

War, An International History (Princeton; Princeton University Press, 1995); Shu Guang Zhang *Mao's Military Romanticism, China and the Korean War, 1950-1953* (University of Kansas Press, 1995) as well as files this author has read from the Foreign Ministry and Presidential Archive, some of which have been published in *CWIHP Bulletin* 6/7 ("New Russian Documents on the Korean War").

²As political officer of the Soviet embassy in Pyongyang, Tunkin played a key role in Moscow's Korea policy prior to the war.

³Memorandum to A. Gromyko from G.I.Tunkin, V.Bazykin and A. Shugaev, 13 March 1952. AVPRF, Fond 0102, Opis 8, Delo 17, Papka 36, List 27.

⁴Memorandum from Vyshinsky to Stalin, with attached draft answers, 12 April 1952. AVPRF Fond 07, Opis 25, Delo 233, Papka 19, Listy 1-14.

⁵S.Golunsky and G.Tunkin to Vyshinsky, 26 April 1952. AVPRF, F. 07, Op. 27, D. 226, Pap. 46, L. 3-4.

⁶In November 1949 the DPRK's request that the Soviet Union temporarily transfer to a Korean port two steam shovels located in the Manchurian port of Dalny was handled by deputy foreign minister Gromyko. AVPRF, F. 0102, Op. 5, D. 39, Inv.

326, Pap. 13, L. 1-4, 6-7.

⁷Shu Guang Zhang, *Mao's Military Romanticism*, 181-187. In an interview on August 26 Zhang added to his published account the information that Soviet advisers had warned Chinese commanders to be prepared for US use of weapons of mass destruction.

⁸Chen Jian, *China's Road to the Korean War, The Making of the Sino-American Confrontation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994).

⁹Kathryn Weathersby, "Stalin, Mao and the End of the Korean War," in Odd Arne Westad, ed., *Brothers in Arms: The Rise and Fall of the Sino-Soviet Alliance, 1945-1963* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), pp. 90-116.

¹⁰For the text of the decision of the Council of Ministers to reach a negotiated settlement in Korea, adopted 19 March 1953, see Issue No. 6/7 of the *Bulletin*, pp. 80-82.

¹¹For a discussion of Beria's foreign policy initiatives after Stalin's death see Vojtech Mastny, *The Cold War and Soviet Insecurity. The Stalin Years* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp. 171-190.

¹²Knight, *Beria*, p. 92.

New Russian Evidence on the Korean War Biological Warfare Allegations: Background and Analysis

"For Mao Zedong

The Soviet Government and the Central Committee of the CPSU were misled. The spread in the press of information about the use by the Americans of bacteriological weapons in Korea was based on false information. The accusations against the Americans were fictitious."

-Resolution of the Presidium of the Council of Ministers of the USSR about letters to the Ambassador of the USSR in the PRC, V.V. Kuznetsov, and to the Chargé d'Affaires of the USSR in the DPRK, S.P. Suzdalev, 2 May 1953.

By Milton Leitenberg

The major allegation of the use of biological weapons—one of the three categories of weapons of mass destruction, along with nuclear and chemical weapons—in the Cold War was made during the Korean War against the United States. In 1951 and again in 1952, the People's Republic of China (PRC), North Korea, and the Soviet Union charged that the United States had used a wide range of biological warfare (BW) agents, bacterial and viral pathogens and insect vectors of disease, against China and North Korea. They alleged the use of BW agents against humans, plants, and animals. The charges were organized into a worldwide campaign and pressed at the United Nations; it was scarcely a matter simply of "the spread of press information..." US government officials denied the charges, but it has never before been possible to establish definitively whether the charges were true or false.

In January 1998, however, a reporter for the Japanese newspaper *Sankei Shimbun* published findings from twelve documents from former Soviet archives that

provide explicit and detailed evidence that the charges were contrived and fraudulent.¹ One document (a fragment of it) is dated 21 February 1952, while the remaining eleven date from 13 April to 2 June 1953, in the four months following Stalin's death on 5 March 1953. While it is clear that the twelve documents are far from a complete history of the events, they nevertheless describe, at least in part, how the allegations were contrived by Chinese officials and Soviet advisors, and identify several of the individuals involved in the process. This paper provides a brief history of the allegations and a summary of the documents' major disclosures.

The Charges

On 25 June 1950, North Korea invaded South Korea. Chinese military forces—the "Chinese People's Volunteers" (CPV)—crossed the Yalu River and entered combat beginning in October 1950. In the spring of 1951, Chinese media repeatedly stated that the United States was using chemical weapons ("poison gas") against Chinese

forces. (Communist media had already claimed that the US had shipped mustard gas to Korea.) At the same time, China also carried on what can be considered a preparatory campaign to the major allegations that followed, charging that the United States was preparing to use biological weapons. (These two campaigns will both be discussed in more detail below.) The first charge filed of actual BW use came on 8 May 1951. The Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK, or North Korea) sent a cable to the President of the United Nations Security Council alleging the use of bacteriological weapons by US forces in Korea during the period of December 1950 to January 1951 and that the United States had spread smallpox. After several weeks, the issue then essentially lapsed until early 1952.

On 22 February 1952, Bak Hun Yung, North Korea's Foreign Minister, again issued an official statement addressed to the UN Secretariat alleging that Washington had conducted biological warfare. (It was apparently forwarded to the UN only on 29 March 1952.) It charged that the US had carried out air drops of infected insects of several kinds bearing plague, cholera and other diseases over North Korean territory on January 28 and 29, and February 11, 13, 15, 16, and 17. Two days later, on February 24, PRC Foreign Minister Zhou Enlai, publicly supported the North Korean charges. On March 8, Zhou Enlai enlarged the accusations against the United States by charging that the U.S. had sent 448 aircraft on no less than 68 occasions between February 29 and March 5 into Northeast China to airdrop germ-carrying insects. The human diseases alleged to have been spread included plague, anthrax, cholera, encephalitis and a form of meningitis. Zhou Enlai also alleged that Washington had spread animal and plant diseases—fowl septicemia, and eleven incidents involving four different plant diseases—using 18 different species of insects and arachnids (spiders and ticks), as well as some small rodents as the vectors. He identified infected clams, paper packets, cloth receptacles as well as various kinds of earthenware and metallic sectioned “leaflet bombs” as dispersion media.²

The Chinese and North Korean governments attempted to buttress their allegations through the use of two “international commissions” of their own selection which operated under highly constrained procedures. In September 1951, the International Association of Democratic Lawyers decided to send a commission to Korea to investigate various “violations of international law.” The commission visited North Korea between 5 March and 19 March 1952, immediately after the main BW accusations were made, and then went to China for the following weeks. It issued two reports in Beijing on 31 March and 2 April 1952: *Report on U.S. Crimes in Korea*, which contained a major emphasis on allegations of chemical weapons use as well as bacterial weapons, and *Report on the Use of Bacterial Weapons in Chinese Territory By the Armed Forces of the United States*.³ These reports seem rather clearly intended as a formal war

crimes indictment. The second report charged violations of the Geneva Protocol of 1925 and the Genocide Convention of 1948, concluding:

We consider that the facts reported above constitute an act of aggression committed by the United States, an act of genocide, and a particularly odious crime against humanity. It indeed hangs over the whole world as an extremely grave menace, the limits and consequences of which cannot be foreseen.

On 7 April 1952, the Chinese government's own investigating commission issued a report with an even more explicit war crimes accusation:

The U.S. Government, in carrying out savage and vile aggression against the People's Republic of China, has committed not only the crime of aggression but also crimes against humanity and crimes in violation of international conventions and laws and the laws and customs of war.... We demand that those responsible in the U.S. Government and the U.S. Armed Forces and the degenerate elements in American scientific circles be branded as war criminals to be tried by the people throughout the world and severely punished.

That same Chinese government commission was reported as having begun its studies on 15 March 1952, and it was presumed to have been the group which gathered the “evidence,” the materials and testimony displayed to the second international group convened by the Communist-oriented World Peace Council, the “International Scientific Commission for the Investigation of the Facts Concerning Bacterial Warfare in Korea and China,” referred to as the ISC. The Chinese representative to the World Peace Council

...declared that the governments of China and [North] Korea did not consider the International Red Cross Committee sufficiently free from political influence to be capable of instituting an unbiased enquiry in the field. This objection was later extended to the World Health Organization, as a specialized agency of the United Nations.

The ISC was chaired by Dr. Joseph Needham, a well-known British biochemist who had headed the British Scientific Mission in China from 1942 to 1946. In that period, he had served as an advisor to the (Nationalist) Chinese Army Medical Administration, and had participated in an investigation of Japanese use of BW in China during World War II. Needham was also an avowed Marxist. After visiting North Korea and China from 23 June to 31 August 1952, the ISC also produced a *Report of the International Scientific Commission for the Investigation of the Facts Concerning Bacterial Warfare in Korea and China*, published in Beijing in 1952. The massive volume contained 669 pages with extensive

background information on entomology, vectors, pathogens, epidemiology, and so forth, little of which the Commission would have been likely to have been able to draw up themselves given their location and the amount of time available. The ISC report documents fewer incidents, and fewer types of incidents, than were reported by the jurists, which in turn were fewer than reported by Chinese media statements.

The “investigations” of both commissions were very similar. They did *no* field investigations or analyses of their own. They received testimony which they duly accepted and reported as fact. They had no independent corroboration of any of the artifacts and materials presented to them.⁴ These elements were explicitly brought out in some of the early discussions which followed the release of the *Report of the ISC*. The Swedish representative on the Commission

...told the press in September 1952, after returning from China: “The scientific foundation of the Commission’s work consisted of the fact that the delegates implicitly believed the Chinese and North Korean accusations and evidence.” Dr. Needham himself was asked at a press conference what proof he had that the samples of plague bacillus he was shown actually came, as the Chinese said, from an unusual swarm of voles, and he replied, as reported in the *Daily Herald*: “None. We accepted the word of the Chinese scientists. It is possible to maintain that the whole thing was a kind of patriotic conspiracy. I prefer to believe the Chinese were not acting parts...”⁵

During the Korean War, units of the CPV and the North Korean People’s Army (KPA) routinely suffered from typhus, cholera, and dysentery. In addition, en route to North Korea, the CPV forces had transited Manchuria, an area with endemic plague at the time. United Nations forces, as well as Koreans and Chinese combatants, also suffered from Korean Hemorrhagic Fever. In the late winter of 1950 and the early spring of 1951, smallpox and typhus were reported throughout Korea, north and south. The UN command responded with mass inoculations and heavy applications of DDT to individuals, and DDT aerial spraying to the countryside at large. In the north, thousands of Chinese health care workers were dispatched to the area behind the front lines, and Hungarian and East German volunteer hospital units were also sent to Korea. What subsequently became known as Korean Hemorrhagic Fever had not been known in Korea before, but it was endemic in areas in Manchuria through which CPV forces had passed, and in which those North Korean contingents that had been parts of the PLA before 1949 and formed the shock troops of the North Korean invasion force had been stationed. It was precisely in a strip in central Korea in which these North Korean troops had been engaged in combat and which was subsequently reoccupied by UN forces that Korean Hemorrhagic Fever then remained endemic.

On no occasion did the Chinese or North Korean governments claim to have shot down a US aircraft containing the means of delivery of biological agents or the agents themselves, despite an eventual Chinese claim of 955 sorties by 175 groups of US aircraft over Northeast China to drop BW between 29 February and 31 March 1952 alone. As for Korea, the Chinese claimed that the US had spread BW over “70 cities and counties of Korea...on 804 occasions, according to incomplete statistics.” The Chinese did obtain the confessions of some 25 captured US pilots. Many of the confessions included voluminous detail about the alleged delivery of BW: the kinds of bombs and other containers dropped, the types of insects, the diseases they carried, and so forth. Interspersed with the enormous technical detail was a great deal of Communist rhetoric identical to that which appeared in the standard Chinese press reports at the time, with references to “imperialists” and “capitalistic Wall Street war monger[s],” etc., which led nearly all observers to doubt that any of the confessions had been written by those supposedly testifying to them. All the confessions were renounced when the US airmen returned to the United States. Prisoners who had been ground troops “admitted” to the ISC that they had delivered BW by artillery—“epidemic germ shells”—in Korea.

The Historical Context of the Chinese and North Korean BW Allegations

There are several important pieces of historical background that are highly relevant to the Korean War BW charges which must be recounted, as they form a chain leading up to the allegations. The first of these is that Japan carried out a substantial biological warfare program within China during World War II. It consisted of an extensive series of BW research facilities throughout occupied Chinese territory, as well as the operational use of BW in China. The most well-known portion of the Japanese program was Unit 731, based in Manchuria and commanded by Gen. Shiro Ishii.⁶ However, there were three additional BW organizations, Unit 100, Unit Ei 1644, and one more, each acting independently and each under its own commanding officers. Most of the senior military officers and officials of these units made their way back to Japan in the final days of the war in the Pacific. Their most senior officers were subsequently interrogated in Japan by US military intelligence, and a crucial and extremely unfortunate decision was made which may have done much to enhance the credibility of the subsequent Korean War BW allegations: The US government granted immunity to Gen. Ishii, all of his subordinates, and members of the other Japanese BW units in exchange for the technical information obtained by the Japanese in the course of their wartime BW R&D program.⁷ Even before the Korean War began, Chinese media carried stories recounting Japanese BW in World War II and accusing the US and Japan of preparing for biological warfare. These charges usually were included

in protests against the “remilitarization” of Japan.

The second important point is that as they occupied portions of Manchuria, Soviet military forces captured some members of Unit 731. After requesting that the US turn over additional senior officials from that organization and being denied, the USSR tried twelve former members of Unit 731 in a war crimes trial in December 1949 in the city of Khabarovsk. The USSR then requested that the United States release Gen. Ishii, together with Emperor Hirohito, to be put on trial as well, a request that the US government also rejected. At the time of the trial, on two occasions Gen. MacArthur’s command falsely denied any knowledge of Japanese BW operations in China during the war. In reporting on the Khabarovsk trial, *Pravda* stated that the United States was “preparing for new crimes against humanity,” i.e., bacteriological warfare.⁸ In the spring of 1950, before the outbreak of the war in Korea, there followed a series of Soviet media reports charging that the US was preparing for “bacteriological warfare.” The proceedings of the trial were published in English.⁹ The evidence obtained from those put on trial provided Soviet (and Chinese) officials with detailed technical descriptions of the BW delivery systems and methods that the Japanese had developed in China during the war. Three years later, these were precisely the methods that they alleged the United States to have used during the Korean War. The opening substantive chapter of the 1952 ISC Report is titled, “The Relevance of Japanese Bacterial Warfare in World War II.”

The third link in the chain is that in the first five months of 1951, the Chinese press and radio made repeated references to Gen. Ishii and the Japanese wartime BW programs, the Khabarovsk trial, Gen. Ishii’s subsequent employment by the United States, and the claim that the United States was preparing to use BW in the Korean War:¹⁰

- On 9 January 1951, that MacArthur and his command had protected Japanese war criminals, particularly Ishii, and employed him and his colleagues;
- On 7 March 1951, that Ishii had been hired by the American government “to supervise the manufacture of germ warfare weapons in America;”
- On 22 March 1951, that “MacArthur is now engaged in large-scale production of bacteriological weapons for use against the Korean Army and people,” and specifying the amount of money that MacArthur’s headquarters had allegedly spent for their bacteria growth media;
- On 30 April 1951, that “the American forces are using Chinese People’s Volunteers as guinea pigs for their bacteriological experiments,” and identifying a site near Kyoto where the BW agents were allegedly being produced. (The Kyoto site was a Japanese vaccine production facility that had survived World War II; during the Korean War, the United States did

in fact purchase Japanese-made vaccines for public-health use in South Korea.) In the North Korean government’s charges, the United States was also accused of using KPA and CPV prisoners of war for bacteriological warfare experimentation on “Kochzheko” island in collaboration with Japanese “bacteriological warfare criminals” (United Nations Security Council document S/2684; the reference is presumably to Koje Island).

This sequence culminated in the 8 May 1951 statement by the North Korean Foreign Minister that the United States was spreading smallpox in North Korea. There were further Chinese statements on May 19, May 24, and May 25, saying that the United States was “preparing to use germ warfare,” and repeating in particular the charges that the US used POWs (in this case Korean) for BW “laboratory tests” and as “guinea pigs.” After one last statement on 22 June 1951, the Chinese campaign ended, although some North Korean statements continued into July, and then they too ceased.

The last of these aspects is that concurrent with the above propaganda campaign in the spring of 1951, the Chinese government also initiated a campaign between 5 March and 13 May 1951 charging the United States with using poison gas in the Korean War.¹¹ In addition to a series of media reports, this included an “Appeal” by Dr. Li Teh-Chuan, the director of the Red Cross Society of China, to the Executive Committee of the International League of Red Cross Societies meeting on 14 March 1951, formally accusing the United States of having used both bacterial weapons and poison gas:

After suffering repeated defeats in Korea . . . the American invaders have ignored world opinion and have openly violated international law by using poison gas on the Korean front . . . In the name of the Red Cross Society of China, I firmly protest to American authorities and all 100 million members of the Red Cross Societies in 68 countries throughout the world to raise their voices for justice and to take action to prevent the atrocity of using poison gas by the American imperialists in their war of aggression in Korea.¹²

The Chinese alleged the use of “poison gas artillery shells” in addition to presumed delivery by aircraft, and announced that “poisonous shells have been collected and photographed.” Radio Moscow and the New China News Agency reported that “Lt. Love Moss of the 24th Division, artillery, had admitted that the US was using gas.” The only gas mentioned by name in the charges was chlorine gas. Chlorine is the least useful for military purposes as it is rarely lethal at the concentrations that can be achieved on the battlefield.

It was already noted that the charge of having used chemical weapons was stressed in the “Report on U.S. Crimes in Korea,” produced by the International

Association of Democratic Lawyers. This report, however, states that chemical weapon use took place between 6 May 1951 and 9 January 1952. However, the Chinese campaign first began charging the US with CW use on *March 5*, and did so on ten occasions before 6 May 1951. In February 1952, the Soviet delegate to the UN, Jacob Malik, also accused the US of using chemical weapons in Korea. Chinese charges of US use of chemical weapons continued sporadically until May 1953. However, when the report of the second group, the International Scientific Commission, appeared only six months after the jurists' report, it did not contain any mention of alleged uses of chemical weapons. It also contained no mention whatsoever of alleged use of Chinese or Korean POWs for BW experiments.

There was never much question that there was no validity to the 1951 charges of chemical weapons use, and they were not repeated during the period of the major BW allegations in 1952. Those in the West who professed to believe the BW allegations into the 1960s and 1970s never mentioned the early accompanying allegations of chemical weapon use.

Two final points remain to be noted. In the late spring and early summer of 1950, just prior to the start of the war in Korea, there was also a campaign of allegations that the United States was dropping Colorado beetles in the German Democratic Republic (GDR), Poland, and Czechoslovakia in order to destroy their potato crops, "starve" their people, and induce the "economic collapse" of the countries. As biological warfare includes the use of disease agents or vectors that affect man, animals or crops, this too was a charge of the use of biological weapons. East German authorities released a report submitted on 15 June 1950, by Paul Merker, State Secretary in the GDR Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, alleging that US aircraft had dropped Colorado potato beetles from May to June of 1950. No evidence was offered, but it was stated that the beetles had been found under the routes taken by US aircraft. Eastern European media printed photographs of "potato bug containers" allegedly attached to parachutes and balloons. In May 1951, the Czechoslovak Minister of Agriculture charged that "Western imperialists this year again are spreading the Colorado beetle in our fields, this time as far east as Slovakia." And in May 1952, Moscow claimed that one of the pilots from whom a confession had been obtained in Korea had also admitted to dropping Colorado beetles over East Germany in 1950. In the years that followed, Polish and GDR school children were regularly sent on excursions to Baltic beaches to search for the beetles.

In 1950, the USSR and the East European Communist parties also launched the Stockholm Appeal (or Stockholm Peace Petition) which demanded the "unconditional prohibition of the atomic weapon as a weapon of aggression." The Appeal, which also linked nuclear weapons with the two other categories of weapons of mass destruction—biological and chemical weapons—obtained

millions of signatures in Western Europe as well as in other parts of the world. During the 1952 campaign an "Appeal Against Bacteriological Warfare" modeled on it was issued on April 1.

Neither the People's Republic of China nor North Korea belonged to the United Nations. It therefore fell to the USSR to press the allegations in the UN, and it seems evident that it was the USSR that arranged for the international protests through Communist parties, the World Peace Council, and other front organizations. There also seems to have been substantial media coordination between the USSR and China, as well as coordination of a more instrumental sort.¹³ The propaganda campaign also combined with others going on concurrently: In early 1951, the Director of the USSR's Marx-Engels-Lenin Institute had launched a domestic "Hate the Americans" (or "Hate America") campaign, and the 22 February 1952 announcement of the BW allegations followed a day after the celebration of an "international day of the fight against colonialism." In the four weeks between mid-March and mid-April 1952, the Soviet press devoted one-quarter of its coverage to the BW allegations. In China, in roughly the same period, newspaper treatment of germ warfare was more extensive than that previously devoted to the entire Korean War. Notably, the U.S.-Japanese peace treaty was due for ratification on 28 April 1952.

U.S. Denials and U.N. Disputes

The first official US denial came on 4 March 1952, in response to the February 22 accusations by the North Korean Foreign Minister. US Secretary of State Dean Acheson said, "I would . . . like to state categorically and unequivocally that these charges are entirely false; the UN forces have not used, are not using, any sort of bacteriological warfare."¹⁴ Acheson repeated the denials on March 26 and on other occasions. General Matthew Ridgeway, Commander of the UN forces in Korea, denied the charges by mid-March, adding, "These charges are evidently designed to conceal the Communists' inability to cope with the spread of epidemics which occur annually throughout China and North Korea and to care properly for the many victims."¹⁵ And in an address to the US Congress on 22 May 1952, Ridgeway stated that "no element of the United Nations Command has employed either germ or gas warfare in any form at any time."¹⁶ UN Secretary-General Trygve Lie also denied the allegations. On 14 March 1953, after Soviet representative to the UN Malik introduced the bacterial warfare charges into the work of the UN Disarmament Commission, the US delegate, Benjamin Cohen, repeated the American denials. When the Soviet delegation distributed the "confessions" of captured US pilots in the UN General Assembly's First Committee, Gen. Omar Bradley, Chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff, submitted a denial (on 25 March 1953), as did the commanding officers of the Marine Air Wings to which the pilots had belonged.¹⁷

Of equal importance to the official US denials is the

fact that relevant US policy at the time was promulgated in NSC 62, approved on 17 February 1950, prior to the outbreak of the Korean War. NSC 62 stated that “[c]hemical, biological and radiological weapons will not be used by the United States except in retaliation.”¹⁸ In NSC 147 (“Analysis of Possible Courses of Action in Korea”) on 2 April 1953, the exact same sentence appears under the caption, “At present the following restrictions apply to UN operations.”¹⁹ The policy was only changed on 15 March 1956, long after the end of the Korea War, in NSC 5062/1. The relevant provision in effect permitted US first use:

To the extent that the military effectiveness of the armed forces will be enhanced by their use, the United States will be prepared to use chemical and bacteriological weapons in general war. The decision as to their use will be made by the President.²⁰

As others have noted, this represented a dramatic reversal. There was still a caveat in the phrase “in general war,” but US military operations in Vietnam made use of both herbicides and tear gases.²¹

The second portion of the US government’s response to the allegations was as important as the denials, or even more so. It was to request immediately in the United Nations an on-site investigation by a competent international organization, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) or the World Health Organization (WHO). In his very first statement on March 4, Acheson asked the accusing nations to permit an investigation by the ICRC. Exactly one week later, Acheson sent a request directly to the ICRC, asking them to conduct an investigation in the areas involved. During World War II, China had appealed to the ICRC to investigate its charges that Japan was employing BW in China, and in 1952 the Red Cross societies of virtually all the Soviet-bloc states had sent direct appeals to the ICRC asking it to “take action against the US atrocities.” Within 24 hours, on March 12, the ICRC had applied to China and North Korea to obtain their necessary cooperation. The government of India offered to assist in an investigation, and the ICRC proposed to send a small team composed of three Swiss members, two Indians, and a Pakistani. The ICRC sent the same message again on March 28 and on March 31, and finally, for the last time, on April 10, adding that if they received no reply by April 20, they would consider their proposal to have been rejected. On April 30, the ICRC explicitly terminated its effort.²² Neither China nor North Korea ever replied directly to the ICRC. The only reply in a UN forum came on March 26, from Soviet delegate Malik, rejecting the ICRC offer. China did respond in New China News Agency broadcasts in March and April, by heaping invective on the ICRC:

The Committee’s actions brand it as a most vicious and shameless accomplice and lackey of American imperialism. The purpose behind its eagerness to

investigate is obviously to find out the effectiveness of the American aggressors’ unparalleled, brutal crime and to try to whitewash the perpetrators of the crime with a worthless report.²³

China charged that the only purpose of an ICRC or WHO investigation would be the collection of intelligence to be used in evaluating the effectiveness of germ warfare. (But the ICRC was still acceptable as a propaganda platform: on 27 July 1952, Chinese delegates at an ICRC meeting in Canada put forward a motion against “the cruelties in Korea.”) China and North Korea also rejected a proposal by the WHO to send assistance into epidemic areas.

In July 1952, the US took the issue of an ICRC investigation to the UN Security Council. It submitted a draft resolution calling for the ICRC to carry out an investigation and to report to the UN.²⁴ The Security Council vote was ten in favor and one—the Soviet veto—against. The US then submitted a second draft resolution which stated that “the Security Council would conclude, from the refusal of the governments and authorities making the charges to permit impartial investigation, that these charges must be presumed to be without substance and false; and would condemn the practice of fabricating and disseminating such false charges.” The vote was nine in favor, one abstention, and again, a Soviet veto. There was also extensive debate in the UN General Assembly and in the UN Disarmament Commissions in 1952 and 1953, with various governments proffering their opinions.²⁵ In some cases, e.g. Australia, governments submitted the documentation in the ISC report to teams of their own scientists and in all cases, they reported that such assessments came to the conclusion that BW had not been used—or even that, based on the evidence, the charges appeared to these observers to be ludicrous.

Throughout the UN debate in 1952 and 1953 dealing with the BW allegations, the USSR kept pressing the point that the United States had never ratified the Geneva Protocol (which prohibits the use of biological weapons and which the US did not ratify until 1975), and repeatedly called on the US to do so. The US pushed one last attempt at the UN to obtain an investigation: On 8 April 1953, the Political Committee of the UN approved a US proposal to institute a commission of investigation. The vote was 52 in favor, 5 against, and 3 abstentions. A day earlier, the USSR had suddenly and unexpectedly offered to withdraw its allegations of bacteriological warfare “as proof of its sincere striving for peace,” on the condition that the United States withdraw its proposal that the United Nations launch an investigation into the allegations.²⁶ Senior US officials apparently viewed the startling Soviet about-face as merely part of a “whole ‘be pleasant’ campaign” that the USSR was pursuing following Stalin’s death the previous month.²⁷ On April 23, the UN General Assembly accepted the US proposal by a vote of 51 for, 5 against and 4 abstaining. On July 28, the President of the General Assembly of the UN

reported that the commission was unable to accomplish its task, due to the refusal of assistance from the PRC and North Korea.

Moscow's Subsequent Positions

Despite the evidence in the newly-discovered documents that Soviet officials have understood at least since 1953 that the BW allegations were fraudulent, neither Soviet officials *nor Russian* ones have to this day ever stated that the Korean War BW allegations were false. In fact, in 1982 and 1983 the Soviet press continued to repeat the charges that the United States had used biological weapons during the Korean War.²⁸ In many other instances as well, the USSR utilized false allegations against the United States of preparations to use or the use of biological warfare. These were alleged in numerous separate, smaller incidents involving almost every continent on the globe until 1986-1987.²⁹

There were, however, scattered apparent admissions by omission, or indirection. When the report of the UN Secretary General on chemical and biological weapons was published in 1969, it carried the following statement: "Since the Second World War . . . there is no military experience of the use of bacteriological (biological) agents as weapons of war."³⁰ The UN report was a unanimous document signed by the representatives of fourteen governments, including the USSR, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and Poland. Without specifically referring to the Korean War BW allegations, the sentence implicitly admitted that no such events had ever occurred.³¹ However, virtually no one drew attention to those few relevant lines or noticed their implications, except for a few specialists.

Two years earlier, in 1967, the Soviet Military Publishing House had printed a technical manual used in the training of its armed forces, *Bacteriological Weapons and How to Defend Against Them*. It contained a historical review of BW which had no reference at all to Korea. In the manual the Japanese use of BW in China during World War II in China is followed directly by a description of the use of defoliants by the United States in the war in Vietnam.³² A more popular Soviet history of World War II published in 1985 also followed this pattern.³³ Perhaps most significant of all in this group, in 1988 Gen. E. I. Smirnov, a Soviet era Minister of Health who was for many years also directly involved with the USSR's biological weapons program, published a book entitled *Wars and Epidemics*. It makes no mention whatsoever of the Korean War BW allegations, and the only entry in the book on Korea discusses the affliction of UN forces by Korean Hemorrhagic Fever.³⁴

Depending on how one interprets the single line, there is a slight possibility that in one instance Chinese officials also considered indicating the same thing by indirection. In September 1984, when China suggested that it might sign the Biological and Toxin Weapon Convention, a Chinese government spokesman noted that "China *once*

was the victim of bacteriological and toxin warfare." (Emphasis added.) Press accounts at the time understood this to be a reference to the Japanese use of biological weapons in China during World War II. *If* that interpretation were correct, it functionally omitted the charge of alleged US use of BW during the Korean War.³⁵ For the most part, however, China and North Korea have maintained the Korean War BW allegations until the present day, repeating the charges in numerous publications. There was no official change upon the death of Mao Zedong, or at the peak of closer relations with the United States in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Many others printed repetitions of the standard Korean War BW charges.

Chinese Sources

In 1989 and 1992, Chinese authorities published two documents dealing with the Korean War BW allegations, one by Nie Rongzhen, head of the Central Staff Department of the PLA, and a reply by Mao Zedong to a related message sent by Nie ten days earlier. Additional material was also contained in a Chinese history of the Korean War published in 1988, as well as in the memoirs of several senior Chinese military commanders of the CPV forces.³⁶ These refer to and quote from the materials mentioned above as well as other documents. Finally, the materials were discussed in 1994 and 1996 in monographs by two Chinese-born historians currently teaching in the United States.³⁷

On 28 January 1952, CPV headquarters reported that enemy aircraft had spread smallpox virus, and further reports followed in February. Chen Jian describes this January 28 CPV report as "the first time" that US forces were reported to be using biological weapons in Korea.³⁸ On February 18, Nie Rongzhen sent a message to Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai:

Other than sending [bacteriological] specialists [to Korea], for further investigations, we have asked [the CPV headquarters] to send back to Beijing all insect vectors found [in the battlefield] for laboratory tests so as to verify exactly what disease germs these insects carry. Laboratory tests won't be ready for two days, but our specialists estimate the four disease germs such as cholera, typhoid, the plague and scarlet fever are the most likely . . . The first priority would be to strengthen epidemic prevention and treatment [for the CPV]. . . . we must ask the Soviet Union to help us out with their bacteriological specialists and materials.³⁹

Zhang states that Nie had already ordered the health division of the PLA General Logistical Department to make preparations. This is three days before date of the first Soviet document obtained, the fragment of a message from Mao Zedong to Stalin on February 21.

The first of the two (officially) published Chinese documents is Mao's reply on 19 February 1952, in which

Mao instructed Zhou Enlai in a single line to “pay attention to this matter and take necessary measures to deal with it.”⁴⁰

Some time during this period, Zhou Enlai outlined to Mao Zedong six urgent measures of anti-bacteriological warfare:

1. Speeding up the laboratory tests of the insect vectors sent back from the front . . . so as to identify all these disease germs.
2. Dispatching epidemic prevention groups [to Korea] immediately along with vaccine, powder, and other equipment.
3. Issuing a public statement to the world to denounce U.S. bacteriological warfare as war crimes and use news media to pressure the United States to be responsible for the consequences of its biological warfare.
4. Instructing the National Association of Resisting America and Aiding Korea to lodge complaints with the Convention of World Peace and request that the convention launch a campaign against U.S. bacteriological warfare.
5. Sending a cable to the CPV headquarters to request that [the rank and file] be mobilized for epidemic prevention and meanwhile ordering the Northeastern Military Command to get prepared [for possible spread of disease germs in the Northeast] as well.
6. Sending a telegram to the Soviet government asking for its assistance.⁴¹

On February 28, Nie sent another message to Mao and Zhou, which is the second of the two officially published Chinese documents. It stated that the United States was “still introducing insect bacteria” over “the 38th and 50th Group Armies. . . . we have mobilized 44 Chinese scientific experts—11 entomologists, 15 bacteriologists, 6 epidemiologists, 4 toxicologists, 7 pathologists and a nutritionist,”—and that they would leave by air the next day, February 29, for the front lines.⁴²

Three points can be noted. This is all nearly a year after the “short” campaign in the spring of 1951 which had alleged that the U.S. was using BW. Second, if internal Chinese sources claim to show that CPV forces reported U.S. BW use “for the first time” in January 1952, then the spring 1951 allegations must be fraudulent. Finally, a few days between Nie Rongzhen’s cable to Mao on February 18 and Mao’s cable to Stalin on February 21 seems much too brief a period of time to have allowed for planning and laying the groundwork for the allegations; even the period from January 28 to February 20 or 21 seems insufficient time for that. Zhou’s memorandum was presumably written well after disease had become a serious problem for CPV forces.

Previously available sources had identified China’s own “investigative commission” chaired by Li Teh-chuan,

director of the China Red Cross, but had claimed that it had not been called into existence prior to March 12 by the China Peace Committee, with an adjunct staff of 25 in addition to the aforementioned experts, and that it had only left for Manchuria and North Korea on March 19.⁴³ By then, the Democratic Lawyers group had already been in North Korea for two weeks. However, Nie Rongzhen’s message makes it clear that the experts group must have been organized well in advance of the date of his message on February 28, and that they left for North Korea well before the lawyers group arrived there on March 4. Presumably not by coincidence, the report of the lawyers group listed the allegations of BW use taking place in North Korea as beginning on 28 January 1952, and continuing through March 4, the day of their arrival in North Korea. In public statements, Chinese authorities alleged that BW began over Chinese territory, in Manchuria, not earlier than February 29, which is apparently also contradicted by Nie Rongzhen’s message.

A book on the Korean War authored in 1988 by Jon Halliday and Bruce Cumings includes a photograph of an audience of the International Scientific Commission with Mao Zedong in Beijing in the summer of 1952. The photograph’s caption states that “Mao greeted the delegates [sic] with two sallies: ‘Don’t make too much of all this! They’ve tried using biochemical warfare, but it hasn’t been too successful,’ and ‘What are all these uninfected insects they are dropping.’”⁴⁴ Mao’s first statement was apt, because although Chinese authorities eventually claimed that US aircraft had made nearly a thousand airdrops of BW agents and vectors over China, the two commissions were told that the number of people allegedly sickened through such an enormous effort was quite trivial. The second statement is incredible: the reports of both commissions, the official Chinese charges to international agencies, the massive propaganda campaign, etc., *all* claimed that the insects *were* infected with pathogens. Mao’s remarks would have effectively aborted any real “scientific” commission and sent them home.

Several Decades of Analysis and Guesswork

In 1952, UN Secretary-General Trygve Lie ridiculed the BW allegations. Dr. Brock Chisholm, who at the time was the head of the World Health Organization, but who had been involved in the World War II joint UK-US-Canadian BW R&D program, stated that if BW had been waged, it would have been quickly known since millions of people would have died.⁴⁵ Theodor Rosebury, a major figure in the US wartime BW R&D program, who had authored two books on the subject in 1947 and in 1949, wrote in 1960 in commenting on the ISC report that he could not tell “[w]hether it be read as a work of imaginative fiction, or a study in abnormal epidemiology, and in the latter event whether its conclusions [can] be accepted in any degree or not.”⁴⁶

The RAND report by A.M. Halpern was published in

April 1952, very early and virtually in the midst of the major BW allegations, but it is an extremely detailed account of their evolution. Its major conclusion as to motive was that “The timing and content of the poison gas and BW campaigns suggest that they were initiated in response to specific situations and carried out with attention to objectives of a tactical rather than a strategic nature.”⁴⁷ Halpern judged these tactical objectives to be primarily leverage in the Korean War truce talks. A report of the US State Department’s Office of Intelligence and Research was also published quite early, on 16 June 1952, but saw somewhat larger motives for the allegations:

The threefold nature of the bacteriological warfare charges—atrocity, international law and disarmament—and their sponsorship on a world scale by the World Peace Council, reflect their value to Moscow as a new propaganda theme. Each year, the self-styled “peace” movement has made some issue the basis for a world-wide campaign: in 1950 it was the Stockholm Appeal, in 1951 the Five Power Peace Pact.⁴⁸

In 1957, Maarten Schneider, in the Netherlands, also came to the conclusion that the allegations were purely propaganda; in other words, a fabrication.⁴⁹

Aside from the two commissions, both organized by international Communist support organizations, there were two principal Western supporters of the BW allegations. Both men had long associations with China, where they had spent much of their lives, including the World War II years, and were very sympathetic to China. Dr. James Endicott, a Canadian minister, was born in China, the son of a missionary, and had himself been a missionary in that country from 1925 until the late 1940s. He was the Chairman of the Canadian Peace Commission and went to China in 1952 at the invitation of the Chinese government to attest to the allegations in the same manner as the two commissions had. He was the only person to claim that the US had carried out BW aerosol spraying, allegedly for a period of three weeks, on the basis of information provided to him by Chinese officials. His son, Stephen Endicott, a historian, has continued his father’s defense of the allegations.⁵⁰

The second individual, John W. Powell, was also born in China. His father had founded *The China Weekly Review* (CWR) in the 1920s. Powell spent the World War II years in China, and in 1945, at age 25, became the editor and publisher of the CWR. The paper’s position during the Korean War was that South Korea had invaded North Korea. Powell remained in China until June 1953, when he returned to the United States.⁵¹

In 1971, the first major academic study of the allegations was published in the set of Stockholm International Peace Research Institute volumes on chemical and biological warfare. In that context, the purpose of the analysis was “not . . . to try to reach a

conclusion one way or another, but to recount the history . . . and to illustrate the very difficult problems of verifying allegations of use” of BW.⁵² It therefore focused entirely on an examination of the two commission reports, their mode of operation and their descriptions of “evidence.” The result was to state that one could draw *no* conclusions at all from the materials presented in either report—and therefore certainly not the one both commissions had chosen—because neither group had any independent knowledge of the provenance of what was shown or told to them. They had simply accepted everything on faith—or more accurately speaking, according to their political preferences. Cookson and Nottingham, in a briefer examination, had used a somewhat similar method of analysis and wrote, “as to whether BW was or was not used, it is impossible to say definitively. The present writer’s opinion is that it was not,” and “[t]he whole thing has been written off almost unanimously as Communist propaganda.”⁵³

But it was simply too difficult for many people to accept exactly what that meant. When a Dutch Marxist wrote a paper in 1977 essentially summarizing and reiterating all the material in the two commission reports and accepting their conclusions entirely, he too noted that “[t]he mainstream of Western public opinion has up to now considered the Sino-Korean claims as mere propaganda,” but then added: “However, few commentators have gone through the pains of formulating what this means.” He did then outline in a few brief lines what that would mean, operationally, but could not accept the implications.⁵⁴ Halliday and Cumings in their 1988 book on the Korean War found themselves in the same dilemma:

If one is to believe the Western case, it is also necessary to take it through to its logical conclusion, which is that the North Koreans and the Chinese mounted a spectacular piece of fraudulent theatre, involving the mobilization of thousands (probably tens of thousands) of people in China and Korea; getting scores of Chinese doctors and scientists and myriad lesser personnel, as well as Zhou Enlai and other senior Chinese figures, to fake evidence, lie and invent at least one extremely *recherché* medical fraud. Needham himself acknowledged at the time that “a patriotic conspiracy”—that is, a gigantic fraud—was a possibility.⁵⁵

However, in later private communications in 1979 and 1986, Needham maintained his initial position that the United States had used BW in Korea; in 1986 he wrote that “everything that has been published in the last few years has shaken the very 3 percent of doubt which I had before and has instead abolished it. So now I am 100 percent sure.”⁵⁶ Halliday and Cumings concluded that “[a]s the evidence stands, the issue is open.” In a much longer chapter on the Korean War BW allegations in their 1989 book on Unit 731, Williams and Wallace also

accepted the validity of the allegations.⁵⁷

Three additional serious analyses appeared, in 1984, 1989, and 1992. The first was published by a US military historian, Charles Cowdrey. Cowdrey did not believe that the US had used BW, but he interpreted the purpose of the allegations in a different way. He mentioned the international and negotiating utilities of the allegations, but he emphasized the public-health requirements of the war in the rear areas adjacent to the battlefield, both in North Korea and in China, with:

thousands of soldiers marched out to collect insects. For days, police shepherded civilians on similar hunts. Germ warfare charges apparently proved themselves in practice as a way of getting things done. . . . Internally . . . the germ warfare appeals served a practical purpose in a mass campaign of preventive medicine aimed at forestalling any recurrence of the conditions of 1951.⁵⁸

Cowdrey felt that the primary purpose of the allegations had been domestic, to mobilize the Chinese population in a large-scale anti-epidemic public health campaign. It was an argument that senior US government officials had made in 1952 in denying the BW allegations.

In 1989, Mark Ryan included a section on the BW and CW allegations in a book on China's anticipation of nuclear weapon use by the United States during the Korean War. Ryan's main concern was to consider whether the Chinese charges were an indirect way of deterring the US from using nuclear weapons in that conflict. This argument had been summarily proposed in 1957 and in 1962 by Henry Kissinger and Alice L. Hsieh. In 1957, Kissinger wrote:

The Communist skill in psychological matters is also demonstrated by the Chinese Communist charge during the Korean War that we were engaging in bacteriological warfare. This was probably a device to keep us from using atomic weapons or from bombing Chinese territory.⁵⁹

In 1962, Hsieh again argued essentially the same motive, acknowledging the hypothesis to A.M. Halpern:

In 1952, Chinese Communist references to the atom bomb were incidental to the propaganda campaign against bacteriological warfare, thus suggesting that this campaign was designed to inhibit even further any possible American plan for use of the atom bomb, to allay domestic anxiety with respect to the bomb, and to maintain the spirit of resistance.⁶⁰

Ryan was convinced that Chinese military officials took the BW charges "seriously," although he notes regarding the CW allegations that "at no point did this alleged chemical weapons use become the subject of a high visibility, coordinated media campaign, as in the case of biological weapons." Ryan too was perplexed by the

operational implications of the allegations being false:

...if the BW charges were concocted by the Chinese from start to finish, it would seem at first appearance to represent a conspiratorial project of enormous proportions, involving the coordinated preparation and submission of knowingly false physical evidence and testimony from hundreds of Chinese scientists and technicians. Particularly problematical is how the teams of scores of prominent Chinese experts in pathology, entomology, zoology, epidemiology, etc. (most of whom had received their education and training in leading European and American universities) sent to Korea and north China to document and battle BW could have been led or induced to fabricate the many and detailed reports and statements they produced. Even if this had been done, why have not any of the individuals involved ever subsequently disclosed, either purposefully or inadvertently, aspects of such a fabricated campaign? Also, if the charges were falsely concocted, it seems to imply an additional conscious deception (mainly in the form of planting evidence, securing depositions, etc.) of thousands of more ordinary soldiers, farmers, and townspeople, and then continued efforts to deceive hundreds of foreign travelers, delegations, and correspondents who visited the affected areas and viewed the collected evidence and depositions.⁶¹

Ryan then put forth the following conclusion:

It seems that the Chinese BW campaign, regardless of whether it was totally or partially fabricated or whether it sprang from a reaction to real or imaginary phenomena, must be considered a success, or even a masterstroke, in the realm of international politics and psychology. Given the nature of the weapons, the problem of the proof or disproof of allegations, and the not unreasonable grounds for suspicion of actual or imminent US use of BW, the campaign was both a direct and practical means to help forestall or terminate any experimental use of BW, and a way to reinforce international condemnation of these and other weapons of mass destruction.⁶²

The most recent analysis was written by a historian, John Ellis van Courtland Moon. Like Ryan, he made extensive use of declassified US documents dealing with the state of preparedness and executive-level decision-making on the utilization of chemical or biological weapons by the United States after 1945, but came to markedly different conclusions. Moon was absolutely convinced that the United States had not used BW in the Korean War. Moon emphasized the denials by senior US officials, the US requests for an investigation of the charges by the ICRC or WHO, and the fact that NSC 62, the policy statement that the United States would not use chemical, biological or radiological weapons except in retaliation, was in effect from 17 February 1950 until 15 March 1956 when it was superseded by NSC 1562/1.

Moon also noted, however, that:

[l]ike all allegations, they have never been completely exorcised; doubts persist to today. . . . What this case reveals . . . is that allegations live on. . . . Once an allegation is made, it is impossible to disprove it completely, since the nature of the weapon makes it almost invisible. If it is difficult to prove that it has been used, it is impossible to prove that it has not been used. Doubt is never totally exorcised.⁶³

The Soviet Documents

Twelve Soviet-era documents (or excerpts from them) on the BW controversy have become available. The first, dated 21 February 1952, appears to be no more than a fragment. All the rest date from 13 April 1953 to 2 June 1953, in the months following Stalin's death. Obviously all the rest—decisions and communications relating to the BW allegations between 21 February 1952 (or earlier) and April 1953—is still missing. It is also evident that other relevant documents dating from late April are missing from the available material.

The first document (21 February 1952), a message from Mao to Stalin, states that the US has used BW, delivered by aircraft and artillery.

The second document (13 April 1953) is a memo to Lavrenti Beria from Glukhov of the MVD, formerly a Soviet advisor to the DPRK Ministry of Public Security. It states that the Chinese government informed the North Korean government in February 1952 that the US was using BW in Korea and in China, and that China would publicize this. The North Koreans insisted on being the first to make a statement, and “the North Koreans, with the assistance of our advisors, created false areas of exposure.” In advance of the ISC's arrival, “[t]wo false areas of exposure were prepared.” Cholera bacteria were obtained from corpses in China. So that the ISC delegation would not remain on site overly long, “an unworkable situation was created for them in order to frighten them and force them to leave.” This was achieved by Soviet advisors with the KPA setting off explosions near the location of the ISC.

The third document (14 April 1953) is a memo to Beria from Lt. Selivanov, an advisor to the Military-Medical Department of the Korean People's Army until April 1952. He informs Beria that he had been the one to help North Korean medical personnel to compose the statement in 1951 alleging that the US had spread smallpox. He says that the North Koreans felt that the BW allegations were necessary to compromise the Americans, and that they had asked three Soviet advisors, Smirnov, Malov, and himself, to help in “creating sites of infection,” which they feared they had not succeeded in doing before the arrival of the lawyer's commission. (No mention is made of the Chinese “Commission” which should be present in North Korea at this time.) Selivanov also reports that he responded in March 1952 to a query from Gen. Shtemenko, Chief of Staff of the Soviet Armed

Forces, and from the Soviet General Staff, that he reported that there have been no outbreaks of plague and cholera in China, *no* examples of bacteriological weapons, and that if any were found, they would be sent to Moscow immediately.

The fourth document (18 April 1953) is a memo to Beria from Lt. Gen. Razuvaev, the Soviet ambassador to the DPRK and Chief Soviet Military Advisor to the KPA. Razuvaev claims that when the North Korean government consulted him about the BW allegation information they had received from China, Soviet advisors had been unable to confirm the information and that he informed Kim Il-Sung of this, but nevertheless the North Koreans and Chinese went ahead with their public statements. He says that General Shtemenko did not inform the Soviet Foreign Ministry of the information that he received. Despite Razuvaev's skepticism about the Chinese material, the North Koreans pressed him for advice, and with the cooperation of Soviet advisers a plan was worked out for action by the Ministry of Health. False plague regions were created, burials of bodies of those who died and their disclosure were organized, measures were taken to receive the plague and cholera bacillus. The adviser of the DPRK MVD [Ministry of Internal Affairs] proposed to infect with the cholera and plague bacilli persons sentenced to execution.

Further details are provided as to what was done in advance of the arrival of the commission of jurists and the ISC. Razuvaev also adds that a Soviet investigation of Chinese allegations that the US was using poison gas disproved the charges.

The fifth document (21 April 1953) is a memo from Beria to Malenkov and to the CPSU CC Presidium. It states that Smirnov and Glukhov had reported in March 1952 to USSR Minister of State Security S.D. Ignatiev “that with the help of General . . . Razuvaev two false regions of infection were simulated for the purpose of accusing the Americans of using bacteriological weapons in Korea and China,” and that “Ignatiev did not report this memorandum, which had special political importance, to anyone. As a result, the Soviet Union suffered real political damage in the international arena. I discovered this document in the archive of the MGB USSR...at the beginning of April 1953.”

The sixth document (21 April 1953) is from V. Molotov to the CPSU CC Presidium and is identifiably incomplete. It begins with the opening line: “[On] 22 February 1952, the DPRK received an intentionally false statement from the Chinese about the use of bacteriological weapons by the Americans.” It further suggests that the Soviet embassy in North Korea may have informed Vyshinsky that the BW allegations were not true. Molotov proposes that the Central Committee direct Vyshinsky, now in late April 1953, that “it is inadvisable to show interest in discussing this question or even more in ‘fanning the flames’ of this question” at the ongoing session of the UN General Assembly. (This is, however,

after the USSR had already offered to withdraw their BW allegations in the UN Political Committee on 7 April 1953, a date that *preceeds* any of the documents in this latter group.)

The seventh document (2 May 1953) is the message to Mao Zedong, brusquely informing the Chinese leader that the USSR and CPSU had been “misled” (implicitly by the Chinese themselves) about the “false” and “fictitious” charges of BW use that had been lodged against the Americans, and recommending that the international anti-American campaign on the subject be immediately dropped.

The eighth document (undated, but subsequent to reports by Glukhov and Smirnov indicated as having been given on April 24) is a protocol of the CPSU CC Presidium, recommending that “for unauthorized actions of a provocatory character which caused significant damage to the interests of the state,” Gen. Razuvaev be relieved of his ambassadorship, stripped of rank, and prosecuted; Ignatiev to be dropped from the CPSU CC and investigated; the USSR to draft its subsequent position on the allegations of BW use by the US, and to prepare a report on the subject to be sent to Mao Zedong and Kim Il Sung.

The ninth document is a telegram to Molotov reporting on the conversation of the Soviet ambassador in Beijing with Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai on 12 May 1953. Mao blames the allegations on reports from Chinese front line commanders in Korea, whose authenticity it would now be difficult to verify, and says that “[i]f falsification is discovered, then these reports from below should not be believed.” (The suggestion that the elaborate preparations and falsification—a BW “Potemkin village”—the extraordinary media campaign, the international commissions, etc. could have been organized “from below” in *either* the China or the USSR governed by Mao and by Stalin is highly implausible.)

The tenth document (17 May 1953) concerns the CPSU’s internal investigations of Ignatiev. Ignatiev claims that he showed the message from Glukhov and Smirnov to Stalin in July or August 1952, and that since he believed “the published material,” he did not believe the information contained in their message and “did not attach any significance” to it.

The eleventh document (1 June 1953) is the telegram to Molotov from the Soviet ambassador in North Korea on the discussions with the Secretary of the DPRK Central Committee, Pak Chang-ok, who “expressed great surprise at the actions and positions of V.N. Razuvaev. . . . We were convinced that everything was known in Moscow. We thought that setting off this campaign would give great assistance to the cause of the struggle against American imperialism. In his turn, Pak Chang-ok did not exclude the possibility that the bombs and containers were thrown from Chinese planes, and [that] there were no infections.”

The twelfth document (2 June 1953) indicts Ignatiev, the former Minister of State Security of the USSR.

What Remains to be Disclosed?

A great deal still remains to be revealed, including:

1. All of the Chinese documentation, which would demonstrate just how the entire affair was decided upon, organized, and carried out.

2. The Soviet documentation between 21 February 1952 and 13 April 1953, and even before the February 21 cable from Mao to Stalin. These documents would establish exactly whose idea the false allegations were—the USSR’s or China’s—and provide a more detailed understanding of the nature and degree of the technical assistance that Soviet advisers contributed to the entire process.

The available documents imply a Chinese and then North Korean initiative, with Soviet personnel as collaborators. This should remain an open question until it is possible to understand the operations of the USSR Ministry of State Security at the time, its collaboration with analogous Chinese government organs, their elaboration of “active measures” and so forth. It is clear that there is a chain in the allegations that even preceded the onset of the Korean War, although the decision to charge the U.S. with using BW could only have been made in the context of the war. The all-important question is the degree of consultation and cooperation in the area of propaganda between the USSR and China in the period not covered by the documents—between February 1952 and April 1953, and while Stalin was alive.

.

Milton Leitenberg, a senior research fellow at the Center for International and Security Studies at the University of Maryland, is a scientist and expert on biological warfare.

¹Yasuro Naito, “The Use of Bacteriological Weapons by US Forces During the Korean War Was Fabricated by China and Korea: Uncovered by Classified Documents of the Former Soviet Union” [in Japanese], *Sankei Shimbun*, 8 January 1998; translation in *FBIS-EAS-98-011* (11 January 1998). The Japanese newspaper printed additional excerpts from seven documents which FBIS did not translate.

²These charges and the events related to them were summarized in two separate sections of the six volume study, *The Problem of Chemical and Biological Warfare*, published by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute [SIPRI] (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell and New York: Humanities Press) in 1971:

—Milton Leitenberg, “Allegations of the Biological Warfare in China and Korea: 1951-1952,” pp. 238-258, appendix 4, vol. 5, *The Prevention of CBW*; and

—Jozef Goldblat, “Allegations of the Use of Bacteriological and Chemical Weapons in Korea and China,” pp. 196-223, vol. 4, *CB Disarmament Negotiations, 1920-1970*.

³“Letter From the Permanent Representative of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, President of the Security Council, Dated 30 June 1952; Annexes I, II and III, International

Association of Democratic Lawyers,” United Nations Security Council, S/2684/Add. 1, 30 June 1952.

⁴The reports of the two commissions are analyzed in detail in Leitenberg, “Allegations of the Biological Warfare in China and Korea: 1951-1952.”

⁵G.P. Thompson, Letter to the Editor, “Germ Warfare,” *New Statesman and Nation*, 5 December 1953. In a 1984 interview with a Japanese academic, Needham said: “Of course, it is entirely true that the members of the Commission never actually saw any incident. What we did see were specimens of the containers that had been used and of the vectors as well as victims of the attacks. I must say that I did not gain the impression that the methods being used were very successful. . . . My judgement was never based on anything which the downed airmen had said, but rather entirely on the circumstantial evidence.” Quoted in Peter Williams and David Wallace, *Unit 731: The Japanese Army's Secret of Secrets* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1989), p. 255. Despite Needham's statement, the confessions of the US pilots comprise 117 pages of the 667 page ISC report, 18 percent of the total.

⁶Sheldon H. Harris, *Factories of Death: Japanese Biological Warfare, 1932-45, and the American Cover-Up* (London: Routledge, 1994). See also Williams and Wallace, *Unit 731: The Japanese Army's Secret of Secrets*.

⁷In addition to Harris's book, see two shorter accounts that stress in particular Washington's postwar role in covering up Japan's BW program in China and obtaining its research results:

—John W. Powell, “A Hidden Chapter in History,” *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* 37:8 (October 1981), pp. 44-52, and

—John W. Powell, “Japan's Germ Warfare: The US Cover-Up of a War Crime,” *Bulletin of the Concerned Asian Scholars* 12:4 (October-December 1980), pp. 2-17.

The decision by US intelligence agencies was also one that made very little sense—or none whatsoever. The information derived from the Japanese program, particularly on human pathology, which was the only aspect otherwise unavailable, was of *no* use to the US BW program. The joint US-UK-Canadian World War II BW R&D program had already taken a different path, and it was that path on which the postwar US BW program continued. Powell was a fervent and persistent believer in the Chinese and North Korean BW allegations, and the logic of his position required him to assume great benefit to the US BW R&D effort for having protected Ishii and his collaborators. That was not the case, but it was something that Powell's argumentation could never comprehend.

⁸“Russians Accuse US of Ready to Launch Germ War,” Associated Press dispatch, Moscow, 29 December 1949.

⁹*Materials on the Trial of Former Servicemen of the Japanese Army Charged with Manufacturing and Employing Bacteriological Weapons* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1950).

¹⁰The best summary of the Chinese charges in the spring of 1951, as well as of the simultaneous campaign that charged the United States with using chemical weapons in the Korean War, appears in A.M. Halpern, “Bacteriological Warfare Accusations in Two Asian Communist Propaganda Campaigns,” RAND RM-796, 25 April 1952.

¹¹The dates of the statements charging the US with chemical warfare were March 5, 6, 7, 8, 14, 17, 18, 19, 20, April 7, and May 13. See Halpern, “Bacteriological Warfare Accusations,” pp. 1-7.

¹²Quoted in Halpern, “Bacteriological Warfare Accusations,” pp. 6-7.

¹³A report prepared by the U.S. Department of State in June 1952 stated, “[i]n the beginning of May, . . . the Soviet representatives in Korea reprimanded in severe terms the north Koreans and Chinese Communists for failing to produce a better propaganda case on bacteriological warfare. This occurred after the north Koreans and Chinese communists were unable to produce enough ‘evidence’ for the international jurists commission ‘investigating’ the charges. Reportedly, all the north Koreans and Chinese did was to conduct the standard tours of bombed areas in Pyongyang and give the jurists the standard propaganda photos of women and children killed in air raids. As as a consequence of the Soviet reprimand, a conference was called of the interested parties in Sop'o. At that time the Russians instructed the north Koreans and Chinese Communists to provide propaganda material for meetings of the national ‘peace councils’ scheduled during the summer of this year.” Communist Bacteriological Warfare Propaganda, OIR/CPI Special Paper no. 4, 16 June 1952, Unclassified.

¹⁴“Statement by Secretary Dean Acheson, March 4, 1952,” *Department of State Bulletin* (DoSB), 26:664 (1952), pp. 427-428.

¹⁵Gen. Matthew B. Ridgeway, “Report of the U.N. Command Operations in Korea: Forty-first Report, For the Period March 1-15, 1952,” *DoSB* 26:679 (1952), p. 1040.

¹⁶Gen. Matthew B. Ridgeway, “A Report on the Far East,” *DoSB* 26:676 (1952), p. 926.

¹⁷In noting official U.S. denials of the charges, the historian should address the issue of relevant American covert operations during the Korean War. There were unquestionably covert, “black,” operations during the Korean War as there have been in every other war, and it is important to attempt to establish that none of these might have involved BW. In the early 1980s, an American reporter was told by former US military service personnel that a “Joint Technical Advisory Group” had been stationed at Atsugi Air Force Base until some time in 1951 or 1952, and that Gen. Ishii had been affiliated with it in some way. After the signing of the US-Japanese Peace Treaty, the group had allegedly been moved to Okinawa and renamed the “US Army Composite Services Group,” and in some way operated together with the US Central Intelligence Agency. These informants stated that the work of this unit was in some way related to BW, and possibly in relation to plant diseases. (Communications to another by William Triplett, 1989.) A series of Freedom of Information Act declassification requests failed to yield any information whatsoever about the above. Two small items marginally relevant to the Korean War BW story, however, can be explained. US covert operations were mounted behind Chinese and North Korean lines to obtain prisoners in order to ascertain what diseases they were suffering from. The motive for these operations was reportedly to be able to mount preventive measures against the respective diseases for US and other UN forces. These operations were known to the Chinese and used as part of the “proof” of the allegations: Beijing claimed that the US had mounted the operations to determine the efficacy of their BW efforts. There was also large-scale aerial pesticide spraying over the positions of UN combat forces to suppress disease vectors. Although herbicides ready for use were not approved for use by the President during the Korean War, there was apparently experimental defoliation of small tracts in Korea in 1951-1952. See William M. Leary, chap. 8, “The Korean War,” and chap. 9, “Covert Operations,” *Perilous Missions: Civil Air Transport and CIA Covert Operations in Asia* (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 1984), pp. 113-153; Ed Evanhoe,

Darkmoon: Eighth Army Special Operations in the Korean War (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1995); Arthur W. Galston, "Science and Social Responsibility: A Case Study," *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences* 196:4 (1972), pp. 223-35; and Arthur W. Galston, personal communication to author.

¹⁸U.S. Department of State, ed., *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1952-1954*, vol. 15, *Korea*, part I (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1984), p. 844.

¹⁹*Ibid.*

²⁰Quoted in John Ellis Van Courtland Moon, "Biological Warfare Allegations: The Korean War Case," *The Microbiologist and Biological Defense Research: Ethics, Politics and International Security*, R.A. Zilinskas, ed., *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences* 666 (1992): 53-83.1992, p. 69.

²¹See *The Problem of Chemical and Biological Warfare*, vol. 1: *The Rise of CB Weapons*, (Stockholm: Almquist and Wiksell, 1971), esp. pp. 162 and 210; vol. 2: *CB Weapons Today* (Stockholm: Almquist and Wiksell, 1973); *The Effects of Herbicides in Vietnam: Part A: Summary and Conclusions* (Washington, DC: National Academy of Sciences, 1974); Committee on Science and Astronautics, U.S. House of Representatives, 91st Congress (1st Session), ed., *Report: 1st Session, 8 August 1969* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1969); J.B. Nieland et al., *Harvest of Death: Chemical Warfare in Vietnam and Cambodia* (New York: The Free Press, 1972).

²²"Le Comité International de la Croix Rouge et le Conflit de Corée," *Recueil de Documents*, vol. II: January 1-June 30, 1952 (Geneva: ICRC, 1952), pp. 84-109.

²³Quoted in Moon, "Biological Warfare Allegations," p. 69.

²⁴The resolution "requested the International Committee of the Red Cross, with the aid of such scientists of international reputation and such other experts as it may select, to investigate the charges and to report the results to the Security Council as soon as possible; called upon all governments and authorities concerned to accord to the International Committee of the Red Cross full cooperation, including the right of entry to, and free movement in, such areas as the Committee may deem necessary in the performance of its task; requested the Secretary-General to furnish the Committee with such assistance and facilities as it might require." Goldblatt "Allegations of the Use of Bacteriological and Chemical Weapons in Korea and China," p. 214.

²⁵These are summarized in some detail in the Goldblatt, "Allegations of the Use of Bacteriological and Chemical Weapons in Korea and China."

²⁶Maarten Schneider, "Bacteria As Propaganda Weapon," *International Spectator* (Netherlands Institute of International Affairs), 8 May 1957.

²⁷Mose Harvey, "Briefing on Soviet Developments Following the Death of Stalin (April 24, 1953)," p. 459, in US House of Representatives, Committee on Foreign Affairs, *Selected Executive Session Hearings of the Committee, 1952-56*, vol. 14 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1980).

²⁸Novosti Press Agency and *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 13 September 1982 and 12 February 1983.

²⁹Milton Leitenberg, "Biological Weapons, International Sanctions, and Proliferation," *Asian Perspective* 21:3 (Winter 1997), pp. 7-39, especially pp. 23-27; Milton Leitenberg, "The Desirability of International Sanctions Against False Allegations of Use of Biological Weapons," *The Monitor: Nonproliferation, Demilitarization, and Arms Control*, 3:4/4:1 (Fall/Winter 1997-

1998), pp. 39-46.

³⁰Report of the [United Nations] Secretary General, *Chemical and Bacteriological (Biological) Weapons and the Effects of Their Possible Use* (New York: United Nations, 1969).

³¹A problem of judgment is introduced, however, by the fact that even official Soviet government statements at the very highest level exist that run counter to unquestionable fact regarding instances of CBW use: In an official Soviet comment on President Dwight D. Eisenhower's "Atoms for Peace" speech at the United Nations on 8 December 1953, the Soviet government drew attention to the 1925 Geneva Protocol by stating: "The fact that not a single Government engaged in the Second World War dared to use chemical and bacteriological weapons proves that the aforesaid agreement of the States against chemical and bacteriological weapons had positive significance." US Department of State, ed., *Documents on Disarmament: 1945-1959*, vol. I: 1945-1956 (Washington, DC: GPO, 1960) p. 402. That contention was unquestionably wrong: Japan had used both chemical and biological weapons in China during World War II, which the USSR knew, not least through the trial it had held in Khabarovsk in 1949.

³²A.M. Arkhangel'skiy et al., *Bacteriological Weapons and How to Defend Against Them* (Moscow: Military Publishing House, 1967), JPRS Translation #42,361, 28 August 1967.

³³In 1985, on the 40th anniversary of the end of World War II, the Novosti Press Agency published a small book, *Recalling the Past for the Sake of the Future: The Causes, Results and Lessons of World War II*. Pages 112-113 of the book reviews Japan's wartime BW program and the use of BW by Japan "in China and Mongolia." No mention is made of the Korean War at all.

³⁴E.I.Smirnov et al., *Voini i epidemii* [Wars and Epidemics] (Moscow: Moscow-Medicine, 1988).

³⁵"China Mulls Toxic Arms Ban," *Washington Times*, 20 September 1984, p. 5.

³⁶Chen Jian, "China's Strategies to End the Korean War," conference paper, CWIHP Conference on New Evidence on the Cold War in Asia, University of Hong Kong, 9-12 January 1996, quoting from Shen Zonghong and Meng Zhaohai, *A History of the Chinese People's Volunteers' War to Resist America and Assist Korea* (Beijing: PLA Publishing House, 1988), p. 7, and Qi Dexue, *Chaoxian Zhanzheng Neimu* [The Inside Story of the Korean War], p. 280 —no source or date. The author would like to thank Hang Zhou for the translation of the Chinese documents.

³⁷Shu Guang Zhang, *Mao's Military Romanticism: China and the Korean War 1950-1953* (Lawrence, KS: University of Kansas Press, 1995); Chen Jian, *China's Road to the Korean War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994).

³⁸Telegram, CPV Headquarters to the CMC, 28 January 1952, cited in *Yang Dezhi Memoirs*, p. 101, and in *Jiang Yonghui Memoirs*, p. 465; quoted in Shu Guang Zhang, *Mao's Military Romanticism*, p. 181.

³⁹Memorandum, Nie Rongzhen to Mao and Zhou Enlai, 18 February 1952, cited in Qi Dexue, *Chaoxian Zhanzheng Neimu*, pp. 280-282; quoted in Shu Guang Zhang, *Mao's Military Romanticism*, p. 182.

⁴⁰"Mao Zedong Comments on Nie Rongzhen's Report About the Large-Scale Airdropping of Insects Carrying Bacteria by the Enemy in the Korean Battlefield," 19 February 1952, *Jianquo Yilai Mao Zedong* [Anthology of Mao Zedong's Manuscripts Since the 1949 Founding of the People's Republic], vol. 3 [1/1952 to 12/1952] (Beijing: The Central Press of Historical Documents, 1989), p. 239.

⁴¹Memorandum, Zhou Enlai to Mao, 20 January 1952, cited in Qi Dexue, *Chaixian Zhanzheng Neimu*, p. 282. Quoted in Shu Guang Zhang, *Mao's Military Romanticism*, pp. 182-183.

⁴²Nie Rongzhen, "Report on American Invaders Using Bacteria Weapons and Our Responsive Actions," *Nie Rongzhen junshi wen xuan* [Selected Military Papers of Nie Rongzhen], (Beijing: People's Liberation Army Press, 1992), pp. 365-366. Most of the memorandum actually deals with other issues, such as pre-planned vaccines and gas defense for Chinese troops, anticipation of nuclear weapons use by the United States.

⁴³Halpern, "Bacteriological Warfare Accusations," p. 43.

⁴⁴Jon Halliday and Bruce Cumings, *Korea: The Unknown War* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1988), pp. 184-185.

⁴⁵Quoted in Cookson and Nottingham, *A Survey of Chemical and Biological Warfare*, p. 62.

⁴⁶Theodor Rosebury, "Biological Warfare: Some Historical Considerations," *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* 16:6 (June 1960), pp. 227-236.

⁴⁷Halpern, "Bacteriological Warfare Accusations," pp. iv, 26-30, 71-79.

⁴⁸Communist Bacteriological Warfare Propaganda, OIR/CPI Special Paper No. 4, June 16, 1952, Unclassified, pp. 24-25.

⁴⁹Schneider, "Bacteria as Propaganda-Weapon."

⁵⁰Stephen L. Endicott, "Germ Warfare and 'Plausible Denial': The Korean War, 1952-1953," *Modern China* 5:1 (January 1979), pp. 79-104. Rev. Endicott's judgment was that his "Personal investigations reveal undeniable evidence [of] large-scale continuing American germ warfare on [the] Chinese Mainland," and that "[t]he evidence can readily convince any impartial and unbiased person."

⁵¹Descriptions of both men appear in Chapter 17, "Korean War," in Williams and Wallace, *Unit 731*, esp. pp. 255-263.

⁵²Leitenberg, "Allegations of the Biological Warfare in China and Korea: 1951-1952," p. 258.

⁵³Cookson and Nottingham, *A Survey of Chemical and Biological Warfare*, pp. 307 and 62.

⁵⁴Jaap van Ginneken, "Bacteriological Warfare," *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 7:2 (1977), pp. 130-152.

⁵⁵Halliday and Cumings, *Korea*, p. 185.

⁵⁶Letter from Joseph Needham to Jeanne McDermott, quoted in *The Killing Winds: The Menace of Biological Warfare* (New York: Arbor House, 1986), p. 169. In a letter to Stephen Endicott in 1979 (Endicott, "Germ Warfare and 'Plausible Denial,'" p. 86), Needham also repeated that he maintained his earlier position on the allegations.

⁵⁷Williams and Wallace, *Unit 731*, pp. 235-285.

⁵⁸Albert E. Cowdrey, "'Germ Warfare' and Public Health in the Korean Conflict," *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences* 39 (April 1984), pp. 153-172.

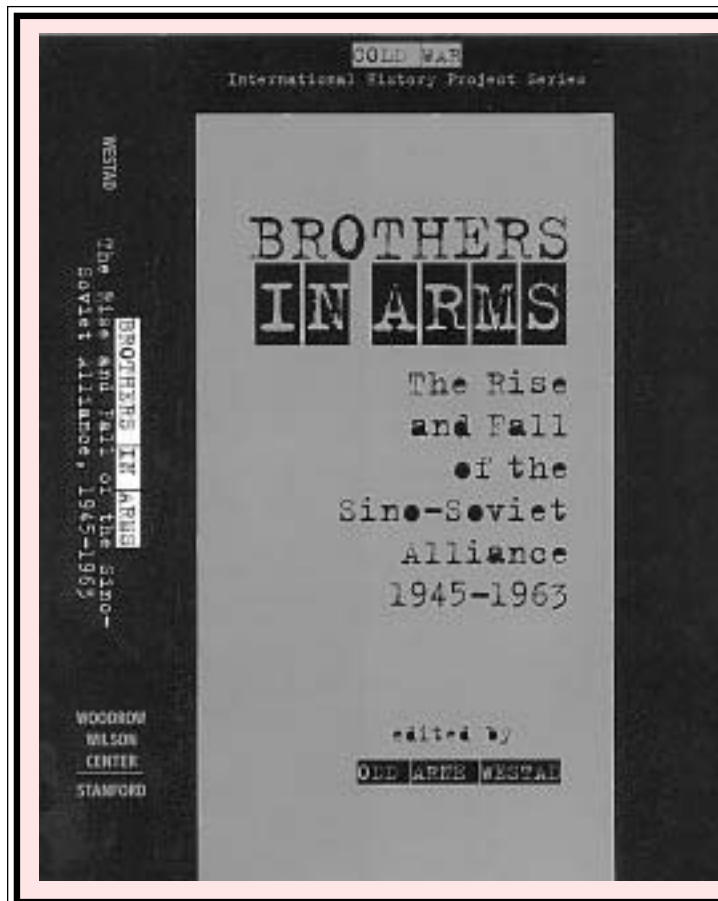
⁵⁹Henry A. Kissinger, *Nuclear Weapons and Foreign Policy* (New York: Harper and Bros 1957), p. 376.

⁶⁰Alice Langley Hsieh, *Communist China's Strategy in the Nuclear Age* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1962), p. 4.

⁶¹Mark A. Ryan, "Nuclear Weapons and Chinese Allegations of Chemical and Biological Warfare," *Chinese Attitudes Toward Nuclear Weapons: China and the United States During the Korean War* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1989), pp. 104-138. Ryan probably exaggerated the number of individuals in China that need to have been involved in the deception in the field (and was so advised by this author in 1988 after reading his manuscript).

⁶²*Ibid.*, p. 104.

⁶³Van Courtland Moon, "Biological Warfare Allegations: The Korean War Case," pp. 53-83.



First Volume in "CWIHP Book Series" Published

Brothers in Arms: The Rise and Fall of the Sino-Soviet Alliance 1945-1963

Ed. by Odd Arne Westad
(Stanford University Press/Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 1998)

This volume brings together young scholars from China, Russia, the United States, and Europe who, drawing on much newly available documentation, analyze the complicated and often stormy history of the Sino-Soviet relationship from World War II to the 1960s.

For further information contact:

Stanford University Press
CUP Distribution Center
110 Midland Avenue
Port Chester, NY 10573-4930
Phone: 800-872-7423
or the CWIHP office