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ASIAN COMMUNIST EMPLOYMENT OF NEGOTIATIONS AS A POLITICAL TACTIC

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ASIAN COMMUNIST EMPLOYMENT OF NEGOTIATIONS AS A POLITICAL TACTIC

This report, originally given a limited distribution in a different form, sets forth the fight-talk tactic used by the Chinese, Korean, and Vietnamese Communists in the course of important military conflicts, namely, the Chinese civil war, the Korean war, and the Indochina war against the French. It focuses on the factors which have impelled the Asian Communist leaders to begin negotiations and on the various tactics used during negotiations in the effort to extract political concessions from the West. It also discusses the lessons which the North Vietnamese today profess to see in these earlier situations, confirming them in their conviction not to negotiate prior to attaining a public declaration of surrender from Washington on the issue of troop withdrawal.

This report, prepared by the Research Staff, has been informally coordinated within CIA. The responsible analysts, [Arthur A. Cohen and Helen-Louise Hunter,] would welcome comment, addressed to the Chief or Deputy Chief of the staff [redacted].

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Summary

This paper discusses the Asian (particularly Chinese) Communist practice of negotiating, focusing on the motives which, in the past, have impelled Asian Communists to negotiate and the signs they have given when they were prepared to talk. It includes an analysis of the fight-talk tactic used in the Chinese civil war in the 1930s and 1940s as well as a detailed examination of the Korean experience of 1950-53 and the Vietnamese experience of 1953-54. Finally, there is a short discussion of implications for Vietnam today.

a. General Findings

On the two occasions when the Chinese Communists have initiated negotiations during military conflicts, their forces were either

(a) weak and in danger of annihilation, as in the Chinese civil war, or

(b) badly hurt in the field, as in the Korean war.

As they negotiated, they continued to fight. This fight-and-talk tactic was formulated by Mao Tse-tung in 1940 as a means to preserve his weak forces from being destroyed by Chiang Kai-shek's militarily superior armies. Subsequently, it was used in Korea by the Chinese and North Koreans, at first as a expedient to shield their badly hurt armies in 1951, and then, from 1951 to 1953, as a holding tactic until they could extract terms enabling them to disengage from a costly limited war.

In Indochina, however, the decision to begin negotiations was imposed by the Soviet and Chinese leaders on Ho Chi Minh when they feared American involvement and escalation of the war more than he did in 1953. They urged Ho to close out the war, which he was by no means losing in the field, and persuaded him to make concessions to the French after talks started and to try to seize Vietnam by a process

of low-risk political subversion. Even after Ho had been induced to begin negotiations, his desire to use Mao's original fight-and-talk tactic for a protracted period was subordinated to the larger interests of Soviet policy (to split the Western alliance in Europe) and Chinese policy (to prevent the US from establishing alliances in Asia). The Soviets and Chinese viewed these interests as being best served by a "peace" offensive and hindered by continuation of the Indochina war. Ho made concessions, particularly on the matter of partition, which were later viewed by him and his lieutenants as a mistake not to be repeated.

b. The CCP-KMT Civil War (1937 to 1949)

Constantly maneuvering to preserve the badly depleted ranks of his Red Army from complete destruction by Chiang Kai-shek's militarily superior forces, Mao in September 1937 finally induced Chiang to establish, on paper, a CCP-KMT united front against Japan. But within the context of this paper alliance, Mao expanded his military and political forces in the northwest and even directed quick-decision thrusts to be made against isolated KMT units. As a pattern of limited armed conflict and political struggle emerged in 1940, Mao avoided major military operations which would provoke a major counterattack and developed a tactic of limited-fight, limited talk: "After we have repulsed the attack of the /KMT forces/ and before they launch a new one, we should stop at the proper moment and bring that particular fight to a close. In the period that follows, we should make a truce with them." (Mao's statement of 11 March 1940). In this way, Mao gained a series of small victories without running the risk of a general civil war, while expanding his territorial holdings behind the Japanese lines.

While fighting continued on the local level, CCP-KMT negotiations went forward on the national level intermittently from 1940 to 1946. Represented in Chungking by his brillant negotiator, Chou En-lai, Mao used various lulls in the civil war to increase his regular forces, and in 1944, he permitted the American Army Observer Mission to operate in Yenan because its very presence had a political restraining effect on Chiang. Recognizing the strengthened military and political position of Chiang after the surrender of Japan in August 1945, Mao tried to settle for a half-way station--legalization of the CCP--on the road to an eventual seizure of national power. Chiang refused to facilitate this eventual takeover. On 19 August 1946, shortly after KMT planes bombed Yenan, Mao dropped the talking half of his dual tactic

and began to fight the all-out civil war, which his forces decisively won in mid-1949.

c. The Korean War (1950 to 1953)

Initial Chinese Communist military successes from November through December 1950 increased Mao's confidence that the UN forces could be driven from Korea if military pressure was sustained, and Chou En-lai rejected a cease-fire as "a breathing spell" for the UN. But a series of manpower-killing advances by UN and ROK units in March and early April 1951 followed by the blunting of the Communists' big April and May offensives, which cost them an estimated 221,000 men, left Mao's best armies on the defensive by 1 June 1951. Of the 21 Chinese Communist divisions which had initiated the April and May offensives, 16 had suffered about 50 percent casualties.

These disastrous defeats impelled Mao to begin negotiations, but there were no prior indications that he was prepared to drop his previous political conditions for a cease-fire. When, on 23 June 1951, Soviet UN delegate Malik for the first time called for talks for a cease-fire, he merely avoided raising the preconditions that the US must withdraw from Taiwan and that Peking should be admitted to the UN. Mao seized upon the military breathing-spell to improve the badly impaired combat capabilities of his forces in the field.

Mao's strategy at the armistice negotiations (July 1951 to July 1953) was to wage a "protracted struggle," combining tactics of political attrition with limited military pressure. But this strategy did not break the determination of the US negotiators to defend the principle of voluntary repatriation of war prisoners. The death of Stalin (5 March 1953) permitted the development of a new Soviet attitude toward East-West tensions in general and concluding an armistice in particular. Soviet pressure on Mao and his own recognition that further resistance was purposeless, and even harmful to his economic program, impelled him to retreat and accept voluntary repatriation--a move which opened the way for the armistice agreement of 27 July 1953.

d. Vietnam (1953 to 1954)

The same considerations that led the Soviets and the Chinese to negotiate an end to the Korean war in mid-1953 made them look with favor upon a negotiated settlement of

the Indochina war. At the time, however, the fortunes of the Vietnamese Communists in their eight-year fight with the French were steadily improving and Ho Chi Minh gave no indication that he would be willing to accept less in a negotiated settlement than his forces could seize on the battlefield.

The first indication that the Communists might consider negotiations came from the Soviets, who began in August 1953 to quote with approval demands in the French press for a "Panmunjom" in Indochina. By September, the Chinese had also indicated a willingness to discuss Indochina at the conference table. But Vietnamese Communist propaganda made it clear that these Soviet and Chinese initiatives were being made at a time when Ho was still resisting the concept of negotiations. The attitude of the Viet Minh leaders at this time is illustrative of the generalization that Asian Communists have been unwilling to begin negotiations when they have been in an advantageous position militarily, or have not been badly hurt in the field.

As the French Government was being subjected to increasing pressure from many members of the National Assembly and from the French public for an end to the costly war, Moscow and Peking acted to convince Ho that he could make major gains through negotiations. On 29 November 1953, he finally took the initiative in proposing negotiations, but it was a hedged proposal that, in effect, demanded a complete French surrender.

Premier Laniel was able to resist the strong domestic pressure for immediate bilateral negotiations with the Viet Minh by agreeing to discuss Indochina at the Geneva conference in May 1954. Although Ho clearly preferred bilaterals, (in which he would have been in a much stronger position vis-a-vis the French than he was at Geneva), he was again pressured by the Soviets to agree to international negotiations.

At Geneva, Molotov and Chou En-lai moved adroitly to avoid any impasse that could be used by the US as an excuse for intervention in the fighting. Ho, whose delegate, Pham Van Dong, started with maximum demands after the fall of Dien Bien Phu (7 May 1954), apparently calculated that negotiations could continue for some time without leading to American involvement. His tactics of protracted negotiations, which would afford him more time to solidify his military position, were similar to those of Mao in Korea. But again

and again, the Soviets and Chinese acted to undercut his delegate's maximum demands at Geneva for French political concessions in exchange for a ceasefire.

The Viet Minh certainly had not expected to have to make as many political concessions as they finally agreed to at Geneva. Ho was in a position to negotiate from strength and to do so for a long time, but he found himself caught in a Sino-Soviet political web and was persuaded not to use his growing military capability to force major concessions. It was clear at the time that the North Vietnamese were far from completely satisfied with the Geneva compromises. As time has gone on, they have probably become even more convinced that the political concessions they made there were a mistake. The clear awareness that they were impelled, primarily by Moscow and Peking, to stop at a half-way station on the road to total military victory has made them all the more determined to fight on in the present situation.

e. Implications for Vietnam Today

North Vietnamese and Chinese Communist officials have indicated privately that the compromises made in 1954, providing the Viet Minh with something less than a total takeover of Vietnam, were a mistake. Ho's determination not to stop half-way again, even in the face of increased US airstrikes, is bolstered by Mao's special need to keep him fighting. Mao's special need, which stems largely from an image of himself as "leader" of the international Communist movement, is to prove Soviet and other doubters wrong regarding the ability of revolutionaries to defeat the US in a protracted small war.

Discussion

A. The CCP-KMT Civil War (1937 to 1949)

The badly depleted ranks of Mao's Red Army, which straggled into the sanctuary of northwest China in November 1935 after the punishing attacks of Chiang Kai-shek's forces during the Long March, were incapable of resisting an all-out KMT offensive. Aware of this basic fact, Mao repeatedly appealed to Chiang to end the civil war and establish a CCP-KMT united front to expel Japanese forces from north China. Chiang was unwilling to comply primarily because Mao insisted on preserving his military units for use in the revolution: "It

goes without saying that we shall never allow Chiang to lay a finger on the Red Army." (Mao's statement of 14 March 1936). But Japan's large-scale attack on China in July 1937 provided Mao with a new opportunity to move Chiang into a united front against Japan. Mao took the first formal step; on 22 September 1937 the CCP declared that its armed forces would be under the "direct control" of Chiang. Actually, three days after this paper statement, Mao made it clear that "direct control" was only an anti-Japanese political facade and that units and their weapons would remain under Communist control:

> It is necessary to maintain the CCP's absolutely independent leadership in what originally was the Red Army as well as in all guerrilla units. Communists are not permitted to vacillate on this principle. (CCP resolution of 25 September 1937)

Mao used the mythical anti-Japanese united front to deter the KMT forces from attacking his new sanctuary in the northwest and to expand his military, territorial, and political holdings. Most of the CCP effort was directed toward extending its assets, some was directed toward guarding against a KMT attack, and only a little was directed toward engaging Japanese armed forces. Negotiations for the reorganization of the former "Red Army" units moved very slowly in 1937 and 1938, and clashes continued on the local level between some Nationalist and Communist forces. As friction increased, Mao began to formulate his political-military tactic. On 6 November 1938, he directed that the CCP's main field work should be in the relatively secure rear areas of the Japanese forces, calculating that the political-military vacuum behind the Japanese lines would shield the CCP from superior KMT forces until the foothold in the northwest could be expanded. Mao enlarged his armed forces as quickly and efficiently as possible, but he always stopped just short of provoking an open break with Chiang and the retribution of a major KMT offensive.

Calculated restraint, intended to provide Chiang with no pretext for an offensive, was designed by Mao to be a temporary tactic to gain vitally needed breathing spells prior to

the opening of a revolutionary advance in the future. Mao indicated the "positive" role of reduced military aggressiveness as a tactic in advancing the revolution:

> Our concession, withdrawal, turning to the defensive or suspending action, whether in dealing with allies or enemies, should always be regarded as part of the entire revolutionary policy, as an indispensable link in the general revolutionary line, as a segment in the curvilinear movement. In short they are positive. (Mao's statement of 5 November 1938)

That is, defensive or suspended action was part of Mao's policy to expand his armies and the CCP membership behind Japanese lines with the aim of seizing more territory at the expense of the KMT. But quick-decision thrusts were never abandoned. For example, in the spring of 1939, Communist forces moved quickly into Shantung Province, and in the winter of 1939-1940, they decimated KMT forces in Hopei Province. These clashes were fully concordant with Mao's policy of expanding holdings by armed struggle within the context of the CCP-KMT paper united front.

A pattern of limited armed conflict and political struggle emerged in CCP-KMT relations in the spring of 1940. Mao began to refine his fighting-and-talking tactic. Militarily, he limited the offensive operations of the Communist armies, which were still considerably inferior to KMT armies; politically, he worked vigorously to indoctrinate workers, peasants, and intellectuals. In this fashion, he groped his way, seeking out and exploiting the soft spots in Chiang's military and political armor.

Mao systematized his tactic. On 11 March 1940, he set forth the unique position that there was no incongruity between waging a political-military struggle against Chiang while maintaining a united front with him. The struggle half of this dialectical policy was intended to demonstrate to Chiang that Mao's forces could not be destroyed--that they would fight back against any KMT offensives. The unity half was intended to deter KMT attacks and to "avert the outbreak of large-scale civil war." Mao depicted the partial struggle against Chiang as "the most important means for strengthening KMT-CCP cooperation," his calculation having been, as he pointed out on 4 May 1940 in a directive to Communist field commanders operating in east China, that clashes with the KMT forces were necessary --

> so as to make the KMT afraid to oppress us...and compel them to recognize our legal status, and make them hesitate to engineer a split.

That is, Mao, on occasion, used military action in certain areas rather than direct political concessions to sustain the united front on paper.

He correctly estimated that small CCP military thrusts would not provoke Chiang to move beyond limited counter-attacks because Chiang did not have the military capability in 1940 to open a nation-wide offensive against CCP forces so long as the war against Japan was being waged. Mao's estimate of 4 May 1940 was that

> The present military conflicts are local and not nation-wide. They are merely acts of strategic reconnaissance on the part of our opponents and are as yet not large-scale actions intended to annihilate the Communists.

In this way, he defended the general plan for limited civil war which he had enunciated on 11 March 1940 as a limited-fight, limited-talk tactic. Mao had set forth the important tactic in considerable detail:

> First, we will never /sic/ attack unless attacked; if attacked, we will certainly counterattack.... Second, we do not fight unless we are sure of victory; we must on no account fight without preparation and without certainty of the outcome....Third, the principle of truce. After we have repulsed the attack of the die-hards /i.e., the KMT forces/ and before they launch a new one, we should stop at the proper moment and bring that particular fight to a close. In the period that follows, we should make a truce with them. We must on no account fight on daily and hourly without stopping, nor become dizzy with success. Herein lies the temporary nature of every particular struggle. Only when the die-hards launch a new offensive should we retaliate with a new struggle.

This became the basic tactical principle of Mao. His practice indicated that his forces were directed to fight, close off the particular battle with a defeat of KMT forces, and then seek a truce and be prepared to negotiate in the hope that Chiang would not take a local and limited defeat as the

reason for a large-scale offensive against all Communist armies. This is the tactical principle designed to advance Mao's protracted war waged with initially weak forces, limiting their actions to safe proportions.

In this way, Mao gained a series of local victories without running a great risk of general civil war. At the same time, he seized territory by expanding the base areas behind the Japanese lines and by controlling the actions of his field commanders, whose forces sporadically chopped away at small KMT units. For example, the First Contingent of the Communist New Fourth Army commanded by General Chen Yi decimated KMT forces in northern Kiangsu in July 1940 and, in the second half of 1940, several Communist victories were won in the lower Yangtze valley. Mao had directed that the New Fourth must be expanded to 100,000 men; by the end of 1940, his generals were successful in expanding this army to approximately that number of combat regulars.

While fighting continued on the local level, CCP-KMT negotiations took place on the national level in the second half of 1940 as Mao implemented his fighting-and-talking tactic. Even when vastly superior KMT forces unexpectedly surrounded and destroyed 9,000 men attached to the New Fourth's headquarters as they were withdrawing to the north of the Yangtze River, Mao refused to consider this setback as invalidating his principle of waging a limited war. In June 1943, the intermittent negotiations between the KMT and CCP reached another major impasse in Chungking, just as they had in late 1939 and in January 1941. Chiang asked Mao to give a conclusive reply to his demands to relinquish the independent CCP government and to incorporate CCP forces into Nationalist armies. Chou En-lai, the brillant Communist representative in Chungking, deflected these demands and charged the KMT with increasing their forces along the northwest border base areas. Chou attained some success in his political effort to depict Chiang as the obdurate element in the united front.

The failure of Chiang to launch large-scale attacks against Communist forces in 1943 was attributed by Mao at the time to the political success in arousing domestic and international opinion against Chiang's policies. (Liberation Daily, 5 October 1943). Two additional factors were Japan's east China offensive against KMT forces and US efforts to stop Chiang's attempts to suppress the Communists. That is, Mao

adroitly used political pressures to compensate for military weakness: "The Communists are not capable of much, if any, offensive action." (Report of Colonel Depass, 16 November 1943)

Expediently, from 1943 to 1945, Mao used the lull in the CCP-KMT protracted war to further expand his armed forces, which increased to 475,000 regulars by October 1944. The Wallace mission to China in June 1944 resulted in the dispatch of the American Army Observer Mission to Yenan, which Mao favored because of "its political effect upon the KMT":

> Any contact you Americans may have with us Communists is gold. Of course, we are glad to have the Observer Mission here because it will help to beat Japan. But there is no use in pretending that--up to now at least --the chief importance of your coming is not its political effect on the KMT. (Mao's remarks to John S. Service, interview of 27 August 1944)

That is, Mao exploited the US desire to end the civil war and get on with the war against Japan, adroitly using it as a political shield against the potential offensive-power of Chiang's superior military forces. He was capable then of considerably more tactical flexibility than he has been in recent years.

By insisting on policies which made the KMT appear unreasonable, Mao deflected Chiang's demand that, to become a legal party, the CCP should disband its armed forces. In a carefully worded proposal, which Mao maneuvered Ambassador Hurley to sign with him in Yenan on 10 November 1944, Mao agreed only "to work for" the unification of all military forces while insisting on the formation of a "coalition national government and a united national military council." His intention was to exploit the generally held view that the CCP was justified in refusing to disband its armies before the formation of a coalition government. However, in order to keep the negotiations alive, he directed Chou En-lai in Chungking to join Ambassador Hurley in pressing Chiang to accept the proposal. Chiang insisted on disbanding the Communist armies, and Mao was then able to "expose" Chiang as recalcitrant in rejecting a "reasonable" negotiations compromise--i.e., a coalition. The widespread domestic and international appeal of the Maoist program for a settlement, the rapidly expanding military-political power of the CCP, and US anxiety to bring about

unity put Chiang at a considerable disadvantage in the talks. Mao's success with dilatory tactics--that is, his substituting of talks about "working for" unified armed forces in the place of action taken to disband CCP armies--further isolated Chiang in China and internationally.

All along, Mao had continued to expand his forces, and by 24 April 1945, he claimed that they totalled 910,000 regulars and more than 2,200,000 militia. Mao made a major move shortly before Japan's surrender, ordering CCP troops to link up with Soviet troops driving southward in Manchuria (10 August 1945). As CCP and KMT armies raced for control of various Japanese-vacated areas and as Chiang prepared to strike at Mao's forces, the Communist leader accepted Chiang's invitation to accompany Ambassador Hurley to Chungking, arriving on 28 August 1945. Mao was still anxious to gain a series of breathing spells. Two days before flying to Chungking, Mao drafted an inner-party policy line on negotiations, in which he indicated that the CCP should be prepared to make some concessions--namely, some reduction in the size of those base areas which were indefensible and in the strength of CCP armed forces.

> Without such concessions, we cannot explode the KMT's civil war plot, cannot gain the political initiative, cannot win the sympathy of world public opinion and the middle-of-the-roaders in China and cannot gain in exchange legal status for our party and a state of peace.
>
> But there are limits to such concessions: the principle is that they must not damage the fundamental interests of the people [i.e., CCP control of the base areas and the armed forces]. (Mao's statement of 26 August 1945)

Mao in Chungking recognized the strengthened military and diplomatic position of Chiang after the surrender of Japan and the signing in Moscow of the Sino-Soviet treaty. In private talks, he dropped his demand (to which he later returned) for a coalition government and high command, but insisted on retaining not less than 20 divisions as well as exclusive control of the base areas in north China. He wanted to obtain a settlement, a half-way station of legalization on the road to an eventual seizure of national power, inasmuch as his armies were still smaller and more badly-equipped than Chiang's. "The Communist armies do not possess

sufficient strength to directly oppose the KMT armies in positional warfare; but over a long period of time as an occupying force, the KMT cannot hold out even with US help." (August 1945 report of Colonel Yeaton from Yenan) Chiang accurately summarized Mao's position as equivalent to allowing the CCP to carry on its political revolution without opposition or hindrance while professing to end the KMT-CCP military clashes by negotiating. Actually, while Mao was talking, CCP forces were consolidating their control over newly taken territory in the north, and when Mao returned on 11 October 1945, after refusing to disband his forces, he justified in the context of protracted revolution, his willingness to negotiate.

Mao made it clear to cadres in Yenan on 17 October that reducing CCP forces to 20 divisions would not mean handing over weapons. "The arms of the people, every gun and every bullet, must all be kept, must not be handed over." He then reminded cadres that his strategy was to wage a long revolutionary war:

> Was our party right or wrong in deciding at its 7th Congress /in April 1945/ that we were willing to negotiate with the KMT provided that they changed their policy? It was absolutely right. The Chinese revolution is a long one and victory can only be won step by step.

As both sides raced to seize Japanese arms and fill the territorial vacuum, Mao directed the Northeast Bureau of the CCP to expand its holdings and use the newly-arrived 100,000 Communist troops to hold the rural areas remote from the existing centers of KMT control. Between the truce of January and June 1946, both sides took territory in Manchuria. During the whole period of the Marshall mission in late 1945 and 1946, Mao tried to disgrace Chiang politically by advocating a moderate program of "peace, democracy, and unity" while his armed forces expanded. He relied heavily on their ability to avoid decisive engagements, to prolong the stop-start fighting, and to counter-attack against small KMT units.

In the final series of negotiations of Mao's long revolutionary war, he gave priority to the goal of attaining a ceasefire and an extension of the Manchurian truce. He was also concerned in June 1946 about US aid to Chiang's forces. On the one hand, he relied on General Marshall's

mediation to gain an immediate cease-fire, to ameliorate Chiang's demands, and to state his own settlement terms. Chou En-lai, urbane and persuasive, ably discharged his task by appearing conciliatory, moderate, and reasonable. On the other hand, Mao's press and radio in Yenan criticized US policy with increasing vehemency in an effort to deter Washington from giving further aid to the KMT. By 26 June 1946, Mao demanded that the US stop all military assistance to Chiang and withdraw all US troops from the mainland; his concern with the modern equipment sent to the KMT forces had been deepened. "Let them know that whatever happens, if we are faced with mechanized war, we shall fight on if necessary with our hands and feet." (Mao's statement to Robert Payne in June 1946)

Although his armies were still numerically inferior to Chiang's, Mao issued an inner-party directive on 20 July warning his forces to prepare to smash Chiang's offensive by an all-out "war of self-defense," which required the temporary abandonment of indefensible cities and the opening of mobile warfare. Mao had no alternative but to fight against superior forces and on 19 August 1946, shortly after KMT planes bombed Yenan, Mao was impelled to drop the talking half of his dual tactic and prepare for all-out civil war, which his forces won in the straight forward contest of military strength waged between late 1946 and mid-1949.

In drawing an analogy between the Chinese civil war and the Vietnam war today, CCP propagandists emphasize the protracted nature of both conflicts and the evolution of weak into strong Communist forces. But they deliberately de-emphasize, or avoid any reference to, the talking-half of Mao's tactic and the temporary half-way station he tried to obtain. Unlike the Soviet propagandists, they insist that talking should take place only after the US withdraws its forces from South Vietnam.

B. The Korean War (1950 to 1953)

Military developments in Korea in the spring of 1951 provide a clear-cut example of the Asian Communists having been impelled to switch to the talking phase after they had been hurt in the field. That is, they viewed the large losses

of Chinese Communist Forces (CCF) combat regulars as the sufficient cause for drastically reducing the fighting phase. The military struggle was subordinated to a political "protracted struggle," the intention being to wear down Western negotiators to attain a favorable political settlement.

When, in late November 1950, the CCF entered the war in force, North Korean Peoples Army (NKPA) combat casualties were already very high, estimated by the United Nations Command (UNC) at 200,000 in addition to 135,000 prisoners. The NKPA had been virtually destroyed and never fought again above corps strength in the Korean war. The initial CCF successes against UNC forces from November through December 1950 increased the confidence of the Chinese Communist leaders that they could drive UNC forces from Korea if CCF pressure was sustained. On 22 December 1950 and again on 19 January 1951, Chou En-lai rejected a cease-fire, describing it as a means to gain "a breathing spell" for UNC forces, and demanded that prior to any halt in the fighting all foreign troops must be withdrawn from Korea, US armed forces must be withdrawn from Taiwan, and Peking's representatives must be admitted to the United Nations. As UNC forces retreated from the Yalu River, however, they took a heavy toll of CCF combat units. For example, between 27 November and 11 December, the 60,000 men of the eight divisions committed by the 9th Army Group, Third CCF Field Army, were estimated by the Marine Corps to have suffered 37,500 combat casualties, a little over half of them inflicted by ground forces and the rest by air attack. The 9th Army Group was so damaged by firepower that it disappeared from the Korean battlefield for three months. By mid-January 1951, UNC forces had stopped the CCF all along the front.

General Ridgway directed UNC forces to comply with his dictum of "inflicting maximum casualties on the enemy" rather than gaining ground. The dictum was put into practice in the months following the UNC offensive which started in late January 1951. By 9 February, OPERATION PUNCH had annihilated at least 4,200 CCF (body count) and when, on 14 February, CCF infantry for the first time in Korea attacked in mass waves, UNC forces killed thousands of Chinese at Chipyong-ni. CCF mass infantry assaults resulted in further heavy Chinese casualties on the 20th and again on the 21st with the start of OPERATION KILLER. By 1 March, the entire Chinese front south of the Han River had collapsed and UNC

units moved to within 30 miles of the 38th parallel. CCF manpower and equipment losses continued to be "heavy" after the start of OPERATION RIPPER on 7 March, and on 14 March, Seoul was retaken as CCF and small NKPA forces fell back. A series of manpower-killing advances launched by UNC and ROK units in late March and early April moved the allied forces across the 38th parallel. The ranks of the best armies--Lin Piao's 4th Field Army and Chen Yi's 3rd Field Army--which the Chinese leaders used in the first massive assault against the UNC forces had been seriously depleted. "Now the best troops are annihilated; this forced the CCF to send replacements from the 1st and 2nd field armies.... The CCF suffered high casualties and its faith in victory had been reduced." (From interrogation report of Assistant Battalion Commander, 40th Army, 4th CCF Field Army).*

General Van Fleet met the first Communist spring offensive, launched on 22 April 1951, with the manpower-killing tactics of General Ridgway, and directed his corps commanders on 30 April

> Expend steel and fire, not men.... I want so many artillery holes that a man can step from one to the other.

Because they used massed infantry assaults against concentrated US artillery, automatic-weapons, and air firepower, units of six CCF armies suffered a total of 70,000 casualties between 21 and 29 April and were forced to end their first spring offensive. Their second spring offensive was even more destructive to CCF men and materiel.

On 16 May, 21 CCF divisions, flanked by a total of 9 NKPA divisions, opened the second spring offensive along a 105-mile front using human wave tactics against strongly fortified UNC positions. Although gains of 10 to 15 miles were made along most of the front, the Communist offensive was completely spent by 21 May, and UNC forces, which had recoiled only slightly, lashed back in a major counter-offensive, depriving the Communists of the opportunity to place screening forces between their main armies and the

*The prisoner reports that are referred to in this paper are, in almost every case, the reports of prisoners captured and interrogated in March and April 1951--that is, after the collapse of the January 1951 CCF offensive and before the even more costly defeats of the spring of 1951.

UNC units. UNC counterattacks quickly carried into CCF and NKPA former assembly areas, where large quantities of supplies were captured as many dumps were overrun. By 1 June, the CCF and NKPA lost more than 102,000 men, and of the 21 CCF divisions which had initiated the offensive, 16 had suffered about 50 percent casualties. The following table, which is based on US Far East Command estimates, indicates the magnitude of the Communist losses:

Unit	Strength 16 May	Strength 22 May	Strength 1 June	% Losses
East Central Front (Main attack)				
12th CCF Army	30,000	17,000	10,000	67%
27th CCF Army	31,000	25,000	21,000	32%
39th CCF Army	20,000	20,000	19,000	5%
40th CCF Army	17,000(?)	27,000(?)	27,000(?)	0
II NK Corps	18,000	18,000	17,000	5%
V NK Corps	19,000	18,000	16,000	16%
Central Front				
10th CCF Army	24,000	24,000	23,000	4%
15th CCF Army	32,000	23,000	14,000	56%
20th CCF Army	32,000	32,000	31,000	3%
26th CCF Army	21,000	17,000	19,000	9%
60th CCF Army	31,000	27,000	14,000	55%
63rd CCF Army	29,000	22,000	16,000	48%
Western Front				
64th CCF Army	28,000	22,000	20,000	29%
65th CCF Army	29,000	22,000	18,000	38%
I NK Corps	17,000	11,000	12,000	29%
VI NK Corps	28,000	28,000	28,000	0
TOTALS:	406,000	353,000	304,000	25%

The table indicates that as of 1 June 1951, the Communists had sustained a loss of 25 percent of their total 16 May strength in Korea. From 1 to 14 June, they suffered an additional 49,000 casualties (not included in the table above).

Most of the CCF prisoners were taken during the last week of May in frantic efforts to escape, indicating that the political-control fabric of many CCF units had been shattered, primarily because large numbers of political officers and non-coms had been killed.

The combined heavy losses to the first wave field armies--i.e., the CCF 3rd and 4th--and the second wave armies--i.e., the CCF 1st and 2nd--had significantly reduced the quality of the forces which the Chinese leaders could put in the field in June 1951. Many of their best combat officers and political cadres had been killed or captured, partly because of the Maoist practice which required that they take front-line positions to lead their troops. Many political officers were killed in combat "because they spent much of their time with the men in the front line to lead the battle themselves" (from interrogation report of a private in the 125th Division, 4th CCF Field Army), and in some companies all officers including the company commander had been ordered to the front line to raise the men's "fighting spirit" (from interrogation report of the Company Political Officer in the 118th Division, 4th CCF Field Army). "The casualties among the commanders were high...because they took the lead at the front" (from interrogation report of Battalion Commander, 64th Army, 1st CCF Field Army). The massed infantry attacks--used for the first time by the CCF in Korea in mid-February 1951--facilitated the destruction: "We fought only with human wave tactics; great numbers of men have been sacrificed; it was indescribably miserable" (from interrogation report of Private, 42nd Army, 4th CCF Field Army). The Maoist doctrine of "defeating the enemy's firepower with a superiority in manpower...is a military idea which is no good... These views of mine were shared by most lower-level leaders and the men in the CCF, though they could not dare to make them public" (from interrogation of Assistant Battalion Political Officer, 40th Army, 4th CCF Field Army). "'Human wave' tactics are supposed to overwhelm the enemy's firepower with predominance of manpower and thus win the victory. From my first experience in this war, I found that this tactic had no sense and no value.... In actual combat, it was nothing but a mass loss of lives and defeat" (from interrogation report of Squad Leader and CCP member, 40th Army, 4th CCF Field Army). The quality and number of CCF cadres who were lost to the four CCF field armies probably was the sufficient cause for the Chinese Communist leaders, whose forces comprised abut 95 percent of the Communist combat units in Korea, to switch to the talking phase.

In the disastrous offensives of spring 1951, the CCF and NKPA sustained an estimated 221,000 casualties from 21 April to 16 June. By 16 June, the Chinese casualties since the CCF entered the Korean war were approximately 577,000, including roughly 73,000 non-battle casualties--mostly due to various epidemics--and 16,500 prisoners. (No data are reported here on NKPA total casualties since November 1950.)

The war was increasingly costly for the Chinese in other ways. It forced the regime to modify its program of long-range economic development and to place the economy on a war footing. The war also subjected the regime to economic sanctions imposed by the West, increased inflationary pressures, and strained economic relations between urban and rural areas. The Chinese Communists became increasingly dependent on the USSR, partly because the Chinese were unable to replace from their own resources the stocks of material being expended in Korea.

The first step toward ending the commitment in Korea was to begin negotiations for a cease-fire, the calculation apparently having been that political concessions could be gained by combining protracted talks with propaganda accusations, while the fighting was kept limited.

Following a series of statements made by American and United Nations' officials in late May and early June 1951 regarding the UNC's willingness to end the fighting without demanding a surrender of Communist forces, the Chinese Communists and the Soviets apparently decided to gain a breathing-spell. Prior to the 23 June radio speech of Soviet United Nations' delegate Jacob Malik, there apparently were no indications that the Chinese were willing to accept these Western proposals. On the contrary, the indications continued to point to Chinese intransigence. Unexpectedly, in his radio speech, Malik indicated a change in the Communist position when he avoided linking the Communists' proposal for a cease-fire to their earlier demands that the US must withdraw from Taiwan and that Peking must be admitted to the United Nations. "The Soviet peoples believe that as a first step, discussions should be started between the belligerents for a cease-fire and an armistice providing for the mutual withdrawal of forces from the 38th parallel."

The Chinese, too, were careful not to admit they had dropped preconditions. On 23 June, the Peking People's Daily frontpaged Malik's proposal without acceding to truce

talks. The Chinese did not accede to truce talks publicly until 1 July, and on 2 July they rationalized the change in their basic position without acknowledging explicitly that it had changed. The Chinese later formulated their switch to the talking phase as follows:

> After the five great campaigns /I.e., offensives from November 1950 to May 1951/, the Volunteers switched over in good time to the strategic line of "engaging in protracted warfare while conducting positive defense" and strictly subordinated the military struggle to the political struggle. (NCNA commentary of 28 November 1958)

The Chinese used the military breathing-spell to improve their impaired over-all combat capabilities. By the time the armistice negotiations started on 8 July 1951, the Chinese had improved their artillery and small-arm stores and had replaced their manpower losses while the NKPA divisions were rebuilt. Politically, they had already exploited the theme of seeking peace and of opposing American "warmongering" with considerable success, gaining face internationally and placing themselves in a favorable propaganda position as the initiators of the truce talks. They were unwilling to move the talks along to a mutually acceptable conclusion within any short period. On the contrary, they used Mao's tactic of wearing down UNC negotiators in a "protracted struggle" (Peking's phrase of 3 September 1951) in order to extract major concessions.

UNC ground advances had ended temporarily on 11 June after the ROK I Corps had taken Chorwon and Kumhwa at the base of the Iron Triangle at points about 20 miles north of the 38th parallel. All of South Korea except for a small part of the Western flank had been cleared of Communist forces enabling fortification of the UNC line in depth in an area 10-20 miles north of the parallel. The Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), acting on a policy position agreed upon at meetings of the National Security Council (NSC) held on 2 and 16 May 1951, informed General Ridgway not to go beyond the general vicinity of the new line. In his memoirs, President Truman depicted the NSC policy objectives for Korea as follows:

> Regarding Korea, we distinguished between the political aim--a unified, independent, democratic Korea--and the military aim of repelling the aggression and terminating the hostilities under an armistice agreement. With the fighting ended, the purpose would be to establish the

authority of the Republic of Korea south of a northern boundary line suitable for defense and administration and not substantially below the 38th Parallel, to provide for the withdrawal of non-Korean armed forces from all of Korea, and to build up the ROK forces so as to deter or repel a renewed North Korean aggression.

Unlike MacArthur's demand for total victory and expulsion of the Communists from the North, this policy envisaged a status quo along the 38th, a North and South Korea for an interim period, and an armistice agreement ensuring the status quo. In order to impell the Communist leaders to consider entering into armistice negotiations, a series of public statements were made in May and June. On 17 May, Senator Edwin Johnson introduced a resolution into the Senate asking the United Nations to urge the belligerents to declare an armistice by 25 June along the 38th parallel, to agree to the exchange of all war prisoners, and to withdraw all foreign troops by the end of the year. Moscow news media were quick to give extensive publicity to the resolution. On 26 May, Lester Pearson, President of the United Nations General Assembly, stated that total surrender of the aggressors might not be necessary, that it would be sufficient to achieve the objective of stopping the aggression. On 1 June, Trygve Lie, Secretary General of the United Nations, stated that the time was right to stop the fighting, inasmuch as the UNC had forced the invaders back beyond the 38th parallel, which could be the approximate line of demarcation. Also on 1 June, Secretary Acheson told senators at the MacArthur Hearings that the Administration's immediate aim was ending the aggression (the complete unification of Korea being the long-term goal); he was more explicit in his statement on 2 June, declaring that if a cease-fire were arranged around the 38th parallel, "that would accomplish the military purposes in Korea." That is, the 1950 policy of complete unification of Korea and expulsion of the Communists was replaced by the more modest and less costly 1951 policy of settling for a non-Communist half in the South.

The ending of major UNC ground advances in June 1951 was a move dictated by higher American political policy. Whether major UNC advances (1) could have been sustained in drives toward the Yalu and (2) would have impelled the Communists to avoid delaying tactics at the subsequent armistice negotiations (which began on 8 July 1951) are conjectural matters. Although badly hurt, the CCF was still a fighting force; on 1 July, an estimated total of 62 CCF (40) and NKPA (22) divisions confronted 17 of the UNC under General

Van Fleet--a disparity in numbers which provided the Communists with a capability to mount a major offensive and, as a consequence, became a constant source of concern for UNC strategists. The UNC would have required an additional input of at least three divisions to consider pressing forward in further large-scale advances into areas were Communist supply lines were increasingly shorter and UNC lines were increasingly longer. It was doubtful that Van Fleet had sufficient forces to annihilate Communist forces by maneuver and encirclement. Beyond the basic military considerations, the majority of nations composing the UNC were reluctant again to advance toward the Yalu. General Van Fleet's strategic view in June 1951 was:

> Continued pursuit of the enemy was neither practical nor expedient. The most profitable employment for the Eighth Army, therefore, was to establish a defense line on the nearest commanding terrain /the KANSAS-WYOMING phase lines/ north of the 38th parallel. and from there to push forward in a limited advance to accomplish the maximum destruction to the enemy consistent with minimum danger to the integrity of the Eighth Army.

This Ridgway-Van Fleet strategy of maintaining military pressure by means of "limited advance" was the predominant feature of the remainder of the Korean war.* By 1 July, the main

*But even the policy of "limited advance" was costly. For example, UNC infantry attacks on Bloody Ridge in late August and early September 1951, which took the ridge, cost UN and ROK forces over 2,700 casualties and, according to UNC estimates, cost the Communists over 15,000 casualties. Higher losses for both sides were reported after UNC forces took Heartbreak Ridge on 13 October following thirty days of bloody fighting. This policy maintained the UNC military initiative, preventing the Communists from opening a major drive; it provided UNC negotiators with the military pressure sufficient to impell Communist negotiators in October to drop their demand for a demarcation line south of the battle line--that is, the demand for a line at the 38th parallel.

Limited UNC advances in October 1951 had inflicted on the CCF and NKPA the highest monthly total of casualties for the negotiations period and had gained important terrain, but UNC casualties in the advances were high--i.e., 40,000.

fortification of phase line KANSAS was complete and by 30 July, the lull in operations due to armistice negotiations permitted Van Fleet to fortify phase line WYOMING farther north, forming it into another main line of defense.

However, the UNC made it clear from the start--in Admiral Joy's statement at the first armistice meeting on 8 July 1951--that the Communists would not be handed a de facto cease-fire and that fighting would continue until (1) they agreed to reasonable armistice terms and (2) a military armistice commission was prepared to function.

The Communist tactic of political attrition succeeded in frustrating UNC negotiators, but it did not gain the Communists major concessions. Small-scale but sustained UNC military pressure on Communist forces in Korea in October 1951 was reflected in the talks. On 26 October, the Communists in effect dropped their demand that the demarcation line be moved down to correspond with the 38th parallel.

On the other hand, they gained a 30-day de facto cease-fire from 27 November to 27 December, enabling them to further strengthen front-line defenses and to augment unit strength. Further, pressure on their negotiators was relaxed because of a UNC concession on the matter of a permanent or temporary line of demarcation. In early November, the Communist negotiators insisted on establishing a map line of demarcation immediately rather than after the armistice was signed, but General Ridgway and the UNC negotiators opposed this demand, recognizing that a permanent line (at the line of contact) would prevent the UNC from using limited advances to pressure the Communists to get on with the task of concluding an armistice. But the JCS in Washington advised establishment of a map line of demarcation with a time limit appended. The time limit permitted invalidation, by the UNC, of the line at the expiration of a 30-day period. General Ridgway still objected that this in effect granted the Communists a de facto cease-fire for one month and that such a cease-fire would impede the UNC strategy of sustaining military pressure--i.e., pushing the line northward--to prevent further stalling at the negotiations. Ridgway was overruled and on 27 November a map line of demarcation was formally agreed on; by 27 December, the expiration of the 30-day limit, there had been no significant change on the battlefield or in the negotiations, suggesting that the Communist calculation on the premanency of the line of demarcation was proving to be correct, providing them with exemption from UNC military pressure and further time to protract the negotiations.

The Chinese desired a political victory together with a military truce, and as the talks centered on the prisoner issue, they adamantly refused to accept a political setback. The major deadlock on the matter of voluntary repatriation of prisoners prolonged the talks from April 1952 to July 1953, inasmuch as the Chinese insisted on the forcible return of all CCF (and NKPA) prisoners in order to avoid a major propaganda defeat if large numbers were to opt for the West. The Communists would not recognize the UNC stand on voluntary repatriation as a valid principle and argued that it was in conflict with the Geneva Convention which required a compulsory, all-for-all exchange. As an alternative, they calculated that if a relatively small number would resist repatriation--that is, about 16,000 of a total of 132,000 CCF and NKPA prisoners--they could tacitly agree to the UNC screening process.

Both the Communists and the UNC were shocked by the results of the screening process after about only half had been questioned. Over 40,000 of about 65,000 prisoners screened indicated that they would resist repatriation to China and North Korea, but the UNC had given the Communist negotiators an estimate of 116,000 willing to return of the total 132,000 prisoners. When, on 19 April, the Communists were informed that only 70,000 would return without the use of force, the CCF Colonel Tsai was speechless, asked for a recess, and on the following day--apparently on instructions from Peking--said that the UNC's earlier estimate of 116,000 was a far cry from 70,000. It was "completely impossible for us to consider" and "you flagrantly repudiated what you said before." Because the Communists had been stung once by the screening procedure, they indicated they would have nothing more to do with it.

Small, division-scale battles continued in the field, but the Communists were still unwilling to change the nature of the war into that of major offensive actions. The tried to deflect politically damaging charges of inhumanity on the prisoner issue by launching a concerted propaganda campaign, accusing the US--starting in late February 1952--of waging "bacteriological warfare" in North Korea and Manchuria. More importantly, Communist-instigated riots in the POW camps were intended to undercut the UNC position on voluntary repatriation by discrediting the entire screening process. In the POW camps, the Communist soldiers shifted their responsibilities from military to political goals. Close coordination was established between the POW camps and the

Panmunjom truce talks. On 20 May 1952, after forcing a contrived confession of "compulsory screening" from General Dodd, who had been held prisoner by the prisoners of the Koje-do camp, chief negotiator Nam Il charged that

> The commandant of your prisoner-of-war camp could not but confess before the whole world your inhuman treatment and murderous violence against our captured personnel, and the criminal and unlawful acts committed by your side in screening and re-arming war prisoners by force. (emphasis supplied)

The Communist negotiators adroitly used the Koje-do incident to discredit the UNC figures and insisted that they obtain 132,000 prisoners in exchange for 12,000 prisoners held by them on the principle of an all-for-all exchange and forcible repatriation. Neither side conceded, and at the recess of talks on 26 July 1952, a year of negotiation had produced an estimated 2,000,000 words of discussion and nearly 800 hours of formal meetings. The prisoner issue was the only remaining agenda item.

On the battlefield, a military stalemate continued. Mao had confronted the US with his limited-risk protracted war. He apparently believed that Washington would continue to avoid pressing for an all-out military victory because of the manpower losses such a victory would require. By July 1952, CCF and NKPA ground forces strength had almost doubled since the start of the talks in July 1951--from 502,000 to 947,000. He also apparently believed that he could deter the US from initiating airstrikes against the China mainland because of Washington's uncertainty regarding Stalin's reaction to such strikes.

While Stalin lived, Communist negotiators at Panmunjom refused to retreat from their demand for forcible repatriation. New Delhi's efforts to smooth the way for a compromise were rejected when Foreign Minister Vishinsky on 24 November 1952 and Chou En-lai on 28 November 1952 attacked the Indian resolution on repatriation as unacceptable. Mao, too, remained adamant into 1953, declaring that "however many years American imperialism prefers to fight, we are ready to fight it..." (speech of 7 February 1953). Stalin had raised East-West tensions to a high level, and Mao was prepared to sustain those tensions.

On the battlefield, small-unit actions continued in localized struggles for hill positions and, although the Communists had taken losses in October 1952 that had cut their estimated total strength from 1,008,900 to 972,000 at the end of the month, their total began to climb slowly again in November as fighting tapered off. Both sides made the same calculation, namely, that a major offensive would lead to a very high casualty rate but not a military breakthrough.

The death of Stalin (5 March 1953) permitted the development of an entirely new attitude among the Soviet leaders toward East-West tensions in general and toward concluding an armistice in particular.* Moscow now appeared to be more anxious to negotiate a quick end to the war than did Peking. Soviet statements in March following Stalin's death were more conciliatory toward the West than those of the Chinese. Chairman of the Council of Ministers Malenkov stated on 15 March that "there is no disputed or unresolved question that cannot be settled peacefully by mutual agreement of the interested countries." For the first time since the end of World War II, Moscow Radio on 21 March admitted that the US and Britain had played a role in winning a "common victory" over the Axis powers. This followed Foreign Minister Molotov's unexpected agreement on 18 March to intercede with the North Korean leaders to obtain the release of 10 British diplomats and missionaries interned in North Korea since the start of the war. A further indication of the change in the Soviet attitude was Malenkov's depiction of the Korean war as a "defensive" operation in his 17 March message to Kim Il-sung on the anniversary of a Soviet-Korean agreement. Significantly, it differed from a similar message to Kim in 1951, when Stalin had described the war as a "struggle for liberation of the

*The death of Stalin provided the Soviet leaders with the opportunity to jettison Stalin's more senseless and unproductive positions and to use methods of flexibility in diplomacy --such as a variety of goodwill gestures and a diminution of doctrinal hostility to Western governments. Stalin was concerned about the international situation leading to a general war, but for reasons of doctrinal obsessions and personal prestige, he refused to moderate the Soviet attitude toward the West and toward neutrals, and refused to make concessions on important international issues dividing the West and the Communist bloc.

fatherland," in which any cease-fire would be conditioned on the withdrawal of US forces from Korea.

Three days after Chou's return from talks with the post-Stalin leadership in Moscow, the Communists unexpectedly agreed to a routine UNC offer for an exchange of sick and wounded prisoners which General Clark had reiterated in his letter of 26 February. In suggesting that the exchange of the sick and wounded might be the first step leading to the "smooth settlement of the entire question of prisoners of war, thereby achieving an armistice in Korea for which people throughout the world are longing," the Communists indicated on 28 March a new and real interest in solving the last crucial problem blocking a cease-fire agreement. This was the first indication that the Chinese might be willing to make a concession on repatriation.

But Mao waged a protracted political struggle as he prepared to make his retreat on forcible repatriation as small as possible. The Chinese used ambiguous and face-saving language in an effort to hold a series of fallback positions, which they surrendered only after it was clear the UNC would insist on the voluntary principle. An ambiguous proposal by Chou En-lai on 30 March--that both sides

> should undertake to repatriate immediately after the cessation of hostilities all those prisoners of war in their custody who insist upon repatriation and hand over the remaining prisoners of war to a neutral state so as to ensure a just solution to the question of their repatriation (emphasis supplied)--

left unclear the matter of final disposition of prisoners who were unwilling to return to China and North Korea. The Chinese propagandists described Chou's proposal as a "procedural concession," which it was, as the point that prisoners who were unwilling to be repatriated should be handed over to a neutral country represented a Chinese retreat. Chou had been deliberately vague in not stating Chinese demands for forcible repatriation, but Chinese propaganda returned to the demands by insisting on the principle of total repatriation by way of a neutral state. That the Chinese had made a concession in fact while insisting on the principle to cover their retreat is indicated by the statement of the senior Soviet member of the UN Secretariat, Kassaniev, who told a member of the Norwegian delegation on 30 March that Chou's declaration on prisoners was "the real thing" and that only "technicalities" remain to be worked out.

The UNC appraised this concession as indicating no change on the substantive matter of voluntary repatriation, and they pressed the Communists to clarify their position on where screening would take place, on its duration, and on whether the voluntary principle would be part of a cease-fire agreement. After manipulating the language of their counter-proposals throughout April, on 7 May the Communists made two more key concessions. They dropped the requirement that no repatriates should be sent physically to a neutral state and reduced the explaining period from six to four months. Finally, on 4 June, the Communists' chief negotiator, Nam Il, using language designed to conceal the Chinese capitulation on forcible repatriation, stated that "according to the application of each individual, those who elect to go to the neutral nations shall be assisted by the Neutral National Repatriation Commission and the Red Cross Society of India." That is, men who refused to return to the Communist countries could reach non-Communist countries through the channel of a neutral-nations commission stationed in Korea, if explanations failed to persuade them to return home. In this way, Mao accepted voluntary repatriation in a disguised form. His propagandists stated that ex-prisoners may go to "neutral states," without making it clear that they were in fact free to go wherever they chose.

Mao was anxious to still extract a degree of political prestige before the cease-fire agreement was signed. Face-saving offensives were launched in June and July by the Communists to achieve several objectives: (a) to move the line farther south, (b) to give ROK forces a bloody-nose in order to convince Rhee that his forces could not "March North," and (c) to convince international opinion that the CCF and NKPA were not weaker than UNC forces and that the Communist motive in seeking an armistice was not that of avoiding military defeat. Although suffering heavy losses between April and July 1953--an estimated total of 134,412--there were over one million CCF and NKPA forces in Korea, well-fed adequately clothed, and effectively supported by massed artillery by the time of the signing of the armistice on 27 July.

Mao's capitulation on the principle of forcible repatriation--a capitulation which provided the West with a major propaganda victory--apparently stemmed from several major considerations.

1. One was pressure from the post-Stalin leadership. The Soviet leaders were clearly anxious to consolidate their

internal position and to relax international tension. They were alert to the harder policy taken toward the China mainland by the new administration of President Eisenhower. Neither the Soviet nor the Chinese leaders could be certain that the new administration would keep the war limited in the event that truce talks remained deadlocked. Chinese apprehension over the possibility of an attack, or at least a series of substantial raids, from Taiwan was reflected in the resumption of recruiting in Shanghai in February and March 1953 and in defense activity along the south China coast. Implicit warnings from U.S. officials that Washington would not accept an indefinite deadlock and Secretary of State Dulles' explicit statement to Nehru on 22 May--viz., if a truce could not be arranged, the U.S. could not be expected to continue to refrain from using atomic weapons--further increased Communist apprehensions. [redacted] desired to move a greater distance from the brink of involvement in the Korean war than Stalin had believed necessary; they were unwilling to risk an escalation on the battlefield which might well have provoked extension of U.S. airstrikes to the China mainland.

2. Mao could perceive no further advantage in continuing the limited war. He was aware that the talking phase--i.e., the war of political attrition, intended to reduce the staying power of the UNC on the voluntary repatriation issue--had failed. The blackmail accusations--that is, American "warmongering" and "bacteriological warfare," which were components of the talking phase--had not forced a UNC concession. His plan of attrition, requiring policy critics in non-Communist countries to soften up the leaders of enemy governments (while policy critics in the Communist countries were effectively eliminated), did not provide him with the advantage he calculated would be decisive in inducing a major retreat. Despite his efforts during the talking phase, the UNC prevailed on the issue of repatriation, announcing on 21 July that 69,000 Koreans and 5,000 Chinese would return to Communist control, but 7,800 Koreans and 14,500 Chinese would be non-repatriates. (Earlier, on 18 June, Rhee had released 25,000 Korean prisoners.) Obviously, these figures represented a political embarrassment to his regime which the new Soviet leaders had to convince him to accept.

3. Mao wanted to get on with the job of industralization. Although political and economic conditions in China and North Korea probably were not exerting compelling pressure on the Communists to conclude an armistice in the summer of 1953, the war was probably viewed as injurious to long-term economic development programs. Political controls had been increased in China during the war and the economic strains on the Chinese were probably less severe in the spring of 1953 than they had been in 1950 and 1951. But Mao was anxious to begin China's First Five-Year Plan of economic development, and the North Koreans were aware that they would have to start virtually from scratch to rebuild.

To sum up, Mao moved into the talking phase in Korea because his best field armies had suffered very heavy losses and were retreating under UNC military pressure. He apparently viewed the enormous loss of human lives with revolutionary callousness, but was forced to draw back because the military capability of his armies had been greatly reduced. When confronted with the UNC's demand that no prisoners should be forced to return to Communist control, he engaged in a "protracted struggle" in the hope of forcing a major concession from the Western powers by combining division-level battlefield pressure with political wearing-down tactics. But he decided to end the Chinese commitment when UNC persistence and Soviet pressure convinced him that further intransigence was purposeless and even harmful to the mainland's economic construction.*

*Total casualties for the CCF and NKPA for the entire war--i.e., from June 1950 to July 1953--were estimated to be 1,500,000, including prisoners of war. In the same period, the UNC casualties were 500,000, of which US losses were 142,019--33,629 dead, 103,284 wounded, and 5,178 missing or captured.

During the longest period of deadlocked negotiations on any one issue--that of repatriation of prisoners, which extended from April 1952 to July 1953--CCF and NKPA casualties were estimated to be over 250,000, while those of the UNC were about 125,000.

C. Vietnam (1953 to 1954)

Near the end of the Korean war, Viet Minh prestige was steadily increasing, and its military successes and organizational effectiveness bolstered Ho Chi Minh's confidence that he could attain a decisive military victory. He was determined therefore, to prosecute the revolutionary guerrilla war more actively and felt under no real compulsion to move toward the talking phase of his long-term effort against the French. On the other hand, lack of French military success and increasing domestic political pressure to reduce or close out the commitment in Indochina made a succession of French premiers and cabinets pessimistic about ever attaining a military decision over Ho's forces.

Even after General Navarre assumed command in Indochina on 8 May 1953, the French were unable to revise their losing strategy in the field despite a much touted (but never implemented) plan for mobile warfare drawn on paper. The force of 150,000 Vietnamese regulars, 50,000 Vietnamese auxiliaries, 15,000 Laotians, and 10,000 Cambodians that Navarre commanded proved unable to take over effectively the job of static defense, so Navarre was impelled to fall back on the old losing policy of tying down and dispersing French and French Union regulars to defend a series of key strongpoints. Out of a total of 175,000 regulars and about 55,000 auxiliaries, there were only seven mobile groups and eight parachute battalions--the equivalent of three divisions--that were not assigned to immobile, defensive duties.

In contrast, the Viet Minh was not tied down to static defense and with about 125,000 regulars, 75,000 full-time regional and provincial troops, about 150,000 part-time guerrillas--in short, the operating equivalent of nine regular divisions--moved freely through the countryside and chose the place to attack the enemy forces. For example, strong Viet Minh guerrilla elements together with two Viet Minh divisions sufficed to contain the 114,000 regular French Union forces in the Tonkin Delta. The Viet Minh skill in guerrilla warfare and in infiltrating into areas under French control seriously reduced Navarre's ability to take the offensive.

While the French were cursed with the necessity of defending a number of politically important but militarily unimportant points, Navarre was also under political restraint from Paris. Because of domestic criticism of the war in

Indochina, the French government had directed its commander in the field to incur the fewest possible number of French casualties. The Viet Minh, on the other hand, was receiving strong support, both military and political, from its allies. The armistice in Korea had enabled Mao to increase significantly his aid across the southern China border to Ho's forces, strengthening their unit firepower and overall military capability. All along, Viet Minh regular forces in northern Indochina continued their gradual evolution from lightly armed guerrilla bands to a regularly organized military force with Chinese and Soviet equipment.

For all these reasons, Ho clearly preferred a complete military victory and gave no indication that he would be willing to attain less in a negotiated settlement than his forces could seize on the battlefield.

The post-Stalin Soviet leadership, however, viewed a softer policy toward East-West military conflicts as a necessary element in their long-range effort to dissolve the Western alliance in Europe. They tried to temporize on every major East-West difference in order to increase pressure against the US by its allies for a relaxation of trade controls, for great power negotiations, and for delays in rearmament and in European integration. The Soviet leaders calculated that such pressures and frictions would progressively reduce the West's capability for united action, as witness Malenkov's statement of the Soviet strategy in his speech of 8 August 1953:

> If today, in conditions of tension in international relations, the North Atlantic bloc is rent by internal strife and contradictions, the lessening of this tension may lead to its disintegration.

This strategy formed the basis of the Soviet campaign of negotiations, the pivotal slogan of which had been set forth by Malenkov in his statement that "there is not a single controversial or unsettled question which could not be solved by peaceful means on the basis of mutual agreement of the interested countries." (Speech of 15 March 1953) But Ho apparently was unwilling to end the war for Soviet political interests, and Moscow was impelled to make a distinction between the need to settle the Korean war and the need to continue the Indochina war.

Shortly after Stalin's death (5 March 1953), the Soviet leaders had made a distinction between the Korean war, which should be settled, and the Indochinese fight for "national independence," which should continue. (Pravda article of 11 April 1953) They insisted that the Soviet Union cannot be expected to "retard the liberation movement" of colonial peoples. (Pravda editorial of 25 April 1953) But the Soviet leaders also tried desperately to deny that their position on Indochina cut across their "peace policy" and seized upon and quoted with approval Churchill's remark that the Viet Minh offensive into Laos was not necessarily a Soviet-inspired move "inconsistent with the attitude of the Soviet government," and suggested that the chances for mutual understanding between East and West would be improved if other Western leaders would recognize the real causes of the "liberation movements." (Pravda editorial of 24 May 1953) Ho made it clear to the Soviet leaders, who did not have the influence with him that they had had with Kim Il-sung, that the distinction between the peace movement and the Indochina war must be maintained.

Ho was also aware of the demoralizing effect that French political disputes were having on French troops in Indochina and almost certainly viewed this development as improving Viet Minh chances in the field. The French military initiative in Indochina was constantly being tempered by political considerations in Paris, and on 9 June 1953, a senior French official [redacted] stated [redacted] that the confused state of French politics and the political issues involved in handling the Indochina war were complicating General Navarre's task of restoring morale and confidence in the French officer corps. The Viet Minh continued to insist inflexibly on the hard-line demand that the basic condition for negotiations was the complete withdrawal of French troops. By late July 1953, they had gained effective control over more than half of the Tonkin population and were believed to have the military capability to occupy the entire delta.

The signing of the Korean armistice in late July 1953 provided the Soviet leaders with the opportunity to maneuver actively for a negotiated settlement of the Indochina war. During the first two weeks after the armistice, Moscow's statements directed in large part to the French, established the line that the Korean truce demonstrated the "victory of negotiations over force" and that this has given a "new stimulus" to the struggle for a peaceful solution to the "dirty war" in Indochina. Whereas prior to the truce, Moscow

had attacked suggestions for East-West negotiations concerning Indochina, by mid-August 1953 it was quoting with approval demands in the French press for a "Panmunjom" in Indochina. By contrast, Viet Minh broadcasts in mid-August 1953 warned that the armistice must not affect the continuation of the war against the French, who will not seek an armistice "in a short time," and that "we must wage a protracted struggle... intensify our fighting so as to annihilate more enemy troops; this is the only way to compel the enemy to accept peace in Vietnam."

As the Soviet leaders began to maneuver for a negotiated settlement, they acted to impress the Chinese leaders with the political benefits which would accrue to China in the event of high-level talks. They gave increasing prominence to the big-power status of the Peking regime and declared that "serious current problems" in Asia could not be resolved without Chinese Communist participation. (Soviet note to the Western powers of 4 August 1953)

The Chinese, who had been working for several years to gain wider recognition as the only legitimate government of China, welcomed this Soviet line. Indicating that the Chinese Communist position was closer to the Soviet position, their delegate to the World Peace Council called for "step by step negotiations" on East-West issues. (Speech of 15 June 1953 by Kuo Mo-jo) On 2 September, Peking specifically cited the Indochina issue as one which could be solved "only by applying the principle of negotiated settlement."

By late summer, the Soviets had begun to contact important French officials privately. These Soviet initiatives were made at a time when Ho was still resisting the concept of negotiations: the "French...and American propaganda campaign," which has the "semblance of peace," is advanced in the "vain hope of weakening the will of our people, who ask only to fight...however painful and long." (Ho Chi Minh speech on 2 September 1953) Ho continued to insist on a "protracted struggle," inasmuch as his forces had not been hurt in the field. On the contrary, in the fall of 1953, Viet Minh military capabilities were at a new high point as a result of the marked increase in Chinese aid, the relatively light casualties suffered during the previous campaign season, and the excellent state of its intelligence regarding French troop dispositions and tactical plans.

The attitude of the Viet Minh leaders at the time is further confirmation of the generalization that the Asian Communists have been unwilling to begin the talking-phase of their dual tactics at a time when they are militarily in an advantageous position and have not suffered high casualties in the field.

French operations to counter expanded Viet Minh guerrilla warfare in the southern Tonkin Delta area had met with very limited success in October 1953 and at the cost of heavy casualties. After an area was "cleared" by the French, the Viet Minh reappeared quickly and Navarre's men, like those of Salan, his defensive-minded predecessor, were tied down and dispersed in a static defense of provincial crossroads waiting for the Viet Minh to come at them again in the night. As the French waited for the Viet Minh fall offensive, reliable reports indicated that they had only four battalions in their mobile reserves in Tonkin and that their military position was "grave." The Viet Minh was aware of this French weakness through a Viet Minh source which was believed by American officials to have penetrated the French high command.

As certain French cabinet officials and many members of the National Assembly increased their demands that Premier Laniel and Foreign Minister Bidault move to end the costly war by negotiations, Ho apparently was brought under increasing pressure from Moscow and Peking to agree to enter the talking-phase of the Viet Minh effort in Indochina. Quoting Izvestiya in its Vietnamese-language broadcast of 24 September, Moscow Radio declared that there exists no international misunderstanding which could not be settled peaceably.

[According to [redacted], French cabinet ministers agreed to ask Foreign Minister Bidault to suggest to Washington that a five-power meeting, including Communist China, should take up the matter on how to end the war as soon as possible. On 10 October, Chou En-lai accepted the US proposals for a meeting to discuss the time and place for the Korean political conference, and Peking's propaganda continued to point to the need to settle international problems through peaceful means.]

Ho was clearly reluctant to switch to the talking-phase, but because of Soviet and Chinese pressure as well as domestic pressure on the French government to agree to bilaterals, he apparently believed that even a hedged offer to talk would improve his international prestige without hindering Viet Minh military initiatives. In their note of 26 November to the Western powers, the Soviet leaders had indicated their desire to prepare the way for a five-power East-West foreign ministers' conference at which Communist China would be present, and they apparently insisted that Ho should at least appear to be less adamantly against talks with the French than he had been. (Politburo member Truong Chinh had declared on 25 September 1951 that peace negotiations would be "illusory" and that the French would have to be expelled as a necessary condition of peace, and Ho personally stated on 2 September 1953 that "We know that only resistance, however painful and long it may be, can give us victory and restore peace to us.")

When, in late October 1953, Ho began to bring his position a step closer to that of Peking and Moscow, he accepted the principle of negotiations but insisted on the practice of continuing military methods to gain a settlement satisfactory to the Viet Minh. He conceded through his spokesmen that "every international problem can be settled by negotiations" (28 October) and that "to stop the Vietnam war through negotiations is completely necessary and also possible" (23 November). But in his reply to questions posed by the Stockholm paper, Expressen, Ho on 29 November in effect demanded a complete French surrender. He asked the French to begin bilateral negotiations by making a peace proposal--which Ho was only prepared to discuss--to stop fighting, to recognize the Viet Minh regime, and, by implication, to withdraw from Vietnam. Ho implied that, in return, he might not continue his war until the Viet Minh gained a complete military

victory.* Actually, he continued to fight, and despite some displays of French aggressiveness, the military initiative was with the Viet Minh, whose forces in late November 1953 included divisions so disposed as to permit attacks against northwest Tonkin, against the northwest corner of the delta, or against Laos.

Ho's hedged proposal of 29 November was a three-pronged exercise of considerable political skill. It (1) advanced the Soviet and Chinese "peace offensive," (2) further isolated the Laniel government from the National Assembly and the French press, and (3) revived and deepend Vietnamese distrust of the French, who were viewed as being at the brink of a "pacifist trap" and who might decide against a greater military effort in the field. At the same time, Ho had his own paramount interest to protect, namely, winning a complete military victory, and in the first Viet Minh comment on his proposal, it was made clear to Moscow and Peking that peace could be attained only through "prolonged" military struggle and that the Viet Minh had no illusion that peace could be easily won. (Viet Minh news agency broadcast of 7 December 1953)

In France, Premier Laniel, supported by Foreign Minister Bidault, rejected immediate negotiations with the Viet Minh in the illusory hope that future negotiations could be attained on more favorable terms after military successes in the field.

Ho's generals continued their highly successful strategy of dispersing French forces in static defense positions while moving into areas of their own choosing. When, in early December 1953, General Navarre made the recently captured Dien Bien Phu a strongpoint to prevent moves into northern Laos, some Viet Minh forces began to move artillery into the surrounding area and, in late December, other Viet Minh forces swept southward into central Laos.

This invasion of Laos by the Viet Minh was treated cautionsly by Moscow and Peking, who muted reports of the new development in their commentaries and stressed the demand for

*Ho stated that "if the French government wishes to have an armistice and settle the question through negotiations, we will be ready to meet the French proposal."

an end to the war. The Soviet leaders, who were searching desperately for "proof" that Ho really intended to negotiate, centered their commentaries on this proposal of 29 November. "The recent statement by President Ho Chi Minh on his preparedness to examine a French proposal on an armistice, should such a proposal be made, constituted striking proof of the peaceful intentions of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam." (Moscow Radio commentary of 10 January 1954) While initiating little independent comment, Peking continued to rebroadcast foreign statements alleging that only US pressure prevented Paris from seeking an end to the Indochina war.

By contrast, the Viet Minh generally avoided the matter of a negotiated settlement and reminded its forces that real peace could be won "only by pushing forward the armed struggle and by dealing deadly blows at the enemy until he is compelled to demand negotiations." (Viet Minh radio broadcast of 24 December 1953) By mid-January 1954, when at least six battalions of Viet Minh were maintaining pressure on French forces in central Laos and more than 18 battalions were blocking all avenues of exit from Dien Bien Phu and bringing in artillery for the siege, the divergence between Ho, on the one hand, and the Soviet and Chinese leaders, on the other, remained clear-cut and reflected his reluctance to enter the talking-phase when his forces were consolidating portions of northwest Tonkin. By insisting that Paris submit a formal proposal for talks to the Viet Minh, Ho had placed the onus for avoiding negotiations on the French government, which continued to equivocate on the issue.

His forces held the initiative throughout Indochina as the result of widespread simultaneous offensive actions by the time the four-power Berlin conference convened on 25 January 1954. The drive into northern Laos of an estimated 12,000 Viet Minh troops, continued encirclement of Dien Bien Phu, the capture of small French posts in southern and central Laos, and extensive harassing operations in the Tonkin Delta forced a further overall dispersal of French regular forces. On 3 February, [redacted] reported that staff thinking and procedures at French headquarters were of the "1935-39 vintage" and that Navarre's strategy was identical to that of the defense-minded Salan. Navarre tied up 12 battalions of regular troops at Dien Bien Phu, only to be by-passed by the Viet Minh, who had moved into portions of Laos but had not been engaged even where the

French had a three-to-one advantage. French patrolling from strongpoints was "the exception rather than the rule," reflecting apparent instructions from Paris to Navarre that he must conduct a "minimum-casualty holding action" with a view to eventual big-power negotiations.

As domestic pressure to end the war increased on the French government in the absence of victories in the field, two alternatives to bilateral negotiations with the Viet Minh were considered: (1) an international negotiated settlement or (2) "internationalization" of the war through UN--i.e., American--involvement. Regarding (1), well before the fall of Dien Bien Phu, French government officials and army staff officers regarded an international negotiated peace as the inevitable solution to the war. In February 1953 they prepared for negotiations at Geneva. Regarding (2), almost all French spokesmen vigorously had opposed internationalization of the conflict and, largely for fear of giving a pretext for Chinese intervention, they continued to rebuff firmly any suggestion that American troops would be necessary.

The Communists hit hard at the possibility of American involvement in responding to speculation in the Western press, reflecting their own calculation that the increasing Viet Minh initiatives in the field might impel "direct intervention" by Washington. One of Molotov's chief aims at the Berlin meeting in agreeing to the Geneva conference was to block any possible increase in American military assistance to the French. The Chinese Communists, satisfied with the Berlin agreement as a first step in gaining general acceptance by the international community, warned that increased American involvement in Indochina was making the issue of Geneva more complicated. Ho Chi Minh expressed his concern when, on 3 March, he accused the US of "another step" toward direct intervention in "allowing the American air force to participate" in the Indochina war.

Soviet plans to end the war by a negotiated settlement at Geneva included a move to convince Ho that important international prestige could be derived from entering the talking-phase of his military effort in Indochina. Pravda on 8 March attacked Foreign Minister Bidault's public statement that it was not necessary to invite Ho's representative to Geneva and insisted that "it is impossible to solve the Indochina problem without considering the lawful right of her people." As Soviet propaganda continued to

press for Viet Minh participation at Geneva, Ho was provided a clear insight into his prospective political gains: unprecedented international prestige, intensification of French-Vietnamese frictions, demoralization of French forces in the field, and reduction of the risk of direct American involvement in the war. Nevertheless, he clearly preferred bilaterals with the French (in order to prevent US pressure on Laniel to remain intransigent) and considered attendance at a multilateral conference would reduce his position of strength. He finally agreed, however, to multilaterals.

Moscow and Paris began to set forth their positions before the Geneva conference was convened. [On 4 March, a Soviet embassy official in London told American officials that if the US and France object to an amalgamation of the Vietnam and Viet Minh administrations, "they can agree to a division along the 16th parallel." This first Soviet comment on Geneva suggested that] Moscow was the most active advocate of partition which would deprive the French of the heavily populated, strategic Tonkin Delta and open the way for Viet Minh control of the whole country. Premier Laniel set forth the French position publicly on 5 March by calling for the complete withdrawal of all rebel troops from Laos and Cambodia, establishment of a neutral zone around the Red River delta, and withdrawal of all Viet Minh troops from that area. He was aware that these terms would be unacceptable to Ho, as was later conceded by the Foreign Ministry official who formulated them in order to forestall any Viet Minh offers for bilateral negotiations before Geneva. Rumors in Paris of direct French-Viet Minh contacts were not confirmed, and on 9 March, the Geneva alternative enabled Laniel to resist pressure for immediate bilateral talks with the Viet Minh.

All the while, Viet Minh tactical capabilities were continuing to improve, particularly with respect to anti-aircraft artillery and heavier infantry weapons acquired from China. Each succeeding campaigning season left the French occupying fewer outposts and the Viet Minh spread over larger areas of the intervening countryside.

Before entering the talking-phase of the Indochina effort, Ho apparently decided to demonstrate Viet Minh strength in the field. He made a major military move for political reasons; on 12 March, Viet Minh battalions hit strongpoints at Dien Bien Phu. He was willing to accept high losses--from 4,000 to 5,000 killed and wounded out of a total of 40,000 troops by 15 March. He was also willing to depart

from Viet Minh military tactics by hitting a major strongpoint without the element of surprise. Though the size and timing of the attack were anticipated, however, the Communist assault did incorporate one major factor for which the French were not prepared; the massive and extensive use of artillery. Communist possession and employment of artillery in itself provided a major element of surprise and rendered invalid the French tactical assumption, on which planning for the defense of Dien Bien Phu had been based.

In early April during the siege, Ho indicated to the pro-Communist newsman Wilfred Burchett that the French situation at Dien Bien Phu was hopeless. Ho placed a helmet upside down on a table, and compared the helmet's rim to the hills around Dien Bien Phu, saying: "They shoot up and we shoot in." He apparently calculated that loss of Dien Bien Phu would reduce Vietnamese army morale, already lowered by talk of an imminent truce; seriously discredit the "new" strategy of Navarre; give the Viet Minh a tremendous boost in prestige immediately prior to the Geneva conference, thus increasing the incentive for defection by Vietnamese nationalists; and increase French domestic pressure for direct negotiations with his representatives.

As Laniel and Bidault parried domestic demands for direct French - Viet Minh negotiations, they were also subjected to increasing Soviet pressure before the Geneva conference began. [Soviet officials in Washington insisted to French officials on 30 March that direct talks between French and Viet Minh representatives should be held "in order to achieve a cease-fire prior to Geneva." The Soviets returned to the matter of bilaterals even after the conference began, and on 5 May, Molotov told Foreign Secretary Eden that the French and "Indochinese" should work out an armistice "themselves."]

Moscow and Peking were anxious to disparage American foot-dragging and used Secretary Dulles' speech on 29 March, in which he suggested that the West should take "united action" to prevent a Communist seizure of Indochina, to spur Paris into bilaterals. They were particularly fearful that the American preference for the French to fight would stiffen Bidault further at Geneva and make French concessions more difficult to extract from him there, flanked by Secretary Dulles. They were also concerned about American statements regarding eventual if not immediate involvement: Pravda on 11 April claimed that the real target of US threats was China, and the Peking People's Daily declared on 21 April

that "faced with armed aggression, the Chinese people will certainly not refrain from doing something about it." On 28 April, Chou En-lai made another noncommittal deterrent statement: the Chinese "most emphatically will not tolerate aggression against us by any country" and the US is looking toward a "new world war."

The series of assaults on Dien Bien Phu throughout April indicated that Ho intended to take the strongpoint even at a very high cost. Despite murderous losses, which in late April and early May were variously estimated at about two divisions (about 18,000 men), Ho's forces continued to attack in intermittent phases. Their estimated strength was about 20,000 infantry plus some 9,000 supporting troops, as compared with less than 10,000 French Union Troops. There were 134,000 French and Vietnamese regulars in the Tonkin Delta, but the greater part of this number was still tied down in static defense, leaving the relatively few mobile units to counter the increased Viet Minh activity.

By the start of the Geneva conference on 27 April 1954, the overall military situation in Indochina and the particularly serious situation at Dien Bien Phu had provided Ho, and his Soviet and Chinese partners, with a position of considerable strength to use to offset American warnings about possible internationalization of the war. Soviet officials privately made various suggestions for a settlement --such as partition, nation-wide elections, and an immediate cease-fire. Calculating that the French would be more amenable to some sort of partition than to a coalition government, Soviet diplomats on the opening day of the conference privately suggested to American officials that the idea of partition would meet China's requirement that its southern border should be buffered by a Communist regime.

The Soviet-Chinese effort to soften up the French on the issue of partition was made in the face of the opposition of Ho, who like Bao Dai, claimed sovereignty over all Vietnam. [As early as 4 March 1954, a Soviet official had suggested [redacted] to American officials that partition along the "16th parallel" would be agreeable to Moscow. But the Viet Minh insisted on nonpartition.]

At the Geneva conference, the Viet Minh delegate, Pham Van Dong, tried to use military developments in Indochina as a backdrop in demanding major French concessions. Dien Bien Phu fell on 7 May, with Viet Minh losses estimated at about 21,000, of which about one-half were killed, and French Union losses of about 18,000 men. On 10 May, Pham Van Dong set forth maximum conditions in the form of an eight-point resolution, the main points of which were political which were linked with military provisions for a cease-fire: French recognition of the independence of the three Indochinese Communist-sponsored states, withdrawal of "foreign troops," elections in each state, and a total cease-fire involving occupation by each side of unspecified areas, no reinforcements, and a mixed control commission. Partition was not mentioned. By tying the French-desired cease-fire to political concessions, the Viet Minh put themselves in the position of using the military weapon to extract a French political retreat.

When a conference deadlock was threatened by French determination to deal with military matters first (i.e. to effect a cease-fire) and Viet Minh insistence that political and military questions be dealt with together, Chou En-lai and Molotov, playing major negotiating roles, moved adroitly to avoid any impasse that could be used by the US as an excuse for intervention in the fighting. [In his major speech of 14 May, Molotov had explicitly rejected the French terms for an armistice because Bidault's formula did not deal with political questions. However, at the secret session on the 17th, he conceded that military questions could be discussed first. Chou En-lai also retreated; [redacted] he stated that the military and political aspects of any Indochina settlement must be dealt with separately, with priority for a cease-fire. These concessions strongly suggested that neither Moscow nor Peking desired protracted talks; they undercut Viet Minh intransigence and policy to prolong the talks.]

Ho calculated that negotiations could continue together with the fighting for some time without leading to American involvement. A Viet Minh commentary of mid-May seemed to be directed at reminding the Chinese and Soviets that there was no pressing need to end the war:

> We still remember the Korean lesson which taught us that one could negotiate and fight at the same time ...for two years.

Ho was clearly determined to protract the talking-phase to gain as much territory of Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia as the French were willing to concede. As the Viet Minh augmented its forces in the Tonkin Delta with units from the Dien Bien Phu operation, helping to compress French-controlled areas there, Ho's delegate at Geneva apparently was instructed to insist again on political concessions in exchange for a cease-fire. He hardened the Communist position, which Molotov and Chou En-lai had been making increasingly more flexible.

Pham Van Dong on 25 May insisted on French political concessions before agreeing to end the fighting. He linked any cease-fire prospect with arrangements for "Khmer Isserak and Pathet Lao," the Communist-contrived regimes in Cambodia and Laos, and in effect denied that military and political questions could be separated. Dong also took a hard line on the Soviet-Chinese concept of partition, proposing the "readjusting of areas under control of each state...taking into account the actual areas controlled, including population, and strategic interests." Inasmuch as Chinese Communist maps showed the Viet Minh as holding most of Vietnam, about half of Laos, and parts of Cambodia, the Viet Minh proposal was a demand for considerable territory--more than its units held on the ground.

On 29 May, however, an agreement was reached to have representatives of both commands meet at Geneva to study the disposition of forces prior to a cease-fire. Molotov and Chou apparently were the prime movers on the Communist side in making this concession. Moscow and Peking, whose policy was centered on splitting the Americans from the French and preventing a system of alliances from forming in Asia, were apprehensive regarding the demands of French military leaders and some Laniel cabinet members that the US enter the war. Accordingly, Molotov and Chou worked hard to attain some kind of agreement at Geneva and to prevent an abortive conference from leading to internationalization of the war. Militarily, Ho was keeping up the pressure: a captured Viet Minh document of late May 1954 directed Viet Minh commanders in the Tonkin Delta area to continue their harassing and guerrilla activities for an unspecified period "pending commitment of the battle corps."

Opposition of the French to the idea of partition began to weaken as they pressed for a cease-fire with controls, and on 5 June,

told [redacted] in Geneva that he favored partition as a solution at about the 16th parallel--i.e., at about the line suggested by the Soviets earlier.

The negotiations took a new turn as the Laniel government tried to survive the National Assembly debate on Indochina which began on 9 June. On the preceding day, the Communists indicated that they would use the weakened government position to gain their maximum demands; Molotov returned to a hard line, similar to that of Pham Van Dong as set forth on 10 May. Molotov demanded independence for Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia, free elections in these states, and withdrawal of all foreign troops. He seemed to believe that the Laniel government would either move toward the maximum Communist position or be replaced by a government pledged to negotiate an immediate end to the war, and on 9 June, a Soviet Pravda writer told an American journalist in Geneva that no progress on Indochina was possible until after the French government crisis was resolved. On 11 June, [redacted] told the [redacted] all members of the endangered Laniel cabinet except the Premier, Bidault, and Schumann had "written off the war" and were anxious to end it. On 12 June, the Laniel government fell, losing the vote of confidence in the National Assembly after the debate on the war; on 18 June, Pierre Mendes-France took over as the new Premier, and he promised to close out the fighting by 20 July.

In the military conversations between the French and the Viet Minh in Geneva, the latter asked for direct control of about three-fourths of Vietnam, half of Laos, and much of Cambodia. In the field, General Ely stated privately on 15 June that the military situation in the Tonkin Delta was precarious and that French and Vietnamese troops were "very, very tired." The Viet Minh maintained a capability for a full-scale attack on the delta.

The ever-present prospect of American involvement again impelled Molotov and Chou to keep the conference alive with small concessions. On 16 June, Molotov tried to break the deadlock over the composition of the international truce supervisory commission, and on the same day, Chou made a settlement proposal which implied withdrawal of Viet Minh forces from Laos and Cambodia. Under pressure, Pham Van Dong also suggested postponement of a political settlement for those two states. Thus by the time the Geneva conference terminated its Korea phase and temporarily adjourned,

the Soviets and Chinese seemed to have moved back in effect to a position envisaging a partition of Vietnam and a neutral Laos and Cambodia. When Pierre Mendes-France took over as the new Premier pledged to seek an end to the war before 20 July, the road was opened to a final settlement.

[In a conversation [redacted], Chou told [redacted] that an armistice should be reached in Vietnam as soon as possible, and that a final political settlement should be reached thereafter. This broke the link established by the Viet Minh between a military truce and political solution. Regarding Laos and Cambodia, Chou said that all foreign forces, including the Viet Minh, should be withdrawn and that there must be no American bases in either state. When the new French Premier complained that the military staff talks between the French and Viet Minh at Geneva had been stalled for several days because of Viet Minh intransigence, Chou agreed to intervene to speed the talks. During the conference recess, Chou, in discussions with Nehru in late June in New Delhi, apparently set forth a partition plan.

Chou then moved to apply pressure on Ho to drop his demands for retaining troops in Laos and Cambodia and for a partition line as far south as the 14th parallel. He met with Ho at Nanning on the China-Vietnam border in early July, on his return from India and Burma, to discuss with him the terms for a final settlement. A clear sign that Chou had insisted that Ho give some ground in the intransigent Viet Minh position appeared in the remark made by the Chinese deputy foreign minister to [redacted] on 8 July: Chou had had a "very good meeting" with Ho, the results of which "would be helpful to the French." When the Viet Minh tried again at the reconvened conference to gain permission to retain their troops in Laos and Cambodia and to settle on the 14th parallel, Mendes-France complained to Chou that this was unacceptable and out of accord with Chou's position. Chou replied that both sides must make concessions, with the Viet Minh making the larger. On 13 July, following Chou's statement to the French Premier, Pham Van Dong changed his position and told Mendes-France that he was prepared to compromise on the 16th parallel. The French still preferred a line between the 17th and 18th parallels, and rejected Viet Minh demands for control of some part of Laos and elections in all three Associated States.]

The final settlement on 20 July indicated that the Viet Minh had retreated on three points. They accepted the partition of Vietnam (they had insisted on "unity" of Vietnam) and with the line at the 17th parallel (they had wanted the 14th); they agreed to withdraw from areas south of that line in Vietnam and from all of Laos and Cambodia; and they accepted July 1956 as the date for national elections--a two-year delay contrasting with their demand for only a six-month delay.

Pham Van Dong had come to Geneva with the apparent expectation that the Viet Minh's increasingly strong military position in the field would enable him to extract considerable concessions from the French to open the way for Communist forces to further penetrate Laos and Cambodia and consolidate everything above the 14th parallel in Vietnam. But Soviet and Chinese pressures, stemming from larger policy considerations and fear of American intervention, frustrated this hope for maximum French concessions. Although Ho perceived certain advantages in ending the military phase--that is, his forces could take territory by political subversion and, therefore, his effort would be less costly in terms of manpower and safer in terms of non-involvement by the US--he had not expected to have to make so many political concessions. These concessions were later viewed by him and his lieutenants as a major mistake. His forces had not been badly hurt in field, as the Chinese armies had been in Korea in the spring of 1951 when Mao moved to the talking-phase of the Korean war. He probably was concerned about the prospect of US intervention, but Moscow and Peking were clearly more concerned about the consequences to their policy of internationalization of the war. He was in a position to negotiate from strength and to do so for a long time--"two years" as his radio declared in mid-May 1954--but he found himself caught in a Sino-Soviet political web and was persuaded not to use his growing military capability to force major concessions.

[French military and intelligence officials agreed that Viet Minh forces in the delta following the fall of Dien Bien Phu were capable of launching a damaging full-scale offensive, but it never took place. In mid-July, one Communist journalist stated that he assumed Chou had pressed Ho to keep the fighting at a low boil when the Geneva conference was in its last phase. The Chinese indicated their national interest in settling the fighting-phase when, on 23 July, one of their journalists at Geneva declared [redacted]: "We have won the first campaign for the neutralization of all Southeast Asia," the implication being that only]

Thailand was a probable area for the establishment of an American base. Chou in late July, after the Geneva agreements were concluded, stated on two occasions that Asian states must work out their "own" security arrangements, and Pravda on 22 July emphasized that the area will not be permitted to join any "aggressive groupings."

[By contrast, the North Vietnamese leaders were far less categorical in praising the Geneva conference agreements.] Pham Van Dong declared at the closing session on 21 July that the problem of Vietnamese unification remained: "We shall achieve this unity, and we shall achieve it just as we have won the war." This contradicted the Pravda statement on 22 July that Vietnamese independence had been "won." On 22 July, Ho renewed his exhortations for a "long and arduous struggle" and declared that the division of Vietnam was only a temporary and transitional arrangement: "Central, South and North Vietnam are all our land, and our country undoubtedly will be unified, the compatriots throughout our country will certainly be liberated." [The Viet Minh ambassador in Peking, Hoang Van Hoan acknowledged to Indian correspondents on 22 July that despite the strong military position of the Viet Minh, it had to compromise on several vital points, notably the timing of elections (put off for two years), the question of French troop withdrawal, and the location of the temporary demarcation line at the 17th parallel, in order to secure peace in Vietnam.] The leaders of the "Resistance Government Khmer and Pathet Lao," repeated Ho's view that the agreements are but a "first step" and called for a long, hard struggle.

Neither Moscow nor Peking revived propaganda support for these resistance phantom-governments. Moscow made little effort to describe the agreement on Vietnam as "temporary" or to stress that portion of the conference declaration disclaiming any intent to permanently partition Vietnam; that is, the Soviet leaders were satisfied with partition. Peking stressed its own new international prestige and the boost to the cause of "collective peace in Asia" provided by the agreements, which were a manifestation of Chou's five principles as declared jointly with Nehru, U Nu, and Ho.

To sum up, the Soviet and Chinese leaders induced Ho to enter the talking-phase of the Indochina war because:

1. It was a major problem which stimulated Western defense efforts and threatened to make a mockery of the

"peace offensive" designed to impede these efforts. Soviet policy in Europe, devised to produce schisms and paralysis in France and to split Britain from the US, required that an end be brought to this war, just as the Korean war had been removed as a defense-stimulating conflict.

2. Peking as well as Moscow feared that any further military advances in Indochina by the Viet Minh might have led to the formation of a strong anti-Communist alliance including some of the previously uncommitted Asian states. [Chou En-lai informed Indian, Pakistani, Indonesian, and Burmese leaders in his talks with them that their security could be guaranteed by his "five principles." At the same time, Peking insisted that the Geneva agreement barred all three Indochina states from any military alliance.]

3. With the example of Korea before them, the Chinese and Soviet leaders could not ignore the possibility that a continued offensive in Indochina would greatly increase the risk of Ameridan intervention and a global war. They preferred a far lower level of risk, namely, political subversion carried out by the Viet Minh. They "paid off" Ho by continuing (in violation of the Geneva agreements) to supply military equipment to make his army a modernized fighting force.

The developments in 1953 and 1954 have influenced the attitude of Ho and his lieutenants toward the current war. The clear awareness that they had been impelled, primarily by Moscow and Peking, to stop at a half-way station on the road to total military victory in Vietnam, apparently has made them very reluctant to stop half way again.

D. Implications for Vietnam Today

It is impossible to exaggerate the importance of this historical lesson for Ho. It sustains his hostility toward any suggestion that he again stop at a half-way station on the road to control of all Vietnam. [An official of the DRV embassy in Havana told a leftist journalist on 3 May 1966 that

> We thought we had achieved something with the French by compromising (in 1954) and it turned out to be]

[shaky. Only through full and unconditional independence can we achieve stability....We are determined to continue to fight until we achieve total victory, that is, military and political, and the Americans leave and accept our four points. (emphasis supplied)

The Chinese leaders, too, apparently believe that they had made a mistake in pressuring Ho to stop at a half-way station in 1954. Chou En-lai told a visiting youth delegation on 1 January 1966 that

> China will continue her absolute support of Vietnam. To tell the truth, I personally signed the Geneva agreement and I regret that my having done so is causing trouble for our comrades in Vietnam. I am not going to be deceived by the American peace campaign this time.

Actually, it was the Soviet-Chinese (not the "American") peace offensive that required an end to the war, and Molotov was Chou's partner in persuading Ho to make concessions] to the French.

Ho is now in a stronger position to reject any Soviet suggestions that he should close out the fighting, and Soviet influence on him is as strong or as weak as Moscow's positive support for the war. That is, when Moscow avoided involvement (i.e., when Khrushchev decided to stand clear of providing important political and military aid to Hanoi), Soviet influence was at an all-time low. On the other hand, when Moscow incurred a degree of commitment (i.e., when the post-Khrushchev leadership decided to supply Hanoi with military aid and political support against the US), Soviet influence increased. However, it will never be as great as it had been in 1954.

The Chinese leaders have helped to make this impossible. In contrast to 1954, they are now the opponents, not the partners, of the Soviets. Ho's militancy is bolstered by Mao's support, which itself stems from special personal requirements. That is, Mao is personally far more pretentious than Ho--as witness the current irrationalities of the Mao cult in China--and with increasing neuroticism insists that his unique doctrine of "people's war" should legitimatize his claim to be the successor of Lenin and Stalin as the "leader of the international Communist movement." Unlike Ho, whose sights are centered on his own national war, Mao

has a larger anti-Soviet doctrinal point to make: protracted small wars are effective in all under-developed areas and must be the main strategy against the US.

Mao has a considerable personal stake in proving to active doubters--namely, the Soviets, the East Europeans, the neutrals, and even men in his own party and military establishment--that his principle of protracted small war will work against the superior American military capability anywhere. Vietnam is the main proving ground for this thesis. [Chou En-lai told Japanese Diet members on 7 January 1966 that if the Vietnamese Communists continue their military operations

> they will make the Americans admit their defeat and drive them out....The most important thing ...is to prove this by actual deed. Unless we defeat the enemy, we will not be believed. (emphasis supplied)]

Any sign, therefore, from Hanoi that Ho is willing even to consider the matter of negotiating a cease-fire or a cessation of US air strikes against the North before a total withdrawal of American troops occurs is criticized by Peking. For example, using a double-edged statement, intended for neutrals and for the North Vietnamese, Chou En-lai on 2 September 1965 warned that: "As long as the US does not withdraw its troops, it can carry on endless talks with you so that it may hang on there indefinitely." (emphasis supplied) [That this was a clear warning to Hanoi is suggested by the

Despite the constant concern of the Chinese leaders that Ho might agree to negotiations before US troops are withdrawn from the South, Ho continues to assign a high priority to prolonging his reactivated war. He and his lieutenants have absorbed Mao's own view on protracted civil war. When, in December 1936, Mao said that "to wage a revolutionary war for ten years, as we have done, might be surprising in other countries," he was rejecting modern Western and Soviet military doctrine on quick-decision ("impatient") war. He made his point emphatic in June 1946, noting that the Spanish civil war was "fought for three years, but we have fought for twenty years." Ho declared on 17 July 1966 that

> The war may still last 10, 20 years, or longer. Hanoi, Haiphong, and other cities and enterprises may be destroyed, but the Vietnamese people will not be intimidated.

[A similar statement of North Vietnamese determination to persevere in the event of air strikes against cities in the North was made by a DRV embassy official in Havana on 3 May 1966: "The imperialists may well do so (i.e., bomb Hanoi and Haiphong), but we are ready to accept this sacrifice as we have accepted the others and it will not change our position or determination one iota."]

Ho apparently believes that he can continue the war primarily because, despite losses in the North and South, he is still able to put forces into the South and to supply them for operations. On the other hand, the Maoist doctrine he has absorbed has a strong ingredient of opportunism. That is, there is no fixed principle that determines when and in what situation negotiations or a cease-fire should be accepted. The deciding factor is a very practical consideration--namely, inability to keep fighting. In the event that US air strikes were to continue to increase his problems, his willingness to negotiate a cessation of the strikes would not be blocked by any doctrinal consideration. The Chinese leaders apparently are aware of the ever-present prospect that Ho might view negotiations as a means to gain a breathing-spell from US pressure and are attacking not only the matter of talks before a total American withdrawal but also the matter of talks to attain a suspension of air strikes against the North.

Despite the constant concern of the Chinese, the cessations of bombing in May 1965 and in December-January 1966 failed to budge the North Vietnamese from their adamant opposition to negotiations because the U.S. had not yielded to their basic demand: that Washington make a unilateral public pledge--prior to negotiations--to withdraw from the South and also (a theme introduced in summer 1965) provide some proof that it would do so. An important political consideration in Hanoi's advancement of this line was the need for deception--that is, the need to commit Washington to a declaration of surrender while pretending that the demand for such a declaration was reasonable. Euphemistic language was used to conceal the fact that the demand was simply for surrender. The North Vietnamese did not, therefore, demand a "surrender" expressly, but rather called on

Washington to "recognize" or "accept" the four points (as set forth on 8 April 1965). Following American military inputs in July 1965, Hanoi became even more unreasonable, and even more frequently demanded that the U.S. "carry out" or show by "actual deeds" that it recognized these points and would abide by them. Further, toward the end of the second suspension of bombing, Ho went beyond the demand for proof of U.S. acceptance of the four points to the demand that Washington negotiate with the Liberation Front and stop bombing forever and "unconditionally." In this way, Ho tried to deflect the appeals of Western and neutral leaders for the commencement of negotiations, and to neutralize the effects of the important American political weapon (the cessation of bombing) which had revealed Hanoi as the real recalcitrant opposed to negotiations. In short, Hanoi's position since January 1966 has been more adamantly opposed to negotiations than it had seemed to be previously.