



INFORMATION SERIES

Issue No. 629

July 7, 2025

Opportunistic Aggression in the Past and Lessons for Today: The Korean War

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Introduction

President Harry Truman led the United States from the conclusion of a globe-spanning conflict, World War II, to the beginning of a limited war under the nuclear shadow, the Korean War.¹ While the Soviet Union's successful 1949 test of a nuclear device shocked many in the U.S. government, the greater worry was the threat of Soviet opportunistic aggression while the undersized U.S. military was preoccupied on the Korean Peninsula. Although historical parallels are never perfect, U.S. leaders today also face the stark possibility of opportunistic aggression, or even coordinated aggression, under the nuclear shadow and thus will benefit from examining the hard-learned lessons of the past. Historical cases, such as the Korean War, can therefore aid policymakers in gauging the kinds of political and military decisions leaders may face, as well as the military capabilities that may be most relevant.

This *Information Series* addresses four critical elements of the threat of opportunistic aggression in the nuclear age, and specifically in the Korean War: first, whether political and military leaders were aware before the crisis or conflict of the potential for opportunistic aggression; second, the political and military actions or restraints used during the crisis or conflict to deter opportunistic aggression elsewhere; third, the adequacy of conventional and nuclear forces, and the tradeoffs between them; and fourth, the role of allies in the formation of political objectives throughout the crisis or conflict. While each of these elements are to some



extent interdependent, nevertheless, these categories are helpful in highlighting some of the major decisions facing political and military leaders that are engaged in one crisis or conflict while simultaneously seeking to deter further aggression elsewhere.

Threat Perceptions of Opportunistic Aggression

In the years leading up to the Korean War, U.S. political and military leaders generally agreed that the Soviet Union was expansionist by nature and opportunistic, but still hindered by its massive losses from World War II. The 1948 Soviet-backed *coup d'état* in Czechoslovakia and Berlin Blockade helped convince U.S. and European allied officials of the need to form an alliance that ultimately resulted in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in 1949. The Soviet Union, also in 1949, successfully tested its first atomic device and ended the U.S. monopoly on that technology. In short, U.S. officials were highly attuned to potential Soviet aggression well before the Korean War, but their focus was predominantly on Europe.

As Frank Pace, Secretary of the Army 1950-1953, explained concerning U.S. views of the Soviet Union at the time, “We believed at that time [immediately post-World War II] that there was a very reasonable chance that this fellow was going to lick his wounds and get all the pieces back together again. The last thing that any of us could imagine was engaging in some kind of war with Russia as early as 1950.”² In keeping with that general assessment, before the outbreak of the Korean War, President Truman and the Joint Chiefs of Staff were united in their desire to withdraw the “constabulary” force of approximately 50,000 U.S. troops on the Korean Peninsula as quickly as possible without provoking Soviet aggression or appearing to abandon a partner.³ President Truman had made it a top priority post-World War II to shrink the U.S. military budget to better enjoy the peace dividend while the Soviet Union was regrouping.

In Secretary of State Dean Acheson’s January 12, 1950, speech before the National Press Club, he infamously did not include Korea in his description of a “defensive perimeter” that ran from the Aleutian Islands of Alaska, through the Ryukyu Islands of Japan, and down to the Philippines.⁴ While Kim-il Sung had expressed his desire to invade South Korea before this speech, it may have affected the timing of the invasion—and in any case was a prominent example of the secondary strategic importance the Truman Administration afforded the Korean Peninsula.⁵ It is, therefore, unsurprising that both Gen. MacArthur and Gen. Ridgway understood when they were Commander in Chief of Far East Command that, even in the midst of the Korean War, their first priority mission was to defend Japan from a potential Soviet invasion, with the secondary concern being the achievement of a successful outcome of war in Korea.⁶

When North Korea invaded South Korea in June 1950, with what U.S. and allied leaders assumed was Soviet backing, threat perceptions concerning the Soviet Union began to change rapidly, and concern for the prospect of opportunistic aggression grew.⁷ Gen. Hamilton A. Twitchell, Chief of Staff at Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE) HQ, remembered the feeling that since the Soviets had shown themselves to be aggressive in Korea, then they could certainly be aggressive against Europe.⁸



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Indeed, U.S. leaders often cast U.S. intervention in the Korean War as an act of deterring opportunistic aggression itself. President Harry Truman laid out his logic for intervention in terms of deterrence, stating:

I felt certain that if South Korea was allowed to fall Communist leaders would be emboldened to override nations closer to our own shores. If the Communists were permitted to force their way into the Republic of Korea without opposition from the free world, no small nation would have the courage to resist threats and aggression by stronger Communist neighbors. If this was allowed to go unchallenged it would mean a third world war, just as similar incidents had brought on the second world war.⁹

His Secretary of State, Dean Acheson, thought similarly: “To back away from this challenge, in view of our capacity for meeting it, would be highly destructive of the power and prestige of the United States. By prestige I mean the shadow cast by power, which is of great deterrent importance.”¹⁰ General Eisenhower, then-President of Columbia University, stated plainly that “We’ll have a dozen Koreas soon if we don’t take a firm stand.”¹¹

Political and military threat perceptions thus changed dramatically in the space of only a few months from relatively little concern over Soviet aggression abroad in the near future to an overriding concern over direct Soviet aggression in one area and Soviet-supported aggression in other areas simultaneously. The United States and its allies were ill-equipped militarily to adapt to these rapid changes in the type and scope of the threats. This unpreparedness extracted a significant cost during the Korean War, as is evident in the next section, because U.S. leaders felt compelled to impose restraints on their military operations to avoid a further expansion of war they could not afford, politically or militarily.

Political and Military Actions to Avoid Opportunistic Aggression

The reasons why U.S. political leaders issued specific deterrence signals or imposed restraints on the military varied depending on the course of the conflict and the perceived danger of war expanding beyond the Korean Peninsula. President Truman, for instance, wrote in his diary on June 30, shortly after the beginning of the conflict, about his decision to intervene: “Must be careful not to cause a general Asiatic war.”¹² Truman’s concern was not hyperbolic given that only months earlier in February 1950, the Soviet Union and the newly formed People’s Republic of China had signed a mutual defense treaty.¹³ Thus, at the beginning stages of the war, there was an acute awareness of the need to keep China, and thus potentially the Soviet Union, out of the Korean War as active participants, lest it draw in Chiang Kai-shek in Taiwan or the nascent Japanese government in defense of the Northern Territories, below the Soviet-claimed Kuril Islands.

The Truman Administration, and later the Eisenhower Administration, sought to confine the Korean War to the Peninsula, a policy that involved a mixture of demonstrations of resolve and restraint. For instance, shortly after the initial North Korean attack against South Korea,



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the United States sought to demonstrate its resolve, and secondarily to deter opportunistic aggression, by deploying B-29 bombers to Europe and the Pacific that could, at least theoretically with the addition of specialized equipment, reduce the time needed to respond to a Soviet attack if Moscow intervened directly in Korea.¹⁴ Later, in 1951, President Truman publicly addressed Soviet and Chinese leaders and warned them that disregarding the tacit agreement that kept U.S. bombers out of China in exchange for Chinese and Soviet planes staying out of Korean airspace would “escalate” the conflict to their detriment.¹⁵ Beyond these specific demonstrations of force, the Truman Administration generally sought to convey the message that U.S. forces fighting in Korea were a tangible and costly signal of American resolve.¹⁶

While the Truman Administration’s demonstrations of resolve were noteworthy deterrence signals, it is what the Truman Administration chose *not to do* that featured more prominently in its strategy to avoid Soviet opportunistic or coordinated aggression with the PRC. Perhaps the most prominent tacit restraint that kept the conflict confined to the Korean Peninsula was the U.S., PRC, and Soviet practice of keeping fighters and bombers out of each others’ airspace. That is, while the United States had complete air superiority over the Korean Peninsula, its pilots were under strict orders not to attack or bomb Chinese mainland targets – a practice that China reciprocated as Mao Zedong did not seek to escalate the conflict more than he already had.¹⁷ This unspoken agreement also benefitted the United States by keeping the Japanese homeland free from Chinese or Soviet attacks – an important consideration as the United States was still occupying Japan itself.¹⁸ As noted, however, the U.S. military was unable to prosecute the war as effectively as it wanted to, such as by striking Chinese bases used to deploy troops into Korea, for fear that it could incentivize Chinese or Soviet formal entry into the war.

During the summer of 1950, the Truman Administration faced two competing priorities that demanded greater levels of U.S. military capabilities: reinforcing allies in Europe as part of the newly-formed North Atlantic Treaty Organization and, on the other hand, winning the Korean War. President Truman was unwilling to initiate a full-scale mobilization of the United States to meet these simultaneous demands and thus chose to prioritize the European allies, while committing to keeping a steady level of forces in Korea to fight for the best possible outcome.¹⁹ Indeed, the only major increase in U.S. forces in Korea came in response to Gen. MacArthur’s warning in 1950 that a protracted war in Korea would incentivize the Soviet Union to act aggressively elsewhere while the United States was preoccupied.²⁰

Put simply, the Truman Administration had to choose between two opposing strategies that sought the same goal: deterring opportunistic or coordinated aggression while achieving its goals in Korea. The first strategy was to significantly increase forces in Korea to seek a short sharp victory, but at the potential cost of minimizing reinforcements to Europe, risking allied dissent, and potentially provoking Soviet opportunistic aggression in Europe. The second strategy was to prioritize reinforcing allies in Europe, but at the potential cost of risking a defeat or stalemate in Korea and the subsequent damage in the eyes of allies and adversaries about U.S. capability and will. President Truman chose the latter – electing to pursue only a limited



conflict in Korea with all the political and military restraints that entailed, even if it meant military disadvantages for U.S. forces.

Adequacy of Conventional and Nuclear Forces

One of the key reasons that the Truman and Eisenhower Administrations perceived opportunistic or coordinated aggression as significant threats was the inadequacy of U.S. conventional and nuclear forces to meet the suddenly increasing deterrence and assurance requirements. The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Gen. Omar Bradley, for instance, warned President Truman that the United States could not commit the necessary military forces to Korea without either mobilization within the United States or failing to meet commitments in other parts of the world.²¹ As described earlier, the constabulary force of U.S. soldiers in Korea was ill-equipped for even a limited war while reserves from the United States were inadequately trained and too few in number to have a significant effect on a relevant timescale.

Additionally, there was the matter of U.S. defense priorities. Given the recent formation of NATO and President Truman's decision to prioritize reinforcing Europe against what was perceived as a newly urgent threat of a Soviet attack, all the new forces that were being drafted and trained in the United States were primarily being sent to Europe. If the United States had sent those new forces to Korea, U.S. military leaders, with the exception of Gen. MacArthur, generally saw "no prospect" of shifting the required divisions in the proper time frame to Europe if the Soviets had invaded.²² Indeed, the Korean War so altered U.S. and allied threat perceptions that in November 1951, the Joint Chiefs of Staff approved a plan to essentially triple the number of personnel and authorized air wings in the U.S. Air Force within less than four years – an incredible influx of resources over time.²³ Even with a series of massive investments across the military, however, the second Supreme Commander of Allied Powers for the Korean War, Gen. Matthew Ridgway, who was later the Secretary of the Army beginning in 1953, believed that in 1952-1953, the military forces available to NATO were "wholly inadequate to meet a sudden, full-scale attack by the Soviets..."²⁴ Indeed, the calls from U.S. forces in Europe, and Berlin especially, were exceptionally dire. Gen. Maxwell Taylor, then U.S. Commander, Berlin (USCOB) and later Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, wrote to the Truman Administration that defense of Berlin "... is now militarily untenable."²⁵

This concern about inadequate forces led to a number of operational restraints and friction within the military. For instance, Gen. Ridgway recounts how Gen. MacArthur had repeatedly requested permission to attack targets in the PRC, across the Yalu River, to improve the U.S. military position, but the Truman Administration opposed this action because it could start "World War III" by incentivizing the Soviets to enter the conflict against ill-prepared U.S. forces. Indeed, then-Chief of Staff of the Air Force, Gen. Vandenberg, also opposed such operations because they would "so weaken us [through attrition and losses] that we will not be able to respond or build up for two years thereafter in case something breaks out in Europe."²⁶



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The Truman Administration also sought to signal U.S. resolve and enhance assurance via the movement of nuclear-capable bombers, and even atomic weapons, overseas – actions not without numerous operational difficulties.²⁷ As Strategic Air Commander (SAC) Commander, Gen. Curtis LeMay during that time was concerned that the bombers needed for missions in the unforeseen Korean War would be unavailable for their original intended mission: deterrence and defeat of the Soviet Union.²⁸ At that time, the U.S. nuclear arsenal was still not large by any means and U.S. nuclear war plans had practically no hedge to accommodate unforeseen requirements on a finite number of bombers.²⁹

The Impact of Allied Perceptions on U.S. Leadership

The risk of opportunistic or coordinated aggression weighed heavily on the minds of allied leaders as the United States committed troops to Korea and tried to stand up NATO simultaneously. Dean Acheson, and the State Department more broadly, feared that Soviet aggression in a distant theater away from the Korean War “would call for the use of more military power than we could then deploy” – a doubly dangerous condition in that it offered a temptation to the Soviets and a quandary for the United States.³⁰ As U.N. forces successfully drove North Korean forces back toward the 38th Parallel, the British protested vehemently both Gen. MacArthur’s rhetoric about expanding the Korean War to the Chinese mainland and the possibility of advances past the 38th Parallel as both risking general war with the Soviet Union.³¹ Thus, in December 1950, British Prime Minister Clement Attlee arrived for a meeting with President Truman to discuss the Korean War generally, but more specifically and privately, to urge President Truman to curtail U.S. involvement in Korea in favor of focusing on the defense of Europe—a major switch of British policy that, up until China’s overt intervention, was staunchly behind U.S. efforts in the Korean War.³²

These and other allied private protestations led the Truman Administration to prioritize reinforcing Europe militarily while the Eisenhower Administration focused on ending the war quickly, but acceptably, to accomplish the same goal. Both administrations sought to walk the policy tightrope of assuring allies the United States was a reliable security guarantor and was willing to expend blood and treasure in cooperation with them, as evidenced in Korea, but would not commit too much blood and treasure elsewhere such that it risked deterrence failure in their immediate vicinity.

Lessons and Conclusions

As is evident from this case study, the threat of opportunistic or coordinated aggression increases the risks and potential costs of every plausible U.S. course of action. A limited war in Korea, a scenario that the United States was unprepared for, proved difficult in and of itself, but when combined with the real possibility of Chinese direct and formal entry into the Korean War and/or Soviet aggression in Europe, the threats and costs to the United States and its allies became magnified. What summary lessons can U.S. policymakers draw from the Korean War



that may be relevant to the emerging two nuclear peer threat environment? Three stand out as especially relevant.

1. *Victory in a limited conflict may be ideal for deterring opportunistic or coordinated aggression, but the cost of victory may be deterrence failure in a second theater.*

As Gen. MacArthur stated repeatedly, a quick victory in Korea would be a potent demonstration of U.S. power, potentially deter future aggression, and would allow troops to be redeployed more quickly to other higher priority areas. Yet, as Gen. Ridgway, Gen. MacArthur's successor, noted in his history of the Korean War, "It is clear that the nation's top civilian and military leaders... [believed that] the kind of 'victory' sought by the Theater Commander, even if it were attained in Korea, would have incurred overbalancing elsewhere."³³ Victory in the Korean War might have been Pyrrhic if it led to Soviet aggression against a nascent NATO.

How can U.S. policymakers apply this lesson in today's context? First, they can recognize the importance of forces in being, i.e., those military forces immediately available for unexpected contingencies, and what can realistically be expected of them given other U.S. commitments around the world, potentially with higher priorities. While a decisive victory in one theater may indeed improve the prospects of deterring opportunistic or coordinated aggression in other theaters, the pursuit of victory may also cause the United States to spread its forces too thin and ultimately result in the worst case scenario: failure in all theaters. This is not to say that U.S. policymakers must always eschew lesser priority theaters in the face of threats of opportunistic or coordinated aggression, only that they must understand the nature of the conflict and its purpose, à la Clausewitz.³⁴ In short, there may be acceptable outcomes short of total victory in a limited war, such as denying the adversary victory, or achieving strategic advantage, that better hedge against the possibility of opportunistic or coordinated aggression in other theaters.

2. *Threat perceptions and military requirements are likely to change far more quickly than nuclear or conventional forces can adapt – potentially leading to accepting riskier strategies.*

As noted already, the Truman Administration felt compelled to fight a limited war in Korea because the military simply could not provide enough resources in the relevant time frame necessary to *both* reinforce NATO and achieve total victory in Korea. Indeed, even after almost three years and nearly a tripling of the U.S. defense budget, President Eisenhower rejected calls to increase the resources devoted to the Korean War to compel a quicker satisfactory conclusion to the conflict; he saw too much risk that such an increase would disrupt the NATO military buildup and anger essential allies in Europe.³⁵ This dynamic points to the importance of available military forces at the time of conflict, and even more so, the importance of military forces already in theater. If time is of the essence, as it almost certainly will be facing the threat of opportunistic or coordinated aggression, then forces in theater will have an outsized role in determining what political goals the United States can realistically pursue and on what timeframe.



Another important aspect of forces in being is the flexibility of the U.S. nuclear force. Even granting that the U.S. nuclear force was still in its relative infancy during the time of the Korean War and far smaller than it is today, U.S. policymakers can still draw critical lessons from the difficulties that U.S. Strategic Air Command (SAC) encountered. For example, Gen. LeMay, SAC Commander, wrote in 1949, just before the outbreak of the Korean War, “The size of our [nuclear] striking force is so closely tailored to fit the task with which it is charged that we have little or no margin of safety within which we can absorb the effects of a successful enemy attack. Under these circumstances, it would appear economical and logical to adopt the objective of completely avoiding enemy attack against our strategic force by destroying his atomic force before it can attack ours.”³⁶ In other words, Gen. LeMay recommended a strategy of preemption because the fragility and inflexibility of his forces meant he could not achieve the political objectives assigned to him in case of an attack on the United States – there simply was not enough of a hedge within the existing force.

What might this insight mean for U.S. policymakers today? In the face of opportunistic or coordinated aggression, especially after an attack on U.S. forces, the United States may be forced to prioritize, adopt riskier strategies, or both, to achieve the same political objectives. That is, if U.S. policymakers believe prioritizing some theaters or allies over others, or adopting riskier strategies like nuclear first use, are unacceptable, then they should invest in procuring sufficiently flexible nuclear and conventional forces that can withstand attacks and still achieve set political objectives. This is, of course, the costlier option financially and politically; but that fact must be weighed against the absence of these investments and the resulting likelihood of deterrence failure, plus those financial costs and the potential domestic and international political costs.

3. Adversaries are likely to adapt their strategies if they believe that the United States is ill-equipped or unwilling politically to counter opportunistic or coordinated aggression.

If adversaries perceive the United States as either unwilling or unable to engage in one conflict while deterring others, then they may have added incentive to pursue more aggressive strategies at the expense of the United States and its allies or pursue strategies that the United States is less able to counter. An example from the Korean War is how Nie Rongzhen, PLA acting Chief of Staff, stated that the United States was likely unwilling to employ nuclear weapons against China in North Korea because it was “deterred by possible Soviet nuclear retaliation from doing this in the Far East.”³⁷ This widely held belief among Chinese leaders allowed the PRC to adopt its strategy of concentrating troops to overwhelm better-equipped though outnumbered U.S. units. Similarly, the PRC’s Central Military Commission recommended a strategy of “protracted war” that it believed would favor China over time given the long logistics lines and domestic political pressure in the United States.³⁸ Chinese leaders recognized and centered their strategy around exploiting perceived U.S. vulnerabilities, part of which included the U.S. fear of Soviet opportunistic aggression elsewhere in the world.



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Thus, adversaries will likely adopt strategies aimed at perceived U.S. vulnerabilities – and if one of those perceived vulnerabilities is being susceptible to simultaneous conflict, then the risk of that kind of conflict may grow. And, when combined with the second lesson listed above on the inherent limitations of quickly adapting U.S. military forces, U.S. political leaders may be forced to use inadequate forces to counter an adversary’s military strategy that is tailored to exploit U.S. vulnerabilities. This dynamic will likely create pressure to either abandon certain political commitments or adopt a strategy of nuclear escalation, two inherently dangerous options against nuclear-armed adversaries.

Conclusion

Overall, the U.S. experience in the Korean War illustrates how the threats of opportunistic and coordinated aggression compound the difficulties and costs that U.S. political and military leaders are likely to face in the emerging threat environment. The threat of simultaneous conflicts during the Korean War shaped U.S. political goals, military strategy, resourcing, alliances, and even the adversary’s military strategy. Unlike the Cold War, however, the United States today faces not just one, but two nuclear peer adversaries in China and Russia – partners who describe themselves as in a “friendship without limits” – plus their regional partners North Korea and Iran. Today, U.S. and allied officials should view the unique dangers and costs of opportunistic and coordinated aggression as orders of magnitude beyond those U.S. and allied leaders faced during the Korean War – only then can they begin to appreciate the scale and urgency needed to deter this growing network of threats.

¹ This *Information Series* is an edited version of Chapter 3 in Matthew R. Costlow, *Detering the New Pacing Threats: Opportunistic and Coordinated Aggression* (Fairfax, VA: National Institute for Public Policy, March 2025), *Occasional Paper*, Vol. 5, No. 3, available at <https://nipp.org/papers/matthew-r-costlow-detering-the-new-pacing-threats-opportunistic-and-coordinated-aggression/>.

² Alfred Goldberg and Harry B. Yoshpe, *Interview with Frank Pace, Secretary of the Army 1950-1953* (Washington, D.C.: OSD Historical Office, May 13, 1974), p. 12, available at https://history.defense.gov/Portals/70/Documents/oral_history/OH_Trans_PaceFrank5-13-1974.pdf?ver=2014-05-28-135107-660.

³ James F. Schnabel and Robert J. Watson, *The Joint Chiefs of Staff and National Policy, Volume III: 1950-1951, The Korean War, Part I* (Washington, D.C., Office of Joint History, 1998), pp. 7-8.

⁴ Dean Acheson, “Crisis in Asia – An Examination of U.S. Policy,” *The Department of State Bulletin*, Vol. XXII, No. 551 (January 23, 1950), p. 116, available at <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=osu.32437010893382&seq=122>.

⁵ Kim had been pressing Stalin for his blessing to invade South Korea well before 1950. See, for example, Sergey Radchenko, *To Run the World: The Kremlin’s Cold War Bid for Global Power* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2024), pp. 134-136.

⁶ Maurice Matloff, *Oral History Interview with General M. B. Ridgway* (Washington, D.C.: OSD Historical Office, April 18, 1984), pp. 6, 7, 14, available at https://history.defense.gov/Portals/70/Documents/oral_history/OH_Trans_RidgwayMatthew4-18-1984.pdf?ver=2014-09-19-081000-687. See also, Ridgway, *The Korean War*, op. cit., pp. 164-165.



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⁷ On Soviet views of North Korea's invasion plans, see, Radchenko, *To Run the World*, op. cit., pp. 134-138.

⁸ Maurice Matloff, Alfred Goldberg, and Robert Watson, *Oral History Interview with General Hamilton A. Twitchell* (Washington, D.C.: OSD Historical Office, July 5, 1984), pp. 26-27, available at https://history.defense.gov/Portals/70/Documents/oral_history/OH_Trans_TwitchellHamilton7-5-1984.pdf?ver=2014-05-28-140052-920.

⁹ Harry S. Truman, as quoted in, Schnabel and Watson, *The Joint Chiefs of Staff and National Policy, Volume III: 1950-1951, The Korean War, Part I*, op. cit., p. 32.

¹⁰ Dean Acheson, as quoted in, *Ibid.*, p. 33.

¹¹ As quoted in, David McCullough, *Truman* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1992), p. 781.

¹² McCullough, *Truman*, op. cit., p. 783.

¹³ Radchenko, *To Run the World*, op. cit., p. 134.

¹⁴ Roger Dingman, "Atomic Diplomacy during the Korean War," *International Security*, Vol. 13, No. 3 (Winter 1988-1989), pp. 55-60.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 75.

¹⁶ See, for instance, Harry S. Truman, as quoted in, Schnabel and Watson, *The Joint Chiefs of Staff and National Policy, Volume III: 1950-1951, The Korean War, Part I*, op. cit., p. 32.

¹⁷ Matthew B. Ridgway, *The Korean War* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1967), p. 146.

¹⁸ Ridgway, as quoted in, Dean Acheson, *Present at the Creation: My Years in the State Department* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1969), p. 651.

¹⁹ Maurice Matloff, *Oral History Interview with General M. B. Ridgway, Part II* (Washington, D.C.: OSD Historical Office, April 19, 1984), pp. 19-20, available at https://history.defense.gov/Portals/70/Documents/oral_history/OH_Trans_RidgwayMatthew4-19-1984.pdf?ver=2014-05-28-135246-783.

²⁰ Ridgway, *The Korean War*, op. cit., p. 36.

²¹ Schnabel and Watson, *The Joint Chiefs of Staff and National Policy, Volume III: 1950-1951, The Korean War, Part I*, op. cit., p. 39.

²² Matloff, *Oral History Interview with General M. B. Ridgway*, op. cit., pp. 31-32.

²³ Trevor Albertson, *Winning Armageddon: Curtis LeMay and Strategic Air Command, 1948-1957* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2019), p. 47.

²⁴ Matloff, *Oral History Interview with General M. B. Ridgway*, op. cit., p. 24.

²⁵ Ingo Trauschweizer, *Maxwell Taylor's Cold War: From Berlin to Vietnam* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2019), p. 45.

²⁶ Matloff, *Oral History Interview with General M. B. Ridgway*, op. cit., p. 15.; See also Ridgway, *The Korean War*, op. cit., pp. 49-50.

²⁷ Doris E. Condit, *Interview of Robert A. Lovett* (Washington, D.C.: OSD Historical Office, June 7, 1976), pp. 26-27, available at https://history.defense.gov/Portals/70/Documents/oral_history/OH_Trans_LovettRobert6-7-1976.pdf?ver=2014-09-19-080949-827.

²⁸ Albertson, *Winning Armageddon*, op. cit., pp. 28-42.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 28-34.

³⁰ Acheson, *Present at the Creation*, op. cit., p. 421.

³¹ Dingman, "Atomic Diplomacy during the Korean War," op. cit., p. 70.



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³² Acheson, *Present at the Creation*, op. cit., p. 481.

³³ Ridgway, *The Korean War*, op. cit., p. 149.

³⁴ “The first, the supreme, the most far-reaching act of judgement that the statesman and commander have to make is to establish by that test the kind of war on which they are embarking; neither mistaking it for, nor trying to turn it into, something that is alien to its nature.” Carl von Clausewitz, author, Michael Howard and Peter Paret, eds. and trans., *On War* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1993), p. 100.

³⁵ On the defense budget, see, Doris M. Condit, *The Test of War: 1950-1953* (Washington, D.C.: Department of Defense, 1988), p. 500. On Eisenhower’s views, see Dingman, “Atomic Diplomacy during the Korean War,” op. cit., p. 85.

³⁶ As quoted in, Albertson, *Winning Armageddon*, op. cit., p. 14.

³⁷ Nie Rongzhen, as quoted in, Shu Guang Zhang, *Mao’s Military Romanticism: China and the Korean War, 1950-1953* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1995), p. 234.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 76-77.

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