United States, General Darr H. Alkire, who was explicit in his admiration for the Chinese ability to keep the supplies moving:

> It has frequently been stated by commanders in Korea that the one man they would like to meet when the war is over is the G-4 [logistics commander] of the Communist forces. How he has kept supplies moving in the face of all obstacles is a real mystery. He has done it against air superiority, fire superiority, guts, and brawn.[244]

Limited War

Another area is suggestive of the role of American theories of victory in shaping American misperceptions. As the war unfolded, it became quite clear that the U.S. military leaders are chafing against the requirement of limited war. As noted in the previous chapter, prior to the Korean War, the United States had been preparing for general war, another world war that would demand the full attention of the nation. However, the war they found themselves in required that they limit their exposure to avoid being dragged into to an even wider peripheral conflict.[245] One example of this friction was the concerns over hot-pursuit of enemy fighters across the Chinese-Korean

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243 Crane, *American Airpower Strategy in Korea, 1950-1953*, 84.

244 Shrader, *Communist Logistics in the Korean War*, 225-26.

245 For discussion of this, see Jessup, "Memorandum of Conversation (Jessup) 12/3/50," 1276-82. Present at this meeting were the secretaries of State and Defense, the Joint Chiefs, the service secretaries, and senior advisors from State and Defense.

border.[246]   The air force strongly opposed restrictions on their ability to defend their

vulnerable bombers, but national policymakers recognized the importance of preventing

the war from spreading.   Similarly, the Air Force often expressed enthusiasm for using

nuclear weapons in a variety of manners.[247]   MacArthur frequently called for additional

divisions to be deployed to the peninsula from the strategic reserve.[248]   A more thorough

anticipation of the risks of limited war would have prepared the military for this

eventuality and likely decreased their optimism regarding their prospects in such a

conflict.

Change in U.S. Strategies

These difficulties faced by the United States against the Chinese led to many

changes in the American approach to war.   When Ridgway took over from MacArthur

in 1951, he began to implement some of these.   At times, he pushed the United States to

become more like the PLA in certain regards:

> The enemy, it is true, traveled light, traveled at night, and knew the terrain better than we did.   He was inured to the weather and to all kinds of deprivation and could feed himself and carry what weapons and supplies he needed by whatever means the land offered—by oxcart, by pony, even by camel, a number of which had been brought in by the Chinese, or on the backs of native workmen, even on the backs of the troops themselves.   There was nothing but our own love of comfort that bound us to the road.   We too could get off into the hills, I reminded them, to find the enemy and fix him in position.[249]

At other times, he counseled a reinvigorated focus on firepower, while again noting the

issue of mobility off roads:

> The Chinese greatly outnumbered the UN forces, and could reinforce their front-line troops extensively.   But our superior firepower more than redressed the balance.

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246 Futrell, *The United States Air Force in Korea, 1950-1953*, 223.

247 E.g., Dower, *War without Mercy*, 701.

248 Blair, *The Forgotten War*.

249 Ridgway, *The Korean War*, 89.

> Heretofore, we had not been taking advantages of this superiority, through lack of
> intensive training, through use of pursuit tactics that scattered our forces, or from
> allowing ourselves to grow roadbound.   By February 1951, Field Artillery battalions
> that had been undergoing intensive training in the States and had long been earmarked for
> our use began to join the I and IX Corps, enabling those force to return to normal old-
> fashioned tactics of coordinated action.[250]

Finally, by the end of the war, Ridgway was increasingly relying on the use of

fortifications to deal with the human wave tactics of the Chinese.[251]   This was a shift

from tactics that had emphasized mobility before the war.[252]

After the war, the U.S. military more broadly undertook a number of reforms that

suggested it had learned important lessons from the Chinese.   One effect of the war was

to immunize the Navy and Marines from some of the heavy competition from the Army

and Air Force in preceding years of inter-service rivalry:

> In the Korean War naval air and the Marine Corps plays such conspicuous and valuable
> roles that their future are part of the Navy was never again challenged, and the conceptual
> and operations value of sea power in a limited, protracted war confirmed.[253]

More specifically, the Navy was able to restart its long cherished plans for a supercarrier

that would provide it with the ability to combine surface control missions with substantial

strike capabilities:

> The *Forrestal*, successor to the ill-fated *United States*, was a product of the Korean War,
> which had changed many minds about many things.   Within weeks of the North Korean
> invasion, Defense Secretary Johnson, who had scrubbed the *United States* told Admiral
> Sherman [then Chief of Naval Operations], 'I will give you another carrier when you
> want it,' and the *Forrestal* went into the budget for fiscal year 1952.[254]

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250 *Ibid.*, 111.

251 See for instance the discussion of the defense of the Kansas Line in the summer of 1951 at *Ibid.*, 180ff.

252 On the American reliance on mobile armor formations in general before the Korean War, see the
   previous chapter.   On the use of integrated combined arms formations in the early stages of the
   Korean War utilizing the few M-24 Chaffee tanks available to Eighth Army, see Roy Edgar Appleman,
   South to the Naktong, North to the Yalu: June-November 1950 (Washington,: Office of the Chief of
   Military History Dept. of the Army, 1961), Chapter 9ff.

253 George W. Baer, *One Hundred Years of Sea Power: The U.S. Navy, 1890-1990* (Stanford, Calif.:
   Stanford University Press, 1994), 315-16.

254 *Ibid.*, 335.

Also, limited war became explicitly part of American thinking about the use of force.[255]

Thus, it is clear that combat in Korea faced the United States with many unexpected challenges.   Most importantly, the utility of airpower against the Chinese had been vastly overestimated before the war.[256]   But also, the United States was forced to reassess its thinking about the mobility and combat effectiveness of poorly armed infantry forces.   All of this strongly supports the dissertation's theory, which predicts surprise regarding the adversary's capabilities and intent once war is joined (Predictions #8 and #9).   Thus, this section directly supports the link between different theories of victory and underestimation of the enemy (H_1).   Differences in theories of victory directly contributed to a misperception of the adversary's relative capabilities.   This suggests that American assessments of the balance of power and of Chinese signals before the war likely suffered from the misperceptions that this dissertation has outlined (with regard to the variants of H_2), and indeed that previous sections of this chapter have shown.

Conclusion

In this case, both way the Chinese sent military signals and the way the United States evaluated those signals and the overall situation strongly support the theory.   The military signals that the Chinese sent were based entirely on its own theory of victory:

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255 See Christopher M. Gacek, *The Logic of Force: The Dilemma of Limited War in American Foreign Policy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994).

256 In particular, the emphasis on interdiction was misplaced.   However, as the quotes above discuss, CAS against difficult to find light infantry targets was also problematic.

large scale infantry deployments (as anticipated by Prediction #5).[257]   The United States

viewed these through its own lens of understanding of military effectiveness and

downplayed both the likelihood that the Chinese would get involved in the war (H_{2B} and

Predictions #6 and #7) and the effectiveness of the Chinese forces if they did get involved

(H_{2A} and Predictions #1-4).   Both these assessments were tragically wrong, as

subsequent events were to show.   The Chinese did intervene in force, and when they did

so, American forces were repeatedly surprised at their effectiveness and their willingness

to join battle (Predictions #8 and #9).

Clearly, this theory does not have a monopoly on explanations for this American

misperception.   However, the Alternate Hypothesis set forth in the theory chapter does

not do particularly well.   Again, the Alternate Hypothesis represents the primary

approach to strategic coercion in the literature and suggests "Weak signals are more

likely to lead to coercive failure and escalation while strong signals are more likely to

lead to coercive success."   In this case, the strength of the "objective" signal that the

Chinese sent was indeed substantial: numerous diplomatic warnings coupled with the

redeployment of a large portion of the Chinese army.   Nevertheless, for the reasons this

dissertation's theory predicts, the United States was unable to anticipate the Chinese

reaction.

Thus, this case offers strong support for the dissertation's hypothesized links from

differences in theories of victory to underestimation of the adversary to

miscommunications and misperceptions that worsen conflict.

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257 Although clearly the Chinese had little leeway here, given the makeup of the PLA.

Chapter 5. CHINA'S APPROVAL OF THE NORTH KOREAN INVASION (CASE STUDY #2)

The previous chapter presented a strong case in support of the dissertation's theory in its analysis of the U.S. decision to cross the 38th parallel in spite of strong signals from the Chinese. There, the role of the misperceptions caused by doctrinal differences were central to understanding how that attempt at strategic coercion failed.

This chapter turns to an earlier decision, looking at the Chinese approval of the North Korean invasion that occurred in May 1950. This decision is complex, and clearly many explanations play a role in shaping the outcome, as will be discussed. However, throughout the more oblique diplomacy in this time period, the role of the American and Chinese theories of victory can be seen, shaping the tacit signals between the countries and their interpretation of them. This case highlights those factors and suggests they can helpfully contribute to the understanding of this case, without denying the important role of other explanations.[1]

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1   For instance, clearly other actors on the Communist side had less distinct differences in their theories of victory with the United States. Both the Soviets and the North Koreans (who had implemented Soviet doctrine and been supplied with Soviet weapons) used combined arms strategies, even sometimes supported by airpower. Thus, the dissertation's proposed theory cannot explain their behavior at all. (They are, however, discussed briefly in a section at the end of this chapter.) On the Chinese side, however, some explanatory value for the theory will be shown.

Historical introduction

In the spring of 1950, the Chinese civil war was winding down. Mao had proclaimed the establishment of the People's Republic of China six months before, and Chiang Kaishek had fled to Taiwan.[2] In Europe, the Cold War was rapidly heating up with the formation of NATO and the Warsaw Pact as well as the recent Soviet nuclear test. Asia was joining the fray with the declaration of the Sino-Soviet Alliance. The United States was in the process of drawing down its forces in the wake of WWII, although NSC-68 was beginning to be circulated in the inner corridors of Washington.[3] Following decisions taken by various Communist leaders in April and May 1950 discussed below, Kim Il Sung finalized his plans for invasion and attacked on June 25. The effects of that decision on international affairs were tremendous, including the approval of NSC-68, the rearmament of Japan, and indeed the militarization of the Cold War.[4]

Among scholars of the Korean War, there had long been a debate over the role of the Soviets and the Chinese in the outbreak of the Korean War. There is now enough evidence to end it. Scholars have long known that Beijing, like Moscow, had been a strong supporter of the communist movement in the North.[5] There is evidence that Kim traveled to China in April and May of 1949 where he met with Mao, Zhou Enlai, Zhu De

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2   For an excellent military history of the civil war, see Dick Wilson, *China's Revolutionary War* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1991).

3   The classic account of this history is John Lewis Gaddis, *The United States and the Origins of the Cold War, 1941-1947* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1972).

4   See Robert Jervis, "The Impact of the Korean War on the Cold War," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 24, no. 4 (1980).

5   On this support in general, see 宋连生，《抗美援朝在回首》（昆明：云南人民出版社，2002). Song Liansheng, *Recollections on the Korean War* (Kunming: Yunnan People's Press, 2002), 172-73.

(the leader of the PLA), Gao Gang (the regional military leader for the PLA in the

Northeast), and others.[6]   Later, early in 1950, Chinese General Nie Rongzhen, then

Chief of Staff of the PLA returned three divisions who had been fighting on the

communist side in the Chinese Civil War to the control of the North Korean communists,

under Kim's command.   The CCP's Central Committee ordered that these 14,000 troops

keep their weapons as they deployed to Korea.[7]   This brought the total number of

Korean troops sent back from China to Korea after the communists' victory in the

Chinese Civil War to over 50,000.[8]   Many of these same troops were to later serve as the

spearhead of the attack southward in June.[9]   Similarly, there is some evidence that

Chinese military officers played important roles in North Korea's strategic planning over

the course of the year prior to the attack.[10]   Further, the head of the North Korean air

force had been one of fewer than 20 soldiers sent to the Soviet Union for training by the

Chinese communists during the early part of the Chinese Civil War when the PLAAF

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6   Korea Institute of Military History, *The Korean War*, 3 vols. (Lincoln, Neb.: University of Nebraska Press, 2001), vol. 2, p. 6.   KIDA cites Soviet archival evidence published by the Korean Foreign Ministry for this information, but does not explain in detail the nature of that source.

7   蔡仁照、<<中国元帅聂荣臻>>(北京:中共中央党校出版社、1994). pp. 445-46.   [Cai Renzhao, *Nie Rongzhen: China's Principal Military Chief*   (Beijing: Central Party School of the CCP, 1994).] See also Chen Jian, *China's Road to the Korean War: The Making of the Sino-American Confrontation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 106-7.   Liu Shaoqi attributes the decision to let them take their weapons to Mao. 刘少奇、"军委同意第四野战军中朝鲜背兵会朝鲜的电报"、1950年一月十一日<<建国以来刘少奇文稿>>、第一册:7/1949-3/1950(北京:中央文献出版社、1998).   Liu Shaoqi, "Telegrams Regarding the CMC Concurring with the 4th Field Army Regarding the Return of the Korean Battalions to Korea (January 17, 1950)," in *Liu Shaoqi's Manuscripts since the Founding of the State*   (Beijing: Central Party Documents Publishers, 1998).

8   Chen Jian, *China's Road*, 110-111; John W. Garver, "Little Chance," *Diplomatic history* 21, no. 1 (1997): 93.

9   Chen Jian, *China's Road*, 110.

10   Zhang Shuguang, *Mao's Military Romanticism: China and the Korean War, 1950-53* (Lawrence, Kans.: University Press of Kansas, 1995), 45.

was in its embryonic stage (and before there was any independent North Korean military

to speak of).[11]

However, far more critical than this direct military support for the North was

Mao's formal approval of Kim Il Sung's attack.   There is now widespread consensus

that Mao played an integral role here, along with Stalin.[12]   Even most Chinese scholars,

including some writing within China, place Mao at the center of the decision making,

together with Stalin and Kim.[13]   There is some evidence that Mao and Stalin may have

discussed Korea in February of 1950.[14]   Similarly, there is indirect evidence that Mao

was encouraging the North Koreans to attack in late April or very early May.   This

comes from a telegram from the Soviet Ambassador in Pyongyang (Shtykov) to the

Soviet Foreign Minister in Moscow.   In it, Shtykov relates a conversation among the

North Korean ambassador to China, Mao, and Zhou Enlai.

> Mao Zedong added further that the unification of Korea by peaceful means is not possible,
> solely military means are required to unify Korea.   As regards the Americans, there is
> no need to be afraid of them.   The Americans will not enter a third world war for such a
> small territory.[15]

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11   Zhang Xiaoming, *Red Wings over the Yalu: China, the Soviet Union, and the Air War in Korea*, 1st ed. (College Station, Tex.: Texas A&M University Press, 2002), 18.

12   Stueck, *The Korean War: An International History*, 37, 39-40.

13   Chen Jian, *China's Road*, 112-13; Sergei Goncharov, John Lewis, and Litai Xue, *Uncertain Partners: Stalin, Mao, and the Korean War* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1993), 145-46; Shen Zhihua, "Sino-Soviet Relations and the Origins of the Korean War: Stalin's Strategic Goals in the Far East," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 2, no. 2 (2000): 67; William Stueck, *The Korean War: An International History* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995), 37, 39-40.

14   Shen Zhihua, "China Sends Troops to Korea: Beijing's Policy-Making Process," in *China and the United States: A New Cold War History*, ed. Xiaobing Li and Hongshan Li (Lanham: University Press of America, 1998), 17.

15   It is unclear where Shtykov learned of this, although it is possible that Kim related the meeting to him. "Document # 13: 12 May 1950, ciphered telegram, Shtykov to Vyshinsky re meeting with Kim Il Sung" in Kathryn Weathersby, "New Russian Documents on the Korean War," *Bulletin of the Cold War International History Project*, no. 6-7 (1995/96): 38-39.   This clearly occurs before Kim's trip to Beijing, discussed below.

These two points, however, remain unverified.

On the other hand, the rest of the story is clear. Kim Il Sung, after much begging, had received permission from Stalin to attack the South in April of 1950, pending approval from Mao. Thus, in May of 1950, Kim went to China. While the minutes of the meetings between Mao and Kim in Beijing that followed are not available, there is very strong circumstantial evidence that Mao gave Kim the approval he sought. A few key sources are illuminating. First, documents released from Russian archives confirm that Kim Il Sung left for Beijing on May 13, 1950.[16] Second, Khrushchev's memoirs contain his recollections of this visit:

> Stalin decided to ask Mao-Tse-tung's opinion about Kim Il-sung's suggestion [to invade the South] ... Mao Tse-tung also answered affirmatively. He approved Kim Il-sung's suggestion.[17]

Third, Kim was indeed planning to discuss his invasion plans with the Chinese on this trip, hoping to "inform the Chinese Communists of the intention to achieve unification by force, and explain about his meeting with Stalin in Moscow."[18] Fourth, one scholar writes,

> There is even some reason to believe that, during Kim's May 1950 visit to Beijing, Mao offered to position three Chinese armies along the Yalu River as backup for the North Koreans but was assured that he precaution was unnecessary.[19]

Sixth, it is clear plans for a forthcoming attack were in fact discussed since Zhou Enlai, at the request of Mao, telegrammed Stalin to solicit his view on this planned attack.[20] Mao

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16 "Document # 13: 12 May 1950, ciphered telegram, Shtykov to Vyshinsky re meeting with Kim Il Sung" in *Ibid.*

17 Nikita Sergeevich Khrushchev, *Khrushchev Remembers*, trans. Strobe Talbott (Boston, Mass.: Little Brown, 1970), 368.

18 Korea Institute of Military History, *The Korean War*, vol. 2, p. 14. Again, KIDA cites Soviet archival evidence published by the Korean Foreign Ministry for this information, but does not explain in detail the nature of that source.

19 Stueck, *The Korean War*, 39-40.

was looking for confirmation that Stalin had indeed given his contingent approval to Kim.

Stalin replied that he had, but reiterated that it was up to Mao to make the final decision.

These telegrams between Zhou and Stalin are critical. The first makes clear that Kim

and Mao were discussing the invasion, and Stalin's reply makes clear Mao was, at the

very least, a potential veto gate.[21]

Chen Jian is the leading Chinese scholar on the Korean War working in the West.

His argument, while cognizant of the limitations of the historical record, remains the

most thorough look at Chinese decision making on this point. He concludes,

> In short, Kim came to Beijing largely because Stalin wanted him to get Beijing's support
> for his attack on the South. Although Mao seemed to have some reservations, he never
> seriously challenged Kim's plans. When Kim left China he thus had every reason to
> inform Stalin and his comrades in Pyongyang (and we have every reason to believe that
> he did) that he had the support of his Chinese comrades. ... Thus Kim's visit to Beijing
> represented another crucial step toward the coming of the Korean War, and Beijing's
> Korea policy escalated further the potential confrontation between China and the United
> States in East Asia.[22]

Another Chinese scholar, one with access to Chinese archives, comes to a similar

conclusion: "After receiving this telegram [Stalin's response to Zhou's query], Mao

threw his support behind Kim's military plan."[23] Other scholars immersed in this

history agree that Mao approved the attack.[24]

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20 Roshchin to Filipov [Stalin], 5/13/50 and the reply from Vyshinsky to Mao, 5/14/50, Jim Hershberg, "Documentation: More Documents from the Russian Archives," *Bulletin of the Cold War International History Project*, no. 4 (1994): 61.

21 See the telegrams reprinted in *Ibid*.

22 Chen Jian, *China's Road*, 112-13.

23 Shen Zhihua, "Sino-Soviet Relations and the Origins of the Korean War," 67.

24 Goncharov, Lewis, and Xue, *Uncertain Partners*, 145-46; Allan R. Millett, "The Korean War: A 50-Year Critical Historiography," *The Journal of Strategic Studies* 24, no. 1 (2001); Stueck, *The Korean War*, 37, 39-40; Odd Arne Westad, *Decisive Encounters: The Chinese Civil War, 1946-1950* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2003), 319-20.

The official South Korean history of the war summarizes the Chinese role in the

lead up to the war even more damningly:

> Communist China was deeply involved second only to the Soviet Union in North Korea's
> invasion plot.   It encouraged Kim Il Sung to invade South Korea by promising that if the
> U.S. or the Japanese rendered assistance to South Korea after the eruption of the war,
> China would assist North Korea.   In addition, it provided North Korea with the decisive
> support for the war preparations by transferring the Korean troops in the Chinese
> Communist Forces to North Korea and rendering to North Korea necessary advice for the
> war direction.[25]

Thus, this case will examine Mao's decision as a failure of the United States to

deter China.[26]   Of course, Stalin and Kim were certainly strong proponents for the war,

and each played an important role in persuading Mao to go along with the war.[27]   Indeed,

Kim in particular was impressive in his persistence and skill in manipulating both Mao

and Stalin.[28]   Kim's argument that the war would be over before the American's could

intervene went a long way to persuading the leaders of both China and the Soviet Union.

Additionally, several scholars argue that Mao had only limited freedom of action in this

case, given his relationship with Stalin.[29]   Mao did not want to be seen by the Soviet

leader as a Titoist in Asia at this early stage in the budding Sino-Soviet relationship.[30]

Nevertheless, had Mao been *thoroughly and strongly* deterred by the United

States and thus decided to actively oppose the attack, it seems likely that the entire chain

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25   Korea Institute of Military History, *The Korean War*, vol. 2, p. 5.

26   Again, see the brief discussion at the end of the case regarding explanations for Soviet and North
Korean behavior.

27   See Shen Zhihua, "Sino-North Korean Conflict and Its Resolution During the Korean War," *Bulletin of
the Cold War International History Project*, no. 13/14 (2003/04); Richard C. Thornton, *Odd Man Out:
Truman, Stalin, Mao, and the Origins of the Korean War*, 1st ed. (Washington, D.C.: Brassey's, 2000).

28   Shen Zhihua, "Sino-North Korean Conflict."

29   See Shen Zhihua, "China Sends Troops to Korea," 14. Thornton, *Odd Man Out: Truman, Stalin, Mao,
and the Origins of the Korean War*.

30   Chen Jian, *China's Road*, Chapter 5: The Decision for War in Korea; Thornton, *Odd Man Out: Truman,
Stalin, Mao, and the Origins of the Korean War, passim*.

of events leading the to the Sino-American conflict in Korea would have been avoided. Had Mao deeply feared the threats potentially posed by American military power, he likely could have found the wherewithal to slow the drumbeat of war among the Communists in Northeast Asia. This case will provide contribute to the understanding of why Mao was, instead, moderately optimistic regarding China's prospects in a war with the United States.

What Kind of Case?

As will be clear, the U.S. signaling was generally rather oblique. What this case presents, then, is an instance of failed general (rather than immediate), extended deterrence of China by the United States.[31] As noted in Chapter 2, scholarship of deterrence in international relations often distinguishes between general and immediate deterrence.[32] This case is not a primarily an instance of immediate deterrence because the specific threats toward China were limited. Rather, Washington expected its general posture aimed at deterring Communist expansion everywhere to achieve the results in Asia, too. The signals that Washington was sending often pertained to that general posture, rather than the Korean Peninsula *per se*.

This sort of general deterrence is commonplace in Sino-American relations as well as in international relations. One pair of scholars (one American, one Chinese) writes of this sort of deterrence four years later in the same theater:

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31 Among other failures, to be sure. There certainly was a failure to deter Stalin as well, to say nothing of Kim. However, Mao also played a role, as has been argued, and—for the purposes of this study, the U.S.-China dyad—is of greatest interest.

32 See the discussion in the Chapter 2 at note 16.

> Certainly American power constrained and influenced Chinese actions; the very U.S.
> military presence, which was augmented in the Western Pacific during the crisis, may be
> defined as a political-military deterrent.[33]

There were certainly elements of this sort of thinking in the spring of 1950 as well.

While achieving successful general deterrence is relatively challenging,

nevertheless, this sort of case is worth studying for several reasons.   First, the

differences between immediate and general deterrence lie on a continuum, and cases

along the middle range of that continuum will instruct about both extremes, as noted

earlier.   Second, the United States did send some direct signals to China directly on the

Korean case, raising at least some elements of immediate deterrence.   Third, different

theories of victory can impede communication of intent and capability through the same

dynamics in both immediate and general deterrence.   Thus, this case will provide some

insight into the dissertation's theory.

In part because of this large element of general deterrence in this case, the

subsequent analysis will focus on very broad level doctrinal thinking by the two sides.

This is appropriate given that the decisions at this point were quite broad, with neither

side well focused on this particular adversary in this particular theater.   Thus, the

assessment of threat posed by the other would have been at a very broad level.

Signaling by United States

There are a number of different elements in the U.S. signaling policy and general

deterrent posture.   Particular policy statements at the diplomatic level, recent shifts in

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33   John Wilson Lewis and Litai Xue, *China Builds the Bomb* (Stanford, Cal.: Stanford University Press,
1988), 27.   Note that an important advantage of a general deterrent posture, as opposed to an
immediate deterrent one, is that it can avoid provoking one's adversary.   Lewis and Xue argue that
this played a role in the period before the 1954-55 crisis.   See Lewis and Xue, *China Builds the Bomb*,
31.

military posture, both nuclear and conventional, and the general tenor of relations

between the two countries in the Cold War each conveyed some suggestion of U.S. intent

toward China and the situation on the Korean peninsula. This section evaluates each in

turn. In sum, this multifaceted signaling policy should have sent only a limited signal of

general deterrence to the Chinese. However, beyond that, several important elements of

the policy were based on an American conception of military strategy that would have

been difficult for the Chinese to interpret. ' :

Changes in Grand Strategy

The highest level of America grand strategy at this time was the Truman Doctrine,

or containment.[34] First announced in a specially called joint session of congress,

President Truman laid out a very clear policy: "I believe that it must be the policy of the

United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed

minorities or by outside pressures."[35] Even at that time, it was clear to the world that the

shift in American policy was broader than an aid package to Greece and Turkey, but

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34 One might distinguish between the President's Truman Doctrine speech on aid to Greece and Turkey
in March of 1947 that proposed "to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by
armed minorities or by outside pressure" and the blueprint for containment, Kennan's Mr. X article of
four months later, which counseled "confront[ing] the Russians with unalterable counterforce, at every
point where they show signs of encroaching upon the interests of a peaceful and stable world."
However, the concepts are closely related and historically intertwined and will be treated as such here.
For both quotes and discussion, see Thomas G. Paterson, J. Garry Clifford, and Kenneth J. Hagan,
American Foreign Relations: A History since 1895, 5th ed., vol. 2 (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1999),
241-45. Also see Warren I. Cohen, *The Cambridge History of American Foreign Relations*, vol. 4
(New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 38-41; John Lewis Gaddis, *Strategies of
Containment: A Critical Appraisal of Postwar American National Security Policy* (New York: Oxford
University Press, 1982), Chapter 3 Implementing Containment.

35 Address of the President of the United States: Recommendation for Assistance to Greece and Turkey,
March 12, 1947 available at the Truman Library's online collection at
http://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/study_collections/doctrine/large/folder5/tde02-1.htm

rather included a set of principles that might be applied more widely: "Truman's 'Doctrine' Becomes Law At Last" intoned the New York Times.[36]

By late 1949, it was clear that this containment policy was to be both comprehensive and firm, representing a hardening of American policy.[37] There had been a shift away from Kennan's strongpoint strategy that dominated in the late forties to a more comprehensive defensive perimeter or containment strategy. NATO was created in July of 1949. Truman's December 1949 signature of NSC-48, focused explicitly on the security situation in Asia, furthered this trend by making explicit that containment would be applied more broadly in Asia than before.

NSC-68 epitomized this changed emphasis in policy. While not formally signed until after the Korean War's outbreak, its tenets were viewed sympathetically by many in the foreign policy establishment in the early part of 1950. Nevertheless, fear of opposition from within the Budget Bureau and from others concerned with the domestic tax burden prevented NSC-68 from being implemented at the time. These budgetary concerns are sometimes overdrawn. While the pre-Korean War buildup budgetary situation looked severe compared to the post-Korean War budgets, by other standards, the situation was not so dire.

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36 *The New York Times*, May 25, 1947.

37 For similar characterizations, see Rosemary Foot, *The Wrong War: American Policy and the Dimensions of the Korean Conflict, 1950-1953* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985), 47-54; William Whitney Stueck, *The Road to Confrontation: American Policy toward China and Korea, 1947-1950* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1981), 146-52.

Figure 5-1:   Nominal Military Spending (in billions of U.S.$)[38]
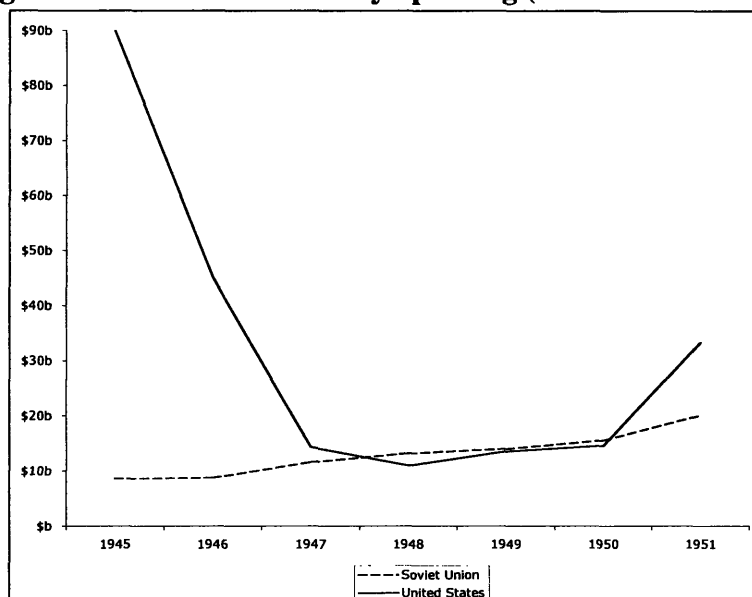
The post-WWII cuts had already bottomed out, and had done so at a level approximately

similar to that of the Soviet Union.

Aside from the budgetary concerns it provoked, NSC-68 served as a list of the

Administration's public talking points on its foreign policy.[39]   The ideas in NSC-68

embodied a shift toward a much more assertive American policy.   "U.S. diplomacy was

imbued with an offensive spirit."[40]   It focused heavily on enhancing American military

capabilities to provide for robust deterrence of threats.   It argued that, in order to

"prevent disaster," U.S. military forces must be able to

> a. To defend the Western Hemisphere and essential allied areas in order that their war-making capabilities can be developed;

> b. To provide and protect a mobilization base while the offensive forces required for victory are being built up;

38   Compiled using data from: J. David Singer and Melvin Small, "National Material Capabilities (Version 2.1), 1990 (updated April 1999)," Correlates of War Project, The University of Michigan.

39   Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment*, 107-08.

40   Melvyn P. Leffler, *A Preponderance of Power: National Security, the Truman Administration, and the Cold War* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1992), 357.

c. To conduct offensive operations to destroy vital elements of the Soviet war-making capacity, and to keep the enemy off balance until the full offensive strength of the United States and its allies can be brought to bear; ...[41]

Thus, by early 1950, even before the outbreak of the Korean War, there was some

hardening in American general deterrent policy—particularly declaratory policy, so

critical to deterrence—against Communist aggression.

Nuclear Weapons Policy

On the nuclear side, several aspects of the American policy toward Communist

nations—in general and in Asia—bear mentioning.   In this period, American

decisionmakers were extremely confident in the signals that implicit moves could send,

particularly if they involved atomic weapons.   Relatively low-key deployments of B-29

bombers had been used to send deterrent signals to the Soviet Union in the past: in 1948,

two squadrons had been deployed to Britain during the first Berlin Crisis as a signal to

Moscow.[42]   Roger Dingman describes the legacy of that crisis:

> Democratic and Republican statesmen looked back to the dispatch of two squadrons of B-29s to Western Europe during the Berlin Blockade of 1948-49 for guidance on how best to use American nuclear superiority...   In the summer of 1948, American statesmen doubted that the B-29 deployment contributed directly to settlement of the Berlin Blockade crisis.   But as time hazed over the particulars of this episode, they came to believe that atomic arms could be instruments of "force without war."   Their credibility might even exceed their actual capability if they were used, without overt threats, for the purposes of deterrence rather than compellence.   Thus American statesmen and soldiers brought to the Korean War the conviction that atomic arms, if properly employed, could be extremely valuable tools for conflict management.

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41   See NSC-68 in United States Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1950*, vol. I: National Security Affairs; Foreign Economic Policy (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1977), 283.

42   Scott Douglas Sagan, *Moving Targets: Nuclear Strategy and National Security* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1989), 15.   These had been falsely described in public as "nuclear-capable" although the specific planes sent were not modified to carry the weapons.   That said, an additional signal was sent at that time by putting the planes that had been so modified on high alert status in the continental United States.

Similarly, Richard Betts describes a series of crises in which nuclear deterrence was attempted without explicit atomic or nuclear threats being made.[43]

Further, the United States had recently developed the capacity to launch nuclear strikes from the continental United States. The first operational B-36 Peacemakers had entered the Strategic Air Command's (SAC's) inventory in 1948, and by 1950 SAC could call on three squadrons of such planes for strikes.[44] Several long-range operational test flights had displayed their capabilities in the late 1940s.

> SAC celebrated the success of the program by staging a long-range navigation and bombing mission that extended from taking off at Carswell through dropping a 10,000-pound "dummy" bomb in the Pacific Ocean near the Hawaiian Islands and returning to Carswell. The unrefueled mission covered 8,100 miles in 35 1/2 hours. The mission was, in a way, a "LeMay triumph" in that the bomber made an approach over Honolulu undetected by the local air defense system—on 7 December 1948! Early in 1949, another B-36 crew set a long-distance record of 9,600 miles. The B-36 covered the distance in 43 hours, 37 minutes. ... There was little doubt that the vast Soviet communications monitoring system was taking note of these and other similar demonstrations of long-range strategic "reach."[45]

This brandishing of planes capable of delivering weapons at exceptional range should have also sent a general signal to the Soviets.

Beyond the intercontinental bombers, forward-deployed nuclear-capable bombers played an active part of the American general deterrence of communism in Asia. Through the early fifties, the bulk of the American deterrent was to be launched from overseas bases, if war ever came.[46] The B-29 was—with the B-36—the primary

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43   See his pre 1958 cases in Richard K. Betts, *Nuclear Blackmail and Nuclear Balance* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 1987).

44   Chris Adams, *Inside the Cold War a Cold Warrior's Reflections* (Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama: Air University Press, September 1999); Marc Trachtenberg, "A 'Wasting Asset': American Strategy and the Shifting Nuclear Balance, 1949-54," in *Nuclear Diplomacy and Crisis Management: An International Security Reader*, ed. Sean Lynn-Jones, Steven Miller, and Stephen Van Evera (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1990), 86.

45   Adams, *Inside the Cold War a Cold Warrior's Reflections*, 39.

46   For a fascinating discussion of the standing U.S. plans in approximately 1950, as well as discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of various permutations of overseas basing, overseas refueling, and

platform for the delivery of nuclear weapons in this period.   Again, the United States

had used overseas deployment of this very plane to send signals in previous cases.   In

Asia, similar tacit signals were also being sent; from October 1949 to June 1950, Guam

hosted B-29 training missions.[47]   (The same B-29s were to later fly missions in Korea.[48])

By familiarizing the Andersen Air Force Base staff with the maintenance and deployment

needs of the B-29 platform, the U.S. military made future immediate deterrent

steps—like the deployment of nuclear-capable B-29s—easier.   Indeed precisely that

step, the deployment of 10 nuclear capable B-29s, was taken early in the Korean War in

late July.[49]

Again, it was believed in Washington that such tacit signals would be heard: "The

decisions of late July 1950 demonstrated the strength of Washington's belief that such

weapons, even if deployed without explicit statements of intent, could serve as

deterrents."[50]   The confidence in the utility of such tacit signals was shown at a later date

as well: as conflict between China and the United States got closer in the fall, the United

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basing in the continental United States (and the implications of all of that from a stability perspective), see Albert J. Wohlstetter and others, *Selection and Use of Strategic Air Bases*, R-266 (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND, April 1954), 3-8ff.

47 It appears these were conventional B-29s, although that would not have been apparent to anyone other than the highest-ranking Americans.

48 http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/facility/andersen.htm.

49 Roger Dingman, "Atomic Diplomacy During the Korean War," in *Nuclear Diplomacy and Crisis Management*, ed. Stephen Van Evera (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1990), 126-27. The *New York Times* reported this deployment, so it would have been well known to the Chinese.   Note that earlier in the Korean War, on July 10th, the United States had sent a similar force of nuclear-capable B-29s to bases in England to allow for potential attacks on Soviet bases from within Europe should the conflict expand.   Those bombers were deployed with "everything but the nuclear cores aboard." *Ibid.*

50 Christopher M. Gacek, *The Logic of Force: The Dilemma of Limited War in American Foreign Policy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 55.

States was again sending not so subtle nuclear threats by very publicly deploying heavy, atomic-capable B-29s to the region in July.[51]

All these various policies were aimed at deterring communist aggression globally. However, the way that they conveyed that message would have appeared less threatening to the Chinese. China would have feared neither destruction of its industrial base nor the prospect of the "full offensive strength" of the United States being brought to bear. Given Beijing's theory of victory, those elements did no seem particularly threatening.[52]

Acheson's Speech

It is commonplace in the scholarship of early cold war American foreign policy to bemoan Secretary of State Dean Acheson's infamous National Press Club speech of January 12, 1950. In it, the conventional wisdom focuses on the exclusion of South Korea (and Taiwan) from the U.S. defense perimeter in East Asia, and this is often thought to have played a major role in convincing various Communist nations to go on the offensive. The original source of that entire argument stems from partisan attacks.[53] This view is overstated because it relies on a selective reading of the speech and it ignores how the speech was received at the time.

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51 Conrad C. Crane, *American Airpower Strategy in Korea, 1950-1953* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2000), 27; Mark A. Ryan, *Chinese Attitudes toward Nuclear Weapons: China and the United States During the Korean War* (Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 1989), 26.

52 Rather, what likely would have appeared threatening was the forward deployment of very large numbers of American troops.

53 Republican critics of Acheson's foreign policy on Capital Hill first popularized the argument that Acheson invited the Korean invasion. See James Chace, *Acheson: The Secretary of State Who Created the American World* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1998), 222.

A more careful reading of the speech suggests that this signal was unlikely to have been as important as is sometimes suggested for several reasons.   First, the idea of a "defensive perimeter" that is the focus of so much attention in the historiography is mention only in passing and is not developed at all in the speech.   The most frequently quoted portion is: "This defensive perimeter runs along the Aleutians to Japan and then goes to the Ryukyus ... from the Ryukyus to the Philippine Islands." [54]   However, quoting this portion alone is extremely misleading as it implies that the phrase "this defensive perimeter" refers to a concept that had already been introduced in the speech. That was not the case.   Earlier portions of the speech neither mention nor presage the concept of a defense perimeter *per se*.   Rather, it is introduced abruptly. [55]

Second, as the rest of the speech makes clear, other parts of the region, although not Korea, *are indeed explicitly excluded* from the sphere of American interests. Elsewhere in the speech Acheson notes the limited role of the United States in Southeast Asia and contrasts that with the more substantial obligations owed to Korea: "There [Korea] our responsibilities are more direct and our opportunities more clear." [56]

Finally, Acheson's speech did speak specifically of a response to military threats in the region outside of Japan and the Philippines:

> So far as the military security of other areas in the Pacific is concerned, it must be clear
> that no person can guarantee these areas against military attack. ...Should such an attack
> occur...the initial reliance must be on the people attacked to resist it and then upon the
> commitments of the entire civilized world under the Charter of the United Nations which

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54   Dean Acheson, "Crisis in Asia—an Examination of U.S. Policy (January 12, 1950)," *Department of State Bulletin* 22, no. 551 (1950): 116.

55   One is only led to infer that this defense perimeter is necessary to the defense of Japan.   *Ibid.*: 115-116.

56   *Ibid.*: 117.

> so far has not proved a weak reed to lean on by any people who are determined to protect their independence against outside aggression.[57]

While Gaddis finds this last sentence a "perhaps excessively elegant circumlocution," its intent seems clear enough.[58]   Looking back at the reference to the UN, a modern reader tends to ascribe current-day thinking regarding the UN to that quote.   This would suggest that it was a rhetorical flourish, and that the UN, in fact, should have been viewed as precisely a weak reed to lean on.   However, to do so is to project backward current American thinking on that organization.   At the time, the UN was viewed as a relatively robust institution, even in the international security arena.[59]   For instance, when Acheson eventually heard that the North had attacked South Korea on June 24, the first action he approved, before even informing the president or calling a meeting with the JCS, was to raise the issue at the UN.[60]   Dean Rusk similarly attests to the perception of the importance of the UN at the time.[61]   Other examples of the perceived importance of the UN in that era litter the historical record.[62]

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57   *Ibid.:* 116.

58   John Lewis Gaddis, *We Now Know: Rethinking Cold War History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 72.

59   Furthermore, by this time the Soviets were already boycotting that body in protest over the prevention of the PRC taking China's seat that was at the time held by the ROC/Taiwan representative.   The Soviets began their boycott on January 10, 1950.   Thus, communists in Beijing and Pyongyang could not count on the UN being kept out of any Korean conflict.   Woodrow J. Kuhns, ed., *Assessing the Soviet Threat: The Early Cold War Years* (Washington, DC: Central Intelligence Agency, 1997), Chronology.

60   Dean Acheson, *Present at the Creation: My Years in the State Department* (New York, NY: Norton, 1969), 401-5.   See also extended discussion in Bruce Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War: The Roaring of the Cataract, 1947-1950*, vol. 2 (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1981), 888, note 2.

61   Dean Rusk, Richard Rusk, and Daniel S. Papp, *As I Saw It*, 1st ed. (New York: W.W. Norton, 1990), 164.

62   Glenn D. Paige, *The Korean Decision, June 24-30, 1950* (New York, NY: Free Press, 1968), 99.

Rather than viewing the speech as an abandonment of Korea, it is more appropriate to see it as a statement that describes a range of American interests in the region. As one historian writes,

> In the soft-spoken language of diplomacy, however, Acheson had actually stated that the United States would unilaterally defend areas which were strategically important to it and would participate with the United Nations to check aggression against other free peoples in the Pacific.[63]

In summary, while Acheson does not offer a blanket promise of aid to South Korea, he certainly does not imply Washington is indifferent to its fate.

Communist Interpretation of the Acheson Speech

Furthermore, what is most important is not a close textual analysis of the speech or an assessment of how it "ought" have been interpreted. Rather, the perceptions of the speech at the time are what matters. In terms of the perceptions in the United States[64] and *apparently* within the Communist bloc, the most important parts of the speech were those that focused on Russian attempts to take Manchuria from China and on suggestions that the United States might abandon Taiwan. Based on the currently available evidence from the Communist side, it appears that it was only after the outbreak of the Korean War that the portion on the defensive perimeter received much attention.[65]

On the Korean side, the foremost scholar of Korean thinking during this period, Bruce Cummings, concludes, "It turns out that the North Koreans thought Acheson *included* the ROK in his perimeter, a bit of a daunting fact for Acheson's presumed

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63 Robert Frank Futrell, *The United States Air Force in Korea, 1950-1953*, Rev. ed. (Washington, D.C.: Office of Air Force History United States Air Force, 1983), 18.

64 Again, it is critical to know both the perceptions of what signals the United States thought it was sending as well as understanding how those were interpreted on the other side. Both sides' perceptions are relevant.

65 Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War, Vol. 2*, 423-428.

failure of deterrence."[66]   One of the more robust pieces of evidence that Cummings

provides is a quote from an article in the North Korean *Workers Daily* newspaper

regarding the speech:

> Acheson's view was that those countries *inside* what he called a defense line, meaning
> those subjugated countries, Japan, the Philippines, and South Korea, such countries
> would be America's 'direct responsibilities' [for defending].[67]

The currently available evidence on Chinese perceptions—while again based on

only limited information—also suggests that the speech did not shape (or reshape) their

view about American Korea policy in a fundamental way.   Several points lead to this

conclusion.   First, it is clear they studied this speech in detail.[68]   There is clear evidence

that the Chinese (and the Soviets) not only listened to this speech, but also adjusted their

assumptions about America policy with regard to the Sino-Soviet alliance because of it.[69]

Shi Zhe, who served as Mao's interpreter for many years including during the

negotiations over the Sino-Soviet Alliance in Moscow in 1949 and 1950, describes the

discussions between Stalin and Mao regarding the speech in some detail.[70]   However, all

the focus in his narrative is on the issues regarding Mongolia and Manchuria and

American accusations of Soviet designs on them.   There is detailed discussion on these

points, and of the discussion between Mao and Stalin over the appropriate response to

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66   *Ibid.*, 423.   Emphasis in the original.

67   Emphasis added.   *Ibid.*, 424.

68   See for instance the discussions between Mao and the Soviet Foreign Ministry: Document 17:
     Conversation, V.M Molotov and A.Y. Vyshinsky with Mao Zedong, Moscow, 17 January 1950
     translated and reprinted in Odd Arne Westad, "Fighting for Friendship: Mao, Stalin, and the Sino-
     Soviet Friendship Treaty of 1950," *Bulletin of the Cold War International History Project*, no. 8-9
     (1996-1997).

69   Shen Zhihua, "Sino-Soviet Relations and the Origins of the Korean War."   See also Chen Jian,
     China's Road, 102.

70   师哲<<在历史巨人身边:师哲回忆录 >>(北京:中央文献出版社、1991)。 Shi Zhe, *Beside the Great
     Men of History*   (Beijing: Central Documents Press, 1991), 454ff.

this accusation from the Americans.[71] However, nowhere in his account is the "defensive perimeter" portion of the speech mentioned.

Similarly, Shen Zhihua is a Chinese historian who is generally regarded by Westerners as having good access to archival data, but also one who publishes independent from government-run presses. In his *Mao, Stalin, and the Korean War* (published in Hong Kong where there are fewer impediments to scholarship on sensitive subjects), he discusses at length the issues of the Chinese and Soviet decision-making during the treaty negotiations (these spanned the date of the speech). Shen does indeed discuss the Acheson speech. However, drawing on Goncharov, Lewis, and Xue, he focuses on it in the context of the Sino-Soviet treaty negotiations and the U.S. wedge strategy, all relating to the issue of Manchuria.[72] It is not surprising that the issue of territorial sovereignty of a former part of China would receive much attention. This had clearly been a contentious issue in the treaty negotiations, and the Chinese also had other areas—Tibet, for instance—that they were concerned about at the time.[73]

Beyond the work of these two Chinese scholars, a few other pieces of evidence are suggestive of the Chinese views. A few months after Acheson's National Press Club speech, Zhou Enlai responded with disdain toward a claim by Acheson that the

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71 *Ibid.*, 456.

72 沈志華、<<毛澤東、斯大林與韓戰:中蘇最高機密檔案>> Hong Kong: Cosmos Books Ltd., 1998. Shen Zhihua, *Mao, Stalin, and the Korean War: The Highest Top Secret Archives* (Hong Kong: Cosmos Books, Ltd., 1998), 179ff. See Goncharov, Lewis, and Xue, *Uncertain Partners.*

73 See, for instance, 刘少奇、"为发外交部发言人关于西藏问题的谈话给毛泽东的电报"、1950 年一月十七日<<建国以来刘少奇文稿>>、第一册:7/1949-3/1950(北京:中央文献出版社、1998). Liu Shaoqi, "Telegram to Mao Zedong Regarding the Foriegn Ministry's Spokesman's Tibet Issue Statement (January 17, 1950)," in *Liu Shaoqi's Manuscripts since the Founding of the State* (Beijing: Central Party Documents Publishers, 1998).

United States lacked territorial aspiration in Asia in a different speech. Historian Zhang

Shuguang summarizes Zhou's comments as follows:

> Zhou Enlai retorted that the Truman administration wanted to "cheat us again." The
> U.S. would always want to control Taiwan, Korea, and Indochina, and that was why "the
> U.S. government is still supplying the KMT with bombers to bomb the Chinese
> mainland; ... the U.S. is doing the same thing to support such puppet regimes as Baota
> [Baoda] and Syngman Rhee ... so as to suppress the Vietnamese and Korean liberation
> movements to strengthen U.S. control over those places."[74]

That further suggests that the Acheson speech was not the key source of Chinese

perceptions regarding the U.S. role in the region.

Once war broke out, the Chinese government repeatedly criticized American

policy over Taiwan as going against their previously stated official "hands off" policy

toward Taiwan.[75] However, in none of these instances is American policy toward Korea

criticized with the same accusations of hypocrisy.[76] For instance, the day after the

United States ordered its forces to Korea and the Taiwan Strait, Mao decried the

American hypocrisy in the latter case:

> Only January 5 Truman stated that America would not interfere with Taiwan, but now it
> is clear that the words he spoke were lies. Moreover, he is also shredding the American
> policy of non-interference in Chinese internal affairs.[77]

Through his comments, there is no mention of American lies about Korean policy, or the

shredding of the Acheson National Press Club speech's tenets. Similarly, when Shen

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74 The direct quotes are Zhou's words from a speech that was made on the March 18, 1950. The
remaining text is Zhang's commentary. See Zhang Shuguang, *Mao's Military Romanticism*, 44. For
the text of the Acheson speech that Zhou is reacting to, see Dean Acheson, "United States Policy
toward Asia (Mach 15, 1950)," *Department of State Bulletin* 22, no. 560 (1950).

75 On Chinese characterization of the U.S. policy in this manner, see 宋<<抗美援朝再回首>> Song
Liansheng, *Recollections on the Korean War* , 195. Describing the politics behind this shift in
American policies embodied in Truman's January 5 speech, is Thomas J. Christensen, *Useful
Adversaries: Grand Strategy, Domestic Mobilization, and Sino-American Conflict, 1947-1958*
(Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1996), Chapter 4.

76 If there had been a Chinese perception that the United States had abandoned South Korea, would it not
be likely that there would also be accusations of hypocrisy over that as well?

77 宋<<抗美援朝再回首>> Song Liansheng, *Recollections on the Korean War* , 197.

Zhihua discusses the outbreak of the war, he makes no reference to the speech.[78] The

official history of the Korean War published by the PLA press makes no mention of it.[79]

Clearly, all this is indirect and circumstantial evidence. Ideally, access to

Chinese archives would allow us to answer this definitively. However, the data

presented above does suggest there is not a large paper trail pointing to the Acheson

speech *per se* as leading the Chinese to support the war. Perhaps the Chinese have

hidden this record to deemphasize their role in the outbreak of the war.[80] While deeper

access to Chinese records may help to deepen scholars' understanding of this critical

issue, at this point the historic record lacks explicit evidence linking the Acheson speech

to the failure of deterrence.

Again, all of this suggests that the conventional wisdom regarding the Acheson

speech—and thus the Alternate Hypothesis' conventional wisdom regarding the failure of

general deterrence in Korea—overemphasizes the weakness of the diplomatic signal and

its causal imporance. The leadership of the United States did not conceive of the

Acheson speech as an abandonment of Korea. At the time of this writing, there is no

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78 沈<<毛澤東、斯大林與韓戰>> Shen Zhihua, *Mao, Stalin, and the Korean War* , see his discussion throughout Chapter 4: Crossing the 38th Parallel, but in particular following page 192. Shen does note that Stalin had changed his position on whether to support the North's plans to invade the South: "therefore, one can absolutely confirm that Stalin's decision to change his policy toward the Korean peninsula was made between January and April of 1950." (*Ibid.*, 198.) However, Shen goes on to attribute this change to the recent signing of the Sino-Soviet alliance, increasing Stalin's confidence in the power of the Communist side. (*Ibid.*, 198-99.) Elsewhere he focuses on Stalin's perceptions of the power of atomic weapons in previous crises (specifically the Berlin Crisis of 1948), suggesting that the Soviet acquisition of a nascent atomic arsenal played some role. (*Ibid.*, 204.)

79 国防大学战史简编编写组,<<中国人民志愿军战史简便>>(北京:解放军出版社、1992). National Defense University Concise Military History Group, *A Brief War Fighting History of the Chinese People's Volunteers* (Beijing: The People's Liberation Army Press, 1992), 2-3.

80 However, it seems that an accusation of American hypocrisy and policy inconstancy might be made without any admission of Chinese culpability in this regard.

direct evidence available that the Chinese leaders (or other communist leaders) took the speech to have that meaning either.   The Acheson speech is only one part of the international context at the time.   Until there is affirmative evidence that this speech played a *large* role in shaping Communist perceptions, scholars should continue to look for other, empirically supported explanations for the perceptions that led China to support the war.

Other Diplomatic Signals

The United States sent a number of other signals regarding the issue.   Senior American foreign policy elites made showy visits to South Korea.   Ambassador-at-Large Philip Jessup (a senior policymaker in State with responsibility for East Asia) was there in January of 1950,[81] and John Foster Dulles (a consultant to Acheson at the time) visited Korea in June of 1950 in a prominent tour of the region.[82]

Acheson, in speeches before and after the National Press Club appearance, had emphasized the strength of the U.S. interests in the region in general and its willingness to defend those interests with military force.   On January 5 he stated:

> It is a recognition of the fact that, in the unlikely and unhappy event that our forces might be attacked in the Far East, the United States must be completely free to take whatever action in whatever area is necessary for its own security.[83]

On March 15, he reinforced this message, mentioning Korea by name (although not directly committing American military support):

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81   Stueck, *The Road to Confrontation*, 161.

82   James A. Field, *History of United States Naval Operations: Korea* (Washington: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1962), 37.

83   Dean Acheson, "Extemporaneous Remarks by Secretary Acheson (January 5, 1950)," *Department of State Bulletin* 22, no. 550 (1950): 81.

President Truman has declared his belief that it must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures and that we must assist free peoples to work toward their own destinies in their own way.   The aid we extend may be of a kind appropriate to the particular situation; it must be fitted into the responsibilities of others, and it must be within the prudent capabilities of our resources.   In some situations, it will be military assistance, in others, it may be grants or loans, ... In still others, the need may be for technical assistance.   There are not new principals nor is the application of them to the Far East a new departure.   In Vietnam, Korea, the Philippines, Indonesia, and Thailand, for example, we have demonstrated our desire to help where such help can strengthen the cause of freedom.[84]

These speeches should have sent moderate signals to the Chinese, and Chinese sources suggest they were being read with care by the Chinese leadership.[85]

Military Signals

Beyond American policy at the grand strategic level and diplomatic signals, the U.S. military deployments in East Asia provided relatively tangible signals regarding American interests.   Many of these various force deployments emphasized the importance of Korea to the United States.   However, the U.S. theory of victory critically shaped these, and they would have been difficult for the Chinese to interpret.

After the Japanese surrender, the United States had rushed a two-division corps to the Korean peninsula, garrisoning all territory below the 38th parallel.[86]   These troops eventually numbered some 45,000.   Their withdrawal was initially proposed by the Pentagon in 1947 as a way to hoard its declining military forces, although Acheson had

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84   Acheson, "United States Policy toward Asia (Mach 15, 1950)," 471.

85   In addition to those citations in the previous section, see for instance, 裴坚章 、 <<中华人民共和国外交史:1949-1956>>(北京:世界知识出版社、 1994)。   Pei Jianzhang, *Foreign Relations History of the People's Republic of China: 1949-56*   (Beijing: World Knowledge Press, 1994), 328-29.

86   John Lewis Gaddis, *The Long Peace: Inquiries into the History of the Cold War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 94.

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stymied this plan for years.[87]   However, by June 1949 the last of these combat troops

were withdrawn from Korea.[88]   This withdrawal decision precisely paralleled the Soviet

withdrawal from the North, where Moscow's last two divisions had pulled out at the end

of 1948.   Both sides of the Cold War were reducing their on-the-ground commitment to

Korea.

Nevertheless, other American signals would have softened this blow to Seoul.

First, the Korean Military Advisory Group (KMAG) remained in place and expanded to

500 men (as well as another 150 air force officers).[89]   This was the largest such group

anywhere in the world at that time.[90]   It integrated American advisors down to the

division level with the South Korean military.   Its emphasis on combined arms training

and integration between the services would have been lost on the Chinese.   Further, the

withdrawing American forces left some $110 million worth of military equipment.[91]

This transfer was made publicly and included over 40,000 vehicles as well as substantial

small arms, ammunition, and artillery.[92]   All of this would have been downplayed in

importance in Chinese doctrine.[93]   U.S. aid was used to equip and train the South

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87   Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War, Vol. 2*, 157-168; Leffler, *A Preponderance of Power*, 251-253, 300.

88   Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War, Vol. 2*, 382; Gaddis, *The Long Peace*, 95.   For detailed discussion of the intra-Pentagon debates over this withdrawal, see Steven L. Rearden, *The Formative Years, 1947-1950*, 3 vols., vol. 1 (Washington, D.C: Historical Office Office of the Secretary of Defense, 1984), 261-65.

89   Foot, *The Wrong War*, 57.

90   Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War, Vol. 2*, 385.

91   *Ibid.*, 473.

92   James F. Schnabel, *United States Army in the Korean War*, vol. 3 Policy and direction: the first year (Washington, DC: Office of the Chief of Military History United States Army/GPO, 1972), 35.   The transfers were discussed openly in congress in 1949.

93   Clearly the ROK arms were, in fact, insufficient to face the North's attack when it came.

Korean military. The size of the force that Washington aimed to create had increased

from 50,000 to 65,000 as the United States was withdrawing in 1949.[94] The South

Korean military had grown further to 100,000 by 1950, and Ambassador Muccio traveled

to Washington in May of that year to secure increased aid for the growing Korean

military.[95] The Truman Administration had battled with budget hawks in

Congress—and won—to preserve an $11 million military assistance package in 1949

under the provisions of that year's Mutual Defense Assistance Act.[96] South Korea was

one of only three named recipients for grant aid under Title III of this auspiciously named

program.[97] The fight over the aid packages continued the following year, with the

Administration again having to overcome an initial defeat in Congress. Eventually (in

January or February of 1950), it secured a $100 million aid package for Korea in fiscal

1951 (July 1050-June 1951).[98] This came on the heels of a $150 million aid package in

fiscal 1950.[99]

Further, Korea was frequently the scene of American displays of force such as

fleet and airpower deployments. For instance, "the navy was persuaded to have an

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94 Stueck, *The Road to Confrontation*, 159.

95 *Ibid.*, 165.

96 *Ibid.*, 159.

97 Rearden, *The Formative Years, 1947-1950*, 264.

98 Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War, Vol. 2*, 425. For discussion of the domestic politics, and in particular of the high cost the Administration was willing to pay for securing passage of the various Korean Aid bills, see Christensen, *Useful Adversaries*, Chapter 4. Christensen puts the initial (proposed) aid figure for FY1951 at $60 million.
  While this aid was in theory not to be spent on military hardware, it was not unheard of for exactly that to happen. See Christensen's discussion of the contemporaneous aid package to Taiwan. Christensen, *Useful Adversaries*, Chapter 4.

99 Stueck, *The Road to Confrontation*, 159.

American cruiser and two destroyers visit Inchon in the fall of 1949."[100]   Other

deployments in the region were commonplace:

> In late March 1950 the aircraft carrier *Boxer* scrambled forty-two jets for flights over
> central Vietnam as a demonstration of American "military strength" and two weeks later
> it sent fifty planes roaring over Pusan and Taegu.   The carrier *Valley Forge* left on a
> similar mission in mid-May, with an accompanying task force of twenty ships, to show
> the flag in "the troubled Orient."[101]

None of these deployments would have looked particularly threatening through the

Chinese doctrinal lens.

Finally, the Air Force retained a significant position in the Far East.   The

prodigious holdings of FEAF (the U.S. Far East Air Force) included *fourteen strike*

squadrons of various aircraft, as well as an additional nine squadrons of air defense

fighters.

Figure 5-2:   FEAF Holdings in East Asia[102]

· Squadron Type	Number of Sq	Plane	Location
Bomber	2	B-26	Japan
	3	B-29	Guam
Fighter-Bomber	6	F-80C	Japan
	3	F-80C	Philippines
Fighter-Interceptor/	5	F-80C and F-82	Japan
Air Defense	4	F-80C and F-82	Okinawa

The United States continued to show its commitment to maintaining a robust Air Force

presence even in the context of a global reduction in military forces in the late 1940s.

"On 23 July [1949], a devastating typhoon damaged Okinawan air facilities so severely

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100 *Ibid.*, 161.

101 Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War, Vol. 2*, 477.

102 Data compiled from Futrell, *The United States Air Force in Korea, 1950-1953*, 2-4. The only aircraft
included are tactical ones.   There were also sundry reconnaissance, transport and search and rescue
units.

that the Air Force could not continue operations without extensive reconstruction."[103]

Over opposition from Air Force leadership (who had other funding priorities), MacArthur,

the Army Chief of Staff, and others were able to convince JCS, and eventually the

President, that rebuilding the Okinawan airbase was key to the American deterrent

posture in the region.   The president's active support of this measure led to

congressional approval of a measure for over $50 million to rebuild the bases in October

of 1949.[104]   More generally, the Air Force was expected to play a significant role in any

American combat in the region.   Indeed, Kennan later explained why he had been rather

sanguine about the American military position in the area:

> I had been assured by a very high Air Force officer, on the occasion of my visit to Japan
> in 1948, that we had no need for any ground forces in Korea anyway, because the Air
> Force could control from Okinawa, through our strategic bombing campaign, anything
> that went on in the way of military operations on the Korean peninsula.[105]

Again, this sort of deployment would not have resonated in Beijing.

Thus, there were some military signals supporting the American general deterrent

posture.   While none were direct or particularly large, it would be inappropriate to

characterize them as trivial either.   Nevertheless, in each case they depended on factors

of military capability (training, combined arms, airpower, naval deployments) that would

have been foreign to the People's War doctrine prevalent in Chinese thinking at the time.

Thus, they support this dissertation's theory through Prediction #5 that states, "When

signaling to the other side, each side should send signals that make use of forces in

accordance with their own theory of victory."

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103 Harry R. Borowski, *A Hollow Threat: Strategic Air Power and Containment before Korea* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1982), 202.

104 *Ibid.*, 202-4.

105 George Frost Kennan, *Memoirs*, 1st ed. (Boston,: Little Brown, 1967), 482.   See also Stueck, *The Road to Confrontation*, 158.

Summary

American signaling policy came in several forms. First, the hardening of American containment policy at the global level relied on offensive strikes and punishment strategies. Second, there were diplomatic statements that were ambiguous and certainly less than robust, although they did not represent a complete abandonment of Korea. Finally, a number of military deployments and displays of force were made in and around the Korean peninsula.

These policies, in sum, should have sent at least a limited, general deterrent signal to the Chinese. Thus, the Alternate Hypothesis—which summarizes the conventional wisdom regarding deterrence and emphasizes the importance of the "objective" quality of the signal—would suggest that there was only a moderate chance for deterrence success. Undermining those prospects even further, as the dissertation's theory would predict, the military and grand strategic elements of these signals were deeply infused with the American theory of victory (again supporting Prediction #5 regarding sending signals with one's own theory of victory). This would have made them difficult to interpret by the Chinese. The following section examines that claim.

Interpretation by China

There is only limited evidence on the intricacies of Chinese decision-making, but what is available is supportive of the theory's predictions. This section lays out several different arguments. First, there is substantial evidence that the Chinese had a deep confidence that their tactics would be capable against the American forces. Second, there is substantial evidence of Chinese denigration of the dangers posed by the

American atomic arsenal. Finally, Mao (and Stalin) downplayed the threat of American involvement in Asia, and this appears to be related to his firm belief of Chinese superiority militarily.

That said, clearly other factors entered into Chinese decision making in this case. While a previous section emphasized that the Acheson speech is often overemphasized and that some aspects of American policy were hardening, neither of those points completely undermines the conventional view about this case. American deterrent policy was very general, and some aspects of policy were relatively weak. However, as the remainder of this chapter will show, coexisting with that was a degree of relative optimism about military factors in China.[106] This section argues that this false optimism also contributed to the Chinese decision to support the invasion plans.

Portions of the evidence presented below in support of the first two points (confidence in the Chinese military) stem from four to five months (sometimes more) after China decided to approve Kim Il Sung's attack plan in May of 1950. While such a gap is not an extended period of time, neither is it trivial. The data comes from the period when China was preparing to respond to the U.S. crossing of the 38th parallel with an intervention of its own. It is not surprising that more information would be available on Chinese perceptions as the prospect of Sino-American conflict increased through the summer. Nevertheless, the geopolitical logic explaining that decision is unquestionably different from that explaining the May decision.[107] However, this evidence does speak

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106 As noted earlier as well, at a later point, once the United States seems likely to move into North Korea, there is a degree of insecurity about the long term competition with the West in Beijing. However, this security dilemma logic does not contribute substantially in this earlier period.

107 This is discussed in the section on case selection in Chapter 2 as well as the introduction to the previous chapter on the U.S. decision to cross the 38th parallel. In short, the May decision could have been deterred, while the October one was less amenable to strategic coercion. (Clearly, it could have

to the issue of the relatively high degree of confidence that the Chinese felt with regard to

its military forces in a conflict against the United States. It seems very likely that this

confidence also existed in May of 1950 as Mao was deciding whether or not to approve

Kim's plans. (Nothing had occurred between May and the early fall that would have

increased China's confidence about facing the United States; indeed it is quite possible

that it would have decreased.[108]) Thus, evidence from the later period should be useful

in allowing us to extrapolate Chinese beliefs from May.

Confidence about Conventional Battles

As they finally explicitly faced the prospect of war with the United States, the

Chinese felt they had grounds for a degree of optimism regarding a number of tactical

issues. This evidence strongly supports the link between different theories of victory

and underestimation (H_1) as well as several of the theory's component predictions. First

is simply the prediction that there should be correlation between differences in theories of

victory and underestimation (Prediction #1). Second is the prediction that states with

different theories of victory will denigrate their adversary (Prediction #2), as discussed

above. Further, the theory also predicts "Larger differences between the two states'

theories of victory should correlate with a larger or more frequent underestimation of the

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been avoided by not crossing the 38th parallel, but that would not have been a case of *deterrence* success.) Nevertheless, the operational and tactical level perceptions that are presented in this section would seem likely to be persistent as they are not dependent on the geopolitical rationale for the war.

108 That is, the Chinese did not have reason to change their perception of their relative power in a positive direction between May and the late summer and early fall. A case could be made that the Chinese should have been less confident in August and even less in September as the United States first stabilized its lines in Pusan, then went on the offensive in Inchon. This would mean that Chinese confidence in May was even higher than one would infer from the statements recounted in sections below from the late summer and early fall.

adversary's capability" (Prediction #10).   All three of these predictions are borne out by

the evidence presented in this section.

The optimism of Chinese leaders as they faced the increasingly likely prospect of

conflict with the United States was widespread.   In August, Zhou had conducted

research into the American army at Mao's request.   His findings suggested weaknesses

such as "the heavy American dependence on logistical support."[109]   Similarly, a detailed

assessment made by field commanders from late September makes explicit the sources of

Chinese confidence.   The following summary of that report, with a number of direct

quotes from actual document, merits reprinting at length:

> First, the U.S. forces were politically unmotivated because "they are invading other
> people's country, fighting an unjust war, and thus encountering opposition not only from
> the American but other peace-loving peoples around the world," whereas the Chinese
> forces would "fight against aggression, carrying on a just war, and thus will have the
> support of our people and other peace-loving peoples; and more important our troops
> have a stronger political consciousness and higher combat spirit."   Second, the U.S.
> troops were inferior in terms of combat effectiveness, because, "although they have
> excellent modern equipment, their officers and soldiers are not adept in night battles,
> close combat, and bayonet charges."   By contrast, the CCP troops "have had rich
> experience over the past ten years in fighting an enemy of modern equipment ...and are
> good at close combat, night battles, mountainous assaults, and bayonets charges."
> Thirst, the U.S. forces were not tactically flexible, since "American soldiers always
> confine themselves to the bounds of military codes and regulations, and their tactics are
> dull and mechanical."   On the other hand, the CCP forces were "good at maneuvering
> flexibility and mobility and, in particular, good at surrounding and attacking enemy's
> flanks by taking tortuous courses, as well as dispersing and concealing [our own] forces."
> Fourth, American soldiers were not capable of enduring hardship.   "They are afraid of
> dying and merely relying on firepower [in combat, while] ... on the contrary our soldiers
> are brave and willing to sacrifice life and blood and capable of bearing hardship and
> heavy burdens," attributes that would remedy the disadvantage of inferior firepower.
> Finally, the U.S. forces had greater logistical problems.   The U.S. was "carrying on a
> war across the [Pacific] Ocean and has to ship most of the necessities from the American
> continent—even if it can use supply bases in Japan, [for instance] it is transporting
> drinking water from Japan—and therefore its supply lines are much longer, eventually
> making it difficult for them to reinforce manpower and supplies."   Meanwhile, the
> Chinese would be close the rear bases and "back by [their] fatherland."   The

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109 Goncharov, Lewis, and Xue, *Uncertain Partners*, 337, note 19.

> organization of supplies would also be much easier; because "we have less trucks and artillery, we won't consume that much gasoline and ammunition."[110]

In this passage, note in particular the references to U.S. military weakness due to numbers of troops, long supply lines, tactical inflexibility, lack of appropriate political motivation, and the dismissal of nuclear weapons. Conversely, the Chinese side was thought to benefit from the justness of its cause, their ability to move on foot, their aptitude for hand-to-hand fighting, and their light logistics tail. These Chinese military lens clearly shaped both those perspectives.

Mao's own optimism regarding his ability to withstand American attacks can be seen in discussions regarding the possibility of Sino-American war as China contemplated intervention in Korea in early October 1950. (This is not to say that Mao was blithely and universally optimistic; see the discussion below.) At that point, Mao was certainly cognizant of the prospect that the United States might attack China:

> Once the Chinese military (of course, the name we will use will be the volunteer army) has engaged the U.S. army inside of Korea, we have to prepare for America to declare and get into war with China. We also must prepare, at least, for the United States to bomb large cities and industrial bases within China and of the navy attacking our coastal zone.[111]

He went on to downplay this danger however, noting that it was not as important as victory on the battlefield—"most importantly, destruction of the 8th Army"—and

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110 Zhang Shuguang, *Mao's Military Romanticism*, 76-77. The bracketed editorial clarifications are all Zhang's. Zhang's footnote does note make clear the precise date, although it is clear it comes from late September 1950.

111 沈宗洪,孟照_ ,等<<中国人民志愿军抗美援朝战史>>(北京:军事科学出版社、版次 1990、印次 1999)。 Shen Zonghong, Meng Zhaohui, and others, *The History of the War to Resist America and Support Korea by the Chinese People's Volunteer Army* (Beijing: Military Science Press, 1999), 9. Note this language appears to come from the unsent version of Mao's telegram to Stalin on October 2, 1950. For discussion of this, and translation of the complete document, see Thomas J. Christensen, "Threats, Assurances, and the Last Chance for Peace: The Lessons of Mao's Korean War Telegrams," *International Security* 17, no. 1 (1992). As argued elsewhere, even though this telegram was not sent, it still has utility for assessing Mao's thinking.

suggesting that the population could be mobilized to create air defense forces.[112]   It is

unclear why the local peasantry would have better luck at air defense than did the PLA,

who at least had some dedicated anti-aircraft artillery.   Mao's confidence in his ability

to destroy the 8th Army seems quite excessive as well.   Mao's writing on this almost

precisely the same as his writing in 1947 when facing the corrupt and inept KMT army,

discussed in an earlier chapter.[113]   In this case, he called for overwhelming numerical

superiority—"my army needs four times the troop strength as the enemy's"—and

expected this to allow him to "thoroughly annihilate one army of the enemy."[114]   The

consistency of Mao's strategy against vastly different military adversaries is instructive

of the persistent influence of China's theory of victory on analysis.   At a somewhat later

date, Christensen writes of a "the optimistic tone of Mao's communiqués" to Stalin, Zhou

Enlai, Peng Dehuai, and others on military issues before February 1951.[115]

Other instances of relative Chinese confidence abound.   One of Mao's generals

later wrote of the perceptions at the time:

> During the past several decades, our army had always defeated well-equipped enemies
> with our poor arms.   Our troops were skillful in close fighting, night combat, mountain
> operations, and bayonet charges.   Even though the American army had modern weapons
> and advanced equipment, its commanders and soldiers were not familiar with close
> fighting, night combat, and bayonet charges.[116]

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112 沈,孟,等《抗美援朝战史》   Shen Zonghong, Meng Zhaohui, and others, *The History of the War* , 9.

113 See Chapter 3: Facing Off over Korea, in the section entitled "Integration of the Various Tactics."

114 See 毛泽东、"关于决定派军队人朝作战给四斯大林的电报"、1950 年十月二日、《建国以来毛
泽东文稿》、第一册:9/1949-12/1950(北京:中央文献出版社、1987)第 539 页.   Mao Zedong,
"Telegram to Stalin Regarding the Decision to Send Troops to Korea for Combat (October 2, 1950),"
in *Mao Zedong's Manuscripts since the Founding of the State*   (Beijing: Central Party Documents
Publishers, 1987), 541.

115 Christensen, "Threats, Assurances, and the Last Chance for Peace," 144, note 63.   See also Chen Jian,
China's Road, 143.

116 Xuezhi Hong, "The CPVF's Combat and Logistics," in *Mao's Generals Remember Korea*, ed. Li
Xiaobing, Allan Reed Millett, and Yu Bin (Lawrence, Kan.: University Press of Kansas, 2001), 115.

The Chinese expected bayonet charges to play a large role in the *hypothetical* next war; the United States thought that in general strategic bombing and nuclear exchanges would be central. Again, this is precisely what the theory would predict: "Each side should believe that battles will be dominated by factors emphasized by their own theory of victory." (Prediction #4)[117]

On October 24, 1950 in a speech to the People's Consultative Congress, Zhou Enlai wrote, "Our Army is capable of resolving the problem. The Air Force and Navy will not go because only next year will we establish them. But should we wait until our strength has grown before intervening? No!"[118] When it intervened, writes one Chinese scholar and military historian, "the CPV employed all of these familiar tactics: numerical superiority, mobile operations, and surprise."[119]

Another Chinese source quotes the Current Events Bulletin of the Central Committee of the CCP of October 26, 1950. This was an internally circulated, classified source that would have only been available to senior Chinese decisionmakers. This report also expresses their confidence in any conventional battle:

> [The United States] has economic strength and superiority of weapons and equipment, but its invasion actions toward the five continents has received the opposition of the people of the world and led to its political isolation. Militarily speaking, it also has many weak spots: its front line is long, its rear areas are far away, its troops are not numerous, its morale is not high. Its allied friends—England, France, etc.—are no longer great powers. Japan and West Germany have yet to arm. Atomic weapons are

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117 And it is irrelevant to the theory which side was correct in their expectations. The widely disparate views shaped their threat assessments.

118 周恩来<<周恩来军事文选>>第四卷(北京:人民出版社、1997)。 Zhou Enlai, *Zhou Enlai's Selected Military Writings* (Beijing: People's Publishers, 1997), 76.

119 Yu Bin, "What China Learned from Its "Forgotten War" in Korea," in *Chinese Warfighting: The PLA Experience since 1949*, ed. Mark A. Ryan, David M. Finkelstein, and Michael A. McDevitt (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, Inc., 2003), 127.

> now held by others, and furthermore do not determine victory or defeat. The final
> victory will certainly belong to the Chinese and Korean people.[120]

Thus, the Chinese confidence on conventional grounds was widespread.

Mao's Doubts

This is not to say that Chinese optimism was not unchecked, by any means. It is

clear that Chinese entered the war with much trepidation. Mao is reputed to have paced

the floor for a few days as the final moves were being made, and much of the back and

forth communication with Stalin in early October did center on the provision of Soviet air

support (which did not materialize until much later).[121] However, the most shrill of the

Chinese communications seem clearly to be attempts by the Chinese to get the best

possible bargain from their Soviet patrons.[122] Clearly, such an ideal bargain would

include air support and mechanized weapons. But the key point is, when the Soviets

rebuffed the personal request for air support of Zhou Enlai, who had flown to Moscow on

short notice in early October, the Chinese went ahead with their decision to intervene

nevertheless. From their perspective it seems, air support would have been a welcome

addition, but was not deemed absolutely critical to military operations.

Across all these pieces of evidence, the Chinese assessment of both sides'

capabilities is precisely predicted by this dissertation's theory: Differences in theories

of victory correlate with underestimation (Prediction #1). Leaders denigrated their

adversary's theory of victory (Prediction #2) and did not have nuanced discussions of

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120 沈,孟,等<<抗美援朝战史>> Shen Zonghong, Meng Zhaohui, and others, *The History of the War* ,
10.

121 For the best recreation of Mao's decision making here, see Chen Jian, *China's Road*, 171-209.

122 *Ibid.*, 199.

their adversary's strategy (Prediction #3). Indeed, the lack of sophistication in considering American strategies and capabilities is precisely that suggested in that prediction. The very large difference in the theories of victory led to large and frequent underestimations (Prediction #10). The optimism that comes from the difference in the two sides' theories of victory supports H_1 and likely informs conclusions regarding the dangers of war with the United States in the first place. That is, it supports the link between mistaken assessments of the balance of power that come from the underestimation of the adversary and escalation of the conflict (H_{2A}).

Again, this data regarding Chinese perceptions of the prospects for war with the United States comes from periods after May 1950. Nevertheless, it illustrates the enduring Chinese views regarding air power and mechanization that were present both before and after the key decision was taken. These perceptions would have informed Chinese decisionmakers as they faced the decision of whether to support Kim's invasion plan since one possible outcome they would have had to consider was war with the United States.

Confidence in the Face of Atomic Weapons

A second element of the Chinese confidence in their forces' ability to fight the Americans came on the issue of nuclear weapons. As the evidence will show, once the Korean War broke out, a wide range of Chinese leaders continued to express confidence in their ability to address this potential threat. Again, much of the evidence presented below focuses on Mao's thinking about potential American atomic weapon use in late 1950, not earlier that same year. However, if the Chinese leadership did not find American atomic weapons threatening at this later point, when any uncertainty about

American involvement in Korea had been resolved, it is unlikely that they would have felt differently in May when they decided whether to support Kim's invasion plans.[123]

In part, Chinese leaders likely took some limited solace in the signing of the Sino-Soviet alliance as a way to provide some extended deterrent to China. However, it is unlikely they had complete confidence the reliability of his Soviet ally. They would have been concerned about the Soviet side's negotiating behavior earlier in 1950. In Moscow, the Soviets had expressed great reluctance to include catch phrases like "with all means at its disposal" in the key provision of the treaty: "In the event of an invasion of one of the signatory countries by a third country, the other signatory country shall render assistance *with all means at its disposal.*" Only after much foot dragging by Moscow, was the provision inserted. (Even then the Soviets also were able to limit the scope of the alliance to conditions that were formally "in a state of war", providing Stalin with some leeway should Chinese behavior appear to put the Soviets in a corner.[124]) This reluctance by Stalin likely did not inspire great faith in Mao regarding the reliability of

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123 One argument why this might not be the case would be to note that the Chinese might have increased their confidence over time that the United States would not use such weapons since they had not done so in the war from June to October. This, however, only invalidates arguments regarding the likelihood of use of atomic weapons, not the confidence about the Chinese ability to overcome them if used.

124 The aforementioned points regarding the motivation on the wording and in particular on Stalin's desire to limit his commitment on the atomic side especially are drawn from Goncharov, Lewis, and Xue, *Uncertain Partners*, 118. (A similar point is made in Avery Goldstein, *Deterrence and Security in the 21st Century: China, Britain, France, and the Enduring Legacy of the Nuclear Revolution* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2000), 66.) The full text of this key paragraph in the Sino-Soviet Treaty is "Both Contracting Parties undertake jointly to adopt all necessary measure at their disposal for the purpose of preventing the resumption of aggression and violation of peace on the part of Japan or any other state that may collaborate with Japan directly or indirectly in acts of aggression. In the event of one of the Contracting Parties being attacked by Japan or any state allied with her and thus being involved in a state of war, the other Contracting Party shall immediately render military and other assistance by all means at its disposal." See Goncharov, Lewis, and Xue, *Uncertain Partners*, Document 45, p 260. The second caveat explicit in the treaty that gets less attention is the provision regarding "Japan or any other state allied with her...." Clearly, this implied the United States. However, the formal U.S.-Japan alliance was not signed until 1951, so this too likely provided Stalin some wiggle room on his commitments.

his extended nuclear deterrent.[125]   Similarly, Goldstein's study of Chinese nuclear

deterrent thought points out "Even before a formal treaty of alliance was signed, Soviet

behavior under Stalin had provided reason for China to worry about the possibility of

abandonment."[126]   Goldstein goes on to argue that these concerns remained unanswered

throughout the 1950s.[127]

As the two sides were edging toward conflict, the United States sent a number of

subtle nuclear threats.[128]   Beginning in early July, the United States had engaged in

noisy signaling of nuclear threats by deploying heavy, atomic-capable B-29s to both

Northern Europe and to the Asian region in a very public manner.[129]   However, the

Chinese were by no means cowed by these threats.   The Chinese media emphasized that

nuclear weapons lacked tactical utility.[130]   Ryan's study of the Chinese views of nuclear

weapons summarizes the "systematic, integrated party line dealing with nuclear

weapons" of the Chinese policymakers once they had decided to intervene in the Korean

War: "The United States had certain glaring weaknesses in its military posture in Korea

...   It was futile to try to use nuclear weapons to compensate for these weaknesses.

Bombing per se, including nuclear bombing, could not be a decisive military tactic."[131]

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125 See other discussions, with Stalin downplaying the utility of the Soviet arsenal at the time, at
Goncharov, Lewis, and Xue, *Uncertain Partners*, 108.

126 Goldstein, *Deterrence and Security in the 21st Century*, 65.

127 *Ibid.*, Chapter 3.

128 The best discussion of this can be found in Dingman, "Atomic Diplomacy During the Korean War."

129 Crane, *American Airpower Strategy in Korea, 1950-1953*, 27; Ryan, *Chinese Attitudes toward Nuclear Weapons*, 26.

130 Melvin Gurtov and Byong-Moo Hwang, *China under Threat: The Politics of Strategy and Diplomacy* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980), 54.

131 Ryan, *Chinese Attitudes toward Nuclear Weapons*, 39-40.   Ryan suggests this view applied "during the period from late October 1950 through January 1951."

At the same time, private, internal commentaries echoed these public views. At

a meeting of the commanders at divisional level and above of the Northeast Military

Region on August 13, 1950, one senior participant recalled that the military leaders relied

on international popular opposition to prevent the United States from using the weapons:

> We then explicitly assessed the factor of nuclear weapons and concluded that it was men,
> not one or two atomic bombs, that determined the outcome of war. And an atomic
> bomb use on the battlefield would inflict damage not only on the enemy's side but also
> on friendly forces. Furthermore, the people of the world opposed the use of nuclear
> weapons; the United States would have to think twice before dropping them.[132]

Such thinking seems more appropriate for pacifist idealists and political propagandists

than for hard-nose military line unit commanders. Senior leaders at the same meeting

shared this approach, focusing on their ability to overcome such weapons:

> Top CCP leaders speculated ... that the atomic bomb might be used. They understood
> that if the United States were to use the atomic bomb in Korea China had no way to stop
> it. But they would not be scared by such a prospect and would try to use conventional
> weapons to fight the Americans. ... In short, the dominant voice of the conference
> favored the CCP Politburo's opinion that China should not be scared by the bomb.[133]

Internal briefing papers were making similar points in November:

> The atomic bomb itself cannot be the decisive factor in a war ... the atomic bomb has
> many drawbacks as a military weapon   ...   it can only be used against a big and
> concentrated object like a big armament industry center of huge concentration of troops.
> Therefore, the more extensive the opponents' territory is and the more scattered the
> opponents' population is, the less effective will the atomic bomb be.[134]

A later discussion held by operational military commanders toward the end of the war

was similarly Panglossian and simplified.[135]

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132 Du Ping, "Political Mobilization and Control," in *Mao's Generals Remember Korea*, ed. Li Xiaobing, Allan Reed Millett, and Yu Bin (Lawrence, Kan.: University Press of Kansas, 2001), 62.

133 Chen Jian, *China's Road*, 142-4. Indeed, in the early days of the Korean War

134 This is a quote from the internal circulation (*neibu*) Current Affairs Handbook (*Shishi shouce*) on November 5, 1950. Quoted in Ryan, *Chinese Attitudes toward Nuclear Weapons*, 42. While some in the United States would make similar points at the time, the overall tenor in the United States would have been quite the opposite.

135 See Zhang Shuguang, *Mao's Military Romanticism*, 237-38.

Mao, in particular, was dismissive of the value of nuclear weapons for the United

States in this case. At the 9th meeting of the Central Committee on September 5, 1950,

he argued:

> We will not let you (the United States) attack us. If you absolutely want to do so, then go ahead. You attack us your way, we will attack you ours. You attack using atomic weapons, we will attack using hand grenades; we will grab on to your weaknesses, and after this, in the end, defeat you.[136]

As a sign of his confidence about this issue, in his telegram to Mao conveying his

decision to enter into war to Stalin, Mao makes no mention of nuclear weapons.[137]

A scholarly assessment from the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences in 1994 is

highly critical of Mao's views on nuclear weapons. It characterizes them precisely as

above, that is, as strongly denigrating the weapons' utility.[138] This study goes on to

explicitly make the point of this dissertation's theory:

> In the case of Sino-U.S. conflict, we can see that Chinese leaders, particularly Mao Zedong, and the American leaders used different criteria to assess atomic bombs or atomic warfare. They lacked the basis to reaching a common understanding.[139]

Similarly, Chen Jian describes the view of top leaders from the CCP as they

moved closer to intervention later in the summer:

> Top CCP leaders speculated ... that the atomic bomb might be used. They understood that if the United States were to use the atomic bomb in Korea China had no way to stop it. But they would not be scared by such a prospect and would try to use conventional weapons to fight the Americans. ... In short, the dominant voice of the conference favored the CCP Politburo's opinion that China should not be scared by the bomb [140]

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136 沈,孟,等<<抗美援朝战史>> Shen Zonghong, Meng Zhaohui, and others, *The History of the War* , 5.

137 For a work that emphasizes this point as significant and related to Mao's pejorative views of such weapons, see Chen Jian, *China's Road*, 179. For a view that places less emphasis on this, see Christensen, "Threats, Assurances, and the Last Chance for Peace," 137, note 43.

138 He Di, "Paper Tiger or Real Tiger: America's Nuclear Deterrence and Mao Zedong's Response," *American Studies in China* 1 (1994).

139 *Ibid*.: 14.

140 Chen Jian, *China's Road*, 142-4.

Certainly some of the Chinese confidence stemmed from a belief that the United States

was unlikely to use nuclear weapons.[141] Nevertheless, even this judgment contains some

assessment of the likely utility of the use of such weapons for the United States; it

involves some cost-benefit analysis. As the Chinese made that estimate, they

substantially downplayed the benefits that would accrue to the United States relative to

the perceptions on that issue in the United States.[142] (This imputation of intent from

capability precisely that predicted in H_{2A} of this dissertation.)

Additional evidence on this point can be found once the two sides were engaged

in conflict. At various times during the war,[143] and particularly during the long drawn

out negotiations over ending the Korean War, the United States made threats—sometimes

oblique, sometimes less so—regarding atomic weapons to push the Chinese negotiating

position. In early 1951, Truman deployed not only atomic-capable bombers, but

bombers loaded with actual atomic weapons to the region.[144] However, as one scholar

well versed in Chinese sources regarding the Korean War concluded,

> There is no evidence to show that the Beijing leadership, while forming this tough
> strategy [regarding its negotiating position at Panmunjom], paid any significant attention
> to whether or not the Americans would use nuclear weapons in Korea. Although
> military planners in Beijing probably considered the possibility that the Americans would
> use nuclear weapons for tactical targets in Korea, Mao and the other Chinese leaders
> firmly believed that the outcome of the Korean conflict would be determined by ground
> operations. Not surprising at all, then, when Mao and the other CCP leaders analyzed

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141 *Ibid.*, 178.

142 And again, the critical issue is that the two sides differ in their valuation of a particular strategy, not which side is correct. Different perspectives, right or wrong, will make communication more difficult.

143 There may have been attempts to quietly threaten the Chinese in May of 1951, although precisely what was being demanded of the Chinese is unclear from the available historical record (perhaps simply not expanding the war further, although it is odd this threat would be conveyed to the Chinese rather than the Soviets). See Dingman, "Atomic Diplomacy During the Korean War," 140-41.

144 Robert Pape, *Bombing to Win: Air Power and Coercion in War* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996), 146.

the means Washington might use to put pressure on the Communists, they did not even bother to mention the atomic bomb.[145]

If the Chinese were not threatened by (or could not understand) the more explicit threats in late 1950 and 1951, then there is no chance they would have been deterred by the mere possession of atomic weapons by the United States in early-mid 1950. Again, this evidence supports the link between different theories of victory and underestimation (H_1) and the predictions regarding the perceptions of the adversary's strategies, the overall balance of power, the nature of war, and the effect of extreme values on the independent variable (Predictions #1-3 and #10).

The evidence above suggests large degree of confidence on the Chinese side regarding both conventional and atomic warfare. This confidence supports the link between different theories of victory and underestimation of the adversary (H_1) and likely shaped China's views about the overall balance of power (thus, supporting Predictions #1 and #10 and H_{2A}) and also about the degree of intent that the American policies would have communicated. In turn, this led to difficulty in interpreting the adversary's intent—H_{2B}—and downplaying the likelihood that he will indeed get involved—Prediction #6 and #7.

Beliefs regarding American Intent

In addition to exhibiting confidence regarding Chinese capabilities, Mao did not expect the United States to get involved in the Korean War. This directly supports Prediction #7: "Leaders of states with different theories of victory should downplay the

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145 Chen Jian, *Mao's China and the Cold War* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 111.

likelihood of the other side getting involved in a conflict or in further raising the stakes in

it." Khrushchev, in his memoirs, writes of Mao's perceptions as the Chinese leader was

approving the invasion in May: Mao "put forward the opinion that the USA would not

intervene since the war would be an internal matter which the Korean people would

decide for themselves."[146] Similarly, in December of 1949, Mao summarized his and

Stalin's shared views on the general situation in Asia:

> Stalin said that the Americans are afraid to fight a war. Americans order others to fight,
> but they too are afraid. According to this thinking, it would be very hard for war to arise.
> *We agree with this estimate.*[147]

Merely a fortnight later, on January 5, 1950 in Beijing, senior military leaders in China

were downplaying the possibility of the United States sending troops to defend Taiwan in

the event of a PRC invasion there on military grounds.[148] The proponent of this was Su

Yu, the leader in charge of the invasion of Taiwan, who was speaking at a "military

conference". Chen Jian summarizes:

> From a military perspective, Su saw a vulnerable America. He believed the that United
> States needed at least five years to mobilize enough troops to enter a major military
> confrontation in the Far East. Su's conclusion was that "in terms of their attitude toward
> Taiwan, the American's would not send troops to Taiwan but might send in planes,
> artillery, and tanks."[149]

(Note that the two pieces of evidence presented here predate the Acheson speech so

certainly cannot have been affected by it.) After the Korean War broke out Zhou Enlai

expressed a similar optimism about American behavior in the face of Chinese people's

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146 Khrushchev, *Khrushchev Remembers*, 368.

147 Emphasis added. Mao was summarizing a conversation he had with Stalin on December 16, 1950 two days later in a telegraph to Liu Shaoqi. See 裴<<中华人民共和国外交史>> Pei Jianzhang, *Foreign Relations History* , 17. For a comparison of this source to two others on the same meeting, see Chen Jian, "Commentaries: Comparing Russian and Chinese Sources: A New Point of Departure for Cold War History," *Bulletin of the Cold War International History Project*, no. 6-7 (1995/96): 20.

148 Chen Jian, *China's Road*, 102. Chen implies this is not a response to President Truman's speech later on the same day in Washington, and given the 13 hour time difference this is almost certainly the case.

149 *Ibid.*

War strategies: "The unity of our nation and our people is so important and so powerful

that any imperialist attempt to invade China would be frightened away by it."[150]   Each of

these examples suggests that at a general level, the Chinese were inclined to downplay

the likelihood of American intervention.

The two leading Chinese scholars writing on this period from the United States

also agree.   Zhang Shuguang writes that Chinese military commanders were "alarmed at

the vigorous American military reaction to the Korean events" in June of 1950.[151]   Chen

Jian supports this at a number of points, for instance: "Mao Zedong and others in

Beijing should not have been surprised by the North Korean invasion, but they were

certainly shocked by the quick and unyielding American reaction."[152]   As discussed

above, there is evidence from the Russian archives that Mao was encouraging the North

Koreans to use force for reunification and to not expect American entry.[153]   Other

scholars point out that Mao had not expected any substantial U.S. military commitment

before the war.[154]

It is easy to understand why this might have been the case given the perspective

on American strategy outlined above, as H_{2A} suggests: "An underestimation of an

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150 Zhou was speaking on October 1, 1950.   Zhang Shuguang, *Deterrence and Strategic Culture: Chinese-American Confrontations, 1949-1958* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1992), 94.

151 Zhang Shuguang, "Command, Control, and the PLA's Offensive Campaigns in Korea, 1950-51," in *Chinese Warfighting: The PLA Experience since 1949*, ed. Mark A. Ryan, David M. Finkelstein, and Michael A. McDevitt (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, Inc., 2003), 91.

152 Chen Jian, *China's Road*, 126.   See also pp. 134-5.

153 "Document # 13: 12 May 1950, ciphered telegram, Shtykov to Vyshinsky re meeting with Kim Il Sung" in Weathersby, "New Russian Documents on the Korean War," 38-39.   For the precise quote, see the discussion on page 232, above.

154 Westad, *Decisive Encounters*, 321. Zhang Xiaoming, *Red Wings over the Yalu*, 56-57.   Shen suggests that there were concerns that Japan might enter, but not the United States.   Shen Zhihua, "China Sends Troops to Korea," 15.

adversary's capabilities can lead to deterrence and coercive failure, escalation, and

conflict in international crises because it complicates assessments of the balance of

power." Since Mao thought U.S. intervention would be costly to the Americans (for the

reasons discussed in previous sections), and because he thought the United States cared

about such costs, he likely downplayed the likelihood of the United States getting

involved. Part of this view came from a general view that communist leaders believed

that contradictions among the capitalist forces would be unlikely to lead them to unify in

opposition to any communist gains.[155] These logics had shaped Chinese interpretation

of previous cases. There was also the belief that communist forces had deterred the

United States from intervening in the Chinese civil war:

> The United States refrained from dispatching large forces to attack China, not because the
> government didn't want to, but because it had worries. The first worry: the Chinese
> people would oppose it and the U.S. government was afraid of getting hopelessly bogged
> down in a quagmire.[156]

All of this supports the hypothesis linking underestimation to faulty assessment of

the balance of power and coercive failure (H_{2A}) and the prediction that leaders will

downplay the likelihood of their adversary's involvement (Prediction #7). Particularly

in the cases of Mao's December 1949 assessment and that of the military conference in

January 1950, the quotes explicitly link the assessment of American intent to a pejorative

view of American capabilities that stems from the Chinese theory of victory.

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155 Stueck, *The Korean War*, 79. For a study describing the role that communist ideology played in shaping Mao's evaluations of international relations in general, see Michael M. Sheng, *Battling Western Imperialism: Mao, Stalin, and the United States* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997).

156 Mao Tsetung, "Farewell, Leighton Stuart [August 18, 1949]," in *Mao Tsetung and Lin Piao: Post Revolutionary Writings*, ed. K. Fan (New York, NY: Anchor Books, 1972), 54. See also Zhang Shuguang, *Mao's Military Romanticism*, 35-6.

Dissent in China

While it is correct to characterize the dominant view in China as optimistic

regarding its own capabilities compared to the Americans, there were some prominent

dissenters.[157] These tended to come from military leaders who had been exposed to

western training.

Thus, Zhu De in particular repeatedly advocated that additional resources be

dedicated to artillery, air defense, logistics, and air support.[158] Zhu De was one of the

most senior military leaders in China and was commander-in-chief of the PLA at the time.

He had been trained at the Yunnan Military Academy and later taught at Whampoa

Military Academy where as noted above, he would have been exposed to German

operational arts.[159] Zhu De also served under Chiang Kai-shek in a number of capacities.

All of which is to suggest that he had reason to view warfare somewhat differently than

did Mao.

Similarly, at an early August 1950 discussion, Ye Jianying had argued with Mao,

over the merits of sending troops to Korea and the speed with which they could be

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157 Peng Dehuai is sometimes regarded as a dissenter as well. See Andrew Scobell, *China's Use of Military Force: Beyond the Great Wall and the Long March* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 84-86. However, the evidence for this is debatable. Within 24 hours of being appraise of the plan to send Chinese troops to Korea in October of 1950 he goes from believing that "troops should be sent to rescue Korea to believing it was "essential" or required that they do so. Neither of these seems fundamentally opposed to intervention. Further, there is little sense of particular concern regarding the prowess of American weaponry or its air force in Peng's statements at the time.

158 Yu Bin, "What China Learned (2003)," 129. On Zhu De, see also Scobell, *China's Use of Military Force*, 86.

159 Donald W. Klein and Anne B. Clark, *Biographic Dictionary of Chinese Communism, 1921-1965* (Cambridge, Mass.,: Harvard University Press, 1971), 245. See also Wilson, *China's Revolutionary War*.

deployed.[160]   Ye was a senior Chinese military leader who had been trained at the

Yunnan School, and who also served as an instructor at Whampoa.   Some line officers

within the Northeast Border Defense Army (NEBDA) also seemed cognizant of the many

of their equipment and training problems.[161]

Lin Biao is another leader often cited as one who had a more conventional view

of military operations than Maoist doctrine permits.   (His later turn toward extreme

Maoist rhetoric is often explained with reference to another aspect of his character: "a

shrewd and increasingly cynical Lin began to tailor his advocacy to the prevailing

wind."[162])   Indeed, during the late 1950s and early 60s, Lin Biao's contributions towards

modernization and professionalization of the PLA were substantial.

> On 29 September 1959, in his first major policy speech, Lin set the tone for much of what
> was to follow ...   A subtle but significant modification was also made to Mao's doctrine
> that "men are superior to material."   Lin's new formulation was that "men and material
> form a unity with man as the leading factor."   Later in the year, Lin also reinstated Su
> Yu as vice-minister of defense.   Su had been fired in October 1958, for advocating all-
> out priority to PLA modernization.[163]

Lin's emphasis on preserving professionalism and enhancing modernization within the

military remained strong even during the tumultuous Cultural Revolution.[164]

Thus it is not surprising that Lin's views led him to a deep skepticism about the

merits of Chinese involvement in Korea.[165]   Unfortunately, there is no evidence

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160 Ryan, *Chinese Attitudes toward Nuclear Weapons*, 27.   Ryan cites the memoirs of one of Peng
Dehuai's assistants on Mao's argument.   See also Scobell, *China's Use of Military Force*, 89.

161 Zhang Shuguang, *Mao's Military Romanticism*, 62.

162 Frederick C. Teiwes and Warren Sun, *The Tragedy of Lin Biao: Riding the Tiger During the Cultural
Revolution, 1966-1971* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1996), 17.   On Lin's politics, see also,
Roderick MacFarquhar, *The Origins of the Cultural Revolution* (London,: Oxford University Press,
1974), vol. 3, p 449.

163 Harlan W. Jencks, *From Muskets to Missiles: Politics and Professionalism in the Chinese Army, 1945-
1981* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1982), 55-56.

164 Harry Harding, "The Chinese State in Crisis, 1966-1969," in *The Politics of China: The Eras of Mao
and Deng*, ed. Roderick MacFarquhar (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 156.

regarding his position in May 1950, as the decision to support the North Korean's

invasion in the first place was being made. However, there is information regarding

Lin's views on Chinese intervention in October 1950. At that point, he would have

been the obvious leader to take command of the Chinese forces in Korea. He was a

well-respected military leader who commanded the Fourth Route Army, the seasoned

army already deployed in the Northeast that was later to serve as the core of the

intervention force. Furthermore, he was quite close to Mao. However, he refused the

job offer from China's paramount leader (never an easy task in authoritarian

dictatorships). Publicly, this was said to be because of his poor health. However, there

is significant evidence that this story is, at best, incomplete. Peng Dehuai, the eventual

commander, writes in his autobiography: "Mao needed a *willing* military commander

since his first choice, Lin Biao, clearly was *reluctant* to take the assignment."[166] No

mention of the health issue here, and indeed "reluctance" and a need for someone

"willing" suggest that there was more going on here. More sharply worded on this point,

however, is the autobiography of Nie Rongzhen, at that time Chief of Staff of the PLA:

> Lin Biao opposed sending our troops to Korea. At first, Mao had chosen Lin to
> command the CPVF in Korea, but Lin was so fearful of this task that he gave the excuse
> of illness and obstinately refused to go to Korea. It was strange to me because I had
> never seen him so timid in the past when we worked together.[167]

Chen Jian as well characterizes Lin as opposed to the war, citing memoirs of Chai

Chengwen, a Chinese diplomat stationed in Pyongyang, as well as documents and

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165 Again see Scobell, *China's Use of Military Force*, 87-89.

166 Emphasis added. Peng Dehuai, "My Story of the Korean War," in *Mao's Generals Remember Korea*, ed. Li Xiaobing, Allan Reed Millett, and Yu Bin (Lawrence, Kan.: University Press of Kansas, 2001), 32.

167 Nie Rongzhen, "Beijing's Decision to Intervene," in *Mao's Generals Remember Korea*, ed. Li Xiaobing, Allan R. Millett, and Yu Bin (Lawrence, Kan.: University Press of Kansas, 2001).

recollections of the relevant Politburo and senior leadership meetings.[168]   Lin apparently

led some other dissenters in the Politburo Standing Committee meeting of October 4,

although little is known of their identities.[169]

Thus, there clearly was some dissent regarding the utility of People's War against

the American forces, and this led some leaders to oppose the war in early fall.   However,

as is made clear above, the dissent seems centered in a few leaders who were least

identified with a People's War doctrine or leaders who had been exposed to western

thinking about military affairs.   In these cases, their own theory of victory was closer to

that of the United States, and so their assessments of the Chinese prospects were much

more pessimistic.   Unfortunately, Mao and the most important other top leaders held

different views.

This section thus supports the prediction from the theory chapter that suggested

that leaders less wrapped up in their side's theory of victory will be less likely to make

the underestimating errors associated with this theory (Prediction #11).

Post-Event Evaluations by the Chinese

Again, the theory chapter suggests that in addition to direct evidence through

process tracing, a number of other, related, ancillary predictions of the theory can be used

to test it.   Several of those pertain to surprise by the countries after a failure of strategic

coercion.   This section shows that the American response surprised Mao and the

Chinese leadership.   There is clear evidence that they had misjudged American intent

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168 Chen Jian, *China's Road*, 152, 185.   See also associated notes.

169 *Ibid.*, 182.

(Prediction #9).   The theory also makes predictions about Chinese assessments of both

its and the U.S.'s doctrines after war has been joined by both sides.   The shock shown at

all levels—tactical, operational, and strategic—in China as well as at the effectiveness of

American airpower comes up repeatedly and strongly supports Prediction #8 which

anticipates precisely this reaction.[170]   These assessments led to significant changes in the

PLA.   Since part of the calculus for the Chinese regarding supporting Kim's

intervention in the first place was based on the prospect of China getting involved in a

wider war (and confidence about that), this evidence strongly supports H_1 this

dissertation's theory.

Again, as with the previous section, some of the evidence presented here will

come from the fall of 1950.   (Although some data does come from June and July 1950,

so is less far removed from the Chinese decision of May and does not raise these issues.)

For the most part, however, there is no alternative, even if complete access to Chinese

archives was possible. Of course, the only way to assess how Chinese perceptions of their

relative capabilities stacked up in the real world is to examine them during and after a

military conflict.   Due to particulars about alliance relations in the Korean War, the

Sino-American conflict did not begin until five months after Mao gave his approval for

the war to begin.   However, the Chinese surprise at that point would have been based on

(and contrasted with) beliefs that were in place in May 1950 as well.   Thus, that

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170 In full, Prediction #8 reads:
8.   Actual battle outcomes, when they occur, should deviate further from leaders' expectations when
nations have more different theories of victory guiding their forces.
  a.   In cases where one side forced the battle on the other, the side taking the initiative should be
surprised at its difficulties on the battlefield
  b.   In cases where both sides pursued battle, both sides should be surprised at their difficulties
  c.   More generally, any leader who believes s/he has a viable strategy in the context of the current
conflict should be surprised at its (relative) shortcomings when battle is actually joined.
  d.   Leaders often have incentives to conceal their surprise, so it may manifest itself as hastily
reinforcing or last minute changes in strategy.

information is useful here for evaluating the various predictions of the dissertation's theory, as outlined above.

Surprise at American Entry

As argued above, Mao had not expected the United States to get involved in the Korean War. Beyond the points raised above, his surprise at U.S. entry is shown through his behavior after the war broke out. The U.S. response led to substantial changes in Chinese policy in several areas, something that would be unlikely had the Chinese anticipated the American action.[171] Chinese policy toward the United States shifted at a grand strategic level, moving to a more confrontational mode toward not only Korea, but also toward Indochina and Taiwan.[172] On July 7th, not even two weeks after the outbreak of war, the Central Military Commission (CMC) quickly made a decision to act: "There emerged a consensus that the Sino-Korean border defense must be strengthened immediately since 'it is necessary to prepare an umbrella before it rains.'"[173] Note that this same logic would have applied in May or throughout June had the Chinese expected the United States to become significantly involved.[174] While *post hoc, ergo proctor hoc* is not logically correct, nevertheless, this evidence is suggestive. It seems likely that the Chinese were not expecting a substantial and effective American engagement or they would have made these moves earlier.

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171 And as noted, the Chinese knew of the North Korean plan to attack, so that event cannot be the cause of the change in Chinese behavior.

172 Chen Jian, *China's Road*, 130ff.

173 Zhang Shuguang, *Mao's Military Romanticism*, 59.

174 While the Chinese claim to have had no prior knowledge of the precise date of the North Korean offensive, they should have had some rough sense of this following the May meetings.

As it was, only immediately following the CMC meeting was the PLA to move

large numbers of troops.   These had been deployed in Fujian, the obvious jumping point

for an invasion of Taiwan, but were moved towards the northeast, where they would form

the core of the NBDA.[175]   Further, these early Chinese moves to redeploy troops were

particularly hurried, with large units given very short timeframes to complete their

orders.[176]   Note also, these moves occurred in mid-July, well before the war began to

turn in favor of the United States (at which point a different logic—defensive concern

over Manchuria—might explain the Chinese moves).   All this suggests that the U.S.

action surprised Mao and the senior Chinese leadership, and they had misjudged

American intent in the diplomatic and military signaling before the war.

Strategic Level Evidence

When American and Chinese forces met in November 1950, the Korean War

proved disastrous for Maoist military thought.   Whitson writes that after the outbreak of

the war, the role of the "peasant ethic" in Chinese military thought declined.[177]   He

summarizes the lessons learned:

> The first year of the Korean War thus challenged the 1947 ten-point compromise between
> Mao and his generals.   On the strategic level, the belief of senior Communist officials
> that a quick battlefield victory would demoralize the United Nations troops proved not
> only erroneous but terribly costly in trained manpower.   At the tactical level, commissar
> emphasis on political ideology soon rang false, as officers and men rediscovered the
> virtues of small-unit professional leadership as the greatest assurance of battlefield
> performance and loyalty.   These lessons reinforced the post-1951 trend toward

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175 Chen Jian, *China's Road*, 132.

176 Zhang Shuguang, *Mao's Military Romanticism*, 58-60; Zhang Shuguang, "Command, Control, and the PLA's Offensive Campaigns," 92.

177 William W. Whitson and Zhenxia Huang, *The Chinese High Command: A History of Communist Military Politics, 1927-71* (New York, NY: Praeger, 1973), 459.

modernization in the PLA and had an immediate impact upon the preparation of the second great wave of PLA units assigned to Korea.[178]

Later, he continues,

> A few senior leaders and many younger leaders learned that the best-trained and best-indoctrinated infantry soldier, lacking properly coordinated air and artillery support, is a poor match for massed modern firepower, coordinated by a single staff through sophisticated communications. They learned other disheartening lessons about the efficacy of guerrilla warfare, Mao's thought, and "People's War."[179]

Several quotes from senior Chinese leaders emphasize this point. Mao later wrote:

> The War to Resist America and Support Korea served as a large classroom for us. At that time we engaged in a big practice exercise. This exercise was much more useful than ordinary military training.[180]

This suggests that Mao learned something new about American tactics and warfare from the war. Zhou Enlai had a similar impression, writing in 1952:

> Although in terms of equipment, weapons, and firepower we were weak compared to the American imperialists, we learned many things from our enemy's side. Now we have practiced, and we know how to drive back their attacks. ... If this war had not occurred, we would not have been able to learn from these experiences[181]

Both of these quotes blandly suggest that in Korea the United States taught the Chinese forces some lessons. Given that archival material is only selectively released by a CCP bureaucracy that uses historiography (and hagiography) to justify the party's continued authoritarian rule, one should not expect too much more. (Indeed, at a general level, even now one only sees occasional critiques of Mao's conduct of the war in China. For instance, one Chinese scholar writes specifically of Mao's "rash determination to entirely

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178 *Ibid.*, 95.

179 *Ibid.*, 462.

180 廖国良、李士顺、徐焰<<毛泽东军事思想发展史>>修订版(北京:解放军出版社、2001). Liao Guoliang, Li Shishun, and Xu Yan, *The Development of Mao Zedong's Military Thought* , Revised ed. (Beijing: The People's Liberation Army Press, 2001), 452.

181 周<<周恩来军事文选>> Zhou Enlai, *Zhou Enlai's Selected Military Writings* , 297.

destroy the UN Army" following the successful second campaign leading to "suffering

many serious setbacks in subsequent campaigns."[182])

Outsiders can be more honest. In his memoirs, Khrushchev writes of the

persistent optimism of the Chinese forces as they entered the Korean War, and the

mistaken nature of those beliefs:

> In the archives you can find documents in which P'eng Te-huai gave his situation reports
> to Mao-Tse-tung. P'eng composed lengthy telegrams expounding elaborate battle plans
> against the Americans. He declared categorically that the enemy would be surrounded
> and finished off by decisive flanking strikes. The American troops were crushed and
> the war ended many times in the battle reports which P'eng sent to Mao, who then sent
> them along to Stalin.
>
> Unfortunately, the war wasn't ended quickly at all. The Chinese suffered many huge
> defeats. ... China bore terrible losses because her technology and armaments were
> considerably inferior to those of the Americans. On both the offensive and the
> defensive, Chinese tactics depended mostly on sheer manpower.[183]

At a military strategic level, the entire shift to 'rotational warfare' in 1951 also

suggests an evolving understanding of the war by the Chinese. Rather than an early,

comprehensive victory, Chinese leaders recognized they would be fighting the war over a

sustained period, thus necessitating a regular rotation of troops into Korea from PLA

reserves. Mao's own explanation of this to Stalin expresses the belated nature of the

recognition of this point:

> First, it is clear from the most recently conducted campaigns of the Korean War that the
> greater part of the enemy has not suffered destruction and therefore is not going to
> abandon Korea. If we are going to destroy the enemy in any large numbers, then we
> need time. We ought make preparations for at least two years...After losing several
> hundred thousand Americans over a period of several years, they will have to recognize
> the difficulty that they are in and pull back. Then we can settle the Korean question. [184]

182`   时殷弘,<<关于台湾的几项必须正视的大战略问题>>战略与管理宗弟 39 期,第 2 期(2000).
Shi Yinhong, "Several Major Strategic Problems Regarding Taiwan That Must Be Addressed,"
Strategy and Management 39, no. 2 (2000): 29.

183 Khrushchev, *Khrushchev Remembers*, 372.

184 This is drawn from a telegram from Mao to Stalin on March 1, 1951, reprinted in Michael H. Hunt,
Crises in U.S. Foreign Policy: An International History Reader (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University
Press, 1997), 227-28.

The latter portion of that quote is particularly interesting given that Mao had earlier

bemoaned the loss of a "over a hundred thousand battle and non-battle casualties" of his

own in less than three months of fighting. This hints at his views of the relative casualty

sensitivity of the two sides: several hundred thousand casualties over a period of many

years would cause a strategic reappraisal in the United States, but losses on a pace of

several hundred thousand in a *single* year would not be a problem for China.

All of this suggests that at a strategic level, the Chinese were surprised by the

prowess of the American military it faced with its own People's War strategy. This

surprise at the adversary's capabilities on the battlefield is precisely what the theory

predicts (Prediction #8). In turn, this supports the overall hypothesis that there was an

underestimation and that it was linked to the difference in the theories of victory between

the two countries (H_1).

Chinese Casualties Were Much Higher than Expected

Mao's views on casualties in mid-1951, above, had come a long way. Before

the war, Chinese expectations were much more optimistic. In August of 1950, Beijing

considered the possibilities of casualties explicitly. Addressing the question of how to

replace casualties within the NBDA, Zhou Enlai spoke of "selecting 10,000 men from all

other PLA forces for the NBDA replacements."[185] At a meeting of the CMC, the

members "estimated that casualties of around 200,000 (60,000 deaths and 140,000

wounds [sic]) would occur in the first year of the war and that proper medical support

should be prepared."[186] In January 1951, a mere six weeks after beginning his main

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185 Quoted in Zhang Shuguang, *Mao's Military Romanticism*, 64.

186 Chen Jian, *China's Road*, 151.

offensive, Peng Dehuai already reported having lost half his men, which translates into at least 200,000 casualties.[187] By June 1951, the UN estimated the PLA had suffered some 577,000 casualties.[188] That was only months after the war started. American estimates put total Chinese casualties for the war at 1 million, with the vast majority of those coming before the end of 1951 (and thus the end of the period for which the Chinese estimated incurring 200,000 casualties). After this point, the war settled into relatively static combat with no further major Chinese offensives.

Again, this strongly suggests that the cost-benefit analysis that Beijing had in mind when deciding to take steps that led toward war was far too optimistic.

Tactical Level Evidence for Ground Combat

A large amount of evidence regarding Chinese shock at their ineffectiveness compared to the UN forces is also available. Some has been alluded to above; much more will be presented here. The two great powers fought their initial battles in November of 1950. The Chinese soon found that the difficulties in surrounding and wiping out large enemy units—the primary operational strategy for the PLA—were pronounced. American tactical mobility and the substantial firepower available even to small American units caused these problems for the Chinese. Beyond that, the PLA found the logistics demands of a foreign war to be taxing, and the American air force, in their view, caused significant problems. The following sections develop these points.

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187 Peng Dehuai, "My Story of the Korean War," 34. For the quantification, see the editors' footnote at *Ibid.*, note 13.

188 Lewis and Xue, *China Builds the Bomb*, 8.

Views on American Tactical Mobility

The Americans' tactic of rapid withdrawal without the collapse of units also had

not been expected by the Chinese (although it had been planned by the U.S. military even

before hostilities broke out).[189]   The United States would simply retreat to stretch the

Chinese lines of communication and would do so even when not under direct pressure.[190]

This led to problems for the Chinese, as Segal describes,

> There were signs that the strategy of ambush and luring in deep had its limits against a
> more modern and mobile force than Chiang Kai-shek's forces.   U.S. troops soon found
> that Chinese forces could not fight lengthy continuous battles without having to stop for
> supplies and new instructions to get to the front.   The swift U.S. withdrawal to the 38th
> parallel far outstripped the pace that the less flexible Chinese command and logistics
> system was designed to handle.[191]

Peng Dehuai, as well, noted these difficulties keeping up with the rapidly moving U.S.

forces:

> Because of their high level of mechanization, the U.S., British, and puppet troops were
> able to withdraw speedily to the Chongchon River and the Kechon Area, where they
> started to throw up defense works.   Our troops did not pursue the enemy because the
> main enemy force had not been destroyed even though we had wiped out six or seven
> battalions of puppet troops and a small number of American troops.[192]

Even much later in the war (in the middle of 1951), Peng complained about the same

problem:

> Except our energetic pursuit of anti aircraft artillery (including both low and high attitude
> weapons), increasing military strength outside of battles of the five campaigns in the
> areas of tactics, technology, and leadership still has many limitations.   *In too many*
> *opportunities to wipe out the enemy, he has again escaped.*   This deserves thorough
> discussion, self-criticism, and rectification.   What important shortcomings does our
> military have?[193]

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189 Dennis D. Wainstock, *Truman, Macarthur, and the Korean War* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1999), 89.

190 Schnabel, *United States Army in the Korean War*, 304.

191 Gerald Segal, *Defending China* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 101-03.

192 Peng Dehuai, *Memoirs of a Chinese Marshal: The Autobiographical Notes of Peng Dehuai (1898-1974)*, trans. Zheng Longpu (Beijing: Foreign Language Press, 1984), 475.

193 Emphasis added. 彭德怀"彭德怀关于几个战术问题的讲话要点"(8/15/51),从"抗美援朝战争期间
彭德怀的两次讲话"中共党史资料,1998 年 12 月总第 68 辑　　Peng Dehuai, "Summary of Lecture

Other scholars note that the Chinese were surprised by the speed of American offensives

and counterattacks as well.[194]

Destroying Americans Units once Engaged

Once the U.S. forces had been found and fixed, the Chinese forces still had

trouble destroying them (which they had been able to do against similarly engaged

Japanese or KMT forces). "Luring them in deep" was not effective when "they" could

then set up hasty, but strong, defensive positions from which they could easily hold off

the ill-equipped Chinese forces.[195]   Again, Peng notes

> If we encircled a U.S. regiment, our troops would need two days to wipe it out because
> they were poorly equipped and the enemy air force and mechanized units would do
> everything to rescue the encircled unit.   Only once did our troops wipe out an entire U.S.
> regiment and none of its men was able to escape; this took place in the Second Campaign.
> Otherwise our troops were able to wipe out only whole U.S. battalions.   If a U.S.
> battalion encircled in the night were not wiped out while it was still dark, the Americans
> had the means to rescue it the following day.[196]

Similarly, another scholar, Yu Bin, writes:

> The First Campaign also revealed some major problems in the CPVF, however.   One
> was its inadequate firepower, which was so weak that a much larger CPVF unit was often
> unable to overcome a small enemy unit (battalion level) in a hastily built defensive
> position.   The CPVF was also unable to pursue retreating UN forces because of its
> unmotorized infantry and lack of supplies.   These difficulties were therefore one of the
> main reasons for its 'disappearance,' which has been widely interpreted by Western
> analysts as part of the CPVF's strategic plan after the initial engagement with the UN
> forces.[197]

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on Several Tactical Problems (October 15, 1951) (Reprinted in Two Speeches by Peng Dehuai During the Korean War')," *Party Historical Documents* , no. 68 (1998): 3-4.

194 Zhang Shuguang, "Command, Control, and the PLA's Offensive Campaigns," 97, 105, 107-8, and 111.

195 *Ibid.*, 102.   This was the case even for the first offensive, in October and November of 1950.   Yu Bin, "What China Learned (2003)," 128 and 130.

196 Peng Dehuai, *Memoirs of a Chinese Marshal*, 481.

197 Yu Bin, "What China Learned from Its 'Forgotten War' in Korea," in *Mao's Generals Remember Korea*, ed. Li Xiaobing, Allan Reed Millett, and Yu Bin (Lawrence, Kan.: University Press of Kansas, 2001), 15.

Difficulties with Logistics for the PLA

The problems that the logistics system had faced were substantial. Beyond the

paucity of military equipment, the PLA troops lacked basic supplies critical for survival

in general.

> First, we had a big problem feeding our soldiers in the war. Since enemy airplanes
> bombed us frequently, grain could be transported to the front only with difficulty. Even
> though some reached the front, our troops could not cook their food. Cooking needed
> fires, and fires caused smoke, which would surely expose our troops' position and attract
> enemy air raids. There was almost no way to solve this problem. During our five
> offensive campaigns, many CPVF troops had to allay their hungers with 'one bite
> parched flour and one bite snow." We should say that the parched flour had played a
> significant role in our food supply during the mobile warfare period. However eating
> parched snow caused diarrhea.[198]

Zhou Enlai, who was organizing supply issues for Mao during the war, recognized that

the food supplies that the PLA had brought along were insufficient and "every day he

called twice" to check on the production of winter clothes.[199] The general supply

situation was so bad that on January 22, 1951, Zhou was forced to hurriedly call for a

meeting of the senior political-military leaders (including Nie Rongzhen and others) to

discuss logistics. This was the first time that such a meeting had been formally held

regarding the Northeast army and the forces in Korea.[200] This poor preparation meant

difficulties for the troops in Korea:

> [A] large number of CPV troops were severely frostbitten and unable to fight. Some
> had even died of exposure. The troops had virtually no protection against frostbite; they
> coated their faces with pork fat and wrapped their feet in straw.[201]

Indeed this problem complicated the ability of the PLA to prosecute their offensives, as

discussed above: "one Chinese military historian points out that the CPV's defeat in May,

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198 Nie Rongzhen, "Beijing's Decision to Intervene," 54.

199 周恩来传编写组,抗美援朝(周恩来传选载,党的文献,1998, 第一期(总第六十一期)45-55 Zhou
Enlai Editorial Group, "Resist America, Support Korea (Zhou Enlai Biography Selected Publication),"
Party Documents , no. 1 (cumulative #61) (1998): 52.

200 *Ibid.*: 53.

201 Zhang Shuguang, "Command, Control, and the PLA's Offensive Campaigns," 104.

1951 demonstrated the Communist forces' inability to overwhelm the enemy without air cover to guarantee the delivery of supplies."[202]   Even given these limitations, the demands on the domestic transportation system back in China were tremendous, requiring the use of a full 20 percent of all Chinese trains in fall of 1951.[203]

The Dangers of the USAF

The Chinese certainly had not appreciated the full extent of the dangers that the U.S. Air Force would pose.   It exacerbated all of the problems listed above.   For instance, the U.S. bombing campaign was having significant effects on logistics.   Mao reported to Stalin with a tone of chagrin, "At the same time, the enemy has been constantly bombing transport lines.   Only sixty to seventy percent of the resupply materiel for our forces are reaching the front lines, and the remaining thirty to forty percent is being destroyed."[204]   Zhou Enlai's biography also emphasizes the difficulties posed by the enemy's air force to the logistics flows, particularly for those heading to the front lines.[205]   The tactical effects of all UN air strikes were devastating: "The Chinese admitted that for three years their ground forces were unable to carry out large military activities in the daytime because of such intensive bombing."[206] When the fledgling Chinese air force first took to the sky against the UN forces, it repeatedly suffered

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202 Zhang Xiaoming, *Red Wings over the Yalu*, 117.

203 Nie Rongzhen, "Beijing's Decision to Intervene," 56.

204 Telegram from Mao to Stalin, March 1, 1951, reprinted in Hunt, *Crises in U.S. Foreign Policy*, 228.

205 周恩来传编写组,抗美援朝   Zhou Enlai Editorial Group, "Resist America, Support Korea ," 53.

206 Zhang Xiaoming, *Red Wings over the Yalu*, 204.

setbacks, causing the Chinese leadership to pull it back for additional preparation on two

separate occasions.[207]

Other Problems

In some cases, the Chinese simply found themselves fighting a war they did not

understand.   The PLA's use of artillery was rudimentary and dealing with counter

battery fire proved problematic.   As late as October of 1951, a full year after Chinese

entry, Peng Dehuai—the top military commander of the PLA forces in Korea—was

providing basic admonitions to the senior leadership of the 3rd Army that would have

been familiar to any enlisted soldier in the artillery corps in the United States Army:

> Under this condition of our inferiority to the enemy in terms of range, if we are
> unrealistic and fire our own artillery from exposed, open positions, this is not appropriate.
> If we do not carefully attend to camouflage and cover, we will immediately encounter
> unnecessary personnel losses.[208]

A similar disconnect with modern warfare is apparent in the following passage:

> Amazingly, enemy horse cavalry made daytime appearances.   FEAF aircraft found
> several cavalry units and inflicted heavy losses to men and horses.   Pilots reported that
> the horsemen neither dismounted nor took cover when attacked.[209]

Both these are consistent with a peasant, infantry army facing an adversary whose tactics

created foreign and heretofore-unseen dangers.

It is not only the problems that the PLA faced that are instructive.   It is the acute

surprise they felt.   In short, nearly all the tenets of People's War were not working

against the Americans.   Alexander George found evidence for this in his survey of some

300 prisoner of war interviews from the Korean War.   He summarized,

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207 *Ibid.,* 107, 155.

208 彭德怀"彭德怀关于几个战术问题的讲话要点"   Peng Dehuai, "Summary of Lecture on Several
   Tactical Problems (October 15, 1951) ," 2.

209 William T. Y'Blood, *Down in the Weeds: Close Air Support in Korea* (Washington, DC: Air Force
   History and Museums Program, 2002), 22.

> As remarks of the kind just quoted imply, PLA military doctrine was discredited in the
> eyes of the Chinese soldiers by what they had experienced in Korea. It is of particular
> importance to note that disillusionment with Mao Tse-tung's doctrine extended to combat
> cadres. ... The eighteen hard core prisoners (mostly junior combat cadres at company
> and lower levels) were virtually unanimous in reporting that they and their fellow soldiers
> had come to question the applicability of PLA military doctrine to the conditions of
> combat and the nature of the enemy in Korea.[210]

George also relates the plaintive pleas from battalion and regimental elements for

"reinforcements of airplanes and artillery."[211] From nearly a hundred interviews of

soldiers who had entered Korea with the first wave of Chinese forces in the fall of 1950,

more than 85 percent found their training to be "totally inadequate" for the Korean

War.[212] This figure is particularly astounding since these forces, committed to the war at

the outset, were among the best-trained and equipped forces of the PLA at the time.[213]

The Full Range of Tactical Problems

Peng Dehuai summarized the wide scope of problems that the Chinese forces

faced at the end of the Third Campaign, in early January 1951:

> By now the Chinese People's Volunteers had fought three major campaigns in a row in
> severe winter after their entry into Korea three months before. They had neither an air
> force nor sufficient anti-aircraft guns to protect them from enemy bombers. Bombed by
> aircraft and shelled by long-range guns day and night, our troops could not move about in
> the daytime. And they had not had a single day's good rest in three months. It is easy
> to imagine how tired they were. As our supply lines had now been extended, it was
> very difficult to get provisions. The strength of our forces had been reduced by nearly
> 50 percent due to combat and non-combat losses. Our troops badly need reinforcements
> and rest and reorganization before they could go into battle again.[214]

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210 Alexander L. George, *The Chinese Communist Army in Action: The Korean War and Its Aftermath*
(New York,: Columbia University Press, 1967), 171.

211 *Ibid.*, 174.

212 *Ibid.*, 168.

213 Former KMT troops were used as well, but mostly later in the war. The troops involved in the earlier
campaigns were drawn heavily from the Fourth Route Army, the most storied in PLA history from the
Chinese Civil War.

214 Peng Dehuai, *Memoirs of a Chinese Marshal*, 479.

All of the evidence presented in the sections suggests that the PLA had not expected to face such a capable military, as the dissertation's theory would predict in the context of such differing theories of victory (Prediction #8). The repeated surprise at the shortcomings of the Chinese way of war is clearly apparent in the evidence above. This suggests that the Chinese were likely to have misperceived the overall balance of power before the war, contributing to errors in their decision-making and their assessment of the U.S. side.

Changes in Doctrine during the War and After

After the Chinese had entered the Korea War and engaged the UN forces, they made a number of changes in PLA doctrine and strategy. These, too, are suggestive of the failure of the Chinese side to accurately assess the other side's capabilities. Many of these changes addressed difficulties stemming from the unexpected effectiveness of the Americans against People's War strategies.

Some of these changes refined the PLA's tactics:

> Overwhelming UN firepower, in turn, forced the CPV to change its tactics ... The CPV adopted its so-called mobile defense tactic. It would deploy its forces lightly at the front while reserving the main units at grater depth. This helped reduce casualties from UN fire and maintained some flexibility for mobile operations.[215]

Other scholars note a Chinese shift toward static, attritional warfare that was not in part of a Maoist People's War strategy and had not been part of the PLA's original plan.[216] For the infantry itself, infiltration tactics, utilizing highly trained small units (and not large masses of poorly trained units as would have been called for under a People's War

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215 Yu Bin, "What China Learned (2003)," 133. This is a standard implementation of a defense-in-depth strategy, useful against a mobile, armored adversary.

216 Pape, *Bombing to Win*, 155.

strategy) were increasingly used.[217] The logistics system was thoroughly overhauled in the wake of the bloody losses of the Fifth Campaign.[218] Yu Bin provides an excellent summary of the range of military changes:

> From the conclusion of the Fifth Campaign until the end of the war, the CPV adopted more cautious and realistic strategies, including maintaining a relatively stable front line, increasing CPV air force, artillery, and tank units; and beefing up logistical supplies. Indeed the CPV increasingly became a mirror image of its American counterpart in its calculation and operation of the war. In the end, the CPV emphasized professionalism, the role of firepower, and improved capabilities.[219]

Additionally, very rapidly during the war, Chinese forces moved away from the political emphasis inherent in People's War strategies.[220]

The Chinese also made changes in the nature of units brought to Korea. Whitson notes that the second set of units the PLA deployed to the Korean theater put increased emphasis on the technical branches: "artillery, anti-tank, engineer, railway-guard, and eighteen out of twenty two new air divisions were committed in an apparent process of modernization under fire."[221] The PLA Army Groups committed to the fifth offensive by the Chinese (in spring 1951) were much better equipped, having received Soviet weaponry for most of their order of battle. After the war, Peng proposed

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217 彭德怀"彭德怀关于几个战术问题的讲话要点" Peng Dehuai, "Summary of Lecture on Several Tactical Problems (October 15, 1951) ," 3.   Again, this comes from a lecture in mid-1951 by Peng to the senior leadership of the 3rd Army.   In it, he emphasizes the importance of company and battalion infiltration, of highly trained, "crack" troops who would aim to destroy command and control targets, as well as of artillery.   Again, this is a contrast from aiming to wipe out entire units, as was called for under traditional People's War tactics.   The tactics are clearly reminiscent of German doctrinal innovation late in WWI facing a similar strategic terrain: static front lines well supported with substantial firepower.

218 Evan A. Feigenbaum, *China's Techno-Warriors: National Security and Strategic Competition from the Nuclear to the Information Age* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2003), 17.

219 Yu Bin, "What China Learned (2003)," 137.   Clearly these military changes were coupled with changes in political or geo-strategic goals.   However, these are clearly related: the changed political goals resulted from difficulties faced on the battlefield.

220 Whitson and Huang, *The Chinese High Command*, 95.

221 *Ibid.*

increasing the relative weight of the artillery, air defense, armored, engineers, and other technical branches still further, all at the expense of the infantry.[222]

Additionally, and of the largest long-term importance, after the war, the PLA began to strongly emphasize modernization. The link between this and the lessons of the war are indisputable: "The impact of the Korean War on the modernization of the Chinese army can hardly be overestimated."[223] As a specific example, the Chinese undertook a program of training guided by the PLA's Academy of Military Science [AMS] that went was very different from previous military education:

> PLA training for conventional warfare was to employ combined arms operations in the Soviet model. AMS recommendations indicate that future training was to go beyond simply combining ground force arms to include all three services in addition to the infantry, artillery, and tank and air defense units of the ground forces. The PLA was taking its first steps toward joint warfare.[224]

In a recent comprehensive study on the evolution of China's national military science and technology research programs, Feigenbaum describes the depth of change that followed the war in this regard.

> Doctrinal differences erupted full-force within the PLA, although the precise tenor and scale of the disputes remain difficult to gauge even five decades later. As early as 1952, Liu Bocheng, a hero of the civil war, began to deliver a series of now-famous lectures to division-level officers at the PLA's new Military Academy in Nanjing that offered a theoretical rationale to undermine Mao's doctrine of "man over weapons." After the Korean armistice, the practical impact of American firepower combined with Liu's theoretical insights to establish what Lewis and Xue have termed a "new baseline of knowledge" for military professionals. The academy began to teach the "lessons" of Korea in the classroom and nurtured an entire generation of Chinese senior officers on the notions of "modern," mechanized, technologically oriented warfare that had emerged from the PLA's brutal encounter with American technology in Korea.[225]

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222 王焰、等<<彭德怀传>>(北京:当代中国出版社,1993). Wang Yan *et al., Biography of Peng Dehuai* (Beijing: Modern China Press, 1993), 505.

223 Ellis Joffe, *Party and Army: Professionalism and Political Control in the Chinese Officer Corps, 1949-1964* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1965).

224 Paul H.B. Godwin, "Change and Continuity in Chinese Military Doctrine: 1949-99," in *Chinese Warfighting: The PLA Experience since 1949*, ed. Mark A. Ryan, David M. Finkelstein, and Michael A. McDevitt (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, Inc., 2003), 34.

225 Feigenbaum, *China's Techno-Warriors*, 18.

Peng Dehuai's biography suggests that these lessons reverberated far beyond the military and explains the emphasis on military technology in the 1952 five year plan with reference to the war: "That was the plan made during the period while the war was still continuing, [calling for] large scale development of technology in all branches of the armed services."[226] When Peng presented a 10-point report the senior military leadership of the PLA in early 1954, less than six months after the war, the bulk of the discussion focused on modernization and technology development.[227]

Changes in the focus of the senior leadership paralleled these changes in the mid-level officer training. Liu Shaoqi, later to serve as defense minister, served as commandant of the Nanjing Academy during this time of debate and change. There he battled against the established Maoist ideology.[228] Peng Dehuai (Minister of Defense through much of the later 1950s) tried to implement these changes throughout the mid- and late-1950s.[229] As Feigenbaum writes,

> Under Marshal Peng Dehuai, the high command spent much of the 1950s trying to cope
> with vast gaps in Chinese readiness and technology revealed by the Korean War.
> Influenced by Soviet doctrine, these men recognized the sharp divergence between the
> army's guerrilla traditions and its need for modern weapons. Thus [they were] united
> by a nearly universal sense that the PLA's guerrilla heritage had lost relevance in the face
> of enemy firepower...[230]

The struggles over professionalization (or man versus weapons) of the PLA throughout the late 1950s and early 1960s centered on interpreting the lessons of the Korean War.[231]

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226 王,等 <<彭德怀传>> Wang Yan and al, *Biography of Peng Dehuai* , 502.

227 *Ibid.*, 510-513.

228 Feigenbaum, *China's Techno-Warriors*, 22. Discussing the Nanjing School in similar terms is Whitson and Huang, *The Chinese High Command*, 462.

229 Yu Bin, "What China Learned (2003)," 138.

230 Feigenbaum, *China's Techno-Warriors*, 27.

231 Joffe, *Party and Army*, 48-50.

Ellis Joffe, a doyen in PLA studies for the last several decades, summarizes these

doctrinal and force structure changes:

> It is difficult to evaluate the less tangible aspects of the Korean War's impact on the
> Chinese military leaders, but there can be little doubt that it was a traumatic experience
> for them. It hammered home the fact that their army would have to undergo a sweeping
> technological and organizational transformation before it could lock horns with a modern
> military force; it exposed them to the manifold problems of modern warfare for which
> their rich storehouse of experience provided no solutions; and it dramatically
> demonstrated the limitations and liabilities of their hitherto successful strategy and tactics.
> In sum, the Korean War not only gave the Chinese an almost newly equipped army, but it
> also probably raised serious doubt in the minds of at least some leaders regarding the
> continuing validity of many facets of their experience.[232]

These shifts suggest that the Chinese found their previous doctrine lacking in comparison

to their adversaries, thus calling into to question the assessments of power and intent that

sprang from them. This is precisely what the theory predicts: nations should be

surprised at their relative weakness on the battlefield (Prediction #8). The existence of

such surprise strongly suggests that their original estimation of the adversary was

mistaken (H_1),

Slowly Budding Interest in Airpower

The problems posed by American airpower were noted above. However, even

after the war began, Mao continued to downplay the role of airpower. His persistent

reluctance to fully appreciate the impact of airpower on his ground forces was a constant

source of tension with the operational commander on the ground, Peng Dehuai. Mao

repeatedly pushed Peng to move faster and to push harder, while Peng would point out

the severe damage American airpower was imposing.[233] Similarly, Mao expressed

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232 *Ibid.*, 12.

233 Zhang Xiaoming, *Red Wings over the Yalu*, 114.

skepticism about the effects of airpower to line commanders who, having been on the

receiving end, knew better:

> Zhu Guang, commander of the 2nd Artillery Division, later recalled that when he returned
> to Beijing several months later, Mao invited him to his office and asked for Zhu's opinion
> about how serious a threat UN airpower was to ground operations, and how many
> casualties were actually inflicted upon Chinese forces by aircraft. The chairman
> appeared displeased with those he thought exaggerated the role of enemy airpower.[234]

However, eventually Peng and others were able to change Chairman Mao's mind,

and secure additional support for the PLA Air Force. Both it and the Navy received

added attention after some of the sharp losses of the battles with the United States:

> By mid-1951 U.S. intelligence estimated that there were "10,000 Soviet military advisers
> throughout China." Soviet assistance had made substantial improvements to the
> Chinese air force and navy and was expected to increase sharply.[235]

After the war, the air force received particular attention. Rather than undergoing a

demobilization, as is the case in many countries following the conclusion of a large scale

war, the Chinese aimed to more than double the size of their air force within a mere five

years.[236] After the war, Peng emphasized the importance of the air force for the future

security of the PLA.[237]

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234 *Ibid.*, 115. While it is possible that Zhu Guang was, in fact, exaggerating the role of American
airpower, that is inconsistent with the line of reasoning Zhang is making when he uses this evidence.
Zhang presents this data to bolster a point he made regarding Mao's "reservations about the effect of
the enemy's airpower in Korea."

235 Lewis and Xue, *China Builds the Bomb*, 7.

236 Zhang Xiaoming, *Red Wings over the Yalu*, 209.

237 王,等 <<彭德怀传>> Wang Yan and al, *Biography of Peng Dehuai* , 506.

Rethinking Nuclear Weapons

Chinese thinking regarding nuclear weapons changed in the wake of the Korean War and, even more, the 1954-55 Taiwan Straits Crisis.[238] Early inklings of this were apparent during the later stages of the Korean War.

> Thereupon, the Chinese Peoples' Volunteers launched an urgent campaign to construct fortifications, including, "in the frontline battlefield, Anti-Atom shelters ... built deep in the middle of the mountains." And then too there were the deliberate leaks: "We purposefully let the spies of the other side ... get some intelligence of the preparations we were waging."[239]

Parallel to these military defense measures for their forces in the field, the Chinese were engaged in a significant civil defense program at home.[240] By 1953, the Chinese were carefully following the changes in the American nuclear posture under Eisenhower.[241]

By 1955, Mao's conversion on the issue of nuclear weapons was complete

> By 1955, this French advice and assistance had helped raise the level of consciousness in Beijing about the bomb and its potential significance for China. Mao characterized that significance for his senior colleagues in 1958, when he told them that without atomic and hydrogen bombs, "others don't think what we say carries weight." Mao thus understood the importance of nuclear weapons and the power they bestowed.[242]

Chinese scholars, too, place Mao's conversion on this issue to the mid-to late-1950s.[243]

Again, these shifts emphasize that when faced with incentive to consider more carefully atomic weapons, Mao was forced to change his view on them. This

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238 On the role of the Korean War in particular, see Pape, *Bombing to Win*, 170-71. More generally see Lewis and Xue, *China Builds the Bomb*, Chapter 2 "American Power and Chinese Strategy, 1953-55".

239 Lewis and Xue, *China Builds the Bomb*, 15. Note the citations for this passage are interviews with senior Chinese leaders at the time. The precise timeframe they refer to is unclear, although Lewis and Xue imply that it is during the armistice negotiations.

240 Ryan, *Chinese Attitudes toward Nuclear Weapons*, 109.

241 Lewis and Xue, *China Builds the Bomb*, 18; Pape, *Bombing to Win*, 171. See also Lewis and Xue, *China Builds the Bomb*, 256 note 35. This continued as the United States shifted from "massive retaliation" to "flexible response" in its nuclear doctrine. Lewis and Xue, *China Builds the Bomb*, 195.

242 Lewis and Xue, *China Builds the Bomb*, 36.

243 He Di, "Paper Tiger or Real Tiger," 17.

emphasizes the superficial way that nuclear weapons had been considered in the past,

supporting Prediction #3 which expects an absence of nuanced discussion regarding the

adversary. It also suggests he likely had underestimated their utility in the previous

period, as this theory would predict. Again, this supports the main hypothesis linking

differences in theories of victory to underestimation of the adversary (H_1).

Summary

Thus, in nearly every relevant area, the American intervention surprised the

Chinese. They had misjudged American intent, underestimated their own casualties,

and were deeply mistaken regarding the dangers posed by airpower and mechanized,

combined arms formations.[244] After the war, the PLA made numerous doctrinal and

strategic changes in response. This all suggests that the Chinese, when deciding

whether to support Kim's invasion plan in May in the first place, were basing their

thinking on a flawed cost-benefit analysis. The costs of potential conflict with the

United States were much higher than they expected. All this supports one component of

the dissertation's theory, linking differences in theory of victory to underestimation, as

well as specific predictions of that theory regarding surprise at the adversary's

capabilities and intent (Predictions #8 and #9).

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244 Some of these misjudgments may have come from ignorance about American doctrine and limited study by the PLA regarding American doctrine and tactics from WWII. However, such ignorance is clearly related to the fact that the American doctrine was so different from that of the Chinese. Had they been more similar, such ignorance would have been dramatically easier to overcome.

An Aside on Soviet and North Korean Motivations

This case examined the failure of the United States to deter Chinese support for

the Korean War. What of Soviet and North Korean support? While this dissertation

does not aim to explain those nations' policies, they are worth discussing briefly before

turning to the next case. For both of those countries, the theory of victory was more

similar to that of the United States than that of the Chinese. Clearly, they were not

precisely the same (on atomic weapons and strategic bombing in particular there were

significant differences), but the Soviets—and the North Koreans whom they taught—did

focus on the importance of combined operations, blitzkrieg-type breakthroughs led by

tanks, and to some extent on tactical air support.[245] Thus, they should not have been

subject to the same over-optimistic biases that this dissertation argues the Chinese fell

victim to. Nevertheless, both were in favor of the invasion. Does this contradict the

dissertation's theory?

Simply, those two cases of enthusiasm for the war have other explanations. For

the North Koreans, there was a strong motivated bias in favor of foreseeing victory.

Only by claiming that they were likely to succeed would they be able to secure the

support of their two patrons. Reunification was a political and nationalist goal of the

highest order,[246] and the support of their allies was required for it. In negotiations with

the Soviets and the Chinese, the North Koreans constant downplayed the likelihood that

245 See, for instance, Clay Blair, *The Forgotten War: America in Korea* (New York: Times Books, 1988); Eliot A. Cohen, "'Only Half the Battle': American Intelligence and the Chinese Intervention in Korea, 1950," *Intelligence and National Security* 5, no. 1 (1990): 137, *passim*; Korea Institute of Military History, *The Korean War*.

246 Bruce Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War: Liberation and the Emergence of Separate Regimes, 1945-1947*, vol. 1 (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1981); Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War, Vol. 2*.

the United States would intervene.   Additionally, the potential costs of a general war would not be borne primarily by them, so the risks of that were not central to their decisionmaking.[247]

The Soviets were likely taken in to some extent by Kim's enthusiasm.   But beyond that, for them, and Stalin in particular, an additional rationale applied.   As noted above, Chen Jian and Richard Thornton separately argue that Stalin wanted to keep Mao dependant on, and to some extent subservient to, Moscow for his survival.[248]   In order to achieve this, China had to be in a state of perpetual conflict with the United States.   (In at least one account, Stalin saw a greater likelihood of American intervention than Mao did.[249])   Dragging the Chinese into the Korean War would accomplish that like no other policy, and so Stalin expressed his support for the war, so long as the Chinese agreed —who as discussed earlier, were to take the lead in supporting communism in East Asia. After May 1950, Stalin's trap was set.

This dissertation makes no claims to explain all cases of false optimism.[250] Other explanations for optimism, false or otherwise, certainly exist.   Beyond that, not all wars are explained by false optimism.   More to the point, not all participants in a particular war need have the same motivation for entry into it.   The dissertation has little to say about the Soviet and North Korean rationales for entering the war.   However, for the Chinese in this period, the dangers of getting involved in a potentially catastrophic

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247 That should be relevant, for instance, for consideration of atomic issues.

248 Chen Jian, *China's Road*, Chapter 5: The Decision for War in Korea; Thornton, *Odd Man Out: Truman, Stalin, Mao, and the Origins of the Korean War, passim.*

249 Khrushchev, *Khrushchev Remembers*, 368.

250 See the discussion in the "Theory and Method" chapter.

conflict with the United States were viewed with false optimism. Certainly some of that optimism came from Kim's persuasion of Mao that China would not get involved. However, based on the discussion above, it also seems likely that the role of doctrinal difference contributed to Chinese misperceptions and false optimism.

Neither of these above rationales that swayed Moscow and Pyongyang applied to Beijing. The Chinese were likely to bear the direct costs of any escalation themselves, and Korean unification was not a nationalist issue in Beijing. Further, they had no interest in deepening the rift with the United States just as Washington was moving away from alignment to the KMT on Taiwan. For the Chinese, the optimism regarding the possibility of facing the United States had to come from other sources. This chapter has tried to lay out at least a partial explanation for that.

Conclusion

This case provides some moderate support for the dissertation's theory. The effects of the two sides' theories of victory certainly shaped each side's perception of its capabilities relative to the other, strongly supporting H_1. The two sides' theories of victory also seemed to have blurred their assessments of the balance of power (H_{2A}) and shaped the pre-war diplomacy (H_{2B}) in ways that contributed to the deterrence failure. These points are clearly apparent in the way that the United States used threats and force to send general deterrent signals. There is also circumstantial evidence that the Chinese interpreted U.S. signals as predicted given the context of doctrinal differences. It is there that this case is weakest (although the shortcomings stem from a limitation of available evidence more than the existence of contradictory evidence.) Further, the

dramatic post-war re-evaluation of People's War strategies by the PLA suggests that its leaders felt their prior theory of victory had been incorrect in many ways, also supporting the theory (H_1, in particular).

The explanation suggested by the Alternate Hypothesis focusing on the objective strength and clarity of the signal in accounting for this failure of general deterrence also does a reasonable job of explaining the case, although it does leave open some questions. As noted, post-hoc concerns over Acheson's speech seem unlikely to entirely explain the case, and there were some military signals sent. Absent the difficulties in interpreting these signals that this dissertation explains, it would seem that the Chinese should have been more cautious in May 1950. The Alternate Hypothesis should predict a low chance for deterrence success and, in fact, deterrence failed. However, at least some of the processes by which deterrence failed appears to have followed the paths predicted by this dissertation's theory.

Thus, in this case both theories contribute to a rich understanding of the outcome. While the Alternate Hypothesis has traditionally been the focus of scholarly explanation, based on the limited evidence available, the dissertation's argument also receives some support. The next case turns to a different theater of Sino-American conflict to see how the proposed theory works there.

Chapter 6. CHINA POSTPONES
THE INVASION OF TAIWAN
(CASE STUDY #3)

Historical Background

This case shifts to look at a different theater. In April of 1949, Communist forces crossed the Yangtze—the critical piece of strategic geography in continental China dividing the north from the south. KMT resistance in the south rapidly crumbled. Immediately thereafter, Mao began to turn his attention to the next and final phase of the civil war, Taiwan.

Taiwan was paramount among a range of Chinese concerns, for both offensive and defensive reasons.[1] The Central Military Commission warned "If we fail to solve the Taiwan problem in a short period, the safety of Shanghai and other coastal ports will be severely threatened."[2] Indeed, Shanghai was regularly being attacked from the air at the time, and Chinese air defense forces were only having limited success at stymieing the enemy.[3]

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1 Zhou Enlai characterized the Chinese grand strategy at the time as "the concept of confronting the United States on three fronts." The three fronts were Taiwan, Indochina, and Korea. Quoted in Chen Jian, *China's Road to the Korean War: The Making of the Sino-American Confrontation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 94.

2 "Telegram, CCP Central Military Commission to Su Yu and others, 14 June, 1949" in Zhang Shuguang and Chen Jian, eds., *Chinese Communist Foreign Policy and the Cold War in Asia: New Documentary Evidence, 1944-50* (Chicago, Ill.: Imprint Publications, 1996), 117.

3 刘少奇、"转呈华东局关于敌机狂炸上海情况电报的批语"、1950 年二月七日<<建国以来刘少奇文稿>>、第一册:7/1949-3/1950(北京:中央文献出版社、1998)。 Liu Shaoqi, "Telegram to Mao Presenting Notes on the East China Bureau's Report on the Situation Surrounding the Unrestrained Bombing of Shanghai (February 7, 1950)," in *Liu Shaoqi's Manuscripts since the Founding of the State* (Beijing: Central Party Documents Publishers, 1998).

Plans were gathering momentum to take Taiwan by mid-1950, with most analysts,

both contemporary and subsequent, viewing the KMT's situations as hopeless.   More

than 30,000 transferred soldiers had reinforced the Chinese Communist Navy.[4]   Military

preparations had advanced quite substantially:

> By spring 1950, the Communists had assembled a motley armada of 5000 vessels for the
> invasion by commandeering freighters, motorized junks, and sampans and refloating
> [naval warships] that had been sunk in the Yangtze River.   Further, they gathered and
> trained over 30,000 fishermen and other sailors to man the flotilla.

> Secretary of Defense Louis Johnson later revealed that between June 10 and June 24,
> 1950, the strength of the [3rd] field army [stationed across from Taiwan] swelled from
> 40,000 to 156,000 men.   Also prior to June 25, elements of Lin Biao's 4th Field Army
> moved from south China to the Shanghai area.[5]

Construction of regional military infrastructure was also progressing rapidly: "in 1950,

the PRC was actively building or rehabilitating 6 airfields in the Taiwan Strait area."[6]

The 1950 Chinese New Year's proclamation by the official *Xinhua* news agency

mentioned that Taiwan would be attacked that year.[7]

American sources also thought the invasion was imminent.   The CIA predicted

in March that Mao's forces "are estimated to possess the capability of carrying out their

frequently expressed intention of seizing Taiwan during 1950, and will probably do so

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4   刘少奇、"关于调四个师到倾倒演习海军的电报"、1950 年二月十日<<建国以来刘少奇文稿>>、
     第一册:7/1949-3/1950(北京:中央文献出版社、1998)。   Liu Shaoqi, "Telegram Regarding the
     Transfer of 4 Divisions to Qingdao for Naval Training (February 10, 1950)," in *Liu Shaoqi's
     Manuscripts since the Founding of the State*   (Beijing: Central Party Documents Publishers, 1998).

5   Edward John Marolda, "The U.S. Navy and the Chinese Civil War, 1945-52" (Ph.D. Dissertation, The
     George Washington University, 1990), 139.

6   David G. Muller, *China as a Maritime Power* (Epping: Bowker, 1983), 55.   Muller cites a report from
     the Office of Naval Intelligence, U.S. Navy from 1955 for this data.

7   Chinese New Years in 1950 would have been celebrated on February 17.   Although much later in the
     year, Mao chastised the head of *Xinhua* for this broadcast.   See 毛泽东、"关于在宣传中不说打台
     湾,西藏的时间给胡乔木的信"、1950 年九月二十九日<<建国以来毛泽东文稿>>、第一
     册:9/1949-12/1950(北京:中央文献出版社、1987)。   Mao Zedong, "Letter to Hu Qiaomu
     Regarding Not Mentioning the Time for the Attacks on Taiwan and Tibet in Propaganda Broadcasts
     (September 29, 1950)," in *Mao Zedong's Manuscripts since the Founding of the State*   (Beijing:
     Central Party Documents Publishers, 1987).

during the period June-December."[8]   This judgment was repeated in an updated

appraisal written dated April 10.[9]   In another report, the CIA noted:

> Despite reported Communist dissention over such matters as the degree of subservience
> to the USSR, policy toward the West and methods to alleviate peasant unrest, there is no
> conclusive evidence of disagreement concerning the necessity for the early occupation of
> Taiwan and Hainan and the elimination of the Nationalist Navy and Air Force.[10]

According to American weekly intelligence digests prepared by the Far East Command in

July and August 1950, the Chinese had originally planed to start probing operations in

July with the main assault to follow in early August.[11]

While it is unclear precisely where the actual Chinese timetable for invasion stood

during late-June 1950, contemporary scholars generally all agree it was imminent.   The

range of expected start dates only runs from weeks to nine months hence.[12]

In Washington, even at the earliest stage of the Korean War, on June 25, concerns

about Chinese goals vis-à-vis Taiwan were paramount.   The Secretary of Defense

recommended immediately assessing Taiwanese security needs, and viewed the North

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8   "Memorandum by the Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs (Rusk) to the Secretary of
State (April 17, 1950)," in United States Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States,
1950*, vol. VI: East Asia and the Pacific (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1976),
330.

9   See again "Memorandum by the Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs (Rusk) to the
Secretary of State (April 17, 1950)," in *Ibid.*

10   Central Intelligence Agency, "Document 164. Weekly Summary Excerpt, 31 March 1950, China:
Military Plans," in *Assessing the Soviet Threat: The Early Cold War Years*, ed. Woodrow J. Kuhns
(Washington, DC: Central Intelligence Agency, 1997), 365.

11   Muller, *China as a Maritime Power*, 16-7.

12   For various views on this, see Richard C. Thornton, *Odd Man Out: Truman, Stalin, Mao, and the
Origins of the Korean War*, 1st ed. (Washington, D.C.: Brassey's, 2000), *passim.*   Note that most
scholars refer to He Di's article as the best on the topic: Chen Jian, *China's Road*, 101; He Di, "'the
Last Campaign to Unify China': The CCP's Unmaterialized Plan to Liberate Taiwan," *Chinese
Historians* 5, no. 1 (1992): 10-12; Zhang Shuguang, *Deterrence and Strategic Culture: Chinese-
American Confrontations, 1949-1958* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1992), 72-3.   See also
宋连生,<<抗美援朝再回首>>(昆明:云南人民出版社,2002).   Song Liansheng, *Recollections on
the Korean War*   (Kunming: Yunnan People's Press, 2002), 194.

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Korean attack as a Communist feint, presaging a broader offensive.[13]   At the first Blair

House meeting, Kennan argued that while not the first stage of a general war, the Korean

attack was likely the first in what would be a multi-pronged offensive by the

communists.[14]   Truman was so concerned about this prospect that the only order to come

out of the first Blair House meeting was for the Pentagon to make some assessment of

where else the Soviets might attack and to prepare plans to meet that eventuality.[15]   It is

in this context that during the second Blair House meeting, the President also ordered the

neutralization of the Taiwan Strait by the Navy's Seventh Fleet.[16]   This proposal echoed

a recommendation made on May 19 by hard-line anti-Communist John Foster Dulles,

who was then serving as a Consultant to the Secretary of State.[17]   In a paper circulated to

senior State Department leaders, he suggested

> If the United States were to announce that it would neutralize Formosa, not permitting it
> either to taken by Communists or to be used as a base of military operations against the
> mainland, that is a decision we could certainly maintain...[18]

Just over a month later, Acheson found reason to draw upon precisely that idea.   Thus, a

mere two days after the outbreak of the Korean War, the United States signaled its intent

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13   Clay Blair, *The Forgotten War: America in Korea* (New York: Times Books, 1988), 71.

14   *Ibid.*, 74.

15   William Whitney Stueck, *The Road to Confrontation: American Policy toward China and Korea, 1947-1950* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1981), 178-79.

16   See Blair, *The Forgotten War*, 75.   Note that this decision was cast as an attempt to neutralize—and indeed communication went out to Jiang to cease bombing and commerce raiding, Glenn D. Paige, *The Korean Decision, June 24-30, 1950* (New York, NY: Free Press, 1968), 183-4.   However, MacArthur's military orders as of June 29 still did not mention anything regarding restraining Jiang. Paige, *The Korean Decision*, 251.

17   The paper was also supported by Rusk and Nitze.

18   Marolda, "The U.S. Navy and the Chinese Civil War, 1945-52", 149.   Other proposals to neutralize Taiwan in various circumstances had also been made.   Rosemary Foot, *The Wrong War: American Policy and the Dimensions of the Korean Conflict, 1950-1953* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985), 64.

to defend Taiwan against a Chinese offensive.   In the more than 50 years since then, there has been no invasion.

This case asks to what extent did the two sides' theories of victory in the naval sphere contribute to the outcome of deterrence success in this case.

Figure 6-1:   The Taiwan Strait Area
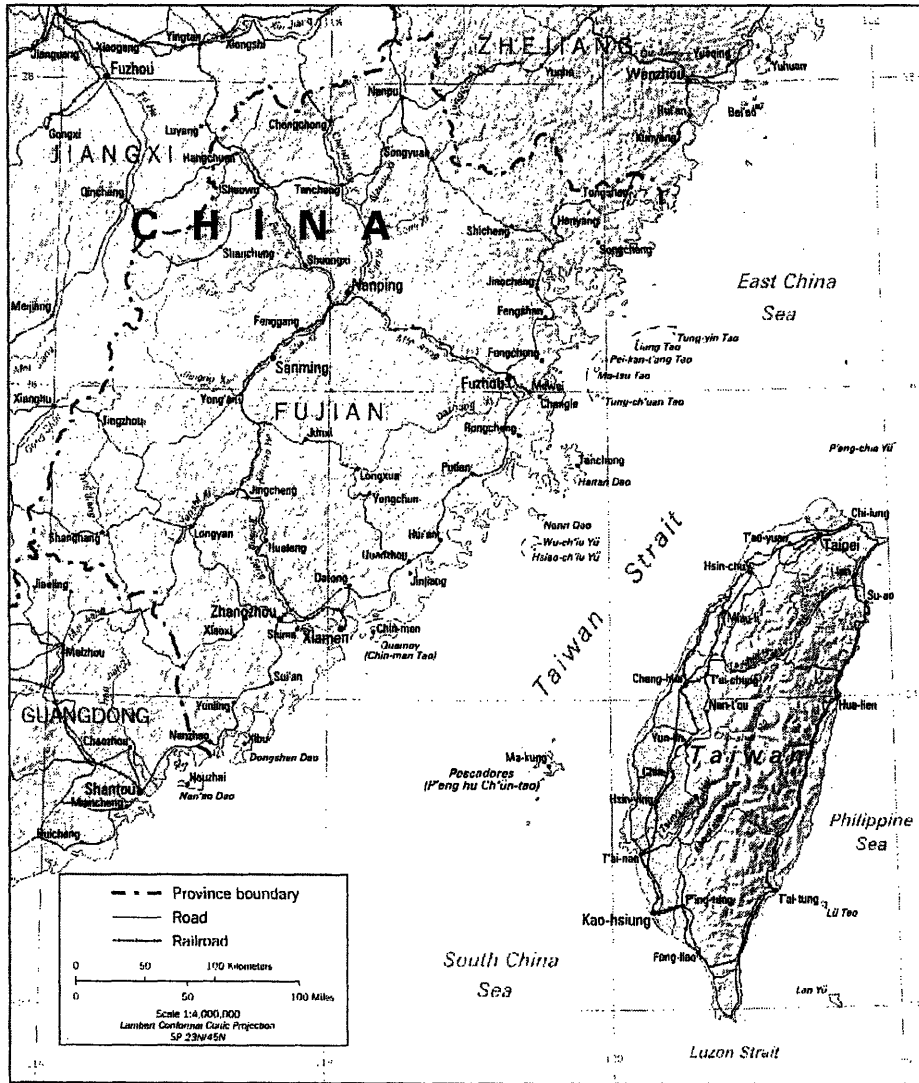
The Two Sides' Theories of Victory at Sea

While the previous two cases centered on warfare in the Korean Peninsula (and potentially in China proper), this case demands consideration of a different military environment. Thus, it cannot rely on Chapter 3's characterization of the two sides' theories of victory. For the Taiwan Straits theater, the relevant military forces are obviously naval and air forces.

One set of naval forces and doctrines was indeed quite different across the two nations. The two sides' views of the sea control mission—competing for control of sea lines of communication—were far apart. Chinese naval doctrine was rather poorly formed at the end of their long civil war:

> The PLA did not have a naval tradition when the Communists came to power in 1949. The famed military writings of Mao Zedong do not mention naval warfare or the role of seapower in national strategy.[19]

Thus, the PLA was forced to look elsewhere for its doctrine in this regard

> Although the PRC in its first decade had no coherent body of maritime strategic thought of its own, the Soviet Union did. Soviet doctrine concerning the development and employment of a navy was adopted wholesale by the Chinese.[20]

The dominant Soviet strategic thought at the time was known as the Young School, which emphasized coastal defense, submarines, small patrol and attack craft, and land based aircraft, but no oceanic capability.[21] This actually meshed rather well with a People's War approach. The Chinese tactics were grounded in a related doctrine:

> Formulated by the former navy commander-in-chief Admiral Xiao Jingguang in 1950, the doctrine was a copy of the Soviet 'small battle' theory, which prescribed naval

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19 Muller, *China as a Maritime Power*, 47.

20 *Ibid.*, 48.

21 *Ibid.*, 49. All instructors at the first Chinese naval academy were Soviets, and submarine tactics were emphasized. Muller, *China as a Maritime Power*, 11. For discussion of the force that this approach put into the field in its first few years (a submarine-heavy one) see Gene Z. Hanrahan, "Report on Red China's New Navy," *United States Naval Institute Proceedings* 79, no. 8 (1953): 848ff.

> warfare conducted by light warships, shore-based planes and submarines. Nothing is
> more revealing about the Navy in its formative years than Xiao's following instructions:
> "The navy should be a light type navy, capable of coastal defense. Its key mission is to
> accompany the ground forces in war actions. That basic characteristic of this navy is
> fast deployment, based on its lightness."[22]

Thus, the Chinese navy (such as it was at the time) specialized in "well-coordinated

sneak attacks, delivered from all quarters by torpedo and gun boats. This might be

thought of as an adaptation of guerrilla tactics to naval warfare."[23]

In contrast, the U.S. view of naval warfare focused heavily on carrier air and large

strike ships.[24] The war plan in 1949 called for the Navy to engage in a "mainly

defensive, a sea-control campaign of running convoys for the coalition" against the

Soviets.[25] A long-term plan written in the same year by the Joint Staff foresaw the

following role for the Navy in the event of war: "protecting communications to the

United Kingdom, destroying Soviet naval power, and securing overseas bases."[26] The

U.S. Navy had long viewed sea control as its central goal.[27] The justification for this

after WWII was a need to be able to strike Soviet submarines at their bastions and pens

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22 You Ji, *The Armed Forces of China* (New York: I.B. Tauris, 1999), 164.

23 Harlan W. Jencks, *From Muskets to Missiles: Politics and Professionalism in the Chinese Army, 1945-
    1981* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1982), 161-62.

24 Karl Lautenschlager, "Technology and the Evolution of Naval Warfare," in *Naval Strategy and
    National Security: An International Security Reader*, ed. Steven E. Miller and Stephen Van Evera
    (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1988), 206-07.

25 George W. Baer, *One Hundred Years of Sea Power: The U.S. Navy, 1890-1990* (Stanford, Calif.:
    Stanford University Press, 1994), 217.

26 *Ibid.*, 313.

27 *Ibid.*, 285, 290. Note there was also some discussion in the navy about obtaining a deep strike
    mission using nuclear weapons for strategic attacks. However, in this period, the navy was unable to
    secure this mission from the Air Force. Baer, *One Hundred Years of Sea Power*, 296.

early in the war to allow the United States to have freedom of movement on the seas.[28]

This, in turn, required having carrier battle groups with their own mobile striking power.

However, for the purposes of this case, the key comparison is in doctrine

regarding amphibious operations.   The coercive attempt here is one of deterring a

Chinese amphibious invasion of Taiwan.   Thus, the question is, did the Chinese have

difficulty understanding the threat posed to their invasion plans by the Americans due to

differences in the two nation's amphibious operations doctrine.   In particular, would the

Chinese be likely to underestimate the threat posed by the American 7th fleet?

American Amphibious Operations Doctrine

As noted above, the long-term plans for the U.S. Navy in 1950 focused on sea

control, so the World War II experience retained a heavy influence on the less studied

issue of future amphibious operations.   At the broadest level, American thinking about

amphibious operations set a high bar: it focused on *opposed* amphibious landings.

While this sounds obvious, for many nations amphibious doctrine focused on the less

challenging goal of *unopposed* landings.[29]

In any amphibious operation, whether opposed or not, the United States

recognized one overriding threat: "The principle danger in such an operation is an

attack on the invading force by an opposing navy."[30]   If the opposing navy can attack the

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28   Baer, *One Hundred Years of Sea Power*, 289.

29   See the discussions of British and Japanese doctrine before World War II in Allan Reed Millett,
    "Assault from the Sea: The Development of Amphibious Warfare between the Wars-the American,
    British, and Japanese Experiences," in *Military Innovation in the Interwar Period*, ed. Williamson
    Murray and Allan Reed Millett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

30   *Ibid.*, 51.

landing force's vessels, particularly the vulnerable shallow-draft landing craft and tank landing ships, defeat will likely result.

Moreover, this was not the only difficulty an attacker must surmount, in the eyes of the American theory of victory. Millett summarizes the key doctrinal thinking in the United States regarding amphibious operations:

> The amphibious force would have to isolate the objective area, then pound the defenders into a stupor with naval gunfire and close air support. The landing itself would require a violent assault by a combined arms team, probably over a broad front, perhaps a beach of a thousand yards' width or more. To secure the beachhead, the landing force would need rapid reinforcement, complete with artillery and tanks. The greatest threat to a landing was disruptive air and naval attack, which might pull critical fleet units from the objective area, but a combined air and ground counterattack was the most immediate concern. A counterlanding might give the enemy a striking advantage because it would be difficult for a landing force to protect its supply line and logistics support areas as well as defend the perimeter of its own enclave. An amphibious expeditionary force could not rely on guile for success, but would require local superiority in every element of air, naval, and ground combat power.[31]

The U.S. experience from WWII covered a great many campaigns: Patton's unopposed landing in North Africa, MacArthur's island hopping in the Pacific, the landings in Italy and eventually the largest amphibious operation ever conducted, the Normandy landings.[32] In the Pacific theater, where nearby airfields were generally not available, carrier-based air was critical. On the other hand, in the Sicily and Normandy landings, carriers were absent, and land-based craft provided the air support (both defensive and offensive).[33] Those two American landings also did not involve Marines whose entire doctrine centered on amphibious operations. Rather, regular Army divisions that had

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31 *Ibid.*, 77.

32 On Normandy, see John Keegan, *Six Armies in Normandy: From D-Day to the Liberation of Paris, June 6th-August 25th, 1944* (New York: Viking Press, 1982), Chapters 1-3; Williamson Murray and Allan Reed Millett, *A War to Be Won: Fighting the Second World War* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2000), Chapter 15; Cornelius Ryan, *The Longest Day: June 6, 1944* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1959).

33 Baer, *One Hundred Years of Sea Power*, 311.

received some training in this sort of operation were used (supported by Seabees).[34]

(Interestingly, the role of close air support was limited in Army doctrine for amphibious

operations.[35])

Another important element in American doctrine centered on the use of

commercial shipping.   Again, Millett describes the U.S. Navy's thinking:

> The navy followed the prewar assumption that it could create an amphibious transport
> force by converting merchantmen and liners to military service, including the installation
> of davits and cranes capable of handling landing craft.[36]

Of course, there was also widespread use of dedicated military amphibious craft and

ships.

In 1950 the United States could look with pride on it amphibious capabilities.

They had been tested in demanding battle conditions during WWII and continued to

evolve and improve.   How did the Chinese doctrine and equipment compare?

Chinese Amphibious Operations Doctrine

On the issue of amphibious operations, there would have been a surprising degree

of shared understanding between Beijing and Washington.   At a broad level, China

faced the same strategic situation that the U.S. military had in World War II: the need to

develop doctrine for *opposed* amphibious landings.   Several specific factors regarding

the Chinese Navy merit discussion.   First, in contrast to the backward PLA ground force

(that is, the Army *per se*), for idiosyncratic reasons the Chinese Navy was relatively

modern.   Further, the naval doctrine regarding amphibious warfare evolved substantially

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34   The U.S. forces that landed on the first day of the Normandy landings were the 1st and 4th Infantry
     Divisions of the U.S. Army.

35   Millett, "Assault from the Sea."

36   *Ibid.,* 83-4.

in response to a series of failures at the end of the civil war.   A successful attack on

Hainan displayed many of these improvements, and the PLAN continued to improve after

that point with an eye toward the imminent invasion of Taiwan.   These points are

explained in turn, below.

The Roots of the PLAN: The Nationalist Navy

It is important to note that the Chinese Navy—or the People's Liberation Army

Navy (the PLAN) as it was officially known—was relatively professionalized and

technically advanced, at least in comparison to the PLA ground force.   There were two

main sources for the leaders in this service: graduates of Soviet training academies and

KMT defectors.   Over 400 students were in the Soviet Union receiving naval training at

the end of the civil war.[37]   Even more numerous were the recent defectors from the

KMT.[38]

> While the Soviet naval advisors and instructors played an important role in the
> beginnings of the Communist naval force, the core of the new navy was formed by the
> 2,000-odd former R.O.C. naval personnel who defected in 1949, most of them with their
> ships.[39]

Some analysts go even further in emphasizing the role of the KMT turncoats, noting that

the PLAN's very organization was imported from the losing side of the civil war:

> General Chang's "navy" was the forerunner of Red China's present navy; yet it was
> Communist in name only.   Most of the officers and men were Nationalist deserters,
> while the naval craft were captured or brought over from the enemy.   With the exception
> of the highest command echelon and the ever-watchful political commissars, Red China's
> first navy was made up almost *in toto* of the enemy.[40]

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37   Muller, *China as a Maritime Power*, 19.

38   See, for instance, Odd Arne Westad, *Decisive Encounters: The Chinese Civil War, 1946-1950*
(Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2003), 299.

39   Muller, *China as a Maritime Power*, 13.

40   Hanrahan, "Report on Red China's New Navy," 847. Cummings is similarly sweeping regarding the
PLAN in 1950: "the only naval personnel were those who had defected from various segments of the

This would have substantial effects in creating a different organizational culture in the

PLAN versus the other branches of the communist forces.   Reforming the political

thought of these former KMT sailors and officers was an important concern for the

nascent PLAN.[41]   The recent defectors were sent to a parallel track of training academies

in Communist China, one that focused solely on political indoctrination and

rehabilitation.[42]

Many of the defectors had even been trained in the West, underscoring their

familiarity with the American way of war.

> The officers and sailors from the KMT were a special new type of serviceman.   Most
> had received relatively high levels of education and they were politically quite sensitive.
> Many had gone to England or the United States to receive training or take delivery of a
> warship.[43]

For some of these officers, their very exposure to Western ideas furthered their

disillusionment with the corrupt KMT regime.

> Most of the bright young officers and sailors sent off to study in the United States and
> Great Britain in 1930s and early 1940s were dedicated to the creation of a strong Chinese
> navy and knew that this could not be accomplished under the nationalist regime.   Many
> were thus susceptible to the appeals of the Communists to defect for the good of China.[44]

Beyond that, in general, intellectuals were more welcome in this service than they were in

the army.[45]   As the official naval history notes:

Nationalist Navy" Captain E. J. Cummings, Jr., "The Chinese Communist Navy," *United States Naval Institute Proceedings* 90, no. 9 (1964): 66.

41 See 卢如春, 江吉泰,等<<海军史>>中国人民解放军军兵种历史丛书(北京:解放军出版社,1989). Lu Ruchun, Jiang Jitai, *et al.*, *History of the Navy*   (Beijing: The People's Liberation Army Press, 1989), Chapter 2: Emergence, Part III: Competing for and Reforming the Sailors Originally from the KMT, pp. 22-25.

42 Muller, *China as a Maritime Power*.

43 卢, 江,等<<海军史>>   Lu Ruchun, Jiang Jitai, *et al.*, *History of the Navy* , 23.

44 Muller, *China as a Maritime Power*, 9.

45 Eric Heginbotham, "The Fall and Rise of Navies in East Asia: Military Organizations, Domestic Politics, and Grand Strategy," *International Security* 27, no. 2 (2002).

> People recruited from the ground forces [to the navy] normally were required to have
> achieved more than an elementary school degree. In order to supply the navy with
> people having technical ability, the Central Military Committee [CMC] required each
> field army to comprehensive assess their people. As many as possible of the following
> were to be provided to the navy: anyone who has previously served in the navy, worked
> on board a ship, studied shipping, and has even a little bit of knowledge regarding
> machinery or has driven tanks or cars. The CMC was very diligent in attracting
> intellectuals to the navy.[46]

The defecting troops, and often their ships, formed the core of the new Navy.

Indeed, the very first naval vessel that the PLA obtained was a KMT vessel—a tank

landing ship captured in 1947—and the tactics learned from that ships crew were put to

good use in later river crossings by the PLA in the civil war.[47] The Nationalist

flagship—the *Chongqing*, formerly the *HMS Aurora*, a 7400-ton cruiser—defected on

February 24, 1949 and would eventually go on to serve as the PLAN's flagship. In

April, 1949, another 26 ships and other craft, from destroyers to amphibious landing craft

to gunboats, also defected.[48]

> Zhang Aiping, who had been deputy commander of the central China military, was
> appointed commander and commissar. He accepted the task of organizing the
> foundation of the navy around the naval vessels that had defected and joined our side
> from the KMT.[49]

This first naval unit in the PLAN was made up entirely of the ships that had defected

from the KMT's Second Fleet.[50] By 1950, "the PRC Navy found itself in possession of

some 30 landing ships of U.S. World War II construction, all left behind by or defected

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46 卢, 江,等<<海军史>> Lu Ruchun, Jiang Jitai, *et al., History of the Navy*, 21.

47 *Ibid.*

48 Muller, *China as a Maritime Power*. Also see Hanrahan, "Report on Red China's New Navy," 847.

49 卢, 江,等<<海军史>> Lu Ruchun, Jiang Jitai, *et al., History of the Navy*, 15.

50 He Di, "The Last Campaign to Unify China: The CCP's Unrealized Plan to Liberate Taiwan, 1949-50,"
    in *Chinese Warfighting: The PLA Experience since 1949*, ed. Mark A. Ryan, David M. Finkelstein,
    and Michael A. McDevitt (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, Inc., 2003), 77.

from the ROC navy."[51]   This was enough to move 20,000 amphibious assault troops at a time.   (Another source suggests slightly higher holdings.[52])   In addition to these captured ships, the PLAN also relied on salvage operations and some foreign purchases: "Between late 1949 and early 1950, China bought forty-eight used warships totaling 25,470 tons."[53]

These former KMT officers were well versed in amphibious operations, and provided a core of expertise for the PLAN to refine.   The Nationalist Navy had conducted unopposed amphibious landings numerous times, including a major operation in August 1947.[54]   As the civil war turned against the Nationalists, their navy conducted a series of amphibious extractions, often while the ground element was under attack, a particularly challenging tactical situation.[55]   Further, they had experience using naval gunfire support in many of these battles.[56]

This legacy of ties to the KMT's navy and in particular the elements of professionalization (particularly relative to the army), exposure to western training, and experience with amphibious operations in the PLAN helped lead it to a relatively similar understanding of amphibious warfare as that of the American Navy.

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51   Muller, *China as a Maritime Power*, 53.

52   Cummings, "The Chinese Communist Navy," 69.   Cummings puts the figure at 50 landing ships, and also emphasizes the large number of ex-U.S. vessels.

53   Zhang Shuguang, *Mao's Military Romanticism: China and the Korean War, 1950-53* (Lawrence, Kans.: University Press of Kansas, 1995), 51.

54   Muller, *China as a Maritime Power*, 8.

55   *Ibid.*

56   *Ibid.*

The PLAN's Early Experience with Amphibious Operations

Beyond these background conditions, the Chinese communist leadership had

recently learned quite a bit in this area against a relatively advanced foe.   Their attempts

to conquer the small coastal islands of Jinmen, Zhoushan, and Dengbu in late 1949 had

led to abysmal defeats.

Mao's assessment of the October 1949 attack against Jinmen was stark: "This is

our biggest loss of the war."[57]   In that battle, a KMT navy-led counter attack led to

tremendous Chinese Communists losses, totaling nearly 10,000 men.[58]   One Western

analyst noted the poor preparation for that attack: "landing in scantily-armed junks and

on rafts, with no support from artillery or aircraft, the PLA forces were mauled, losing

thousands of men without ever gaining a beachhead."[59]   The attack on Dengbu was yet

another setback:

> But, under conditions lacking naval cooperation, sometimes one could not avoid paying a
> heavy price.   For instance, on October 3, 1949, the PLA 21st Army, 61st Division sent a
> force of five battalions strength to attack Dengbu Island in eastern Zhejiang province.
> That day, troops landed smoothly and secured the capture of 600 of the enemy.
> However, on the second day the enemy's second regiment reinforced from the sea.
> Facing the enemy on three sides, the PLA landing force had no other alternative but to
> fight out in retreat.   Casualties reached 1490 men.[60]

The official Chinese naval history, after relating a series of examples from this period,

suggests a conclusion that would be shared by military leaders in the Pentagon, "the

bloody facts show, if you want to breakthrough an ocean blockade to liberate offshore

islands, the navy, ground force, and air force must all work in cooperation."[61]

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57   Westad, *Decisive Encounters*, 301.

58   Zhang Shuguang, *Mao's Military Romanticism*, 53.

59   Muller, *China as a Maritime Power*, 16.

60   卢, 江,等<<海军史>>   Lu Ruchun, Jiang Jitai, *et al., History of the Navy* , 18.

61   *Ibid.*

These setbacks taught the Chinese many lessons about the conduct of such

landings.[62]   For instance, they began to focus on providing the troops with specialized

training for amphibious landings, something prior Chinese operations had lacked.   Soon

they would be using translated U.S. Marine amphibious warfare manuals.[63]   At this

point, the Chinese communists were using regular Army divisions rather than dedicated

marines, just as the United States had occasionally done in WWII.[64]   They established

the Navy as a separate branch of the PLA on April 14, 1950.[65]   From their prior defeats,

"they again learned that without the support of regular navy ships, landing operations by

small boats could be disastrous."[66]   They prepared to remedy this problem as well.

Further, these defeats had also emphasized the importance of follow-on logistics support:

> Although PLA forces eventually security their beachheads, most of their boats were left
> aground when the tide went out.   The first wave could not be reinforced, and Ye Fei and

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62   毛泽东、"关于同意粟裕调四个师演习海战等问题给刘少奇的电报"、1950 年二月十九日<<建国
以来毛泽东文稿>>、第一册:9/1949-12/1950(北京:中央文献出版社、1987)第 257 页。Mao
Zedong, "Telegram to Liu Shaoqi Approving Li Yu's [Deputy Commander of the 3rd Field Army]
Proposal for the Training of Four Division for Amphibious and Related Operations", February 10,
1950, Mao Zedong's Manuscripts Since the Founding of the State (Beijing, Central Party Documents
Publishers, 1987) p. 257.   毛泽东、"关于同意四十三军以一个团先行渡海给林彪的电报"、1950
年二月十二日<<建国以来毛泽东文稿>>、第一册:9/1949-12/1950(北京:中央文献出版社、1987)
第 259 页。Mao Zedong, "Telegram to Lin Biao Approving the 43rd Army to Operate Jointly in
Amphibious Crossings", February 12, 1950, in *Ibid.*, p. 259.   毛泽东、"军委转发粟裕关于占领舟山
群岛后的直处置意见的电报"、1950 年四月二十九日<<建国以来毛泽东文稿>>、第一
册:9/1949-12/1950(北京:中央文献出版社、1987)第 357 页。Mao Zedong, "Telegram to Li Yu
From the Central Military Committee regarding Dealing with the Zhoushan Islands after their Capture",
February 10, 1950, in *Ibid.*, p. 357

63   Hanrahan, "Report on Red China's New Navy," 853.

64   On the Chinese, see footnote 62, above.   The first dedicated marine unit in the PLA was established
in 1953.

65   卢, 江,等<<海军史>>   Lu Ruchun, Jiang Jitai, *et al.*, *History of the Navy* , 15.

66   Alexander C. Huang, "The PLA Navy at War, 1949-1999: From Coastal Defense to Distant
Operations," in *Chinese Warfighting: The PLA Experience since 1949*, ed. Mark A. Ryan, David M.
Finkelstein, and Michael A. McDevitt (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, Inc., 2003), 252.

other PLA commanders were forced to watch helplessly as the defending Nationalist
forces destroyed their troops.[67]

Thus, the key lesson of the importance of controlling the sea to prevent the opposing

navy from attacking or reinforcing was emphasized.[68]   The PLAN would have to

address this problem, too.

Over time, the PLA had internalized many of the lessons from these earlier

campaigns.   They also benefited from Soviet training of an amphibious assault group in

late 1949 and early 1950.[69]   By April of 1950, they were ready to resume their attacks on

the offshore islands.

The Attack on Hainan

The diligence and dedication following their earlier defeats allowed them to win a

resounding victory on Hainan.   Hainan is a large island, similar in size to Taiwan itself

that had been held by some 300,000 well-equipped KMT soldiers.   Hainan was not only

defended by troops on the ground, but by Nationalist Navy's Third Naval Squadron,

consisting of 3 destroyer escorts and 15 other smaller warships.[70]   The squadron

engaged in aggressive patrolling of the Hainan Strait on a regular basis and also patrolled

the nearby coastline of the mainland, sinking Communist shipping there, preventing any

large amphibious force from gathering.[71]   This allowed the KMT Navy to fend off

eleven separate probing attacks during March and early April 1950.[72]   Many of these led

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67   *Ibid.*, 251.

68   Again this was central to the thinking in the United States as well: Millett, "Assault from the Sea," 51.

69   Westad, *Decisive Encounters*, 304.

70   Marolda, "The U.S. Navy and the Chinese Civil War, 1945-52", 125.

71   *Ibid.*, 126.

72   *Ibid.*, 128.

to the loss of scores of Communist boats and hundreds of Communist soldiers and

sailors.[73]   However, these taught the Chinese communists an extremely important

lesson:

> Perhaps most importantly, the preliminary operations revealed to the Communists that the
> main invasion fleet would be destroyed if the relatively lethal Nationalist Navy and Air
> Force patrol units were not driven from the strait.[74]

In contrast to other times in the Civil War, during this battle the Nationalist

military did not collapse, but rather "by most accounts fought long and hard against the

invasion forces.   There were no mass defections to the Communists before the island's

fall."[75]   American military attachés in Hongkong reported that the Nationalist Navy and

Air Force were "doing their most effective work since the end of World War II with

morale and reliability the highest in years."[76]

To achieve their victory against this force, the Chinese relied on a hodgepodge

landing fleet, closely coordinated timing, and some naval gunfire support.   The eventual

armada used for the Hainan operation included 400 boats of assorted types.   "Many of

the vessels were armed with light artillery pieces, antitank guns, mortars, and machine

guns."[77]   (This use of civilian shipping reinforced with military hardware again was

something the United States had relied on in several instances in the Second World War.)

Responding to the lessons of previous defeats, this motley navy, supported by large

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73   *Ibid.*, 128-9.

74   *Ibid.*, 129.

75   *Ibid.*, 134.   For a countervailing view, albeit one little detail, to back it up, see Muller, *China as a
Maritime Power*, 16.

76   "Memorandum by the Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs (Rusk) to the Secretary of
State (April 26, 1950)," in *F.R.U.S., 1950, Vol. 6*, 333.

77   Marolda, "The U.S. Navy and the Chinese Civil War, 1945-52", 127.

amounts of coastal artillery and antiaircraft fire was able to defend the strait for the initial

landing and the critical resupply sorties that followed.[78]

> The Nationalist Navy and Air Force was [sic] driven from the strait, after a hard-fought
> interdiction effort... Having previously learned the hard way what Nationalist sea and air
> forces could do to invasion flotillas, the Communists lined either side of the strait with
> coastal artillery and antiaircraft weapons that effectively covered the entire water way.
> On the 18th, for example, the Third Naval Squadron flagship, *Tai Ping* [a former U.S.
> Navy ship], was heavily damaged by radar-directed Communists coastal artillery.
> Squadron Commander Wang was wounded and the ship's executive officer was killed.[79]

Adequate logistical supplies were delivered. The Chinese also used advanced forces to

prepare beachheads that the main force would land on later.[80]

The victory was complete, with the KMT forces routed. While many retreated

to Taiwan, many others were killed and captured before they could embark.

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78 *Ibid.*, 131.

79 *Ibid.*

80 Westad, *Decisive Encounters*, 304-5.   Note that the Chinese used guerrilla forces already on the
ground.   In practice, this seems quite similar to the American practice of using paratroopers and other
special forces for the same mission.   The Normandy invasion had relied on three paratroop divisions
(two American, one British) to delay the German reinforcements from hitting the amphibious
beachheads.

Figure 6-2:   **Maps of Hainan and the PLA Campaign of 1950**[81]
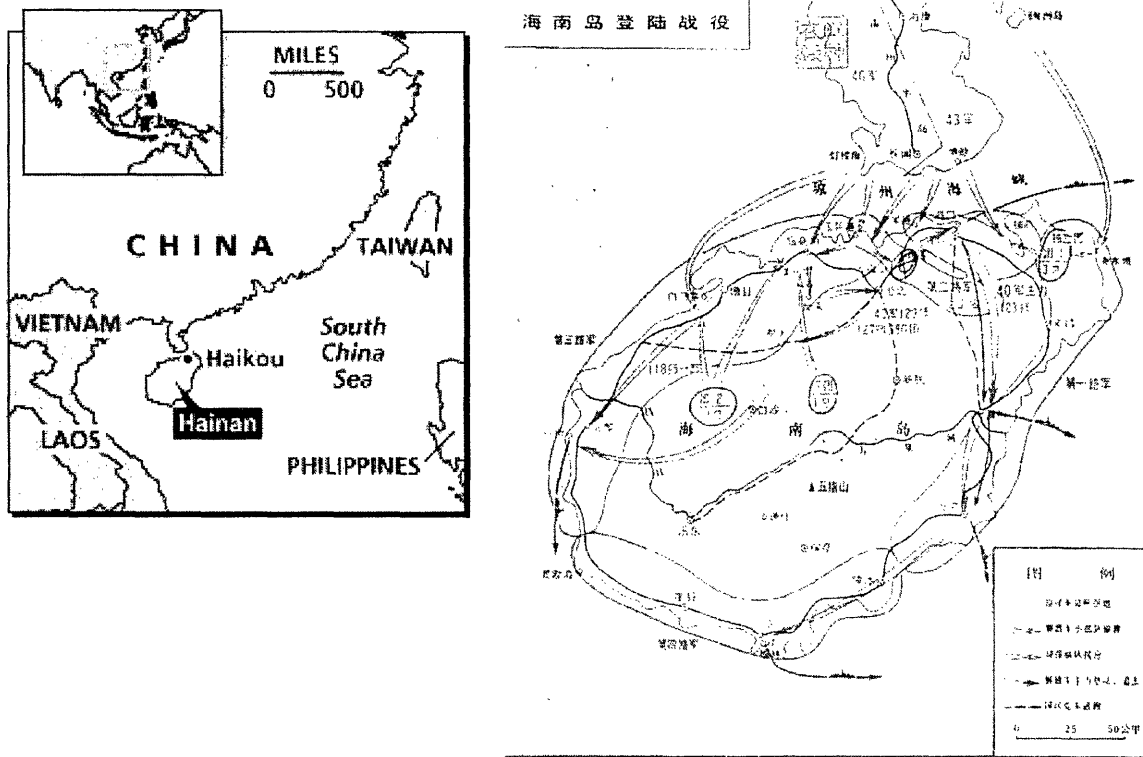
The Chinese communist confidence after the success at Hainan rose appreciably.

Senior CCP leaders believed that many of the lessons of this experience had prepared

PLA well for the upcoming invasion of Taiwan.[82]   Following this victory, Liu Shaoqi

(soon to be groomed as Mao's successor) trumpeted the "PLA's mastery of the art of the

sea-borne landings."[83]

81   English map source: Wall Street Journal; available online http://www.taiwandc.org/wsj-2001-06.htm.
     Chinese map source: available online http://www.unitedcn.com/01ZGZZ/images/02JINDAI/hnd.jpg.

82   Clearly, coastal artillery would be insufficient to sanitize the entire Taiwan Strait, although most other
     tactics were directly relevant to this theater.

83   Quoted in Melvin Gurtov and Byong-Moo Hwang, *China under Threat: The Politics of Strategy and
     Diplomacy* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980), 33.

Looking toward Taiwan

As the Chinese looked forward to the invasion of Taiwan, they recognized "victory would depend on cooperative operations of the three services."[84] They also knew they could draw on units that were now experienced in conducting successful amphibious assaults against an opposed coastline.[85]

Many of these elements of matured Chinese thinking regarding amphibious operations would have been quite familiar to the U.S. Navy. Nevertheless, there no question the Chinese forces were not as well equipped and as technologically capable as the United States' forces. However, in the case where this was most acute, the PLA was striving to improve (again, primarily because of the lessons of its earlier failures).

Thus, while airpower had not played a major role in the Chinese history of amphibious operations,[86] the Chinese certainly recognized the importance of at least land-based air power in this sort of operation. Mao wrote in July of 1949:

> We must start preparation for the invasion of Taiwan. In addition to ground forces, we need to rely on internal cooperators and an air force. Our action will succeed if we meet one of the two conditions; and our hope will be even greater if both conditions are satisfied.[87]

Similarly, Liu Shaoqi emphasized the same message early the following year:

> Regarding Zhoushan, Taiwan, Jinmen, and Hainan islands ... if we do not have air support as well as a certain amount of naval support, advancing across the sea for an

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84 He Di, "The Last Campaign to Unify China," 80.

85 These would be the forces from the Third and Fourth Field Armies that were to be used again against Taiwan as they had against Zhoushan, Hainan, and others. Marolda, "The U.S. Navy and the Chinese Civil War, 1945-52", 159.

86 张驭涛、<<新中国军事大事纪要>>(北京:军事科学出版社,1998)第 15-16 页. Zhang Yutao, Summary of Important Events in the New China's Military (Beijing: Military Science Publishers, 1998): pp. 15-16.

87 "Letter, Mao Zedong to Zhou Enlai, 10 July, 1949" in Zhang Shuguang and Chen Jian, eds., *Chinese Communist Foreign Policy and the Cold War in Asia: New Documentary Evidence, 1944-50*, 123.

> amphibious attack cannot be done. Today's report from Hainan and Jinmen makes these points clear. [88]

Later, Mao implored the Soviets to provide the Chinese with an air force having the amphibious assault of Taiwan in mind[89] and indeed as mid-1950 approached China was increasingly getting the support of Soviet air assets. Likely Mao and Liu were particularly emphatic about the utility of air support here given that the sea surrounding Taiwan could not be defended using coastal artillery as had several of the earlier islands taken by the PLA.

The Soviets had recently deployed several squadrons of MiG-15s, the premier jet fighter in the world at the time, to Shanghai. The Soviets continued to fly them (for purely defensive missions), as there were no available Chinese pilots, although they did so wearing Chinese uniforms.[90] The KMT had flown bombing strikes against the mainland with some effect throughout 1949 and 1950, and this deployment was intended to address that.[91] This is the first time the MIG-15 flew in combat. While there are no records of plans to use these fighters to defend the seas around an amphibious invasion fleet, the possibility of this can certainly not be excluded without further access to

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88 刘少奇、"关于舟山等地作战需要空军协助问题给毛泽东的电报"、1950 年一月十一日<<建国以来刘少奇文稿>>、第一册:7/1949-3/1950(北京:中央文献出版社、1998). Liu Shaoqi, "Telegram to Mao Regarding the Problem of Needing Assistance from the Air Force in the Battles for Zhoushan Island and Other Similar Locations. (January 11, 1950)," in *Liu Shaoqi's Manuscripts since the Founding of the State* (Beijing: Central Party Documents Publishers, 1998), 252.

89 Zhang Xiaoming, *Red Wings over the Yalu: China, the Soviet Union, and the Air War in Korea*, 1st ed. (College Station, Tex.: Texas A&M University Press, 2002), 32-33.

90 These deployments occurred in March of 1950. Zhang Shuguang, *Deterrence and Strategic Culture*, 72-3; Zhang Xiaoming, *Red Wings over the Yalu*, 61, 78-84. Note that it appears these forces were redeployed from Lushan, and did not represent net additions to the Soviet forces in China. Rather they were moved from a place where they did not enhance Chinese security to a somewhere that they were more relevant. See Michael H. Hunt, *The Genesis of Chinese Communist Foreign Policy* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1995), 181.

91 For discussion of the costs of these attacks, see 王焰,等 <<彭德怀传>>(北京:当代中国出版社:1993). Wang Yan *et al.*, *Biography of Peng Dehuai* (Beijing: Modern China Press, 1993), 530.

Chinese and former Soviet archives.[92] They certainly had the capability to play a role

here,[93] and the Soviet role in supporting the Chinese intervention in Korea is now

recognized to be far heavier than previously understood.[94]

Beyond that, much of the Soviet aid to China provided in the wake of the signing

of the Sino-Soviet Alliance on February 14, 1950 was being used to improve Chinese

military capabilities with an eye toward Taiwan.

> Although Stalin cautiously did not agree to use Soviet air and naval assets to support the attack again Taiwan, in the end he did agree an appropriate opportunity to liberate Taiwan required preparation. He also agreed that one half of the Soviet aid to China, a loan of $300 million (U.S.), would be used to order equipment that would be most important in order to attack Taiwan.[95]

Zhou Enlai pressed hard for that hardware to be delivered that same year (1950) so that

the invasion plans would be kept on track.[96] By some reports, rather than half of the

loan being used for military hardware to be aimed at Taiwan, the entire $300 million

was.[97] While the Chinese did not develop their own Higgins landing craft until the

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92 Even the original MiG-15, notoriously short-legged, would still have had the range to provide defensive combat air support for such a fleet. Its range of 500 miles would limit its role in a Taiwan contingency from its Shanghai bases, although it would be able to serve as defensive air support for a fleet in the northern portion of the Taiwan Strait. Beyond that, moving to more appropriately located airbases would have increased its potential substantially (and, as discussed above, military infrastructure construction in that region had been proceeding rapidly in 1949 and 1950). For the MiG-15bis, this range concern would have been even less of a concern.

93 While they rules of engagement nominally restricted them to the coastline, on at least one instance, the Soviet fighters were prepared to attack Nationalist naval vessels, suggesting some confidence with over-the-water operations. Zhang Xiaoming, *Red Wings over the Yalu*, 82.

94 See *Ibid.*

95 宋<<抗美援朝再回首>> Song Liansheng, *Recollections on the Korean War* , 196.

96 *Ibid.*

97 Sergei Goncharov, John Lewis, and Litai Xue, *Uncertain Partners: Stalin, Mao, and the Korean War* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1993), 99-100. Goncharov *et al* concur that at least half of it was certainly used for military purposes and provide some evidence that the rest might have been as well.

1960s, they had captured scores of the real thing from retreating KMT forces.[98] There is

certainly more to building a navy or an air force that simply buying the hardware, but this

does speak to the issue of the recognition in China of the importance of these two

services for the amphibious mission.[99]

Similarly, Beijing's repeated postponements of the invasion of Taiwan before

mid-1950 generally had been made to allow more time for training of highly specialized

amphibious assault troops.[100] The Chinese were in the process of demobilizing large

portions of their army, while preserving a core of forces that would be able to attack

Taiwan.[101] (In this vein, Zhou Enlai initially took a rather sanguine view of the U.S.

deployment of the Seventh Fleet, noting it would allow more time to prepare.[102])

Finally, other small-scale naval engagements after Hainan continued to allow the

PLAN to hone its skills at sea.

> The campaign near Lajiwei Island was considered the PLA Navy's first direct
> warfighting engagement, and the designation of some gunboats as an attack squadron,

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98 Bernard D. Cole, *The Great Wall at Sea: China's Navy Enters the Twenty-First Century* (Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 2001), 18.

99 And note also that the PLAAF was prepared to fight in Korea in the middle of 1951 after a crash course in tactics and organization.   It is likely that this force would have fared better against the KMT air force than it did again the UN in the Korean War.   See Zhang Xiaoming, *Red Wings over the Yalu*.

100 See again, 毛泽东、"关于同意粟裕调四个师演习海战等问题给刘少奇的电报"、1950 年二月十九日<<建国以来毛泽东文稿>>、第一册:9/1949-12/1950(北京:中央文献出版社、1987)第 257 页. Mao Zedong, "Telegram to Liu Shaoqi Approving Li Yu's [Deputy Commander of the 3rd Field Army] Proposal for the Training of Four Division for Amphibious and Related Operations", February 10, 1950, Mao Zedong's Manuscripts Since the Founding of the State (Beijing, Central Party Documents Publishers, 1987) p. 257.   See also 宋<<抗美援朝再回首>>   Song Liansheng, *Recollections on the Korean War* , 194.

101 Mao Tsetung, "The Struggle for a Fundamental Turn for the Better in the Financial and Economic Situation [June 6, 1950]," in *Mao Tsetung and Lin Piao: Post Revolutionary Writings*, ed. K. Fan (New York, NY: Anchor Books, 1972), 109.

102 Quoted in "Recollection, Xiao Jinguang, 'The Taiwan Campaign was Called Off,' 30 June 1950, reprinted in Zhang Shuguang and Chen Jian, eds., *Chinese Communist Foreign Policy and the Cold War in Asia: New Documentary Evidence, 1944-50*, 155.

> separated from the landing ships, may be taken as the earliest PLA Navy development of
> naval tactics.[103]

This battle in late-May 1950 showed an increasing amount of command and control

sophistication by the Chinese, including not least the coordination of multiple forces in a

single naval battle.   Of particular interest was the use of the small fleet to clear the area

of KMT naval vessels before sending the vulnerable amphibious element to sea.[104]   This

lesson was increasingly firmly ingrained within the PLAN.

Summary

Thus, in this case, the difference between two nations' theories of victory—the

independent variable—was relatively small.   Both sides understood the paramount

importance of defending the landing force from attack from the opponent and of ensuring

a steady supply of reinforcements and resupply over the same waters.   Whether the

threat was from the opponent's navy or air force, it had to be neutralized if there was to

be any chance for an amphibious operation to succeed.   Beyond that, the Chinese shared

with the Americans a recognition of the utility of naval gunfire support, specially trained

amphibious assault troops, and specialized landing craft.   Lastly, the Chinese at least

aspired to create an air force to support their fleet and the landing force.[105]

Interestingly, one piece of evidence emphasizes the degree to which the Chinese

understood the American view of amphibious operations.   Basically, the senior

members of the PLA anticipated the Inchon landings in the Korean War.

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103 Huang, "What China Learned," 256.

104 Zhang Shuguang, *Mao's Military Romanticism*, 53.

105 While substantially behind the United States with regard to airpower, the intensity with which Mao and
his compatriots pursued an air force seems deeper in the Taiwan theater than in the deliberations
regarding crossing the Yalu.

> On August 23 the staff of the Operation Bureau of the PLA's General Staff convened a meeting to discuss the situation on the Korean battlefield, chaired by Zhou |Enlai's| military secretary Lei Yingfu (who had then also been appointed as the Bureau's vice director). After debating different options and conducting a simulated scenario on maps, the participants unanimously concluded that the enemy's next step would be a landing operation at one of five possible Korean ports, Wonsan, Nampo, Inchon, Kunsan, and Hungnam. Among these ports, the most likely and threatening one would be Inchon.[106]

The report's detail about the strategic level goals of such an attack was quite accurate.

Zhang quotes the report directly:

> To make a large-scale landing of its main force on our flank rear areas (near Pyongyang or Seoul) and at the same time employ a small force to pin down the |North Korean| People's Army in its present positions, enabling it to attack from the front and rear simultaneously. In that case the People's Army would be in a very difficult position.[107]

This was precisely the plan that X Corps put into place in its first landing on the peninsula.[108] That the PLA senior leaders were able to anticipate the likelihood and the dangers posed by MacArthur's daring plan suggests they shared his understanding of how amphibious warfare was to be carried out effectively. Indeed the detail of the Chinese understanding about this plan stands in noted contrast to many of the discussions regarding the American strategy on the Korean peninsula. This sort of nuanced discussion is supportive of Prediction #3.

Signaling by the United States

American signaling regarding Taiwan consisted of both diplomatic and military elements. The former were clear and forceful. The latter were much less strong, and were conveyed through the use of forces integral to the American theory of victory for amphibious operations. That is, the signals followed the predictions that stem from the

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106 Chen Jian, *China's Road*, 147.

107 Zhang Shuguang, *Mao's Military Romanticism*, 73.

108 See Blair, *The Forgotten War*, Chapters 7-9, *passim*.

dissertation's theory (specifically Prediction #5).   These signals are both discussed in turn.

Diplomatic Signals

The American announcement of June 26 was very clear.   On the morning of June 26 at a well-covered press conference, Truman announced the U.S. policies of providing air, naval, and logistics support to the South Koreans and the policy of neutralizing the Taiwan Strait.   The President stated that the 7th Fleet would "neutralize" the Taiwan Strait.   He did so because "the occupation of Formosa by communist forces would be a direct threat to the security of the Pacific area and to United States forces performing their lawful and necessary functions in that area [surrounding Korea]."[109] Later, supplementing this diplomatic signal, the commander of the Seventh Fleet joined MacArthur on a trip to Taibei in August of 1950.[110]   However, far more important than these words and gestures were actions.

Military Signals

The United States' rapid reinforcement of South Korean positions in June and July should have sent a broad signal about the robustness of American containment policy in general.   (That said, the American performance on the battlefield in this period may have undermined that signal to some extent.)

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109 Quoted in James F. Schnabel, *United States Army in the Korean War*, vol. 3 Policy and direction: the first year (Washington, DC: Office of the Chief of Military History United States Army/GPO, 1972), 368.

110 James A. Field, *History of United States Naval Operations: Korea* (Washington: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1962), 139.   While MacArthur was there, Chiang Kai-shek played up his relationship with the United States well beyond the degree of commitment that had been offered by Washington.   Schnabel, *United States Army in the Korean War*, 368.

In the Taiwan Strait itself, the deployment of Seventh Fleet was the sole military signal. However, the American forces available in the region were rather limited. The vaunted Seventh Fleet at this point consisted of a single aircraft carrier (the *USS Valley Forge*), one heavy cruiser (the *USS Rochester*), and eight smaller destroyers.[111] Even this small force was not sent to the Strait, however:

> As a result of budgetary constraints, American naval power in the western Pacific was seriously understrength. Given the navy's tasks in Korea, few ships or planes were left to protect Chiang Kai-shek. Until late July, little was done around Taiwan except reconnaissance flights with navy airplanes. A month after the Korean attack, a destroyer division traveled southward from the Yellow Sea through the Taiwanese straits, but on 1 August it headed north again. On 4 August, the Seventh Fleet formed a new task group, consisting of only three destroyers, to patrol the waters separating Taiwan from the mainland. Thus the announcement that the United States would prevent a Communist attack on the Nationalists' last stronghold was largely a bluff.[112]

As this passage suggests, there was little permanent deployment to the Strait by surface ships, at least initially. The few early passing shows of force (some listed above) are worth discussing in detail, however. A single destroyer, the *Brush*, was dispatched to Keelung to evaluate Taibei's defensive needs on June 28.[113] On the morning of June 29, the *Valley Forge* sent some 29 planes through the Strait, although it appears the carrier did not traverse those waters itself.[114] The bulk of the fleet did not stop in Taiwan, rather, it continued north, arriving in Okinawa on the 30th where it was to begin operations in support of the Korean War.[115]

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111 Paige, *The Korean Decision*, 135.

112 Stueck, *The Road to Confrontation*, 196.

113 Marolda, "The U.S. Navy and the Chinese Civil War, 1945-52", 156.

114 While deploying a modern Nimitz-class carrier in the waters surrounding Taiwan, rather than in the Strait itself, sends a powerful signal, naval air at this time was exceptionally limited in range. Thus, the issue of whether the Valley Forge traversed the Strait is important.

115 Malcolm W. Cagle and Frank Albert Manson, *The Sea War in Korea* (Annapolis, Mary.: Naval Institute Press, 1957), 34; Field, *History of United States Naval Operations: Korea*, 54-55. Crane suggests that the *Valley Forge* continued to consider the situation in the Taiwan Strait for a few days

While the Seventh Fleet had received orders from the JCS to defend the Strait,[116] for the next several months the bulk of the operations to "neutralize" the Taiwan Strait were carried out by patrol planes. However, even here, the size of the squadrons deployed was quite small. Further, the emergency nature of the 1950 patrol was clearly reflected in the way it was set up and carried out."[117] While five squadrons of naval patrol planes were deployed to support operations around the Korean Peninsula (where they could also count on the surface fleet for support and information), a mere two patrol squadrons were deployed to the Taiwan Straits area—VP-46 and VP-28.[118] Each was equipped with nine patrol planes. Their missions eventually began on July 16 and 17, north and south of Taiwan respectively.[119] The squadrons were initially based out of the Pescadores, islands in the middle of the Strait, and Okinawa, just to its northeast.[120] However, as the weather worsened in October, they were moved to the Philippines and Okinawa, decreasing their ability to closely and regularly monitor the situation.[121]

The official U.S. Navy history of the war suggests the patrols were "brandished [as] a weapon of publicity against the Chinese Communists."[122] Another historian makes a similar point, noting that

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after its first strike missions on the Korean Peninsula in early July. Conrad C. Crane, *American Airpower Strategy in Korea, 1950-1953* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2000), 28.

116 Mark A. Ryan, *Chinese Attitudes toward Nuclear Weapons: China and the United States During the Korean War* (Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 1989), 206, note 3.

117 Marolda, "The U.S. Navy and the Chinese Civil War, 1945-52", 174.

118 Cagle and Manson, *The Sea War in Korea*, 375, 520.

119 Field, *History of United States Naval Operations: Korea*, 110.

120 Cagle and Manson, *The Sea War in Korea*, 384.

121 Marolda, "The U.S. Navy and the Chinese Civil War, 1945-52", 174.

122 Field, *History of United States Naval Operations: Korea*.

> During this first patrol, in July 1950, MacArthur approved Struble's [commander of the Seventh Fleet] recommendation that the patrols be publicized. The U.S. interest in the inviolability of Taiwan, first demonstrated by the Seventh Fleet's June 29th aircraft flyover of the strait, was to be made absolutely clear. For deterrence to work this was considered an essential measure.[123]

Thus, there are grounds to believe that the Chinese would have been aware of this deployment.

As for the capability inherent in this initial deployment, a U.S. Naval War College history claims:

> These two squadrons maintained a continuous 24-hour patrol of the Formosan Straits and the China coast ... A round-the-clock coverage of the China coast was maintained with two flights of landplanes of seven to eight hours' duration during the daylight hours and one seaplane patrol during the period of darkness.[124]

It does not take much reading between the lines to note the bravado in this report. Covering a coastline of several hundred miles with a single aircraft patrol at night leads to very thin coverage. Occasionally, these patrols would sound warnings of possible invasion fleets massing. One report on December 7, 1950 found some 750 junks in two separate fleets (far larger than the usual fishing fleet size) at sea.[125] That these fishing fleets were not noted gathering at the Chinese ports, but only caught after underway, steaming towards Taiwan, is suggestive of the thinness of the American coverage.

Acheson recognized these concerns "conced[ing] that the reconnaissance has been inadequate as a basis for firm conclusion on this point [the possible buildup of unusual

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123 Marolda, "The U.S. Navy and the Chinese Civil War, 1945-52", 177.

124 Cagle and Manson, *The Sea War in Korea*, 384. Note that Cagle suggests that these patrols were "supported by ready-duty destroyers from the Seventh Fleet maintained in constant readiness in Formosan waters" (Cagle and Manson, *The Sea War in Korea*, 384.) but there is no evidence that such arrangements existed before late July or early August. Indeed, Field directly contradicts this. Field, *History of United States Naval Operations: Korea*, 67.

125 Cagle and Manson, *The Sea War in Korea*, 384-85. In this particular instance, the fleet turned around within hours.

concentrations of junks]."[126]   Further, it was not until August 2, 1950, that the rules

about what reconnaissance would be allowed were actually finalized.[127]   (MacArthur

had attempted a unilateral decision on this issue a few days earlier, likely prompting this

policy to be determined by Washington.[128])   The final rules were relatively restrictive

and did not allow crossing into Chinese territorial waters.[129]   It appears from the

discussion between the representatives from the Departments of State and Defense that

prior reconnaissance had taken place even further offshore.

Aside from the issue of detection, it would have taken several days for ships from

Korean waters to respond to any convincing evidence that a landing attempt was

underway.[130]   However, typically, the first response was to send out additional

reconnaissance planes to reconfirm the sighting the next day, adding to the potential

delay a true invasion force would have benefited from.

Eventually the air reconnaissance patrols were reinforced.   They were joined on

July 18 by two fleet submarines, the *Catfish* and the *Pickerel*, who conducted

reconnaissance along the Chinese coast.[131]   However, this deployment was not

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126 "The Secretary of State to the Secretary of Defense (Johnson) (July 31, 1950)," in *F.R.U.S., 1950, Vol. 6*, 403.

127 See Note 2 in "Memorandum by the Executive Secretary (Lay) to the National Security Council (August 2, 1950)," in *Ibid.*, 407.

128 See "Joint Daily SITREP No. 34 (July 31, 1950)" in *Joint Daily Sitrep Collection*, (Carlisle, Penn.: Military History Institute Library, U.S. Army War College, 1950).   This was the situation report for the entire Far Eastern Command.

129 "The Secretary of State to the Secretary of Defense (Johnson) (July 31, 1950)," in *F.R.U.S., 1950, Vol. 6*, 405.

130 Marolda, "The U.S. Navy and the Chinese Civil War, 1945-52", 117.   While some air support might have been provided by the prop-driven twin-Mustangs (F-82) based in Okinawa, the jet fighters there, the F-80s, would have been out of range.

131 Field, *History of United States Naval Operations: Korea*, 67.

announced (thus negating any potential deterrent value), and was temporary, with the

boats returning to Japan on July 30.[132]   One brief deployment of surface ships to the

area—including the heavy cruiser *Helena* and 4 destroyers—was ordered on July 26 in

response to stepped up reports of an imminent attack.[133]   The deterrent value of this

deployment was very clearly in the mind of the Joint Chiefs in their directive to

MacArthur (who had protested of the need for Seventh Fleet assets in Korea).   They

noted that the:

> presence of elms [elements] of 7th Flt in Formosa Strait and [waters] of Formosa even for
> a short time, would be an [effective] demonstration of U.S. intentions and a deterrent to
> invasion.[134]

The *Helena* and its fleet was soon relieved by a smaller fleet.   This was centered around

the *Juneau*—a light anti-aircraft cruiser—and also included an escort of two destroyers.

This group was formed into Task Group 77.3, which was permanently tasked with the

defense of the Taiwan Strait in early August.[135]   While not a trivial deployment, this

fleet, by itself, would have been insufficient to stop an invasion fleet.   The PLA had

fought off attacks by one or two destroyers in their campaigns against the KMT.[136]   By

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132 Marolda, "The U.S. Navy and the Chinese Civil War, 1945-52", 178-9.

133 Field, *History of United States Naval Operations: Korea*, 125. One source suggests only a total of four
destroyers.   See Marolda, "The U.S. Navy and the Chinese Civil War, 1945-52", 182.

134 From a message dated July 27, 1950, cited in Marolda, "The U.S. Navy and the Chinese Civil War,
1945-52", 181.

135 Field suggests the date of August 1 (Field, *History of United States Naval Operations: Korea*, 128.).
Whereas Marolda puts it at August 4 (Marolda, "The U.S. Navy and the Chinese Civil War, 1945-52",
1183.).   One of the destroyers was the *USS Maddox*, which was later to play a prominent role in the
Gulf of Tonkin Incident of 1964 of Vietnamese waters.

136 Huang, "What China Learned."

winter, the group was reinforced more significantly with another cruiser and a third

destroyer.[137]

American Insecurity about the Capabilities Used to Signal

Not only was the initial force deployed relatively small, but also *local American*

commanders repeatedly expressed concerns over whether it would be sufficient to defend

Taiwan.   Throughout the Korean War, the dual responsibility of the Seventh Fleet—to

neutralize the Taiwan Strait and to support the war in Korea—was imbalanced, strongly

favoring the Korean mission.   The Joint Chiefs recommended to the Secretary of

Defense that this problem be addressed by ensuring,

> ... the Chinese forces on Formosa must be prepared, within reason, to resist attack.   It is imperative, therefore that the capabilities of the Chinese Nationalist forces be assessed at the earliest possible date; that immediate and positive steps be taken to insure that such of their military equipment as requires maintenance be rendered usable; and that deficiencies of matériel and supplies essential to the Chinese Nationalist forces be met.[138]

There were repeated attempts to reinforce the small deployment by the U.S. Navy to the

Taiwan Strait, however in each case, the requests were rebuffed because the requested

forces were needed even more urgently in Korea.[139]   The Seventh Fleet's commander

"complained that he could not fight in Korea and stop a PRC invasion at the same

time."[140]

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137 Field, *History of United States Naval Operations: Korea*, 398.

138 "Memorandum by the Joint Chiefs of Staff to the Secretary of Defense (Johnson)," July 27, 1950, in *F.R.U.S., 1950, Vol. 6*, 393.

139 Field, *History of United States Naval Operations: Korea*, 58, 62-63, 67, 120, 266.   Also on the pull of Korea for forces also tasked with the defense of Taiwan, see Robert Frank Futrell, *The United States Air Force in Korea, 1950-1953*, Rev. ed. (Washington, D.C.: Office of Air Force History United States Air Force, 1983), 50.

140 Roger Dingman, "Atomic Diplomacy During the Korean War," in *Nuclear Diplomacy and Crisis Management*, ed. Stephen Van Evera (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1990), 125.

With regard to the prospect for a Chinese Communist invasion of Taiwan, the

United States remained concerned through much of 1950. In early July, the CIA

reported "an analysis of recent Chinese Communist troop movements, propaganda and

press comment indicates that the Peiping regime may now be capable of launching an

assault against Taiwan."[141] Later that month, the Joint Chiefs themselves expressed a

number of similar concerns:

> Current intelligence indicates that sufficient build-up of troops and water lift now exists
> on the China coast for launching an invasion of Taiwan. Estimates of Chinese
> Communist air strength indicate that moderate air support would be available for an
> assault. It is doubtful, however, that information of an imminent attack may be obtained
> except through photographic reconnaissance.[142]

They concluded, "*neither the Seventh Fleet nor Chiang's troops were capable of*

stopping an invasion."[143] They went on, "recommend[ing] approval for Chinese

Nationalist 'offensive-defensive' actions [i.e., preemptive attacks] there, despite President

Truman's previous rejections of that course of action."[144] Also in late July, the CIA

concluded,

> There are no indications the U.S. pronouncement of 27 June 1950 has caused the Chinese
> Communists to abandon these preparations. Barring effective opposition by U.S. naval
> units, Chinese Communist forces are capable of security and initial lodgment of 75,000
> fully equipped troops on Taiwan and within two or three weeks of establishing control
> over the entire island. An early assault may well be launched.[145]

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141 Central Intelligence Agency, "Document 183. Daily Summary Excerpt, 12 July 1950, Possible Assault on Taiwan," in *Assessing the Soviet Threat: The Early Cold War Years*, ed. Woodrow J. Kuhns (Washington, DC: Central Intelligence Agency, 1997), 418.

142 "Memorandum by the Joint Chiefs of Staff to the Secretary of Defense (Johnson)," July 28, 1950, in *F.R.U.S., 1950, Vol. 6*, 395.

143 Emphasis added. Dennis D. Wainstock, *Truman, Macarthur, and the Korean War* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1999), 39.

144 Dingman, "Atomic Diplomacy During the Korean War," 126. Johnson passed on may of these concerns to Acheson. "The Secretary of Defense (Johnson) to the Secretary of State," July 29, 1950, in *F.R.U.S., 1950, Vol. 6*, 401.

145 Central Intelligence Agency, "Document 186. Weekly Summary Excerpt, 28 July 1950, Soviet/Satellite Intentions," in *Assessing the Soviet Threat: The Early Cold War Years*, ed. Woodrow J. Kuhns (Washington, DC: Central Intelligence Agency, 1997).

Even after the U.S. deployments to the region were regularized, a large number of "war

scares" in the Taiwan Strait—and the degree to which they caused grave concern in

Tokyo and Washington—emphasized the perception of potential danger here, at least in

Washington's eyes.[146]   By October, the CIA was more confident of the American ability

to defend the island (so long as the Soviets did not intervene), but noted the "Chinese are

now capable of launching an invasion against Formosa with about 200,000 troops and

moderate air cover,"[147]

Indeed, even in the spring of 1950,[148] before the outbreak of the Korean War (and

its demands on the 7th Fleet's assets), the U.S. military leadership had felt that they lacked

the forces available in the region to adequately defend Taiwan from Mainland China.[149]

Paul Nitze, head of Policy Planning at State at the time and the primary author of NSC-68,

recalled a discussion with John Foster Dulles.   Nitze had just explained to Dulles that

the group drawing up NSC-68 had consulted thoroughly with the Pentagon regarding

what areas they had the forces to defend, and the Pentagon had rejected Taiwan.   Dulles

pushed Nitze further on this point:

> What we should have asked, Dulles argued, was if the President determined that it was of
> great political importance that Taiwan be defended, could the Joint Chiefs of Staff make
> the forces available?   So I [Nitze] went back to the Joint Chiefs and they went through
> the analysis in great detail.   The upshot was that the Chiefs decided that we could not
> prudently make the forces available to defend Taiwan despite a determination that it was
> politically important to do so.[150]

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146 Field, *History of United States Naval Operations: Korea*, 110, 256, 274, 343.

147 "Memorandum Prepared by the Central Intelligence Agency: C. Threat of Chinese Communist
   Invasion of Formosa," October 12, 1950, *F.R.U.S., 1950, Vol. 6*, 529.   This memo was prepared for
   the Wake Island conference between Truman and MacArthur.

148 Nitze does not elaborate more fully on the date.

149 In this period, the United States was also moving away politically from a decision to support the KMT,
   so the question was moot.   That said, the fact that it was discussed at senior levels is interesting.

150 Paul H. Nitze, "The Development of NSC-68," *International Security* 4, no. 4 (1980): 175.

(To be sure, that passage speaks to both intent and ability. However, as Nitze, himself, noted, concurring with part of this dissertation's argument, these are often closely interrelated.[151])

Clearly, the above several paragraphs speak primarily to American perceptions of the military balance here with the forces that were available at the time. What matters more for assessing the dissertation's theory is the Chinese perception. Yet, in the absence of detailed information on how prepared the Chinese were—in a military sense—to invade, this is nevertheless useful. It helps to bound the question and suggests that the Chinese may have had a reasonable degree of capability relative to that the United States had in the region.

Additionally, however, given the pessimism regarding their own position, it is clear that the United States was not overestimating its own capabilities, as it had done in the prior two cases. This, too, is as this dissertation's theory would predict: more similar theories of victory should lead to less over-optimism (Predictions #1 and #10).

Thus, in a military sense, the "deployment" of the 7th Fleet was less strong that it might have appeared. For a month, there was a single show of force by a carrier and a series of air patrols. After that only a small fleet was deployed, and it was frequently pulled to Korean waters—days away from the Strait—to support the war effort there.

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151 The passage cited above implies there are forces elsewhere that might be up to the task, but that it would be imprudent to do so. However, things are not so neatly divisible, as many examples in this dissertation have shown and as Nitze notes in the paragraph immediately following:

There is always an inter-relationship between capabilities and intentions, tactics, and strategy. Because of the limitations of means—we had only seven active divisions at the time of the outbreak of the Korean War—our policy choices were obviously constrained. We had to tailor planning to the means available. As the means increased, we could contemplate other, more powerful reactions in other places. However, we did not foresee any time when U.S, means combined with those of our allies, would be such as to give us an unlimited range of political/military options.

See *Ibid.*

Beyond that, U.S. military leaders repeatedly expressed concern throughout the fall that

they would be unable to stop a significant Chinese attack.

Interpretation by China

There is limited information available about the Chinese interpretation of this

threat.   However, their response was immediate, and suffered from none of the wildly

optimistic misperceptions that the other cases exhibit.   This section will provide strong

support for the theory: in the absence of large differences in theories of victory, there was

no underestimation of the United States (thus supporting H_1) and no subsequent

misperception of American signals or capabilities that might have led to an avoidable

military conflict in the Strait (thus supporting H_{2A} and H_{2B}).   Minimal differences in the

theory of victory correlate with more accurate perceptions (Prediction #1), and there was

no questioning of American intent (as expected by Predictions #6 and #7).

Prior to the outbreak of the Korean War, the Chinese were increasingly expecting

the United States to avoid direct military involvement in the conflict.[152]   As mentioned

in a previous chapter, Beijing had previously believed that the United States could be

deterred from intervening in the Chinese Civil War.   This had come from the Chinese

experience late in the Civil War when they deployed a large force, purely for the

purposes of signaling to the United States the dangers of large-scale intervention, along

the Northeastern coastlines of China.   The lack of a U.S. response convinced Mao that

he had deterred the United States from intervening.   (In fact, there is little evidence that

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152 As mentioned in Chapter 5, on January 5, 1950, hours before the President's speech, senior military
    leaders in China were downplaying the possibility of the United States sending troops to defend
    Taiwan in the event of a PRC invasion there on military grounds. Chen Jian, *China's Road*, 102.

the United States was strongly considering intervention at that point, and it had already reduced its forces from Chinese territory—which had numbered several thousand in 1948.)   Nevertheless, according to Mao's perspective, the lack of American involvement in the Chinese civil war implied that the United States would be unlikely to interfere once the invasion of Taiwan was underway.[153]

Additionally, even before President Truman's "hands off" speech, Chinese military leaders argued that the United States was too overstretched to get directly involved.[154]   The President's speech itself signaled the beginnings of the public moves toward abandonment of Chiang Kai-shek.[155]   Beyond that, as argued at the beginning of this chapter, the Chinese plans for the invasion of Taiwan were clearly moving forward. They would come crashing to a halt after June 27 (i.e., after the U.S. declaration regarding the neutralization of the Taiwan Strait).

The deployment of the Seventh Fleet caused the Chinese to abandon their plans. In the context of amphibious operations, this new policy by the United States spelled disaster for Mao's plans.   (In Korea, in contrast, as shown in the previous chapter, doctrinal blinders continued to nourish false optimism by the Chinese from the initial decision to intervene and even for several months after People's War tactics should have by been thoroughly discredited.)

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153 See *Ibid.*, 98; Chen Xiaolu, "China's Policy toward the United States, 1949-55," in *Sino-American Relations, 1945-1955: A Joint Reassessment of a Critical Decade*, ed. Harry Harding and Ming Yuan (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, Inc., 1989), 186; He Di, "The Last Campaign," 2.

154 Chen Jian, *China's Road*, 102.

155 For discussion of the speech and the politics surrounding and resulting from it, see Thomas J. Christensen, *Useful Adversaries: Grand Strategy, Domestic Mobilization, and Sino-American Conflict, 1947-1958* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1996), Chapter 4.

Following the announcement of the 7th Fleet deployment, a number of orders were

issued immediately in Beijing to push back the invasion of Taiwan.   On June 30, just

over two days after Truman's declaration, Zhou Enlai ordered "the date for the invasion

of Taiwan to be postponed.   The army should continue to demobilize, and the

establishment of the air force and navy should be strengthened."[156]   The formal order

from the CMC to relocate troops that had previously been slated for the invasion of

Taiwan was issued on July 7. [157]   In early August, they were shifted northeast where

they would participate in the Korean intervention.[158]   Also in early August, the CMC

gave its formal approval to an extended delay, postponing the invasion until after 1951.[159]

Not only were troops moved, but military construction projects were also discontinued.

At the beginning of this chapter, work on a number of airbases was mentioned, "but these

projects ceased at the beginning of the Korean War as assets were shifted to northeastern

China."[160]

In terms of detail on *why* this decision was taken, it is clear from several other

pieces of evidence that the Chinese leaders found the American threat to be both credible

and *very capable*.   For instance, one Chinese scholar provides added context to Zhou's

original statement postponing the invasion:

> Zhou Enlai pointed out the General Staff Headquarters and the Ministry of Foreign
> Affairs must watch the Korean battlefield's situation attentively and carefully.   However,

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156 Quoted in 廖国良,李士顺, 徐焰<<毛泽东军事思想发展史>>修订版(北京:解放军出版社,2001).
　　Liao Guoliang, Li Shishun, and Xu Yan, *The Development of Mao Zedong's Military Thought* ,
　　Revised ed. (Beijing: The People's Liberation Army Press, 2001), 372.

157 Zhang Shuguang, *Mao's Military Romanticism*, 59.

158 Chen Jian, *China's Road*, 132.

159 宋<<抗美援朝再回首>>　Song Liansheng, *Recollections on the Korean War* , 204.

160 Muller, *China as a Maritime Power*, 55.

> the demobilization work should still continue according to plan. Only the plan to liberate Taiwan must immediately be abandoned because of the 7th Fleet that the Americans had stationed in the Taiwan Strait. According to the memoirs of Xiao Jinguang, on June 30, 1950, Zhou conveying the Central Committee's analysis of this situation to him [Xiao], saying "the changed situation adds to the problems we face in attacking Taiwan. Because the U.S. blocks the Taiwan Strait ... the ground forces should continue to demobilize, and we'll continue to establish our navy and air force. We will postpone the attack on Taiwan."[161]

Similarly, while the 3rd Field Army had prepared hard for the invasion, the top political leadership of the PRC quickly recognized a need to abandon these plans: However, in an internal directive, the Central Committee [of the CCP] had to admit: it [China] did not have the ability to compete with the United States in a trial of modern navies."[162] Finally, a tantalizing report regarding the reaction in Beijing to the American deterrent threat comes from a Chinese Nationalist agent who reportedly attended a high level meeting in Beijing. He passed on the conclusion of the senior Communist cadres, that the Chinese assault fleet would "last only a few [hours] against 7th Flt and U.S. Air Force."[163]

In each of these three pieces of data, the specific dangers posed by the U.S. Navy (and in at least one case, the Air Force) are tied to the decision to postpone the attack. Thus, the Chinese understood that even this minimal deployment would decimate any prospects for a successful invasion. They understood both the capability that the signal entailed (H_{2A}) and the intent that it conveyed (H_{2B}). After this, there was no longer any

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161 宋<<抗美援朝再回首>> Song Liansheng, *Recollections on the Korean War* , 204. Xiao Jinguang was a senior Chinese military leader, veteran of the revolutionary war, and was to go on to command the PLAN. Chen Yi was another senior communist leader who served as a senior military leader under Zhu De during the civil war and later was mayor of Shanghai and Minister of Foreign Affairs.

162 *Ibid.*, 197. The precise date of this "internal directive" is unclear from the text of Song's book, although it appears to be only a few days after June 28, 1950.

163 Marolda, "The U.S. Navy and the Chinese Civil War, 1945-52", 192.. Marolda cites a message sent from the U.S. Air Attaché in Taipei to the Chief of Naval Operations on August 25, 1950 available in the MacArthur archives.

doubt regarding whether the United States would intervene and what that intervention would mean to the Chinese invasion plan if it did so.

Summary

This case suggests several conclusions. First, it suggests that the Alternate Hypothesis that focuses on the 'objective' quality of the signal as being critical for coercive success is partially supported, but only partially. The signal was, at best, moderately sized. In terms of 'objective' quality, it certainly was quite clear (Truman's speech left little ambiguity), but the strength of the military signal was quite weak at first. Over time, it grew to be—at the most—a moderately strong military signal.[164] Nevertheless, deterrence held. The Alternate Hypothesis can take some credit for explaining this, but not exclusive credit.

More convincingly, this case supports the argument advanced by this dissertation. There is evidence to support the contention that neither side had an unduly high view of its own capabilities: for weeks, the United States was worried about its ability to defend Taiwan and some branches of government were not reassured until the full buildup for the Korean War was underway in early 1951. The Chinese had backed down in the face of only a moderate deterrent threat. Thus, this case supports H_1, clearly and directly.

This case further suggests that in instances where the two sides have similar theories of victory, international communication is easier (H_{2B}) and joint assessments of

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164 The alternate explanation cannot be rescued completely by invoking Mearsheimer's stopping power of water. (See John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company, 2001), 114-28.) The stopping power of water may have played a role in amplifying the clarity of the American signal to the Chinese, but Mao's views changed over the feasibility of the attack directly in response the U.S. moves. An exclusive focus on the stopping power of water cannot explain that.

the military balance are likely to be similar (H_{2A}).   In this case, an only moderately sized signal was sent.   However, the signal was so clear and the military language so straightforward, that it was sufficient to deter the Chinese from continuing on this path. Because both sides understood amphibious war similarly, they both instantly understood the damage even a few surface ships or a rapidly deployed air squadron could do to a Chinese landing force.   In this case, there is none of the "explaining away" of the adversary's capabilities that other cases displayed.   Both sides knew how to interpret this signal.   No translation was needed.

Chapter 7. CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This final chapter summarizes the results of the three cases, highlighting the strongest arguments made in each, as well as acknowledging their key shortcomings.   It then turns to the implications of this research for both practitioners and theorists.   In short, the dissertation has found initial support for the proposed relationship between doctrinal differences, misperception, and coercive failure.   Nations look at the world through their own military lens.   Doctrinal differences impeded communication and signaling between the United States and China.   This, in turn, contributed to deterrence failure and escalation of conflict in the cases.

For effective international communication, both sides must understand the language of diplomacy.   When that language depends on military threats, different theories of victory can lead to problems in translation and thus unnecessary conflict. Looking forward, policymakers in similar situations to those studied in this dissertation—attempting to deter or compel an adversary with a different doctrine than their own—need to recognize the acute difficulties in such a project and adjust their behavior and expectations accordingly.

Summary

Although additional concurring empirical work would bolster the confidence in these findings, these three cases provide tentative, initial support for the hypotheses.   In two of the cases, deterrence failure and subsequent escalation occurred in the context of

deep differences between the two nations' theories of victory. The causal role of the doctrinal difference is clear-cut in one case (the United States crossing the 38th), and more ambiguous because of limitations in evidence in the other (China's approval of the invasion). In a third case, more similar theories of victory permitted the straight-forward communication of intent and capabilities between the two nations over Taiwan. Beyond this, the eleven ancillary predictions of the dissertation's theory received wide support across all three cases. While each of the three cases supported the dissertation's theory, the Alternate Hypothesis received only mixed support. (That said, clearly combining the two will lead to the most accuracy.)

The cases present several different types of evidence. In all three cases, the outcomes correlate with predictions based on the characterization of the relevant theories of victory. However, this would be only thin evidence for a qualitative research project. Much more convincing is the data presented that shows that the process by which the outcome occurs indeed corresponds to the detailed predictions of how the proposed theory should work. Thus, the strongest evidence presented in each of the cases is process tracing data.

In the case of the U.S. decision to cross the 38th parallel, the data presented above makes very clear that the United States explained away the Chinese threats for precisely the reason predicted by the dissertation's theory. That is, in a series of quotes from both civilian and military sources, American analysts and decisionmakers would move with ease from statements belittling China's doctrine of People's War to statements concluding that Chinese capabilities were weak relative to those of the United States. They would then use those relative weaknesses in PLA capability to derive an assessment

of Chinese intent that downplayed the likelihood of Chinese intervention. This led to mistakes in American policy that critically shaped the Korean War, and indeed the entire Cold War.

In the case focusing on Chinese decision making in May of 1950 regarding approval of Kim's invasion plan, the limitations of the historic record impede analysis to some extent. Nevertheless, in December 1949 and January 1950 Mao and other senior Chinese leaders linked their expectations about a general withdrawal from Asia by the United States to perceptions about American military relative weakness. Again, in turn, these assessments of American weakness were made using language that suggested that a People's War doctrine underpinned the analysis.

In contrast, in the Taiwan Straits case, the evidence available about Chinese decision-making suggests that similarity in doctrine reduced the prospects for coercive failure. In various quotes describing the reasoning of senior Chinese leaders as they abandoned their planned attack, it was precisely the dangers the American Navy would have posed invasion that accounted decision. In that case, there was no evidence of the pervasive false optimism that the other two cases exhibited.

Thus, in each of the three cases, there is process tracing evidence that the precise biased perception that the theory predicts was in fact used to draw conclusions about the situation and the adversary's behavior.

Beyond that, however, the specific predictions regarding related phenomenon are also borne out pervasively in the associated historic record. In all three cases, it is very clear that the signals sent were products of the sending nation's theory of victory. The military signals were clearly products of the dominant doctrine on each side.

Additionally, in the two cases of coercive failure, there is copious evidence that United States and China were both surprised by the effectiveness of their adversary and the limitations of their own forces.[1]   Indeed, this was endemic, ranging from shock regarding specific tactical issues and the strategic success of the opponent to a broader surprise over the opponent's involvement in the conflict.

In total, then, all three cases provide some initial support for the proposed theory. Significant differences in theories of victory did indeed lead to misperception, miscommunication, and miscalculation.   In turn, these errors played important roles in key deterrence failures in the Korean War, leading to a substantial worsening of that conflict.   On the other hand, mistakes and escalation were avoided in the case where the theories of victory were more similar.   The conventional wisdom regarding deterrence failure that focuses on the "objective" clarity of the signal did not explain the cases as well as the proposed theory.

The figure, below, summarizes these judgments.

Figure 7-1:   Summary of Cases

Hypothesis/ Variable Case	Outcome	H$_{Alternate}$: 'Objective' Quality of Signal	IV: Difference in Theory of Victory	H$_1$: Diff Theory of Mil. Victory -> Underest.	H$_2$: Underest. -> Coercive Failure
U.S. Crosses 38th Parallel	Deterrence Failure	Weakly Supported	Large	Strongly Supported	Strongly Supported
Chinese Approval of NK Invasion	Deterrence Failure	Supported	Large	Moderately Supported	Weakly Supported (poor evidence)
China postpones Taiwan Invasion	Deterrence Success	Weakly to Moderately Supported	Small	Strongly Supported	Moderately Supported (poor evidence)

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1   Clearly, *both* sides were surprised.   As noted in the theory chapter, that is certainly a possibility. Both sides had high expectations of quick victory against their adversary.   Instead, what each got was a bloody stalemate that did little to advance its national interests.

Future research will help to deepen the understanding of these hypotheses more generally.[2] Until additional work is done, however, it is important to consider how this project might contribute to the understanding of international conflict, signaling, and beliefs about war.

Implications for Policy

Attempts at coercion of one sort or another are pervasive in international politics. The United States has done this in more than half a dozen major cases just since the end of the Cold War.[3] It is remarkable how often such attempts fail, even when the nation attempting coercion is, like the United States, dramatically more powerful than the target nation by conventional measures of power. This dissertation helps to explain this sort of failure.

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2   Several cases seem promising. Cases from the U.S.-Vietnamese War, would illustrate to what extent learning occurs between the same two adversaries. (Three decisions would appear worthy of study: a. The 1962 decision by China to support the North Vietnamese; b. The escalations following the Gulf of Tokin incident; and c. Chinese attempts to deter the United States from widening the war in 1965 and 1966.) Other cases might focus on Chinese crisis diplomacy with a country less far ahead in technology and less distinct in doctrine and theory of victory. In this regard, the Sino-Vietnamese war of 1979 and the Sino-Indian war of 1962 seem promising.

Clearly there would also be advantages from the perspective of generalization to adding a case completely outside of this dyad. One way to do this would be to build on Jonathan Shimshoni's work on the Arab-Israeli wars. (Jonathan Shimshoni, *Israel and Conventional Deterrence: Border Warfare from 1953 to 1970* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988).) In particular, study of the 1973 war, which Shimshoni does not examine, would seem interesting from the perspective of this study. Another promising case might be WWII; witness the examples discussed in the Theory and Method chapter, above. The Napoleonic period seems particularly promising given the range of conflict that occurred, as does the pair of U.S.-Yugoslavia/Serbia crises in the 1990s. (Barry R. Posen, "Military Responses to Refugee Disasters," *International Security* 21, no. 1 (1996); Barry R. Posen, "The War for Kosovo: Serbia's Political-Military Strategy," *International Security* 24, no. 4 (2000).) Other cases from perhaps the Crimean War, the Indo-Chinese war of 1962, Austro-Prussian War (see Thomas J. Christensen, "Perceptions and Alliances in Europe, 1865-1940," *International Organization* 51, no. 1 (1997): 70-76.), etc., might also be helpful.

3   Iraq in 1991 and 2003, Somalia in 1992, Haiti in 1994, Yugoslavia in 1995, Serbia in 1999, and Afghanistan in 2001.

The dissertation also lays out a path for states to avoid these dangers. Deterrence theory has long emphasized the importance of assessing what an adversary values to enhance coercive threats. This dissertation points out that in many cases that is insufficient. For deterrence or compellence to succeed, states also have to understand how the target understands military power. In order to send an effective deterrent or compellent signal, states have to understand the perceptual lens through which that signal will be evaluated. This requires understanding the adversary's theory of victory.

Perhaps the most important policy implication of this study is simply that coercion of either form —compellence or deterrence—is very, very difficult. State leaders need to understand that and be restrained in their expectations about shaping other countries' behaviors. Target states with differing doctrinal lenses will often misunderstand threats, and pursuing the steps outlined below to avoid this may not completely vitiate this problem. Compellence and deterrence promise victory on the cheap: Rather than having to rely on brute force to achieve one's goals, threats backed up by limited uses of force might suffice. However, this dissertation warns that compellence and deterrence will often fail, leaving the threatening state in a position where brute force will have to be used to achieve its goals. For many goals, this more costly policy will not be worth the stake at hand.

This dissertation's conclusions are particularly relevant today for two reasons. First, in the context of the ongoing revolution in military affairs (RMA), it is likely that the United States will view warfare very differently than any of its adversaries do.[4] The

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4   For descriptions of the RMA, see Vice Admiral Arthur K. Cebrowski, Retired, *Planning a Revolution: Mapping the Pentagon's Transformation*, WebMemo #292 (Washington, DC: Heritage Foundation, June 12, 2003); Donald Rumsfeld, "Transforming the Military," *Foreign Affairs* 81, no. 3 (2002).

U.S. theory of victory increasingly emphasizes a number of exotic technologies:

precision guided munitions, space-based intelligence gathering, electronic warfare,

information warfare, stealth, heavy strategic bombers, standoff weaponry, "total

battlespace awareness," and systems integration. In every single one of those areas, the

United States has a substantial lead on the entire globe.

However, when the United States sends deterrent or compellent signals relying on

the threat or actual use of this sort of military power, it should avoid assuming that its

adversaries will view American forces as Washington does. For instance, Saddam

Hussein is said to have remarked, "The United States relies on the Air Force, and the Air

Force has never been the decisive factor in the history of war."[5] This likely led to

misperceptions and miscalculations on the part of Iraq before the first Gulf War.[6]

Indeed, this problem is likely to become even more pronounced over time as the

United States continues to invest heavily in high-technology weapons programs and

systems integration. Today, the United States spends more on military research and

development than any other country spends on its entire military budget.[7] Over time,

the gap between the American theory of victory and that of nearly all of its potential

adversaries is likely to widen. The dangers outlined in this dissertation will also grow,

and must be carefully guarded against.

Second, because this dissertation looks at Sino-American cases, it is likely to have

continuing relevance to those two great powers. The interaction between the two is

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5   Merrill A. McPeak, "Leave the Flying to Us," *Washington Post*, June 5, 2003.

6   A similar case could be made in the second gulf war regarding Hussein's expectations for various
     guerilla strategies.

7   Research and development spending in the 2004 budget totals some $61.8 billion.

likely to shape international politics in the East Asian region, if not more widely, for the

next century.[8]   Thus, learning more about how the two sides can reduce the prospect for

unintended conflict is valuable.   The lessons of this dissertation are likely to be

particularly apt given that the differences between Chinese and American military

technology remain very substantial.[9]   The problems that faced the two in Korea in 1950

may well arise again.   Attention to the two sides' understanding of military power

through their theories of victory will help to ameliorate this danger.

Indeed, one prominent argument suggests that China is engaged in a deliberate

effort to develop asymmetric strategies that might be used in a coercive manner to

counter current American conventional dominance.[10]   Since that "asymmetry" is defined

relative to the U.S. strategy, this is, by definition, a theory of victory very different from

that of the United States.   This will have the effect of making communication of military

threats more difficult for both sides.   Washington and Beijing will not understand the

overall balance of power and the degree of intent communicated by military signals when

the other side's theory of victory is different than its own.   There are some signs,

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8   Thomas J. Christensen, "China, the U.S.-Japan Alliance, and the Security Dilemma in East Asia," *International Security* 23, no. 4 (1999); Thomas J. Christensen, "Posing Problems without Catching Up: China's Rise and Challenges for U.S. Security Policy," *International Security* 25, no. 4 (2001); Avery Goldstein, "Great Expectations: Interpreting China's Arrival," *International Security* 22, no. 3 (1997/98); Robert S. Ross, "The Geography of the Peace: East Asia in the Twenty First Century," *International Security* 23, no. 4 (1999).

9   Harold Brown, Joseph W. Prueher, and Adam Segal, *Chinese Military Power: Report of an Independent Task Force* (New York, NY: Council on Foreign Relations, May 29, 2003).

10   Christensen, "Posing Problems."; Department of Defense, *Annual Report on the Military Power of the People's Republic of China (Report to Congress Pursuant to the Fy2000 National Defense Authorization Act)* (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, July 12, 2002).   Note the Pentagon's attention on this is promising, particularly on the power balancing side.   However, understanding the adversary's signals based on asymmetric tactics will remain challenging.

however, that Chinese strategy is moving toward that of the United States.[11]   This may

actually be a healthy sign from the perspective of crisis stability.[12]

Again, many students of strategic coercion preach similar general lessons to those

that this dissertation counsels.[13]   Morgenthau has a section in the final chapter of his

Politics Among Nations entitled "Diplomacy Must Look at the Political Scene from the

Point of View of Other Nations."[14]   One recent examination of deterrence policy with

the post-Cold War era in mind concludes:

> That solution [to the problems posed by post-Cold War deterrence] is to examine as
> closely as possible the particular opponent's thinking—its beliefs and thought filters—to
> better anticipate its likely behavior in response to U.S. deterrence policies, and structure
> those policies accordingly.[15]

11   In particular, here one thinks of the PLAAF's focus on tactical airpower, the move toward sea control
rather than the People's War/Soviet Young School model that focuses on coastal defense and
submarine forces.

12   These shifts are not without other costs, to be sure.   However, they should reduce the potential for
dangerous misperceptions.   Indeed, to the extent that the Chinese shifts are toward strategies that
favor first strikes, this is not a healthy trend at all, as the large spiral model literature has pointed out.
There is a debate on the direction of Chinese military strategy.   Pessimistic on the score discussed
here is Christensen, "Posing Problems."   More optimistic accounts can be found in Solomon M.
Karmel, *China and the People's Liberation Army: Great Power or Struggling Developing State?*, 1st
ed. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000); Michael O'Hanlon, "Why China Cannot Conquer Taiwan,"
International Security 25, no. 2 (2000); Robert S. Ross, "Navigating the Taiwan Strait: Deterrence,
Escalation Dominance, and U.S.-China Relations," *International Security* 27, no. 2 (2002).

13   E.g., Alexander L. George, *Presidential Decisionmaking in Foreign Policy: The Effective Use of
Information and Advice* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1980), 66ff.   See also Robert S. McNamara
and Brian VanDeMark, *In Retrospect: The Tragedy and Lessons of Vietnam*, 1st ed. (New York: Times
Books, 1995), 322.   On other dangers of mirror imaging, see Les Aspin, "Misreading Intelligence,"
Foreign Policy, no. 43 (1981).

14   Kenneth N. Waltz, "The Origins of War in Neorealist Theory," in *The Origin and Prevention of Major
Wars*, ed. Robert I. Rotberg and Theodore K. Rabb (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press,
1989), 587.

15   Keith B. Payne, *The Fallacies of Cold War Deterrence and a New Direction* (Lexington, Kent.: The
University Press of Kentucky, 2001), xi.

With regard to China in particular, this is also a frequent plea.[16]   Shimshoni also makes

similar policy prescriptions;[17] however, his conclusions suggest more hawkish policies in

general, even though he notes that this has its own set of dangers (making war more

likely in the long term).   This dissertation suggests that by tailoring signals to the

adversary, leaders can cut the Gordian knot.   They will not attract aggressors in the short

run, but at the same time will not provoke security dilemmas in the long run.

More generally, the existing work on "putting yourself in your adversary's shoes"

generally focuses on considering his national interests.   How important is a specific

piece of territory to him?   Would a particular concession be difficult to make?   This

project points out that this is insufficient.   This dissertation contributes to the points

made on mirror imaging in general by providing specific evidence of this phenomenon,

locating it in one very important issue-area, and explaining why it occurs by making

explicit its causal mechanism.   Policymakers need to understand how their adversary

assesses power, which requires understanding his perspective on effective military

doctrines, his theory of victory.

Clearly, the independent variable of this study is not directly manipulable by

policymakers.   It is not easy for nations to change their theory of victory.   As was

noted above, the various theories regarding the sources of theories of victory are deeply

rooted in systemic pressures, technologic opportunities, bureaucratic procedures, and

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16   The importance of focusing on the Chinese perceptions of the world is emphasized in Melvin Gurtov
     and Byong-Moo Hwang, *China under Threat: The Politics of Strategy and Diplomacy* (Baltimore:
     Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980), 4-5.

17   Shimshoni, *Israel and Conventional Deterrence*, 201.

historic experience. Nevertheless, several specific steps can be taken to remedy this problem.

First, states should strive to tailor their signals to the perceptual framework of their adversaries with regard to military doctrine and effectiveness, that is, to their theory of victory. Policymakers can send signals that will be easier for the other side, with its distinct theory of victory, to interpret. While one side's military may not be optimized to implement the other's doctrine, it may, nevertheless, have some forces that might be particularly relevant to the adversary.[18] These can be used to enhance the clarity of the signal, even if the signaling state does not value them highly.

Second, leaders can also "red team" their own net assessments of the adversary's forces. This is not, however, a call for instructing intelligence analysts to make worst-case assumptions.[19] Rather, analysts and scholars who are experts in the country being studied should conduct their honest appraisal of what they understand the adversary to believe regarding its own forces. The value of such red teaming is not that it will allow a state to better assess the overall balance of power, but rather it will allow the state to

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18 Thus, for the United States in 1950, leaving a substantial ground presence in Korea would have been a more clear signal to China than airpower deployments. This would have likely led to a different conversation between Kim and Mao in May of 1950. For China, deploying troops to North Korea earlier (i.e., in August) would have likely deterred the United States from crossing the 38th parallel in October. Clearly, at times material conditions will not allow a state to send precisely the signal it would like. The cost of very expensive signals must be weighed against the cost of inadvertent war however.

19 Again, on the dangers of such an approach, see Jane Kellett-Cramer, "National Security Panics: Overestimating Threats to National Security" (Ph.D. Dissertation, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2002); Fareed Zakaria, "Exaggerating the Threats," *Newsweek*, June 16 2003. For a contemporary example of the dangers of a "red team" that was given too much guidance, see Franklin Foer and Spencer Ackerman, "The Radical: What Dick Cheney Really Believes," *The New Republic*, December 1 2003; Seymour M. Hersh, "Selective Intelligence (Annals of National Security)," *The New Yorker*, May 12 2003; Seymour M. Hersh, "The Stovepipe (Annals of National Security)," *The New Yorker*, October 27 2003; James Risen, "How Pair's Finding on Terror Led to Clash on Shaping Intelligence," *New York Times*, April 28 2004.

better understand what its adversary thinks the balance of power is, and thus provides some insights into how the adversary views the world.

Third, a final important policy prescription is to engage is military-to-military ties. These will have the effect of allowing both sides to better understand the other's theory of victory. This, in turn, will improve the prospects for avoiding unnecessary escalation.

The dangers that this dissertation highlights are severe and can lead to unnecessary conflict. However, they are not inevitable and can be reduced if given appropriate attention.

Implications for Theory

This study speaks to several different theoretical literatures in political science. Most importantly, this dissertation speaks to the large deterrence literature. Its key conclusion is that deterrence is more difficult that many posit. Achieving successful deterrence is not simply a matter of making credible threats. Rather, it requires understanding how those threats will be interpreted. While substantial attention has been paid to the Alternate Hypothesis in the existing literature (emphasizing the role of having the capability to back up a deterrent threat), other areas would seem to warrant additional study. In particular, understanding how different countries perceive power and how they communicate threats seems critical from the evidence presented here. The approach used in this dissertation is only one of many possible ways to examine these issues. Others will likely bear fruit as well. Regardless, the results of this dissertation suggest that net assessments and weighing the balance in particular dyads is insufficient. Rather, focusing on the perceptions as they are influenced by their theories of victory on

both sides—whether they are correct or incorrect—will likely enhance the predictive

value of such analysis.

What this requires, however, is detailed knowledge of the countries that one is

trying to influence. Without strong language skills and deep understanding of other

countries, this knowledge will be impossible to obtain. However, for someone trained

in these areas, the information regarding national approaches to military strategy is

readily available. Even relatively closed societies often publish doctrinal debates in

open sources.[20] This would suggest more emphasis in political science on area studies

and historical knowledge and less on abstract theory. Unfortunately, "area studies in the

United States is under siege."[21] Put bluntly, this threatens American national security.

Second, there is a substantial formal literature on the causes of war that views war

as a failure of bargaining.[22] One of the primary sources of such failures in this literature

is deliberately created informational asymmetry:

> Rational leaders may be unable to locate a mutually preferable negotiated settlement due
> to *private information* about relative capabilities or resolve and *incentives to misrepresent*
> such information. Leaders know things about their military capabilities and willingness
> to fight that other states do not know, and in bargaining situations they can have
> incentives to misrepresent such private information in order to gain a better deal.[23]

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20 Again, see the discussion of this point in Eliot A. Cohen, "Toward a Better Net Assessment:
Rethinking the European Conventional Balance," *International Security* 13, no. 1 (1988): 212.

21 Peter J. Katzenstein, "Area and Regional Studies in the United States," *PS: Political Science and
Politics* 34, no. 4 (2001). For a general discussion on the status of area studies within the field of
political science today, see the roundtable discussion in the same issue. For a concurring view on the
importance of this body of scholarship, see David C. Kang, "Getting Asia Wrong: The Need for New
Analytical Frameworks," *International Security* 27, no. 4 (2003): 83.

22 Bruce Bueno de Mesquita, "An Expected Utility Theory of International Conflict," *American Political
Science Review* 74 (1980).

23 James D. Fearon, "Rationalist Explanations for War," *International Organization* 49, no. 3 (1995): 381.

This study draws attention to a different informational problem: opacity and the importance of perceptual bias.[24]   As the argument of this dissertation makes clear, there are times when informational asymmetries do not come from each side's incentive to misrepresent.   Rather, each side's perceptual bias makes it very difficult for them to see information in the same way as its opponent does.   This is the case even when one side is trying to communicate—not trying to obfuscate—by sending signals to communicate its capabilities and intent.   Rather than informational asymmetries being voluntary and intentional, they are unavoidable and deeply ingrained.   This calls for a fundamentally different understanding of the rationality of war.

Another literature that this project speaks to is the effects of military doctrine. There is already one well-understood link between military doctrines and crisis outcomes. Scholars know that offensive doctrines can worsen the security dilemma and increase the propensity for spirals.[25]   This danger is profound and continues in many areas today.[26] However, this project points to another potential problem that traces its roots to a related independent variable that also deserves study.   Military doctrines can impede communication and increase the prospects for unnecessary conflict.

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24   Note opacity is the core of the critique of Fearon made by Kirshner.   Jonathan D. Kirshner, "Rationalist Explanations for War?," *Security Studies* 10, no. 1 (2000).

25   Robert Jervis, *The Illogic of American Nuclear Strategy* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984); Barry R. Posen, *Inadvertent Escalation: Conventional War and Nuclear Risks* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1991); Jack L. Snyder, *The Ideology of the Offensive: Military Decision Making and the Disasters of 1914* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1984); Stephen Van Evera, "The Cult of the Offensive and the Origins of the First World War," in *Military Strategy and the Origins of the First World War: An International Security Reader*, ed. Steven E. Miller (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1985).

26   Christensen, "China, the U.S.-Japan Alliance, and the Security Dilemma in East Asia."; Christensen, "Posing Problems."; Ashley J. Tellis, C. Christine Fair, and Jamison Jo Medby, *Limited Conflict under the Nuclear Umbrella: Indian and Pakistani Lessons from the Kargil Crisis*, MR-1450-USCA (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND, 2001).

Finally, this project also highlights the importance of opening up the black box of the state. There is a view that the most important insights into international relations come from studying the international system and the relations among the units.[27] This project suggests that important elements in explaining the outbreak of war come from not only state level variables, but even sub-state level variables: the nature of thinking about how to win wars generally comes from within the military. Given that these factors have been shown to be critical to understanding the outbreak and nature of conflict between two of the major powers in the Cold War system,[28] then ignoring such factors sacrifices too much at the alter of parsimony.

Thus, the dissertation has important policy prescriptions and theoretical implications. Strategic coercion is a high stakes foreign policy under the best of circumstances. When nations see the world through different military lenses, the risk of misperception and miscommunication in the conduct of their diplomacy and statecraft grows even higher. Mitigating these dangers will help advance the cause of peace and stability.

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27   For the classic and pure statements of this view, see Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (McGraw-Hill Publishing, 1979); Kenneth N. Waltz, "Reflections on *Theory of International Politics*: A Response to My Critics," in *Neorealism and Its Critics*, ed. Robert O. Keohane (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1986); Waltz, "The Origins of War in Neorealist Theory."; Kenneth N. Waltz, "The Emerging Structure of International Politics," *International Security* 18, no. 2 (1993). For authors who continue to focus primarily on systemic level factors, see Dale C. Copeland, *The Origins of Major War* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000); John J. Mearsheimer, "Back to the Future: Instability in Europe after the Cold War," *International Security* 15, no. 1 (1990); John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company, 2001).

28   Indeed, given that some have argued that the Korean War was a central cause of the militarized competition between the United States and the Soviet Union that came to be known as the Cold War, than understanding this case is even more important. Robert Jervis, "The Impact of the Korean War on the Cold War," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 24, no. 4 (1980).

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