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## The Bonds of Brotherhood: New Evidence on Sino–North Korean Exchanges, 1950–1954

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## The Bonds of Brotherhood

New Evidence on Sino–North Korean Exchanges,  
1950–1954

❖ Adam Cathcart and Charles Kraus

Scholars have often noted that the Soviet Union's reluctance to enter the Korean War resulted in significant changes in North Korea's international alignments. Specifically, the war induced North Koreans to look less to the Soviet Union for advice, influence, and support, and more to the People's Republic of China (PRC).<sup>1</sup> On the battlefield and behind the front lines, the war accelerated contacts between North Korean leaders and their Chinese comrades. In the postwar period, China behaved generously toward the North Koreans, offering food, material aid, monetary support, and laborers.

Until recently, however, the general lack of primary documents on these topics meant that China's greater importance in North Korean foreign relations in the 1950s was mostly a matter of conjecture. This article uses evidence from the PRC Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) Archive to fill part of the documentary gap.<sup>2</sup> The documents illuminate a range of issues, including how the PRC dealt with North Korean refugees and retreating soldiers flooding into China, welcomed North Korean students and cultural groups travel-

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1. Andrei Lankov, *Crisis in North Korea: The Failure of De-Stalinization, 1956* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2005), p. 19; Balázs Szalontai, *Kim Il Sung in the Khrushchev Era: Soviet-DPRK Relations and the Roots of North Korean Despotism, 1953–1964* (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2005), p. 32; and Robert A. Scalapino and Chong Sik-Lee, *Communism in Korea, Part I: The Movement* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972), pp. 475–476. Bruce Cumings emphasizes Chinese influence after 1947. See his *The Origins of the Korean War*, Vol. 2, *The Roaring of the Cataract, 1947–1950* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990), pp. 350–370. For Chinese cultural influence in North Korea prior to the war, see Adam Cathcart and Charles Kraus, "Internationalist Culture in North Korea," *Review of Korean Studies*, Vol. 11, No. 3 (Fall 2008), pp. 134–142. For caveats suggesting limits to Chinese influence on North Korea's decision to attack the South, see Chen Jian, *China's Road to the Korean War: The Making of the Sino-American Confrontation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), p. 111.

2. For general information on the archive and its holdings, history, and future, see Christian F. Ostermann, "Archival Thaw in China," *Cold War International History Project Bulletin*, No. 16 (Fall 2007–Spring 2008), pp. 1–6.

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ing in the PRC, and shuffled Pyongyang's requests between Zhou Enlai and the Northeast People's Government. The wide range of documented Sino–North Korean contacts, particularly those concerning repatriation, shed light on this significant transitional period. The PRC MFA archival holdings not only provide information about a rich diversity of personalities involved in Sino–North Korean relations, they also contain a small number of Korean-language documents from the Beijing embassy of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), documents that represent a tentative step toward developing a more complete understanding of what the war and its Chinese-dominated aftermath looked like from Pyongyang.

The MFA documents, together with the three volumes of Zhou Enlai's manuscripts published in April 2008, shed valuable light on Zhou's concerns during the Korean War.<sup>3</sup> Supplementing these materials are recently declassified intelligence estimates produced by the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) during and after the Korean War. The documents suggest that although Sino–North Korean relations at that time did not yet eclipse North Korea's ties with the Soviet Union, Chinese economic and military influence with North Korea was growing faster than Soviet influence.<sup>4</sup> Finally, documents collected and translated by the Cold War International History Project and the North Korea International Documentation Project further strengthen an interpretation of China's vigorous role in North Korean affairs during and after the Korean War.<sup>5</sup> In emphasizing some of the lower-level contacts in the Sino–North Korean relationship, this article traces how North Korea's relationship with China evolved in the 1950s.<sup>6</sup>

3. *Jianguo yilai Zhou Enlai Wengao* [Manuscripts of Zhou Enlai since the founding of the Republic], 3 vols. (Beijing: Zhongyang Wenxian Chubanshe, 2008) (hereinafter referred to as *JYZEW*, with appropriate volume and page information).

4. U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), Office of Current Intelligence, "Relative Influence of the Soviet Union and Communist China in North Korea," 21 May 1953, p. 1, in CIA-RDP91T01172R000200300029-7, CIA Records Search Tool (CREST), U.S. National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), College Park, MD. Such sources must be used with some caution. At times the CIA relied mainly on information from Chinese and North Korean newspapers or from individual accounts, and U.S. foreign policy biases sometimes skewed the materials. Furthermore, these sources by no means offer a comprehensive view of Sino–North Korean relations. Their value lies in the abundant and detailed economic and industrial data offered. All CIA sources cited in this article come from CREST, a huge digitized collection at NARA.

5. See the Cold War International History Project's collection on the Korean War at [http://www.wilsoncenter.org/index.cfm?topic\\_id=1409&fuseaction=va2.browse&sort=Collection&item=The%20Korean%20War](http://www.wilsoncenter.org/index.cfm?topic_id=1409&fuseaction=va2.browse&sort=Collection&item=The%20Korean%20War).

6. Shen Zhihua's recent work departs from discussion of the Korean War's origins but remains focused on the Sino–North Korean relationship at the highest levels only. Similarly, Andrei Lankov has called for a more thorough assessment of the Sino–North Korean relationship, but he himself rarely departs from discussion of top leaders. See Shen Zhihua, "Sino–North Korean Conflict and Its Resolution during the Korean War," trans. by Dong Gil Kim and Jeffrey Becker, *Cold War International History Project Bulletin*, No. 14/15 (Winter 2003–Spring 2004), pp. 9–24; and Lankov, *Crisis in North Korea*, p. 6.

## Sino-Korean Population Movements

In October 1949 the North Korean government became one of the first to establish diplomatic ties with the PRC. After receiving an official request from DPRK Foreign Minister Pak Hon-yong on 4 October, Zhou Enlai sent an affirmative response.<sup>7</sup> Zhou and Pak, however, were merely codifying what had been a loosely structured relationship between the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and North Korea for many years. Political, military, economic, and cultural exchange had been taking place along the Sino-Korean frontier throughout the Chinese Civil War. Most significantly, North Korea's northern provinces had served as a strategic sanctuary for People's Liberation Army (PLA) soldiers and supplies during pivotal stages of the civil war in the north-east, sparing many lives and countless goods from Kuomintang destruction.<sup>8</sup> But the Sino-Korean relationship was not just a one-way street benefiting North Korea. Kim Il-Sung was convinced that a Chinese Communist victory would have important political and social implications for his regime. After 1948, when the Chinese Communist victory seemed more and more imminent, North Korean media outlets closely followed campaigns in the war and made special note of each city that fell to the CCP.<sup>9</sup> To readers, this suggested the political tides in East Asia were turning in North Korea's favor, and speculation inevitably arose that Syngman Rhee's fate would soon mirror that of Jiang Jieshi's. By 1949 the Chinese Civil War had become a central event in North Korean society, and the CCP victory was both welcomed and celebrated. The establishment of diplomatic relations with the PRC in October capped what had been an important and reciprocal relationship since 1945.

In the spring of 1950, North Korea and the PRC were consolidating power domestically while preparing the grounds for overrunning their respective rival southern states. In this period, communications between Beijing and Pyongyang were sporadic, but one avenue of cooperation for the two Communist states was the return of Korean soldiers and cadres from China. In early 1950, an outstanding matter remained concerning the repatriation to North Korea of ethnic Korean soldiers who had fought with the PLA during

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7. See "Chaoxian yuan yu wo jianli waijiao guanxi shi zhi Zhou Enlai zongli de han (Zhongwen, Chaowen)" [Letter to Premier Zhou Enlai on North Korea's willingness to establish diplomatic relations with China (Chinese, Korean)], 4 October 1949–6 October 1950, p. 6, in Doc. No. 106-00001-01, MFA Archive, Beijing.

8. Kim Donggil, "Zhongguo renmin jiefangjunzhong de Chaoxianshi hui Chaoxian wenti xinshen" [Some new insights into the return of the ethnic Korean divisions in the PLA to North Korea], *Lishi yanjiu* [History Research], No. 6 (2000), pp. 103–114; Odd Arne Westad, *Decisive Encounters: The Chinese Civil War, 1946–1950* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003), pp. 318–322; Chen, *China's Road to the Korean War*, pp. 106–113; and Cumings, *Origins of the Korean War*, pp. 350–370.

9. Cathcart and Kraus, "Internationalist Culture in North Korea," pp. 134–142.

the Chinese Civil War.<sup>10</sup> In January 1950, the CCP arranged for representatives of Kim Il-Sung to come to Wuhan to receive some 14,000 Korean soldiers of the Fourth Field Army, along with their weaponry.<sup>11</sup> Although the return of Koreans to China to join Kim Il-Sung's Korean People's Army (KPA) is typically regarded as a pre-Korean War phenomenon, it in fact continued well into the autumn of 1950.<sup>12</sup> Although the numbers sent back were not immense in the summer and fall of 1950, the return of ethnic Korean soldiers, families, workers, and students to North Korea was an extensive process, coordinated at all levels of the Chinese government and military, including the MFA, the Ministry of the Interior, the PLA North China Military Area, the Northeast Foreign Affairs Bureau, and provincial and city governments. The North Korean embassy in China was also an important player in moving repatriations forward.<sup>13</sup> The MFA holdings do not force a radical shift from findings in previous scholarship, but the documents do suggest how the returning soldiers augmented KPA strength and technical ability, and they reveal both the social dimensions and the prewar fluidity between the boundaries of the PLA and the Korean People's Army. In March 1950 the Northern Military District of the PLA was in contact with the MFA in Beijing about returning groups of Korean soldiers.<sup>14</sup> PLA officers took significant time to lay out in detail individual cases of the would-be KPA, providing context for the Koreans who wished to cross the border, changing their national and military affiliations.<sup>15</sup> On 11 April 1950 the PLA informed the MFA that they had sent back ten Korean mechanics from the Second Mechanized Division of the PLA in northern China, relinquishing their technical expertise to the

10. Chen Jian, *China's Road to the Korean War*, pp. 106–111; and Cumings, *Origins of the Korean War*, pp. 362–365.

11. “Junwei tongyi di si yezhanjun zhong Chaoxian guanbing hui Chaoxian de dianbao,” [Telegrams of the Central Military Commission agreeing to have Korean soldiers in the Fourth Field Army return to North Korea], January 1950, in *Jianguo Yilai Liu Shaoqi Wengao (JYLSW)* [Manuscripts of Liu Shaoqi since the founding of the Republic], 4 vols. Beijing: Zhong yang wen xian chu ban she, 1993–2005], Vol. 1, pp. 319–321. (henceforth cited as *JYLSW*).

12. Kim Donggil, “Reconsideration: Repatriation of the Ethnic Korean Divisions in the PLA to North Korea in 1949 and 1950,” unpublished working paper, 2008; and Kim Donggil, “Zhongguo renmin jiefangjunzhong de Chaoxianshi hui Chaoxian wenti xinshen” [Some New Insights into the Return of Ethnic Korean Divisions in the PLA to North Korea in 1949 and 1950], *Lishi yanjiu*, No. 6 (2006), pp. 103–114.

13. “Wo tiedao bingtuan Chaoxian budui huiguo jiaoyu wenti de laiwanhan” [Correspondence on the problem of educating our railroad military units returning to China from Korea], 21–27 May 1950, p. 6, in Doc. No. 118-00077-01, MFA Archive; and “Chaoxian shiguan pairen gei wo tiedao bingtuan budui zuo huiguo jiaoyu baogao de lairenhan” [Correspondence from Korean embassy delegate regarding the enactment of return-to-country education for Korean units in our railroad military corps], 12–20 June 1950, in Doc. No. 118-00077-02, MFA Archive.

14. “Jiefangjun Huabei junqu Chaoxianji ren yuan jia qing huiguo shi de laiwanhan” [Communication on the matter of members of Korean nationality in the People's Liberation Army North China Military Area], 9 March 1950, pp. 1–7, in Doc. No. 118-00080-01, MFA Archive.

15. *Ibid.*, March–April 1950, pp. 13–29.

KPA.<sup>16</sup> In May 1950, as the ethnic Koreans left China to become KPA soldiers, their families stayed behind in the PRC and sought concrete benefits from PRC bureaucracies.<sup>17</sup> Because the matter of their nationality was complex (many had been in China for a decade or more), no immediate decisions were made about giving these families social benefits, which would have been on a par with those enjoyed by other Chinese PLA veterans.<sup>18</sup>

Data from the MFA Archive do not fundamentally shake the established reasons for Chinese intervention in the Korean War, but the information does describe the care the central leaders in Beijing took in coordinating policy with the North Korean comrades.<sup>19</sup> Mao may have been taken by alarm by the timing of Kim Il-Sung's invasion (an act that threw Mao's Taiwan calculus to the winds and evened the score for the Minsaengdan incident of 1932), but the CCP remained in close contact with the North Korean government in the spring of 1950. Often, repatriation issues were at the core of Sino–North Korean contacts.

With the outbreak of war on the Korean peninsula on 25 June 1950, the pace of requests quickened. Many Koreans in China wished to return to Korea to fight. A survey by the Foreign Affairs Bureau of the Northeast People's Government found that 38 male Korean soldiers entered North Korea from Manchuria in June 1950, 8 in July, 61 in August, and 4 in September. August was also the high point for repatriation of North Korean cadres from China. That month, a total of 104 cadres (including 2 females), accompanied by 61 soldiers and 59 workers, returned to Korea.<sup>20</sup> In addition to soldiers, the CCP Central Committee on 18 July ordered the Northeast People's Government—led by the ubiquitous Gao Gang—to mobilize Korean-nationality doctors, nurses, drivers, mining engineers, and ordnance personnel to return to North Korea, where they “[were] all much needed.”<sup>21</sup> Requests for repatriation con-

16. *Ibid.*, 11 April 1950, p. 32.

17. “Waijiaobu guanyu zai Zhongguo de Chaoxianren huiguo canjun qi jiashu shifou an jun shu you dai wenti zhi zhongyangjunwei han” [Letter from the Foreign Ministry to the Central Military Commission concerning the question of preferential treatment for family members of Koreans in China repatriating to North Korea to join the army], 25 May 1950, in Doc. No. 118-00080-03, MFA Archive.

18. For general information on the nationality issue among Korean soldiers who had fought in the Chinese Civil War, see Gao Yongyi, *Zhongguo Chaoxianzu lishi Yanjiu* [Historical research on Chinese Koreans] (Yanbian, China: Yanbian Jiaoyu Chubanshe, 2007), p. 416; and Kim Chun-seon, “The Settlement and Repatriation of Koreans in Northeast China after Liberation,” *Korea Journal* (Fall 2004), pp. 85–110.

19. For a detailed review of Mao Zedong and the CCP's decision to enter the Korean War, see Chen Jian, *China's Road to the Korean War*; and Shu Guang Zhang, *Deterrence and Strategic Culture: Chinese-American Confrontations, 1949–58* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1992).

20. “Dongbei waishiju guanyu neipai Chaoxian ganbu ji gui guo ganbu qingkuang huibao” [Collected report by Northeast Foreign Affairs Bureau regarding internal North Korean cadres and those returning to their country], 19 September 1950, p. 2, in Doc. No. 118-00080-06, MFA Archive.

21. “Zhongyang guanyu dongyuan Chaoxianji jishuren yuan huiguoshi gei gao gang de dianbao”

tinued to arrive at the MFA, some from Kim Il-Sung himself, at least into September, and at one point the Northeast People's Government even offered to pay the "household allowances" for Korean drivers returning home.<sup>22</sup> When North Korea made a request to PRC Ambassador Ni Zhiliang to supply 500 soldiers to operate radios, CCP Chairman Mao Zedong criticized the chain of command for such a sensitive issue. The Chinese leaders afterward suggested that these personnel instead be selected "from the Korean students in Yanji"—a further indication that transferring Koreans from northeast China back to North Korea was a recurring issue.<sup>23</sup> The total of 347 repatriations to Korea from Manchuria described in the MFA documents from June to September 1950 is hardly an overwhelming number, but indicates that China was carefully tracking the number of returning Koreans. The number also throws into statistical relief the huge contrast between the small number of Koreans going south from Manchuria and the exponentially increasing numbers of refugees moving in the opposite direction, seeking entrance into China.<sup>24</sup>

Given the intense Chinese propaganda support for the North Korean war effort, questions arose about the Korean repatriates and would-be repatriates, who were leaving their families behind in China. The families expected preferential treatment, as had been the case for PLA families in the Chinese Civil War, but the matter first had to be debated in Beijing.<sup>25</sup> The question of according benefits to families of Korean soldiers in China was, in some sense, a question that replicated China's larger dilemma as 1950 lengthened: To what extent would rhetorical support for North Korea extend to material support

[Telegram to Gao Gang concerning the mobilization of Korean-nationality technicians to return to Korea], 18 July 1950, in *JYZEW*, Vol. 3, p. 60.

22. Central Committee, "Zhongyang guanyu dongyuan Chaoxianji jishuren yuan huiguoshi gei gao gang de dianbao" [Telegram to Gao Gang concerning the mobilization of Korean nationality technicians to return to Korea], 18 July 1950, in *JYZEW*, Vol. 3, p. 60; Zhou Enlai, "Guanyu tongyi Chaoxian zai Zhongguo sheli cangku deng gei ni zhiliang deng de dianbao" [Telegram to Ni Zhiliang, etc., concerning agreement with North Korea to set up warehouses in China and other matters], 29 September 1950, in *JYZEW*, Vol. 3, pp. 345–346; and Zhou Enlai, "Guanyu dongyuan zai dongbei de Chaoxian renyuan huiguo shi gei gao gang deng de dianbao" [Telegram to Gao Gang, etc., concerning the matter of mobilization of Korean personnel in northeast China to return to Korea], 4 October 1950, in *JYZEW*, Vol. 3, p. 381.

23. Central Committee, "Zhongyang guanyu cong Chaoxian choudiao wuxiandianhuayuan shi gei Gao Gang de dianbao" [Telegram to Gao Gang concerning the transfer of radio operators from North Korea], 25 August 1950, in *JYZEW*, Vol. 3, pp. 199–200.

24. "Dongbei waishiju guanyu neipai Chaoxian ganbu ji gui guo ganbu qingkuang huibao," 19 September 1950.

25. "Neibuwu guanyu zai Zhongguo de Chaoxianren huiguo canjun qi jiaoshu shifo anjun shuyoudai wenti zhi wajiaobu han" [Internal Affairs Department Response letter to foreign ministry concerning the question of whether or not to extend preferential treatment for family members of Koreans in China repatriating to North Korea to join the army], 18 September 1950, in Doc. No. 118-00080-02, MFA Archive.

in the struggle? The views of local governments on this matter had to be taken into account by the ministries in Beijing, which were themselves handling various requests from localities about Koreans seeking benefits.<sup>26</sup> Demand for benefits was such that the MFA had to reply in a blanket statement to all internal affairs bureaus, stating that the families were ineligible for Chinese government funding. Denying PRC benefits to North Korean–affiliated families in China made them all the more likely to look to Pyongyang for support.<sup>27</sup>

However, tensions over these matters were rarely acknowledged in public. Instead, the North Korean attack on the South, the rapid initial “liberation” of Seoul, and the unexpected intervention of the United States in the conflict elicited strident Chinese declarations of support for North Korea. Waves of pro-North demonstrations and publications flowed throughout China.<sup>28</sup> At the North Korean embassy in Beijing, Kim Il-Sung’s neglected channel for conveying his war plan to Mao, diplomats expressed a desire to participate in Chinese activities denouncing the United States for “invading” Taiwan.<sup>29</sup> With such tender steps, the North Korean embassy moved into a position of greater coordination with the Chinese MFA as the two countries plunged forward into the often unwilling embrace of cooperation. The halting internal cooperation between Chinese and North Korean diplomats indicates that, whatever the vehemence of the anti-American demonstrations in Chinese cities and towns, declarations of Sino–North Korean brotherhood did not automatically lead to flawless coordination in the early Korean War.<sup>30</sup>

One aspect of the war that brought the two Communist governments

26. “Waijiaobu fu neiwubu guanyu Chaoxian huiguo canjun qi jiayu bu yuyi junyu youyu han” [Foreign Ministry reply letter to internal affairs departments indicating that preferential treatment not be extended to families of Koreans returning to North Korea to join the army], 2 November 1950, in Doc. No. 118-00080-04, MFA Archive.

27. For a roughly contemporaneous example of ethnic Koreans in border regions of China turning to Pyongyang for material support in the absence of funding from Beijing, see “Dongbei Jiaoyubu Yanbian Daxue guanyu yu Chaoxian jianli tushu jiaohuan guanxi de xinjian; Tushu mulu; Tongjibiao [Letters from Northeast Education Bureau/Yanbian University regarding establishment of library exchange connections with North Korea], June 1950, in File No. 18, Yanbian University Archive, Yanji, China.

28. A good example of propaganda in Sichuan is Chuandong Junqu Wenyi Yeshu [East Sichuan Military Region Arts Publishers], eds., *Ai Zu Guo: Kangmei Yuanchao Jiji* [Love the motherland: Collection of dramas to resist America and aid Korea] (Chongqing: Chongqing lianhe yuanshu chubanshe fuyin, 1951). For pro–North Korean songs in Guangdong, see Li Caiguang, ed., *Kangmei Yuanchao Gequ* [Songs to resist America and aid Korea] (Guangzhou: Zhonghua yuexue shenyinxing, 1950).

29. “Guanyu Chaoxian zhuHua shiguan ren yuan canjia wo fanmei qinChao qinTai huodongshi” [Regarding the matter of a committee from the Korean embassy participating in our “anti-U.S. invading Korea and Taiwan’ activities”], 19 July 1950, in Doc. No. 117-00034-03, MFA Archive. For a rebuttal of the notion of an “invasion” of Taiwan by American troops, see Harry S. Truman, *Years of Trial and Hope, 1946–1952*, Vol. 2 (New York: Doubleday, 1956), p. 354.

30. A much fuller explanation of this is available in draft conference proceedings. See Chen Jian, “Limits of the ‘Lips and Teeth Alliance’: The Antinomies of the Chinese–North Korean Relations,” Symposium at Cornell University, 29–30 September 2006.

into rapid alignment was the magnitude of U.S. air superiority over the Korean Peninsula.<sup>31</sup> U.S. bombing reaped a toll not just on the forward positions of the KPA but increasingly on the rear areas and cities of North Korea. Whereas the U.S. air strategy in July 1950 had focused on blunting the force of KPA front-line attacks south of the 38th parallel, U.S. bombers in August and September increasingly rained fire on North Korea itself.<sup>32</sup> Pyongyang in particular was being bombed regularly, eliciting dramatic dispatches from the Chinese embassy there.<sup>33</sup> DPRK government agencies began moving north toward Sinuiju and Kanggye.<sup>34</sup> The aerial destruction was also triggering the movement of refugees out of North Korea into China, a problem the North Korean embassy in Beijing was quick to admit. The issue of refugees from North Korea thus became central to the question of the Korean War's potential impact on China.<sup>35</sup> The MFA data appear, then, to confirm Allen Whiting's 1963 speculation in *China Crosses the Yalu*: Preventing a wave of refugees from crossing into the northeast was a significant part of Beijing's internal rationale for action in Korea. The alternative was to accept the quasi-permanent status of North Korean consulates and enclaves up and down the border from Dandong to Ji'an/Tonghua and on to Yanbian in the north. What Whiting and others did not realize, however, is the forceful role of the North Korean government in arguing for the setup of its immigration offices north of the Yalu.

On 2 August 1950, concerned about the uncontrolled outflow of refugees into Manchuria, the North Korean embassy in Beijing took the unusual step of petitioning the Chinese MFA for the establishment of a DPRK consular office in Andong. Andong (today Dandong) was the largest Chinese city

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31. Propaganda in northeastern China increasingly projected to the Chinese people images of U.S. bombing atrocities in North Korea, implying that China could be bombed as well and thereby linking the self-interest of the Chinese people to that of the suffering North Koreans. For representative examples, see *LüDa ribao* [Port Arthur/Dalian daily news], 25 October 1950, p. 6; and *LüDa ribao*, 11 November 1950, p. 4.

32. The subject of the air war in Korea is treated at length in Robert F. Futrell, *The United States Air Force in Korea, 1950–1953* (Washington, DC: Office of Air Force History, U.S. Air Force, 1983). See also Zhang Xiaoming, *Red Wings over the Yalu: China, the Soviet Union, and the Air War in Korea* (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 2002).

33. The U.S. air raid on the city on 8 August with about 50 planes prompted the Chinese chargé d'affaires in Pyongyang to ask Zhou Enlai whether the embassy could be equipped with anti-aircraft weapons. "Guanyu Chaoxian zhanzheng baofahou Zhongguoshi zhu Chaoxian shiguan bian zhi deng wenti shi" [Regarding the matter of staffing the Chinese embassy in North Korea after the outbreak of the Korean War and other problems], 8 August 1950, pp. 2–3, in Doc. No. 106-00021-09, MFA Archive.

34. Cumings, *Origins of the Korean War*, p. 730.

35. Whiting's classic analysis refers to the refugee issue but does not indicate its potential magnitude within Beijing's war calculus. See Allen S. Whiting, *China Crosses the Yalu: The Decision to Enter the Korean War* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1960).

on the Sino-Korean border and the site of extensive bilateral trade via Sinuiju. During the Korean War, it became the gateway for the vast majority of North Koreans fleeing violence on the peninsula. The North Korean request framed the projected responsibilities of the Andong office as follows: first, to communicate with the DPRK Foreign Ministry and the embassy in China; second, to connect with the commercial delegation of the DPRK in northeast China; and third, to form an office, led by someone at the level of first or second secretary of the North Korean embassy, to handle documentation for citizens of the DPRK who were temporarily in China, and to issue documents to those moving about (*luxing*).<sup>36</sup> In concluding this note, the embassy added its desire to have the office in Andong set up by 15 August 1950, a date perhaps chosen to coincide with the more positive association of liberation from Japan. Under any other circumstances 15 August would have been considered a tight deadline for setting up such an office in a neighboring sovereign state. Haste, however, was the order of the day. The document appears to have been written rapidly and contains a handful of subtle revelations. The Korean original describes the type of people the Andong office would be helping as “DPRK citizens” (*Choson Inmin Minjujuui Gonghwaguk kongmin*). However, the authors misspelled the word for “country” (*guk*), dropping the final consonant. This unintentional linguistic amputation, even if just a simple typographical error, constitutes a type of Freudian diplomatic slip reminding us that the DPRK was indeed disintegrating and that the refugees might well have lost their homeland in 1950.<sup>37</sup> The note also functioned as a tangible acknowledgment by the DPRK that it was losing control of its own citizens, many of whom were, in effect, “wandering about” in Manchuria. Such a concession was likely difficult for the North Koreans to make, but it presaged Kim Il-Sung’s abject October request for Chinese intervention on the peninsula.

The Chinese Foreign Ministry moved quickly to respond to North Korea’s unusual request. In forwarding the request to the Northeast People’s Government in Shenyang, MFA officials stated that “we agree in principle to the request by the Korean embassy” to establish an office in Andong. On

36. The “Commercial delegation of the Northeast in Korea” (Dongbei zhu Chaoxian shangye daibiaotuan) was the de facto Chinese embassy in North Korea until the official Chinese embassy opened probably only days after this request was sent. See Central Committee, “Zhongyang guanyu yu Chaoxian maoyi tongshang tanan wenti de dianbao” [Telegram from the Central Committee concerning negotiations on trade and trade relations with North Korea], 21 April 1950, in *JYZEW*, Vol. 2, p. 325; and “Chaoxian zai Shenyang, Andong, Tonghua shiban shiji goushi (Zhongwen, Chaowen)” [North Korea setting up mission offices to handle affairs in Shenyang, Andong, and Tonghua cities (Chinese, Korean)], 2 August 1950–13 December 1950, in Doc. No. 106-00002-04, MFA Archive.

37. “Chaoxian zai Shenyang, Andong, Tonghua shiban shij goushi,” pp. 1–3. The Chinese translation that accompanies the document contains penciled corrections likely done by a staff member in the North Korean embassy in Beijing.

9 August, the MFA answered in the affirmative via an official note.<sup>38</sup> However, the establishment of the office was delayed, possibly because “accidental” U.S. air raids that rocked Andong on 24 August and 27 August. These incidents stirred substantial panic in the city and hampered the PRC’s ability to handle the refugee problem.<sup>39</sup> At the local level, however, such attacks likely prompted consideration of moving all operations further inland, including those for handling refugees.<sup>40</sup> There would be little sense in setting up facilities so close to the border if General MacArthur decided to relinquish the restrictions under which he had been broadly operating. Possible chaos in the North Korean administration may also have been responsible for the delay. Sinuiju was the logical source for DPRK cadres moving to Andong.<sup>41</sup> Despite these hindrances, by early September the Andong office was in operation.<sup>42</sup>

As Kim Il-Sung embarked on his euphemistic “temporary” retreat in October–November 1950, he was pursued by the Far East Air Force (FEAF) commanded by George E. Stratemeyer. Stratemeyer and MacArthur, in coordinating U.S./UN air strategy, assumed that Kim and his government would

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38. “Chaoxian zai Shenyang, Andong, Tonghua shiban shiji goushi (Zhongwen, Chaowen),” 2 August 1950–13 December 1950.

39. Before admitting that a U.S. Air Force F-51 strafed an airstrip near Andong, about five miles north of the Korean border on 27 August 1950, Warren Austin, the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations (UN), attributed this “possibility” to “climatic conditions.” Warren Austin, *UN Security Council Meetings*, 31 August 1950, S/PV.493, pp. 24–25. Richard Thornton suggests that the Andong incident was the work of Soviet planes hoping to push China more swiftly into war with the United States, but no concrete evidence for Thornton’s hypothesis has yet turned up. What is certain is that Zhou Enlai and the PRC regime used the incidents as effective international and domestic propaganda. See Richard Thornton, *Odd Man Out: Truman, Stalin, Mao and the Origins of Korean War* (Washington, DC: Brassey’s, 2000); and “Meiguo feiji qinfan Zhongguo lingkong shijian baogaoshu” [Report on American aircrafts violating Chinese airspace], 24 August–27 September 1950, p. 144, in Doc. No. 111-00041-01, MFA Archive. For similar PRC accusations about U.S. surveillance flights over Shandong, see Zhou Enlai to UN Security Council, in *United Nations Security Council: Official Records, Fifth Year: Supplement for September through December 1950*, United Nations University Library, S/1870, p. 95; and the coverage in *Renmin ribao*, 28 September 1950. For Mao’s possible role in fabricating reports about the Shandong incidents, see Mao Zedong, Memorandum to Zhou Enlai, 16 September 1950, in Zhang Shuguang and Chen Jian, eds., *Chinese Communist Foreign Policy and the Cold War in Asia: New Documentary Evidence, 1944–1950* (Chicago: Imprint Publications, 1996), p. 160. For Truman’s orders to the Air Force about scaling back reconnaissance flights near Dalian that might serve as a pretext for Soviet intervention in July 1950, see Truman, *Memoirs*, Vol. 2, p. 346.

40. See documents from Kuandian displayed at the exhibition in the War to Resist America and Aid Korea Museum, Dandong, Liaoning Province, PRC.

41. For detailed discussion of Andong/Sinuiju ties in the prewar period, see Adam Cathcart and Charles Kraus, “Peripheral Influence: The Sinuiju Student Incident and the Soviet Occupation of North Korea, 1945–1947,” *Journal of Korean Studies*, Vol. 13, No. 1 (Fall 2008), pp. 1–28.

42. Little is known of how this office operated, the names of its staff, or the nature of its interaction with Andong city government or the local foreign affairs department (*Waishichu*). Attempts to check Dandong City Archives for evidence of such cooperation were denied in 2007, and standard sources such as *Dandong Shizhi* omit mention of any such organization. For discussion of specific North Korean Foreign Ministry officials with previous contacts in Manchuria who might have been given such assignments, see Cathcart and Kraus, “Internationalist Culture in North Korea,” p. 140.

flee toward China, the UN forces accordingly showered Sinuiju and the roads leading to that city with bombs.<sup>43</sup> Coupled with U.S. infantry's northward advance, the intense bombardment caused disintegrating KPA units to flee into Chinese sanctuary to avoid destruction. The neat symmetry this offers has already been remarked upon: China could now repay North Korea for having opened its borders in 1946 and 1947 as a sanctuary to CCP forces reeling from the Chinese Civil War. In 1950, however, as chaos was threatening to overwhelm the border areas, local officials were likely not hearkening back with great clarity to prior years. China was not wholly prepared to handle the outflow of North Korean refugees and was in fact eager to contain the problem. The Chinese government, aided by the North Korean embassy in Beijing, estimated that the number of refugees in China in late 1950 had already surpassed 10,000 people.

In this context, the two or three North Korean consular officials newly arrived in Andong could function only as an inadequate breakwater for the influx of Korean refugees. Although Andong was the preeminent gateway, North Korean refugees were entering China through multiple corridors. Pressures were being felt along the border crosspoints between Korean Manpo and Chinese Ji'an and, to a lesser extent, in the far northeast between the North Korean province of North Hamgyong and the Chinese Yanbian region. On 4 December 1950, the DPRK embassy in Beijing informed the Chinese MFA of an urgent request to set up a similar office in Tonghua, the urban manufacturing and lumber center for Southeast Jilin Province. Tonghua, however, was about 60 kilometers from the border with North Korea, meaning that tiny and peripheral Ji'an functioned as the actual gateway to China from North Korea. Apart from its ancient Koguryo tombs, Ji'an's main asset was its link to the North Korean city of Manpo via a black iron bridge built by the Japanese in the colonial period and protected by a blockhouse.<sup>44</sup> But this steel remnant of Japanese colonial rule was not matched by Chinese administrative muscle. Ji'an was still just a county-level administration and lacked the infrastructure necessary for housing large numbers of refugees.<sup>45</sup> Because tens of thousands of Chinese People's Volunteers (CPV) were being dispatched to Korea via the Ji'an bridge, the flow of refugees traveling in the reverse direction (i.e., into China) had to be stanching or moved to another area. The need to clear refugees from Ji'an was emphasized on 8 November in a note from the Northeast

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43. William T. Y'Blood, ed., *The Three Wars of Lt. Gen. George E. Stratemyer: His Korean War Diary* (Washington, DC: Air Force History and Museums Program, 1999), pp. 236–237. See also Truman, *Memoirs*, Vol. 2, pp. 374–376.

44. The bridge at Ji'an had the further advantage of not having been bombed by the U.S. Air Force. According to local residents (interview, West Ji'an, July 2008), the bridge was not bombed until 1952.

45. Residents in Ji'an, interviews, June 2008 and June 2009.

People's Government to the Chinese MFA disagreeing with a plan that would have kept friendly socialist ambassadors, such as the Polish ambassador to Pyongyang, and their respective staffs in Ji'an. Instead, Gao Gang told Zhou, ambassadors should be moved to Shenyang, a city with much better capacity to handle large numbers of foreigners.<sup>46</sup> By 10 December 1950, Zhou Enlai and his vice foreign ministers agreed to allow the Koreans to set up an office in Tonghua.

The request for the Tonghua office arrived on 4 December, coinciding with the fall of Pyongyang to Chinese forces and Kim Il-Sung's visit to Beijing (Tonghua is not exceedingly far from Kanggye, the remote northwestern province to which Kim's cabinet had fled).<sup>47</sup> The request indicated that battlefield victories by the reconstituted KPA and Chinese forces were by no means stanching the flow of refugees. Because of the prevailing near-paranoia toward outside influence, the local governments were expected to give North Koreans a wide berth. Tonghua was already serving as a staging point for the PRC's rapid reception of Korean groups, many of which came nearly unannounced to Beijing. (These groups were yet another drain on Zhou Enlai's time from as early as August 1950.) Although most of these groups were first received in Andong, Tonghua, or Shenyang, many of them did not give the central government much warning about their arrival in the capital. The influx of often-undocumented foreign nationals into Beijing was likely unnerving to the Chinese and shows the sometimes tentative nature of communications between Shenyang's Northeast People's Government and the MFA.<sup>48</sup>

Responding to the Northeast People's Government, Zhou placated Gao Gang by subtly phrasing the order as a request. He also gave the North Koreans the impression that the Chinese central government needed to deliberate about the matter when in fact he had been planning all along to accept the request.

Tonghua has a rich history as a base for northeast Asian governments in exile. The city was the designated alternate capital for Pu Yi's disintegrating Manchukuo regime in August 1945, and Japanese troops held out in the area until February 1946.<sup>49</sup> In December 1950, Tonghua was apparently under

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46. Memorandum from Gao Gang to Zhou Enlai, November 1950, p. 13, Doc. No. 106-0002-04, in MFA Archive.

47. On Kim's visit to Beijing, see Chae Jin Lee, *China and Korea: Dynamic Relations* (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 1996).

48. Ni Zhiliang to Zhou Enlai, Ye Jianying, and Gao Gang, "Regarding Delegation of Koreans from Pyongyang," 23 August 1950, p. 2, in Doc. No. 106-00021-07, MFA Archive. Unaccompanied by any Chinese, the group mentioned in this letter had come from Pyongyang via Andong and was already in Shenyang when the letter was written. The letter indicates that the group would be in Beijing the following day and wished to meet with Zhou.

49. Yanbian History Research Office, eds., *Yanbian lishi yanjiu* [Yanbian history research] (Yanji, China: Xinhua, 1988), p. 9.

consideration as a destination for the flight of the North Korean government. On 4 October 1950, Stalin had suggested that Kim Il-Sung retreat into Manchuria with a government-in-exile. Although the Chinese were opposed to the idea—their invasion of Korea could be seen as an action undertaken to prevent such a scenario—Tonghua was likely seen as the contingency base for the Korean government.<sup>50</sup> The request for the consulates in the northeast serves as a reminder that if the CPV had not joined the war in Korea, these consular offices might have served as foundations for a resumption of that all-too-familiar aspect of the twentieth century, the Korean government in exile. As the head of a beleaguered and nearly destroyed state in 1950, Kim Il-Sung had at least foreseen the need to keep rear bases in mind, as he had enjoined his cadres in 1945.<sup>51</sup> However, he most likely did not have in mind a retreat into the very areas where he had plied revolution twenty years earlier.<sup>52</sup>

For all of China's strident public rhetoric about the "territorial integrity" of the northeast region, Zhou Enlai appeared willing to be supremely flexible where war allies were concerned. This flexibility also extended to moving "Soviet-ethnicity" pilots from Sinuiju to Andong and then on to Shenyang.<sup>53</sup> Given the fanfare with which the CCP had expelled U.S. consulates from the northeast urban centers of Shenyang, Changchun, and Harbin in 1948 and 1950, the accusations of U.S. and Japanese spying, and the suspicions that certain Koreans remained linked to Japanese intelligence, the speed of the affirmative MFA response to the North Korean requests is striking.<sup>54</sup> Ongoing local bureaucratic tussles over management of Russians, Japanese, and Koreans already resident in multiethnic Manchuria indicate Zhou Enlai's determination to push the pro-Korean policy over the implicit objections of the

50. Might Yanbian have been considered an alternate site for Kim's government? The CCP viewed Yanbian as less than ideal because it was Kim's old power base, the site of the largest concentration of ethnic Koreans in the PRC, and an area that had already shown a propensity to privilege North Korean over Chinese needs. For discussion of Yanbian's ambivalent sovereign status, see Adam Cathcart, "Nationalism and Ethnic Identity in the Sino-Korean Border Region of Yanbian, 1945–1950," *Korean Studies*, Vol. 34, No. 1 (2010), pp. 25–53.

51. "Building of New Korea and Immediate Tasks of Communists: Talk with Political Workers to Be Dispatched to Local Areas, 20 September 1945," in Kim Il-Sung, *Works*, Vol. 1, *June 1930–December 1945* (Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1980), p. 244.

52. In his masterwork of Cold War orientalism, novelist Richard Condon envisioned Tonghua ("a city of approximately . . . the size of Terre Haute, Indiana") as the site of an ad hoc coalition of Chinese, Soviet, and North Korean brainwashing experts. But even Condon's brilliant fiction-generating mind could not conceive of a Kim Il-Sung regime in Tonghua. See Richard Condon, *The Manchurian Candidate* (New York: Jove Books, 1959/1988), p. 18.

53. Zhou Enlai to Chinese Ambassador in DPRK, 1 October 1950, p. 8, in Doc. No. 106-00021-07, MFA Archive; and Zhou Enlai to Chairman Gao and Chinese Ambassador in DPRK, 6 October 1950, p. 9, in Doc. No. 106-00021-07, MFA Archive. In the 1 October 1950 note, Zhou penned in "Gao Zhuxi" (Chairman Gao Gang) as an additional addressee.

54. Chen Jian's *China's Road to the Korean War* contains a detailed analysis of the Angus Ward incident in Shenyang in 1948.

Northeast People's Government.<sup>55</sup> The North Korean request ran precisely counter to the general trend of exodus from the northeast.<sup>56</sup> Perhaps in taking into account Beijing's rationale for sending troops to Korea, the desire to prevent a far larger number of refugees from settling in northeastern China should be considered in light of the new evidence. At the same time, the assent to the North Korean request shows that the PRC did not want to, and could not, handle the refugee issue unilaterally.

The North Korean authorities also relied on a North Korean commercial delegation to keep contacts with the Beijing government and, as important, the Northeast People's Government led by Gao Gang. A Northeast business delegation in Korea (*Dongbei zhu Chaoxian shangye daibiaotuan*) facilitated wartime communication between the DPRK and the Chinese MFA. Alternative methods and channels for resolving bilateral issues and for receiving aid came to the fore. In addition to connecting with the commercial delegation from Pyongyang, China's bureaucratic reach extended even into the North Korean postal system, which had completely broken down, and to working out communications to China from major North Korean cities.<sup>57</sup> The problem of telegraphs in North Korea had multiplied, and the Chinese embassy in Pyongyang, though itself struggling to continue work during punishing bombings, had become the de facto coordinator of the communications of other proletarian embassies in North Korea. The Chinese chargé d'affaires, Chai Junwu (later known as Chai Chengwen), filling in for the ailing Ambassador Ni Zhiliang, noted in 1950: "The Koreans want to connect to our sys-

55. On Japanese migrants in the region in 1949, see "Dongbei xingzheng weiyuanhui guanyu Ribenren guanli weiyuanhui bannian gongzuo baogao" [Northeast political committee regarding report on six months of work by committee for management of Japanese persons], 1 October 1948–31 March 1949, in Doc. No. 105-00224-01, MFA Archive. On Russian immigrants, see "Haerbin guanyu Sulian Qiaomin de xingshi shenpan anjian de jian" [Document from Harbin regarding criminal cases and trials of Soviet immigrants], 21 December 1949–20 January 1950, in Doc. No. 118-00344-01, MFA Archive. On the repatriation of ethnic Koreans, see Kim "Settlement and Repatriation of Koreans," pp. 85–110. See also Bernard Vincent Olivier, *The Implementation of China's Nationality Policy in the Northeastern Provinces* (San Francisco: Mellen Research University Press, 1993), pp. 47–63. On the expulsion of U.S. diplomats, see Richard D. McKinzie, "Oral History Interview with O. Edmund Clubb," 26 June 1974, in Harry S. Truman Library and Museum, <http://www.trumanlibrary.org/oralhist/clubb.htm>.

56. Local controls over immigrants and refugees in border cities remain poorly documented, but narratives nevertheless emerge in oblique ways in local histories in statements of policy changes for which agencies would handle immigrants. In 1952 in the Yanbian region, for instance, the *gongan bu*, or public security bureau, was charged with handling such cases rather than the courts. See Yanji Historical Committee, eds., *Helong Xianzhi* [Information on Helong County] (Yanji, China: Yanji People's Publishing House, 1995), p. 187. The Tonghua City Archives and the Ji'an County Archives were not open to non-Chinese scholars as of 2007 and 2008 respectively.

57. Zhou Enlai to Chairman Gao Gang, "Regarding Communications with Korean Embassy Officials Inside of China," 2 November 1950, p. 21, in Doc. No. 106-00021-07, MFA Archive.; See also "Guanyu Chaoxian ji wang wo guo 'jun shi youbian' youjian mianfei youji han" [Letter concerning free mailing service through our "military post" for Koreans], 21–23 December 1950, in Doc. No. 118-00077-06, MFA Archive.

tem (or need help from telegraph bureaus) via Ji'an or Tonghua; a lot of embassies in Korea have this need."<sup>58</sup> A telephone line from Chongjin, the northeastern Korean port city and capital of North Hamgyong Province, to Changchun, the heart of Chinese Manchuria, was also discussed, apparently at the PRC's urging.

## Educational Exchanges

Physical bombardment and warfare created more than just refugees in North Korea. The war badly mauled the North Korean education system, a system that prior to the war was seen as a prime state achievement. Dislocations, deaths, and the war's voracious need for manpower eviscerated North Korea's wartime schools. Not wanting to completely disrupt the development of educated cadres, however, the DPRK recognized that not all students could serve their country on the battlefield. Thus, students whose skills were deemed too important to risk on the battlefield were evacuated to China where they could continue their studies without handicap. Not just soldiers, but interpreters and the intelligentsia faced great dangers in Korea, a notion reinforced by the death of Mao Zedong's eldest son, a Russian-language interpreter, in a U.S. napalm raid in Korea in 1950. The DPRK, stressing the need to shelter its educated citizenry, asked the Chinese government to provide temporary accommodation for its most promising students in a variety of disciplines. The Chinese government responded positively to most requests and offered students opportunities to study in Beijing and the northeast, including at universities around Yanbian. Allegedly, these students were sometimes handpicked by Kim Il-Sung. (Kim Jong-Il, although his name cannot be found in MFA documents, was one of the young students sent to northeastern China during the war.)<sup>59</sup> Toward the end of 1952, Kim Il-Sung, having been relieved of military command by Peng Dehuai, was focusing on culture and plans for rebuilding Pyongyang as a socialist capital.<sup>60</sup> As part of this drive, the North Korean leader selected 50 students and cadres from within the party, government, and

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58. Chai Junwu to Zhou Enlai, "On the Problem of Telegrams," 12 November 1950, p. 17, in Doc. No. 106-00021-07, MFA Archive. For more on Chai Junwu, see Shen "Sino–North Korean Conflict and Its Resolution during the Korean War," pp. 9–24; and David Tsui, "Did the CCP Sign a Secret Document on Mutual Defense with the DPRK in 1949?" *Journal of Contemporary China*, Vol. 8, No. 20 (1999), pp. 167–177. Tsui met with Chai in 1992 and 1994, and Shen conducted interviews with Chai in 2000.

59. Bradley Martin, *Under the Loving Care of the Fatherly Leader* (New York: St. Martin's, 2005), p. 208.

60. Lee Sin-Cheol, "Sahwiju'ui 'Chosonui simjang' Pyongyangui Tung'asi'a Tusilu'ui Bokhwa Kakongsong" [The possibility of Pyongyang, the city of "socialism with a Korean heart," becoming an East Asian city"], *Hanguksa Hakpo*, Vol. 137 (June 2007), pp. 143–179.

military to go to China to study English.<sup>61</sup> These English-language students joined other traditional students studying abroad in the PRC during the Korean War.<sup>62</sup> The DPRK especially wanted to develop Korean technicians and gained permission for large numbers of them to study in China. These technicians were of great benefit during the postwar reconstruction in North Korea. In August 1952, the North Korean Foreign Ministry requested that 2,150 students and researchers from Kim Chaek University of Technology, the Southern University of Technology, and Wonsan Agricultural University be admitted to China. The North Koreans acknowledged that “for students to progress in their studies in Korea” was “very difficult,” thus necessitating their relocation to China.<sup>63</sup> North Korean workers in China were joined by doctors, pharmacists, and other specialists for additional training. The November 1953 economic and cultural agreements formalized exchange programs, but international students had been coming to China prior to the signing of this agreement. As early as July 1953, 200 workers from the Ministry of Heavy Industry were sent to China for a six-month program.<sup>64</sup> By 1954, more than 2,963 Koreans had been or were in China developing skills to benefit their homeland.<sup>65</sup>

Instead of being a burden on China, these educated North Koreans were often an asset to the development of China’s northeast, and some even promised to bring their own grain to avoid depleting China’s limited material resources. The PRC was eager to establish itself as a socialist center of Asian civilization and did so by moving ahead in areas in which the USSR was less dominant, such as students, the arts, and women’s groups. The inflow of North Korean students and artists to China in 1952 and 1953 may well have occurred absent the Korean War and its daily aerial devastation and creeping famine. Students, artists, and performing arts delegations all had finite tasks and limited stays in China—quite unlike the most problematic refugees.

Even in the midst of rapid changes and military coordination, Foreign Minister Zhou Enlai took responsibility for guiding the movements of elite

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61. “1952 nian jiena Chaoxian xuesheng lai Zhongguo xuexi yingyu shi” [North Korean students admitted to come to China to study English in 1952], in Doc. No. 106-00036-08, MFA Archive.

62. “1953 nian jiena Chaoxian daxuesheng 50 ren lai Zhongguo liuxue shi” [Fifty North Korean college students admitted to come study abroad in China in 1953], in Doc. No. 106-00036-03, MFA Archive.

63. “1952 nian jiena Chaoxian gongren 2150 ren lai Zhongguo shixi shi” [2150 North Korean workers admitted to come to China for training in 1952], in Doc. No. 106-00036-07, MFA Archive.

64. Károly Fendler, “Economic Assistance and Loans from Socialist Countries to North Korea in the Postwar Years 1953–1963,” *Asien*, No. 42 (January 1992), p. 44.

65. Szalontai, *Kim Il Sung in the Khrushchev Era*, p. 46; and CIA, Information Report, “Training of North Korean Technicians in China, Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union,” 13 July 1953, p. 1, in CIA-RDP80-00810A001700380008-4, CREST, NARA.

North Koreans into China. On 9 November 1950, Zhou made significant revisions to a note about handling the relocation of a famous North Korean dancer, Chae Chongju, who wished to leave North Korea and move her school, including her students, to Beijing. Zhou approved the matter with extensive commentary, ordering that the MFA's cultural office facilitate the school's transportation to Beijing.<sup>66</sup> In this way, the Chinese became the literal guardians of North Korean culture during the war.

The war accelerated the trend of cultural exchange and cross-border flows of composers, dancers, artists, and writers—as well as soldiers—between the PRC and the DPRK. Although the DRPK was the recipient of this aid, the North Korean government demonstrated considerable agency in soliciting the donations. Sending North Korean arts delegations to China as well as to the USSR and East European “people's democracies” became an effective means of stimulating aid during the Korean War.<sup>67</sup> Korean orphans in particular were recognized as a major asset at benefit concerts and events because donations by foreign audiences always spiked when they were present.

## Aid and Reconstruction

By the time the Korean War ceasefire agreement was signed in July 1953, North Korea was in ruins. Throughout the war, China had urged North Korea to make speedy repairs to infrastructure, particularly sites that served both military and transportation purposes (e.g., airports), and had coordinated with the North in making those repairs.<sup>68</sup> To avoid losing costly machinery and factory tools in cities such as Pyongyang and Kaesong, North Korea had requested that the goods be stowed in northeastern China for the duration of the war.<sup>69</sup> Despite these efforts to minimize damage, however, both the physi-

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66. Zhou Enlai to Chairman Gao Gang and Northeast Foreign Affairs Department, “Regarding 7 Nov. Note from North Korean Named Choi,” 9 November 1950, p. 14, in Doc. No. 106-00021-07, MFA Archive. Zhou crossed himself out as author and wrote “Waijiaobu.”

67. The archives of the former German Democratic Republic are full of such examples. See “Hilfausschuss für Korean und Vietnam beim Nationalrat der Nationalen Front der DDR” [Aid organization for Korea and Vietnam via the national assembly of the National Front of the German Democratic Republic], in DY 6 vorl., Stiftung Archiv der Parteien und Massenorganisationen der DDR im Bundesarchiv, Berlin. These documents, which are not referenced in standard articles on GDR aid to North Korea, are summarized in Elizabeth Campbell, “East German Aid to North Korea in War and Reconstruction,” paper presented at the Military Oral History Conference, University of Victoria, Victoria, BC, June 2007.

68. Zhou Enlai, “Guanyu qing Chao kongjun siling deng lai jing shangtai xiuzheng jichang gei chai junwu deng de dianbao” [Telegram to Chai Junwu, etc. requesting that North Korea's Air Force commander, etc., come to Beijing to discuss matters regarding the maintenance of airports], 13 December 1950, *JYZEW*, Vol. 3, pp. 638–639.

69. Zhou Enlai, “Guanyu tongyi Chaoxian zai Zhongguo sheli cangku deng gei ni zhiliang deng de dianbao” [Telegram to Ni Zhiliang, etc., concerning agreement with North Korea to set up ware-

cal infrastructure and the economy of North Korea had suffered immensely.<sup>70</sup> Chinese aid and support in reconstruction was thus viewed both positively and as a necessity by the North Koreans.

Shortages in agricultural output in the early 1950s required the North Koreans to turn to their Communist allies.<sup>71</sup> Food shortages became a recurring problem throughout the war and after but were always met with a swift response from the Chinese. Although for a time hesitant to reveal the problems plaguing the rural areas, DPRK Foreign Minister Pak Hon-yong eventually divulged to his Chinese comrades that perhaps 27 percent of the population in rural areas was starving. To remedy the situation, the USSR and China quickly appropriated funds for deliveries and supplanted North Korean food stocks in 1952.<sup>72</sup> The Chinese were probably not surprised to hear that the DPRK's food stocks were insufficient. North Korea's perennial need for food aid had at that time already become a source of tension in the Sino–North Korean relationship. In January 1951, Peng Dehuai had levied several strong complaints against the North Koreans for poor planning. The most serious problem, he said, was that the North Koreans were failing to provide refugees in the “newly liberated areas” (*xin jie fang qu*) south of the 38th parallel with food and fuel. Instead, North Korean ineptitude resulted in only enough basic necessities for soldiers, which in turn fostered social unrest and the formation of local gangs and cliques.<sup>73</sup> Hungarian documents suggest that the Chinese, not wanting to funnel money away carelessly, became more critical of North Korea's economic policies in the mid-1950s.<sup>74</sup>

Still, the Chinese were unwilling to let social unrest boil over in North Korea.<sup>75</sup> The derision the North Koreans received from Peng Dehuai was lim-

houses in China and other matters], 29 September 1950, in *JYZEW*, Vol. 3, pp. 345–346. Mao Zedong added his input to this letter, suggesting that Andong and Ji'an were too close to the Yalu River and thus still vulnerable to destruction. He suggested that areas such as Meihekou and Benxi would be better.

70. Bruce Cumings, “Korea: Forgotten Nuclear Threats,” *Le monde diplomatique*, December 2004, <http://mondediplo.com/2004/12/08korea>.

71. The CIA questioned the depth of Chinese activity, putting the term “reconstruction” in quotations to suggest some sort of impending imperial ambition in Korea. CIA, “Relative Soviet and Chinese Influence in North Korea,” 29 July 1953, p. 2, in CIA-RDP79R00890A000100060034-3, CREST, NARA.

72. Szalontai, *Kim Il Sung in the Khrushchev Era*, p. 44.

73. “Telegram from Mao Zedong to I. V. Stalin, Conveying 19 January 1951 Telegram from Peng Dehuai to Mao, Regarding Meetings with Kim Il-Sung,” 27 January 1951, in Cold War International History Project Virtual Archive 2.0. The original document is in Listy (LL) 37–40, Delo (D.) 337, Opis (Op.) 1, Fond (F) 45, Arkhiv Prezidenta Rossiiskoi Federatsii (APRF), Moscow.

74. Szalontai, *Kim Il Sung in the Khrushchev Era*, p. 82.

75. For indications of Kim's own concern with the problem, see “The Organizational and Ideological Consolidation of the Party Is the Basis for Our Victory: Report to the Fifth Plenary Meeting of the Central Committee of the Workers' Party of Korea,” 15 December 1952, in Kim Il-Sung, *Works*, Vol. 7, *January 1952–July 1953* (Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1981), p. 354;

ited to internal dialogue among the Chinese and did not necessarily narrow the scope of Chinese generosity. Peng himself was committed to delivering aid. In a discussion with Pak Hon-yong, he remarked:

They say that our government has already resolved to deliver to the Korean government 30,000 tons of grain. I do not know, is this true? If it is not true, I consider that it is necessary to prepare for timely delivery of 30,000 tons of grain in March for the purpose of providing assistance so that the peasants can engage in spring planting.<sup>76</sup>

From February to May 1952, the Chinese delivered 5,000 tons of rice, 5,000 tons of *chumiza*, and 200 tons of bean oil each month to the North Koreans.<sup>77</sup> From January 1954 to September 1955, China transferred 300,000 tons of grain to North Korea.<sup>78</sup> Peng Dehuai's personal role in arguing for this aid is assumed, but published documentation such as his *Nianpu* (Chronology) offers only brief glimpses of this significant issue.<sup>79</sup> North Korean views of Peng Dehuai are similarly difficult to assess. Letters of thanks to him from Kim Tubong and Pak Han-yong are newly available but do little to expose disagreements between Peng and his North Korean colleagues.<sup>80</sup> Both before and after the war, the Chinese press was quite kind to the North Koreans, playing up the close cooperation between Pak, Kim Il-Sung, and Peng.

The Chinese also provided extensive monetary aid and were willing to subsidize trade with North Korea, a policy dating back to the war years as advocated by Peng Dehuai. Answering Peng's request for Chinese fiscal aid

and "On Strengthening Party Political Education and Mass Cultural Work in the Countryside: Concluding Speech at a Meeting of the Organizational Committee of the Central Committee of the Workers' Party of Korea," 28 June 1952, in Kim, *Works*, Vol. 7, p. 251.

76. "Telegram from Mao Zedong to Stalin, Conveying Telegram of 22 January 1952 from Peng Dehuai to Mao and 4 February 1952 Reply from Mao to Peng Dehuai," 8 February 1952, in Cold War International History Project Virtual Archive 2.0. The original document is in Ll. 81–83, D. 342, Op. 1, F. 45, APRE. Peng's emotional response when confronted with hunger is discussed with appropriate intensity, along with his contacts in Eastern Europe, in Jung Chang and Jon Halliday, *Mao: The Unknown Story* (New York: Knopf, 2005).

77. "Telegram from Mao Zedong to Stalin," 8 February 1952.

78. CIA, Office of Research and Reports, Provisional Intelligence Report, "Economic Rehabilitation of North Korea, 1954–56," 25 April 1956, pp. 58–59, in CIA-RDP79-01093A001100010001-5, CREST, NARA.

79. Yan Wang, ed., *Peng Dehuai nianpu* [Chronicle of Peng Dehuai] (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe: Xinhua shudian jingxiao, 1998). Although selected documents of Mao, Zhou, and Liu Shaoqi have been released, the Chinese authorities have given no indication that Peng's papers will be similarly published, although the chill on publications regarding his isolated life after 1958 seems to have been broken. Peng appears only sporadically in the MFA Archive, perhaps because his prickly personality caused problems for the ministry. For a fascinating example of friction between Peng and MFA officials (concerning Peng's contact with East German reporters over his apparent misinterpretation of the Warsaw Pact), see Doc. No. 116-00212-01, May 1957, in MFA Archive.

80. "Chaoxian yuan yu wo jianli wajiaoguanxi shi zhi Zhou Enlai Zongli de han (Zhongyen, Chaowen)," 4–6 October 1949.

to North Korea in 1952, Mao agreed that 1.6 million yuan was urgently needed, even though he noted that this amount “exceeds the sum of the trade credit extended by China to Korea in 1951.”<sup>81</sup> Thus, when CIA analysts predicted in May 1953 that the PRC “desires to increase its economic influence in North Korea,” they were accurately noting the growth of an existing trend.<sup>82</sup>

After the war ended, Kim Il-Sung traveled to both the USSR and China in search of economic aid. He arrived in Beijing on 10 November and stayed until 27 November, hammering out the details of cooperative agreements in the fields of economics and culture. On 23 November, North Korea and China signed an economic pact, the benefits of which were heavily slanted toward the DPRK.<sup>83</sup> Beijing offered 800 million yuan in grants, delivering 550 million yuan of promised aid in 1954 and 1955. Furthermore, Kim learned, much to his delight, that the PRC had cancelled all of North Korea’s debt from the Korean War.<sup>84</sup> Chinese aid outweighed that of the Soviet Union for some time, although aid from each country served different purposes. China predominantly supplied non-durable items (consumer products), whereas the Soviet Union focused on durable goods (capital goods). Thus, although China funneled more into North Korea in the immediate postwar years, the long-term benefit of Soviet aid and investment was probably greater.<sup>85</sup> East German aid during the same period was also substantial, presumably adding to the weight of Soviet-influenced contributions, although even the East Germans were attracted to Mao and his alternate Communist model.<sup>86</sup>

The November 1953 economic pact mandated that Chinese monetary aid be used for food, textiles, cotton, coal, fishing vessels, farm equipment,

81. “Telegram from Mao Zedong to Stalin,” 8 February 1952.

82. CIA, “Relative Influence of the Soviet Union and Communist China in North Korea,” p. 1.

83. For public commemorations of this agreement in Chinese, see “Zai huansong Chaoxian zhengfu daibiaotuan huiguo yanhui shang de jianghua” [Remarks at the banquet to see off the North Korean government delegation returning home], 24 November 1953, in *JYLSW*, Vol. 5, pp. 323–324; and “Tong Mao Zedong deng zhuhe Zhongchao jingji ji wenhua hezuo xieding ding yi zhou nian gei Jin Richeng deng de dianbao” [Telegram to Kim Il Sung from Mao Zedong and others congratulating the one-year anniversary of the signing of the Sino-Korean Economic and Cultural Agreement], 22 November 1954, in *JYLSW*, Vol. 6, pp. 437–438.

84. Charles K. Armstrong, “‘Fraternal Socialism’: The International Reconstruction of North Korea, 1953–1962,” *Cold War History*, Vol. 5, No. 2 (May 2005), p. 164; Fendler, “Economic Assistance and Loans,” pp. 43–44; NSC Briefing, “North Korean Integration into the Bloc,” 2 December 1953, p. 2, in CIA-RDP79R00890A000200020009-4, CREST, NARA; Szalontai, *Kim Il Sung in the Khrushchev Era*, pp. 46, 91; and Scalapino and Lee, *Communism in Korea, Part I*, pp. 529–530.

85. CIA, Office of Research and Reports, Provisional Intelligence Report, “North Korean Foreign Trade, 1954–57,” 21 December 1955, pp. 3–6, in CIA-RDP79-01093A001000060001-1, CREST, NARA.

86. Adam Cathcart, “East German Aid to North Korea in War and Reconstruction, 1949–1960,” unpub. ms.; and Adam Cathcart, “Under the Banner of Internationalism: GDR-PRC Cultural Relations in the 1950s,” unpublished ms. Both of these manuscripts are based on GDR archival sources.

and paper, as well as for reconstruction supplies, machinery, and railroad repairs.<sup>87</sup> China also became the largest supplier of consumer goods to North Korea, flooding the market with clothing, toiletries, and utensils.<sup>88</sup> As Robert Scalapino and Chong-Sik Lee have noted, even cursory glances through North Korean journals of the time indicate that KPA troops wore Chinese-made clothing and were at times equipped with Chinese rifles. Even in DPRK science laboratories, North Korean students wore Chinese-made garments.<sup>89</sup>

U.S. bombing raids had wiped out building materials and brickyards, leaving the North Koreans with little to rebuild their shattered country.<sup>90</sup> Setting priorities in such a context was difficult. Construction of factories and housing meant that North Korea had to revive its cement industry. Cement factories were producing one million tons annually at the height of the period of Japanese control, but these facilities were devastated during the Korean War. Output in 1954 was approximately one-fourth of the production figures during Japan's occupation. In areas like Hamhung, North Korea's inability to surpass colonial-era production occurred because the United States had used Japanese blueprints to bomb factories more efficiently.<sup>91</sup> The slow pace of North Korean industrial recovery heightened the significance of PRC-sponsored cement shipments to the DPRK for the postwar reconstruction. In 1953–1954, China delivered 100,000 tons of cement.<sup>92</sup> With the help of East German engineers in Hamhung, the DPRK used Chinese cement to rebuild its infrastructure and erect new apartment flats.

On the macro-level, China was a safe source of aid for the North. Although the Soviet Union remained the North's foremost financial benefactor in reconstructing factories, the PRC also made significant contributions on this matter. The Chinese rebuilt the Namp'o Glass Works and, complementing their deliveries of consumer goods, constructed a consumer goods manufacturing plant in 1954. Beijing also saw that the new railways in North Korea had general stores alongside them, building such structures in Pyongyang, Ch'ongju, and Kowon. The stores were entirely funded by the PRC. Chinese

87. NSC Briefing, "North Korean Integration into the Bloc," p. 2; and Scalapino and Lee, *Communism in Korea, Part I*, pp. 529–530.

88. Szalontai, *Kim Il Sung in the Khrushchev Era*, p. 46.

89. Scalapino and Lee, *Communism in Korea, Part I*, pp. 497, 530.

90. CIA, "Historical Notes on the Use of Air Power as a Weapon of Interdiction," May 1966, in CIA-RDP78S02149R00010003003-4 CREST, NARA.

91. U.S. intelligence officers investigating North Korean massacres near the Hungnam Arsenal found a buried 50-gallon oil drum that contained 9,020 colonial-era documents detailing plant plans. See Far Eastern Commission Liaison Group to Judge Advocate General, 30 October 1950, in Folder 2, Korean War Crime 64, Box 895, Records of the Judge Advocate General, RG 153, NARA.

92. CIA, Office of Research and Reports, Intelligence Memorandum, "Reconstruction in North Korea," 26 July 1954, pp. 2, 16–17, in CIA-RDP79T00935A000200370001-2, CREST, NARA; and Szalontai, *Kim Il Sung in the Khrushchev Era*, p. 45.

soldiers also rebuilt important buildings, such as those housing the Foreign Ministry and the national bank.<sup>93</sup> Although smaller socialist states were engaged in similar types of postwar aid, the PRC—unlike the smaller states; for example, the German Democratic Republic—accomplished its goals in North Korea without massive propaganda campaigns emphasizing its public contributions to North Korean restoration.<sup>94</sup> Apart from a smaller number of graphic publications for domestic consumption, the Chinese tended to emphasize military heroism in war while deemphasizing their central role in rebuilding the North Korean economy. The effort to play down China's role stemmed from the PRC's desire to avoid antagonizing the North Koreans.

Perhaps in no other area did China's commitment to rebuild North Korea after the war shine through with more clarity than in the activities of the CPV from 1953 to 1958. Apart from their obvious role as a deterrent to the South, these troops also filled labor shortages and rebuilt infrastructure. Their importance to postwar reconstruction should not be underemphasized.<sup>95</sup> CPV involvement in reconstructing North Korea's rail system was significant. Chinese vessels could move unhindered between ports in Dalian and Andong and Sinuiju, carrying supplies and aid. The Chinese were quite concerned, however, about land transportation and in linking the railways in North Korea with those in northeastern China.<sup>96</sup> Thus, both during the war and after, the highest Chinese leaders concerned themselves with rebuilding transportation systems and saw that Chinese soldiers in North Korea worked alongside KPA troops to rebuild the railways.<sup>97</sup> The CIA estimated that as many as 40,000 Chinese railway workers and 54,000 construction workers from northeast China were living in North Korea.<sup>98</sup> Although these numbers cannot yet be verified in the Chinese archives, even if the CIA estimates are inaccurate by a factor of ten, such aid would still be significant. Chinese efforts to reconstruct North Korea's transportation systems added agility and strength to the North Korean economy. This aspect of Sino–North Korean cooperation sufficiently worried the U.S./UN forces in Korea that they attempted, in leaflets dropped in profusion on North Korea, to make a major issue of Chinese control of the

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93. Fendler, "Economic Assistance and Loans," pp. 49–50.

94. Cathcart, "East German Aid to North Korea."

95. CIA, "Reconstruction in North Korea," p. 7. For Chinese perspectives, see Li Xiaobing, *The People's Liberation Army* (Lexington, KY: University of Kentucky Press, 2008).

96. CIA, Information Report, "Marine Transportation between Dairen and Sinuiju, and Antung and Sinuiju," 18 December 1953, in CIA-RDP80-00810A003100770001-2, CREST, NARA.

97. Zhou Enlai, "Guanyu qiangxiu Chaoxian jingnei shou pohuai qiaoliang wenti gei mao zedong de xin" [Letter to Mao Zedong concerning the problem of urgent repairs for the destruction of North Korea's bridges], 12 December 1950, in *JYZEW*, Vol. 3, pp. 621–622; Fendler, "Economic Assistance and Loans," p. 45; and Scalapino and Lee, *Communism in Korea, Part I*, p. 530.

98. NSC Briefing, "North Korean Integration into the Bloc," p. 2.

transportation system, asserting that China was behaving arrogantly and was unconcerned about North Korean civilians.<sup>99</sup>

However, rail ties between the two countries were not without their difficulties. In the Chinese border city of Ji'an in 1954, a train arriving from North Korea killed two Chinese workers, resulting in a distressed local populace and worried internal dialogue in the Chinese MFA about handling the case discreetly. The North Koreans, whose KPA soldiers had been running the train, asserted that they were not at fault; Chinese reports on the incident asserted recklessness by the KPA. Annoyed by the lack of information forthcoming from the North Korean side, Chinese bureaucrats sought to find out the North Korean military regulations for such incidents.<sup>100</sup> Word of the Ji'an deaths no doubt raced through local communities, and, although the deaths were not publicized in northeastern newspapers, they put a sharper edge on the “brotherly” attitude toward North Korea with which the Chinese regime sought to inculcate its citizens and soldiers in the border regions.

The CPV also caused problems in North Korea, as could the soldiers' Chinese counterparts living as civilians in the DPRK. At times, the CPV's presence became overbearing and imperious, resulting in what North Koreans perceived as flagrant violations of their national sovereignty. In 1954, controversy arose about whether the CPV was permitted to hang the PRC flag in North Korea. Wanting to avoid potential problems with the North Korean government, the Chinese MFA instructed the PLA that the flag could be raised only if the North Koreans had no objections.<sup>101</sup> The inevitable relations between lonely CPV soldiers and North Korean women (some of them war-time widows) also caused problems, albeit ones that were rarely discussed.<sup>102</sup> U.S. and South Korean propaganda leaflets that had blanketed North Korea during the war had repeatedly drummed on themes such as the supposed dirtiness, hunger, and imperious nature of the CPV.<sup>103</sup> Chinese soldiers may also

99. Headquarters 1st Radio Broadcasting and Leaflet Group, 8239th AU, APO 500, “CCF Control (Rear Area),” leaflet in Korean targeting North Korean civilians and NKA, 26 January 1953, in Box 1, Far East Command Materials, Hoover Institution Archives (HIA), Stanford University. See also “Cooperation,” leaflet in Korean targeting North Koreans, 25 May 1953, in Box 4, Far East Command Materials, HIA.

100. “North Korean Trains in Ji'an,” 1954, in Doc. No. 118-00249-07, MFA Archive.

101. “On the Matter of Chinese People's Volunteers Hanging the National Flag in Korea,” 1954, in Doc. No. 117-00442-02, MFA Archive.

102. James Z. Gao, “War Culture, Nationalism, and Political Campaigns, 1950–1953,” in George Wei and Xiaoyuan Liu, eds., *Chinese Nationalism in Perspective: Historical and Recent Cases* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2001), pp. 186–189.

103. General Headquarters Far Eastern Command, Military Intelligence Section, General Staff, Psychological Warfare Section, 1st Radio Broadcasting and Leaflet Group, APO 500, “Chinese Colonization of Korea,” leaflet in Korean targeting NKA troops and civilians, 30 October 1951, in Box 1, FEC Materials, HIA; and Headquarters 1st Radio Broadcasting and Leaflet Group 8239th AU, APO 500, “Eviction,” leaflet in Korean targeting North Korean farmers, 21 May 1953, in Box 4, FEC Materials, HIA.

have noted with more than saintly detachment the reported postwar spike in libidinous activity among North Korean youth no longer oppressed by war's dislocations.<sup>104</sup> In all cases, the uncertainty accorded to North Korean national sovereignty, implicit in the stationing of CPV units across Korea, highlighted the sensitivities present. Interviews with CPV veterans, such as those conducted by Li Xiaobing, surveys of memoirs by veterans, and careful analysis of propaganda films from the 1950s depicting the CPV in North Korea might fill in some of the gaps in the study of the social role or function played by Chinese troops.<sup>105</sup> Further work can also be done in the MFA Archive.

## Conclusion

Chinese soldiers remained in the DPRK for an additional five years, and their interaction with the North Korean state and populace remains a significant research frontier for scholars of the Cold War. In measuring the amount of work left to be done by historians of Northeast Asia, one might juxtapose the current scattering of scholarship regarding the Chinese "occupation" of North Korea with Norman Naimark's immense, admirable monograph on the Soviet occupation of eastern Germany.<sup>106</sup> The gap is great and in need of filling. Yet many of the relevant archives—particularly, regional Chinese archives—are closed to Western scholars, and Chinese scholars are too often unable to publish their writings on Sino–North Korean relations because of the tremendous political sensitivities of the sharp-eyed—and vocal—readers in the North Korean embassy in Beijing. We might have to await a new crop of fearless Chinese graduate students or South Korean scholars trained in China to unearth or explain these issues in their full complexity.<sup>107</sup>

In addition to the issues raised in this article, the MFA Archive contains several additional groups of documents whose analysis might shed further light on China's relations with North Korea in the 1950s. Bacteriological warfare (BW) allegations in 1952 and 1953 were an important means of cementing Sino–North Korean solidarity, and a handful of new documents indicate an earlier coordinating interest in the matter. North Korean interest in China's re-

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104. Glenn D. Paige and Dong Jun Lee, "The Post-War Politics of Communist Korea," in Robert Scalapino, ed., *North Korea Today* (New York: Praeger, 1963), p. 19.

105. "Who Is the Most Loveable Person?" *Renmin ribao*, 26 August 2008.

106. Norman M. Naimark, *The Russians in Germany: A History of the Soviet Zone of Occupation, 1945–1949* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995).

107. In 2008, Beijing University inaugurated its Institute of Korean Studies, a venue that might be the origin of such young scholars. Well-established institutes such as the University of North Korean Studies in Seoul seem, for the time being, to have taken less interest in China as a historical player in North Korea than they might.

search on Japanese BW crimes dates back at least to December 1949, when the authorities in Beijing began publicizing Soviet trials of Unit 731 members at Khabarovsk. Did China's drive to stamp out the legacies of Japan's hated Unit 731 significantly affect North Korean Health Ministry officials, particularly when such educated leaders were likely spending time in northeast China before 1952? A related question regards the degree of propaganda coordination that had occurred between the two sides prior to the biological warfare allegations of February 1952. Chinese leader Guo Moruo played an active role in propagandizing the BW issue and the Chinese cause within North Korea and globally, and his trips to Pyongyang and Sinuiju might be profitably analyzed.

Local Chinese archives are the next frontier, but in the meantime even in-depth studies based on local newspapers or publications (*difangzhi*) would suffice for improving our understanding of Chinese–North Korean dynamics both near the border and beyond. Work by doctoral students and other young scholars tramping around Manchuria, as well as by those figuratively plundering the immense cache of captured North Korean documents in College Park, Maryland, remain promising and interesting.<sup>108</sup> What is most needed is greater study of interactions at the county and city level in what might be called the Sino–North Korean “contact zones.”<sup>109</sup> The persistent work by scholars to peer around the edge of North Korean archives has also yielded some gains. Further gains might be possible if some kind of academic exchange were included as part of a diplomatic agreement with the North.

Divergent pasts in East Asia frequently reveal their ability to interfere with a common future, and North Korea is no exception. The history of China's influence on North Korea may provide food for thought today. Although policymakers seem to have grasped that the relationship with the PRC is North Korea's most important bilateral relationship by far, the tensions and specific issues inherent in the alliance are rarely understood. Understanding the historical underpinnings of the relationship and how the PRC has responded to past humanitarian and political crises in North Korea is highly instructive. North Korea has largely purged the PRC from its own stylized history, but political changes on the peninsula, particularly if they result in a more vigorous Chinese role—a role surely contemplated by DPRK diplomats on those long and instructive train rides from Sinuiju to Beijing—may eventually return North Korea to its Chinese past.

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108. Hajimu Matsuda, “Whispering Gallery: Domestic Politics, Popular Sentiments, and China's Strategy toward the Korean War, 1950,” paper presented at the Association for Asian Studies Annual Meeting, Atlanta, 4 April 2008.

109. Andrew S. Natsios, *The Great North Korean Famine: Famine, Politics, and Foreign Policy* (Washington, DC: U.S. Institute of Peace, 2001), pp. 55–66.