

Revisionism and the Korean War

William Stueck

Volume 22, Number 1, Spring 2002

URI: https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/jcs22_1art03

[See table of contents](#)

Publisher(s)

The University of New Brunswick

ISSN

1198-8614 (print)

1715-5673 (digital)

[Explore this journal](#)

Cite this article

Stueck, W. (2002). Revisionism and the Korean War. *Journal of Conflict Studies*, 22(1), 17–27.

Revisionism and the Korean War

by William Stueck

William Stueck is Distinguished Research Professor at the University of Georgia.

Revisionism became a major presence in American scholarship on the Korean War with the publication in 1972 of Joyce and Gabriel Kolko's *The Limits of Power: The World and United States Foreign Policy, 1945-1954*.¹ The genre reached its apogee in 1981 and 1990 with the publication of Bruce Cumings' massive two volumes on the origins of the war.² In between 1972 and 1990, other contributions appeared by such scholars as Robert R. Simmons, Barton J. Bernstein, Jon Halliday, John Merrill, Mark Paul, and Cumings himself.³ Since 1990 and the emergence for the first time of substantial documentation from the Soviet and Chinese sides, revisionism has fallen on hard times. Yet two years ago a new revisionist work appeared on the bacteriological warfare issue, and the year before that Cumings published a survey of modern Korean history that incorporated the vast bulk of his earlier revisionism.⁴ Although elements of revisionism, such as the role of the Soviet Union in the North Korean attack of 25 June 1950, have been put to rest, important elements of the genre remain very much alive. Because much of the literature focuses on origins, I have chosen to concentrate on the war itself, a key question being, what is the status of revisionism in light of the new evidence from "the other side?"⁵

It is a good idea to start off with a definition. What is revisionism as it applies to the Korean War? First let me say that I do not regard revisionism as a pejorative label. John Lewis Gaddis and Bruce Cumings, leading scholars on opposite sides of the Cold War historiographical divide, both have been heard to complain of old categories - and I happen to think that they are both misguided.⁶ The old categories of traditionalist (or orthodox) and revisionist have their limits, but they remain accurate and useful in placing many scholars on broad issues. Insofar as revisionism on the Korean War is concerned, two key arguments are identifiable: first, that the war was in essence a civil war with its roots on the peninsula itself, and second, that US involvement in the war was based on a larger quest for global hegemony and/or a misperception of its fundamental nature.⁷ The fact that in the largest sense I disagree - in degree at least - with these arguments has nothing to do with my use of the label revisionist. That usage simply has to do with the time frame within which the arguments became prominent among American scholars. It so happens that this was over a generation after the war began and that the arguments challenged the views that the war was largely international in nature and that the American participation in it was - with at least one prominent exception - defensive and wise.⁸

I will concentrate my attention here on six matters: the US decision to intervene to repulse the North Korean attack; the internal aspect of the war, including allegations of Korean and American atrocities; the UN march north and the Chinese intervention in the fall of 1950; the controversy over prisoners of war (POW); allegations of bacteriological warfare; and key events leading up to an armistice in July 1953.

New documentation from the Soviet Union and China arguably does nothing to undermine the revisionist explanation for US intervention in Korea in late June 1950, but, by disproving the claim that the North Korean attack was largely the independent act of Kim Il Sung, it does raise questions about the revisionist challenge to the legitimacy of that intervention. Cumings, the most sophisticated and best informed proponent of the revisionist view, sees US intervention within a world systems framework. To him, Secretary of State Dean Acheson was the main architect of that intervention, and "the foundation of Achesonian containment in East Asia was a world economy logic, captured by his metaphor of a 'great crescent' stretching from Japan through Southeast Asia and around to India Here was the crucial background to Acheson's extension of containment to southern Korea [in 1947], his later elaboration of a 'defensive perimeter' in Asia, and his decision to intervene in the Korean War."⁹ This interpretation contrasts with Acheson's own, which emphasized the need to protect the security of Japan as well as American prestige or credibility in an area of direct Soviet-American confrontation and where the United States had the military capability nearby to intervene effectively.¹⁰

More traditional scholars, such as myself, have seen this view as persuasive in light of the assumption in Washington in June 1950 that the Soviets were instrumental in the unleashing of the North Korean attack and the belief, given the Soviet-American agreement on the 38th parallel in 1945, that it constituted aggression.¹¹ Nonetheless, numerous documents from the period do show that Japan was widely considered to be the most important nation to the United States in Asia and that Acheson and others viewed South Korea's survival as a non-Communist state as advantageous to Japan's economic recovery and well-being. This was not what was emphasized in top discussions in Washington between 25 and 30 June 1950, but, then again, decision makers do not always say or record their true thoughts, either immediately or after the event. As with most issues involving causation, definitive answers elude the historian.

However this may be, we now have a substantial body of documentation from Russia that shows Kim consulting - indeed, urging - Soviet Premier Joseph Stalin over and over again regarding an attack on the South. The first occasion was during Kim's March 1949 visit to Moscow. When Kim proposed the use of military means to unite his country, his host demurred, saying, among other things, that "one should not forget that the agreement on the 38th parallel is in effect between the USSR and the United States. If the agreement is broken by our side, it is more of a reason to believe that the Americans will interfere."¹² By April 1950, Stalin had changed his mind regarding a North Korean military offensive, but he agreed with Kim's idea of commencing operations on the remote Ongjin peninsula to create uncertainty as to the initiator.¹³ Only then, with Stalin's approval and subsequent military assistance and Chinese leader Mao Zedong's blessing, did Kim proceed to launch the attack. Key elements of the attacking forces were ethnic Koreans who had recently returned from China after fighting on the Communist side in the civil war there.¹⁴ This evidence by no means negates the civil aspect of the Korean War: in all likelihood, Stalin would not have come up with the idea of an attack on his own, nor approved it without Kim's persistent and determined advocacy. Yet the new evidence certainly demonstrates the critical nature of the conflict's international

dimension. And the explicit documentation of that dimension, even in retrospect, adds weight to the legitimacy of US intervention.

This is *not* so clearly the case with regard to the war for the South during the summer of 1950. Here, aside from the description of conventional military operations, Cumings has the field pretty much to himself. Among other things he shows that atrocities were common on both Korean sides and probably not uncommon on the American side as well.¹⁵ If we include the bombing of civilian targets as atrocities, the Americans become all the more culpable. Cumings also calls attention to the all-too-common expressions of racism on the part of US officers and soldiers.

Perhaps most important of all, Cumings addresses the domestic political character of the war. "The quick collapse of the [Syngman] Rhee regime and its dependence on the United States to succor it and fight its battles," he contends, "ultimately owed not to the North Korean assault, but to the regime's political character and its lack of rooted support in the broad reaches of Korean society."¹⁶ Although denial of the centrality of North Korea's assault is silly given the fact that, prior to June 25, there was little likelihood of the collapse of the Republic of Korea (ROK) in the foreseeable future, there remains strong evidence that the lack of broad, enthusiastic support for the Syngman Rhee regime undermined resistance to the North Koreans, even generating substantial guerrilla support for them among South Koreans. The extent of such support, in fact, helps explain why UN forces, with total control of the air and, by August, with ground forces matching North Korean numbers, had such difficulty holding their own for some two months following intervention.

Even so, analysis of the political-social context of the war cries out for more extended treatment. Undeniably there are elements of truth in Cumings' analysis; but it remains to be explained first, why the guerrilla war, whatever its scope in the summer of 1950, never became the dominant feature of the conflict, as it did later in Vietnam; second, how the Republic of Korea's army grew from its abysmal record during the first year of fighting to, by 1953, the force responsible for holding over half of the forward UN line; and third, why for the bulk of the war and thereafter anti-Americanism among South Koreans was so limited. Cumings does *imply* one answer: that the North Korean land reform in the occupied South during the summer of 1950, which the Americans refused to permit Rhee from overturning later on, eliminated the key issue of discontent among the peasantry.¹⁷ A contributing factor, nonetheless, was that Rhee had somewhat broader appeal among the masses than Cumings acknowledges. Land reform was already well along in the ROK prior to June 1950 and anti-ROK uprisings in the South were not nearly as broad as the North Koreans anticipated prior to the attack. Furthermore, the tens of thousands of casualties suffered by the ROK army in the initial months of the war, plus the substantial contribution it made to defense of the Pusan perimeter during August and early September, suggest that poor morale was not the primary factor in its early defeats.¹⁸ Another answer may be that, whatever their depredations, the Americans overall treated Koreans better than they had been treated by other foreigners, and often by each other. These matters are not likely to be definitively resolved, but clearly more intensive study

is needed. Hopefully the recent attention devoted to the No Gun Ri incident will generate new interest in the subject.¹⁹

On the issue of the American decision to cross the 38th parallel with ground forces, Cumings has taken the lead in arguing its linkage to "rollback" thinking regarding Asia in Washington in the months prior to the outbreak of war. When an apparent opportunity arose in the fall of 1950 to eliminate the Communists in Korea, a foundation already existed in American policy circles to seize the moment. He and others have emphasized that thinking in Washington was by no means dictated by General Douglas MacArthur in Tokyo, that virtually everyone saw advantages in moving northward and downplayed the risks.²⁰ Here the disagreement between revisionists and other scholars who have used the evidence from US archives that began emerging in the mid-1970s is often narrow, sometimes even nonexistent. For instance, Cumings argues that, "up to the Inchon landing [of 15 September], U.S. policy had determined only to wait until the moment arrived, when the realm of the feasible might present itself, or might not; the decision would be taken accordingly."²¹ No informed scholar would disagree with this position. On the other hand, differences over the role of domestic politics and personalities do exist for the period following Inchon, with the revisionists deemphasizing those factors more than others. This becomes all the more true as we approach MacArthur's final offensive in Korea in late November and the massive Chinese counteroffensive.²² The evidence is massive but sufficiently ambiguous to permit reasonable people to disagree.

Why did the Chinese intervene and what were their aims? By the time revisionism came to the fore in the 1970s, Allen S. Whiting's view, developed in his 1960 classic *China Crosses the Yalu*, that China entered the war reluctantly and to protect its border against a perceived American threat had become standard.²³ Joyce and Gabriel Kolko did not challenge that interpretation, but Cumings did in his 1987 and 1990 volumes, arguing that reciprocity to North Korea in light of its assistance in the Chinese civil war should take precedence over, first, "defense of the border and the prevention of an integration of the region with Japan" and, second, "the decisive supplanting of Soviet influence in North Korea." On the last point, Cumings contended that the process had largely occurred in 1949, although "it was congealed by Chinese blood that soaked Korean soil"²⁴ As for aims, Jon Halliday and Cumings concluded that "China's goal was to push the USA and Rhee back into the South and settle for that."²⁵

On both motives and aims, recent studies contest these interpretations. In the first case, Chen Jian's important work emphasizes Mao Zedong's revolutionary aims at home and in China's border areas, the latter of which is not necessarily inconsistent with any of the factors in the Cumings-Halliday hierarchy. Domestic considerations are largely absent from the Cumings-Halliday account, however, although it is at least plausible to argue that the furthering of revolution at home was a desirable *effect* of intervention in Mao's mind rather than a primary *cause* (just as rearmament was to top American leaders regarding the June 1950 intervention). On the other hand, while the evidence shows some flexibility on goals, it seems clear that Mao hoped from the beginning to eliminate entirely the American and ROK presence on the peninsula. The only real question was whether or not he had the means to do so.²⁶

As for the motive of "supplanting . . . Soviet influence in North Korea," the new evidence indicates that, if it did exist, the process was *not* well along by the end of 1949. Contrary to Cumings, the Soviet Union, not China, was the major outside force in North Korea's preparations to the attack the South. Well before those preparations were complete, Stalin had made it clear to Kim Il Sung that, if he got into trouble with the Americans, he would have to look to Beijing, not Moscow, to bail him out.²⁷ Apparently, Mao indicated a willingness to do so from the start. When the time came to act, he hesitated in the face of dissent within his Politburo, despite pressure from Stalin. Concerns about Soviet influence in North Korea appear to be, at best, minor in Mao's road to intervention in Korea just as fears of American aggressiveness were paramount. In its broad outlines, Whiting's account remains plausible if hardly incontestable.²⁸

Before leaving the issue of Chinese intervention, it is worthwhile to point out that there is evidence, both old and new, of Mao's being influenced by North Korea's past assistance to the Communists in the Chinese civil war, although it is doubtful that it belongs at the top of the hierarchy.²⁹ That a scholar who insists on emphasizing the internal aspect of the Korean War places it first among the reasons for Mao's decision is certainly ironic. A major source of North Korea's initial military advantage over the South, after all, rested in the experience that key elements of the North Korean army had received in China, an experience that South Korea's forces lacked. The fact serves to emphasize the international dimensions of the war right from the start.

Let me turn now to the last two years of the war - the period of the armistice talks. Predictably, the revisionists place on the Americans the major responsibility for the lengthy stalemate in the negotiations. Bernstein, for example, refers to the US military officers who led the negotiations on the UN side as "inflexible, intolerant, and self-righteous." He quotes General Matthew Ridgway pleading with Washington at one point to employ "more steel and less silk," only to be overruled.³⁰ Bernstein is probably right that the military men were not the ideal people to conduct the negotiations, but he ignores the impact on them of the early behavior of the Communists, who tried to maneuver the Americans into humiliating situations that made it appear as if they were surrendering. In fact, as the talks approached Ridgway instructed the team actually conducting day-to-day negotiations to be sensitive to the Asian concern about face, to give enemy counterparts easy avenues of retreat from stated positions.³¹ It was only after experiencing Communist tactics that he turned rigid. That said, the Americans, in Washington and in the field, did botch the preliminaries to the talks, both regarding the site and the armistice line, and this helped to produce misunderstandings and bad feelings on the other side. There is plenty of blame to spread around for the slow progress of the negotiations, which are best explained by the intense animosities on both sides rooted in deep ideological and cultural differences.

The single most difficult issue was the return of prisoners of war, which alone took over a year to resolve. Among revisionists, the Kolkos provide the most pungent comment regarding the American insistence on the principle of no forced repatriation: "From a legal and practical viewpoint, the prisoner issue was a sordid use of men on behalf of politics."³² What they mean is that the US position was dubious on legal grounds, that the

Americans adopted it to embarrass the Communists politically, that conditions in the UN POW camps were brutal and not conducive to determining the true desires of the prisoners, and that American leaders were willing to see hundreds of thousands more Korean civilians and soldiers from both sides killed or wounded and hundreds of millions of dollars of material destruction in order to win the point. However, revisionists ignore the impact on US policy makers, especially President Harry S. Truman, of North Korea's and China's flaunting from the start of the rules on POWs. If the American position was flawed legally and based primarily on a calculation of self-interest rather than humanitarian sentiment, the Communists hardly deserve a position of greater virtue on the issue.³³

Before the No Gun Ri incident made headlines in 1999, the bacteriological warfare issue was the one sparking the most lively discussion. It was so both because of the appearance of the volume by Stephen Endicott and Edward Hagerman and the apparent surfacing of new materials from the Russian archives that contradict the Endicott-Hagerman thesis that the United States did experiment with bacteriological warfare in Korea.³⁴ Endicott and Hagerman conceded the lack of any "smoking gun" to substantiate their case, although they noted appropriately the fact that much on the issue on the US side remains classified. They also put together bits and pieces of evidence from American, Chinese, Canadian, and Australian sources to build a circumstantial case. The new evidence aside, Endicott and Hagerman have justifiably been taken to task for the uncritical use of Chinese sources as well as a questionable reading of American materials.³⁵ It remains possible that Chinese leaders believed in the basic guilt of the Americans at the beginning of their propaganda campaign, but the weight of the available evidence now suggests the likelihood that, as Cumings and Halliday put it as a possibility they clearly thought unlikely over a decade ago, "the North Koreans and the Chinese mounted a spectacular piece of fraudulent theater, involving the mobilization of thousands (probably tens of thousands) of people in China and Korea; getting scores of top Chinese doctors and scientists and myriad lesser personnel, as well as Zhou Enlai and other senior Chinese figures, to fake evidence, lie and invent at least one extremely *recherche* medical fraud."³⁶

That revisionists thought, and in some cases still think, this unlikely reflects their tendency to deny outright or overlook the fundamentally brutal nature of the Chinese and North Korean (not to mention the Soviet) regimes and the likely connection in the minds of their leaders between the war and the mobilization of their societies at home. If it is undeniably true that American leaders consciously used the conflict in Korea to mobilize domestic resources to fight the Cold War - and, in the latter stages of the conflict, occasionally showed ambivalence toward its end - it is highly likely that at least as much can be said for leaders on the other side.³⁷ The cynicism of the revisionists toward the United States might be a bit more credible - if not necessarily more accurate - were it combined with a dose of the same toward the Communists.³⁸

Finally, the end of the war. Here, while highlighting the brutality of the United States in using air power during May 1953 to destroy dams in North Korea thereby threatening the domestic food supply of the enemy, the revisionists differ little with traditional scholars

in seeing Stalin's death and military pressure, threatened and real, as critical in persuading the Communists to make the necessary concessions on the POW issue.³⁹ Indeed, while the Kolkos ignore the possibility that Eisenhower and Dulles threatened the use of atomic weapons against China, both they and Cumings and Halliday see the bombing of the dams as central to the resolution of the POW issue. What they ignore, however, is the possibility that greater military pressure at an *earlier* date, most notably an active ground campaign in the aftermath of the tentative resolution of the armistice line in November 1951, would have led to an earlier settlement of the remaining issues. In their determination to lambaste the United States for virtually every crime imaginable, the revisionists ignore the facts, first, that a measure of sensitivity on the part of American military leaders toward their own soldiers might actually have cost them (not to mention the Korean people) more casualties in the end and, second, that a *total lack* of humanitarian concern on the part of Communist leaders for their own soldiers and their civilian populations contributed to the death and destruction of the war. Although the balance of immorality on the two sides can be debated, the greater concern of leaders on the American side for the well-being of their own peoples certainly helps us to understand the superior staying power and broader appeal of democratic political culture over communist alternatives.

What can be said in conclusion about the Korean War revisionists? On a positive note, they can be credited with developing the dark side of the US relationship with Korea, whether it involves American behavior on the peninsula before or during the war, and placing that behavior in the context of American policy toward the Third World in general. Ignorance, arrogance, racism, hypocrisy, and brutality all are features of this part of the story. Although revisionists exaggerate the internal side of the war's origins, they do demonstrate a significant level of Korean agency. On the other hand, in underestimating or ignoring the dark dimensions of parties in Korea other than the United States - with the exception, that is, of the ROK government - the revisionists have distorted a crucial part of the context within which American behavior evolved. More often than not, the United States responded to conditions it had not created and certainly did not find desirable. If the responses were sometimes clumsy or worse, they at least helped to provide a framework within which, for the long-term, a majority of the population in Korea moved toward far more hopeful lives than those experienced by their parents and grandparents under the Japanese and during the late Yi dynasty.

In this light the greatest mistakes of the United States were not the intervention in Korea in 1945 or 1950 or the support for collaborators with the Japanese, but the withdrawal of American troops in 1949 and the crossing of the 38th parallel in October of the following year. The Korean War as we know it *could* have been avoided, *even* in a divided country; or it could have been far more limited in duration and destructiveness. Korea also might have been ruled in its entirety by Kim Il Sung, and that is a possibility the revisionists need to contemplate along with their spirited condemnation of the United States.

Endnotes

1. Joyce and Gabriel Kolko, *The Limits of Power: The World and United States Foreign Policy, 1945-1954* (New York: Harper and Row, 1972), chapters 10, 21, 22. The author wishes to thank Melvyn Leffler for comments that helped me in revising this article.
2. Bruce Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War, Vol I: Liberation and the Emergence of Separate Regimes, 1945-1947* and *Vol II: The Roaring of the Cataract, 1947-1950* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1981 and 1990). The second volume actually covers the war through the Chinese intervention in late 1950.
3. See the articles by Cumings, Mark Paul, John Merrill, and Barton J. Bernstein in Bruce Cumings, ed., *Child of Conflict: The Korean-American Relationship, 1943-1953* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 1983); Robert R. Simmons, *The Strained Alliance: Peking, Pyongyang, Moscow and the Politics of the Korean Civil War* (New York: Free Press, 1975); Jon Halliday and Bruce Cumings, *Korea: The Unknown War* (London: Viking, 1988); John Merrill, *Korea: The Peninsular Origins of the War* (Newark, DE: University of Delaware Press, 1989); and Barton J. Bernstein, "The Truman Administration and the Korean War," in Michael J. Lacey, ed., *The Truman Presidency* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 410-44.
4. Stephen Endicott and Edward Hagerman, *The United States and Biological Warfare: Secrets from the Early Cold War and Korea* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1998); Bruce Cumings, *Korea's Place in the Sun: A Modern History* (New York: Norton, 1997), chapters 4 and 5.
5. My priority here is more on depth in covering the most prominent of the revisionist literature and arguments rather than on comprehensiveness. For an excellent, up-to-date account of the historiography of the Korean War that uses the opposite approach, see Allan R. Millett, "The Korean War: A 50-Year Critical Historiography," *The Journal of Strategic Studies* 24, no. 1 (March 2001), pp. 188-224. See also, Paul M. Edwards, ed., *The Korean War: An Annotated Bibliography* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1998).
6. I have heard John Lewis Gaddis on this issue at conferences at Ohio University in May 1997 and Claremont University in May 1999. Bruce Cumings complains that Kathryn Weathersby "stigmatize[s]" his work by labelling it revisionist in the Cold War International History Project *Bulletin* (hereafter referred to as *CWIHPB*), issues 6-7 (Winter 1995/1996), p. 120.
7. The generalizations do not fully apply to the work of John Merrill cited in endnote 3.
8. The exception is the United Nations ground campaign in North Korea in the fall of 1950. The first revisionist account in the United States was published by a journalist before the war ended. See I. F. Stone, *The Hidden History of the Korean War* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1952). However, this account was largely ignored by scholars until the 1970s. An exception is D. F. Fleming, *The Cold War and Its Origins, 1917-1960*, vol. 2 (New York: Doubleday, 1961), p. 593. It also is worth noting that, although I.F. Stone, Joyce and Gabriel Kolko, and Cumings are all associated with the radical left

in American thought, this is not the case with all advocates of at least elements of the revisionist argument. See, for example, Ronald L. McGlothlen, *Controlling the Waves: Dean Acheson and U.S. Foreign Policy in Asia* (New York: Norton, 1993), chapter 3; and Richard C. Thornton, *Odd Man Out: Truman, Stalin, Mao, and the Origins of the Korean War* (Washington, DC: Brassey's, 2000), chapters 6 and 7.

9. Cumings, *The Roaring of the Cataract*, p. 49. In *Controlling the Waves* (chapter 3), Ronald L. McGlothlen traces Secretary of State Dean Acheson's concern about Korea to its historic role as breadbasket for Japan.

10. Dean G. Acheson, *Present at the Creation: My Years in the State Department* (New York: Norton, 1969), p. 405.

11. Regarding President Harry S Truman's belief that North Korea's attack constituted aggression, see his *Memoirs*, Vol. II: *Years of Trial and Hope* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1956), p. 334.

12. As quoted in Kathryn Weathersby, "'Should We Fear This?': Stalin and the Korean War," Conference on "Stalin and the Cold War, 1945-1953," Yale University, September 1999, p. 5. The most extensive documentation of Kim Il Sung's discussions with Stalin is in Evgeny P. Bajanov and Natalia Bajanov, "The Korean Conflict, 1950-1953: The Most Mysterious War of the 20th Century - Based on Secret Soviet Archives," pp. 14-60. The manuscript will eventually be published as a working paper by the Cold War International History Project, Woodrow Wilson Center, Washington, DC.

13. Weathersby, "'Should We Fear This?'," pp. 12-13.

14. See Shu Guang Zhang, *Mao's Military Romanticism: China and the Korean War, 1950-1953* (Lawrence, KS: University of Kansas Press, 1995), pp. 44-45.

15. My description of Cumings' presentation in this and the next paragraph is from Cumings, *The Roaring of the Cataract*, chapter 20.

16. *Ibid.*, p. 666.

17. *Ibid.*, p. 677.

18. See Korean Institute of Military History, *The Korean War*, vol. 1 (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2000), chapters 2-4; John C. Oh, "The Forgotten ROK Soldiers of the Korean War," Conference on "The Korean War: Forgotten No More," Georgetown University, June 2000.

19. For important articles on the No Gun Ri incident at key moments, see the *New York Times*, 30 September 1999, pp. 1-2, 22 May 2000, p. C1, 12 January 2001, pp. A2 and 6; *Washington Post*, 30 September 1999, p. A1, 13 May 2000, p. A4, and 12 January 2001, A18; *Baltimore Sun*, 30 December 2001, p. 3E; *Los Angeles Times*, 12 January 2001, p.

4. For a book by the Pulitzer Prize winning authors who broke the story, see Charles J. Hanley, Sang-Hun Choe, and Martha Mendoza, *The Bridge at No Gun Ri* (New York: Henry Holt, 2001).
20. Cumings, "Introduction," *Child of Conflict*, pp. 32-34.
21. See *ibid.*, p. 52.
22. Here, I myself came over time to place more weight on domestic political factors. Compare my *The Road to Confrontation: American Policy Towards China and Korea, 1947-1950* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1981), pp. 227-50, with my *The Korean War: An International History* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995), pp. 97-98, 114-15. My examination of British and Canadian documents between the two books made the difference. For the revisionist view, see Bernstein, "The Truman Administration and the Korean War," p. 431; and Cumings, *The Roaring of the Cataract*, pp. 712-15.
23. Allen S. Whiting, *China Crosses the Yalu* (New York: Macmillan, 1960).
24. The quotes are from Cumings, *The Roaring of the Cataract*, p. 740. See also, Halliday and Cumings, *Korea: The Unknown War*, p. 113.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 144.
26. See Chen Jian, *China's Road to the Korean War: The Making of the Sino-American Confrontation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), pp. 175-79. See also, Zhang, *Mao's Military Romanticism*, pp. 78-85.
27. Weathersby, "'Should We Fear This?'," pp. 13-16.
28. For more on this issue, see my "The Korean War As History: David Rees' *Korea: The Limited War* in Retrospect," Conference on "The Power of Free Inquiry and Cold War International History," National Archives II, September 1998, <http://www.nara.gov/research/coldwar/coldwar.html>. Michael H. Hunt has remarked that "any effort to pin down the exact motive behind Mao's decision to intervene must enter a mind as complicated as the crisis it wrestled with." See Michael Hunt, "Beijing and the Korean Crisis, June 1950-June 1951," *Political Science Quarterly* 107 (Fall 1992), p. 463.
29. See Stueck, *The Korean War*, pp. 105-06.
30. Bernstein, "Truman Administration and the Korean War," p. 438.
31. Stueck, *The Korean War*, pp. 222-23.
32. Kolko and Kolko, *The Limits of Power*, p. 613.

33. See Stueck, *The Korean War*, pp. 250-53, 258-72.

34. For the new documentation, see Kathryn Weathersby, "Deceiving the Deceivers," *CWIHPB*, Issue 11 (Winter 1998), p. 177. For Stephen Endicott's and Edward Hagerman's response to the new evidence, see "Twelve Newly Released Soviet-Era Documents and Allegations of US Germ Warfare during the Korean War," <http://www.kimsoft.com/1997//us-germy.htm>.

35. The best critique I have seen is Milton Leightenberg, "New Russian Evidence on the Korean War Biological Warfare Allegations: Background and Analysis," *CWIHPB*, Issue 11, pp. 185-99. Leightenberg, a long-time student of bacteriological and chemical warfare issues, provides excellent historiographical background on the matter. He argues that the Endicott-Hagerman thesis is highly dubious even without the new evidence.

36. Halliday and Cumings, *Korea: The Unknown War*, p. 185. For a discussion of evidence that the Chinese leadership initially believed the United States was engaging in bacteriological warfare, see Chen Jian, *Mao's China and the Cold War* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), pp. 109-10.

37. For my analysis of the American side during the summer of 1952, see Stueck, *The Korean War*, p. 289. For a balanced assessment of the international and domestic aspects of China's position regarding Korea, see Chen, *Mao's China and the Cold War*, chapter 4.

38. An account that is equally cynical about all sides is Thornton, *Odd Man Out*. On the coming of the war and US intervention, he argues that top American officials knew the North Korean attack was coming and did nothing to discourage it because they saw it as providing an opportunity to mobilize opinion at home behind a massive rearmament program. The general argument is not new, but Thornton marshals a wide array of circumstantial evidence to support it. I remain unconvinced. Warnings of attacks from North Korea had been made from South Korea since the fall of 1946 and, in addition to the questionable motives of many purveyors, they came in the context of numerous reports from other areas that seemed more plausible. That historians uncover evidence to suggest that policy makers *should* have known in advance is not the same thing as demonstrating that they *did* know. For two excellent studies on the use made by US leaders of the climate created by the Korean War to promote a military buildup at home, see Michael J. Hogan, *A Cross of Iron: Harry S. Truman and the Origins of the National Security State, 1945-1954* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998); and Paul G. Pierpaoli, Jr., *Truman and Korea: The Political Culture of the Early Cold War* (Columbia, MI: University of Missouri Press, 1999).

39. Kolko and Kolko, *The Limits of Power*, pp. 680-82; Halliday and Cumings, *The Unknown War*, pp. 191-97.