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In A Dilemma: How Did Moscow Make The Decision Of The Soviet Air Force To Enter The Korean War?

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In A Dilemma: How Did Moscow Make The Decision Of The
Soviet Air Force To Enter The Korean War?

by

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Table of Contents	i
Abstract	ii
Introduction	1
Soviet Air Force aid to China and North Korea Before The War	5
Stalin's Attitude When the United States Just Joined the Korean War.	9
Before Battle of Inchon and the Hesitant Moscow authorities	21
After the Battle of Inchon	28
Chinese Volunteers And Soviet Air Force Entered The War	44
The U.S. Effort to Oppose Escalation	51
Conclusion	54
Bibliography	56

ABSTRACT

When China sent troops into North Korea to fight the UN forces in 1950, the Soviet Union's secret air cover for Chinese troops became critical support. However, the Soviet Union's determination to provide support was not easy. China and the Soviet Union's decision on this issue changed many times, and it was not resolved until the Chinese leader decided to send troops to North Korea on October 13, 1950. At the same time, the United States was aware of the secret involvement of the Soviet Union and made corresponding choices.

INTRODUCTION

The fighting of the air forces of the communist countries with the United Nations Air Force in the Korean War (1950-1953) has always been a focus of military historians. In their official history, the U.S. military has long ago publicized the high kill ratio victory of North Korean air combat and the maintenance of air dominance.¹ At the same time, the Chinese military likes to publicize how the young People's Liberation Army Air Force bravely fought against the former air overlord, the US Air Force, without falling behind.² In this battle for North-Korean airspace domination, there is a "secret" that both sides know but do not care to write much about, and that is the participation of the Soviet Air Force. The Soviet Air Force was no stranger to China. As early as the Sino-Japanese War broke out in 1937, the Soviet Union and the Guomindang government reached an agreement that sent some Soviet fighter planes to help China resist the Japanese army.³ In 1949, when the Communist Party of China won a victory in the civil war, the Soviet Air Force firmed up its presence in China through the mutual assistance agreement between China and the Soviet Union.⁴ Soviet military advisors were to train the newly established People's Liberation Army Air Force and assist China in defending against bombing

¹ Jacob Neufeld. *F-15 Origins and Development 1964-1972*. (Office of Air Force History, 1974.), 3-4.

² Xiaoming Zhang. *Red Wings over the Yalu : China, the Soviet Union, and the Air War in Korea*. (United States: Texas A & M University Press, 2002.) 208

³ Pingping Gao, and Yaru Li. "Sino-Japanese Air Force's Deadly Fight for Air Control during the Anti-Japanese War," (抗战时期中日空军争夺制空权的殊死搏斗) *Military Historical Research*, (军事历史研究) no. 02 (1996): 117-30.

⁴ Zhihua Shen. *Mao Zedong, Stalin, and the Korean War*. (毛泽东, 斯大林与朝鲜战争) 2nd ed. (Guangzhou: Guangdong People's Publishing House, 2003.) 145-149.

by the Taiwan-based Guomindang Air Force. Nevertheless, sending the Soviet Air Force directly to North Korea to fight Americans was still a very risky proposition. The confrontation between the two superpowers might have escalated into a new world war. So when and how did Stalin make this risky decision, and when did the Soviet Air Force participate in the war?

It seems that American historians have not done much research on this issue. Dr. Zhang Xiaoming's *Red Wings Over Yalu* gave a detailed introduction to the Soviet Air Force's assistance to the People's Liberation Army Air Force, Zhang did not cover political details in the book but focused on military analysis.⁵ For example, in Chapter 4, Zhang introduced in detail how the Soviet Air Force helped the newborn PRC withstand bombing from the Guomindang Air Force and train the Chinese Air Force, but skipped negotiations and diplomatic games between Beijing, Pyongyang and Moscow.⁶ *Uncertain Partners: Stalin, Mao, and the Korean War* by Sergei Goncharov, John W. Lewis, and Xue Litai is a Western political and historical work that studies the game between Mao Zedong and Stalin when he sent troops to aid them in their conflict during the civil war. The book does not specifically write a separate chapter of the Soviet Air Force's secret warfare.⁷ Chinese Cold-War historians, such as Shen Zhihua and other historians in Center for Cold War International History Studies(CCWIHS), have conducted a more in-depth study of this topic, but many of their works have not been published in the Western world.

Among them, *the History of the War to Resist US Aggression and Aid Korea* (抗美援朝战争史)

⁵ Zhang. *Red Wings over the Yalu*

⁶ Ibid. "From Defending China to Intervention Korea". 78-98

⁷ Sergej N Goncarov, John W Lewis, and Litai Xue. "China Enters The Korean War" *Uncertain Partners*. (Stanford, Calif: Stanford Univ. Press, 1994.)168-202

compiled by the Chinese Academy of Military Sciences is seen as the most authoritative work in China. The book also mentions that the Chinese leaders consulted with the Soviet leaders on the issue of troops and Soviet air support.⁸ Several other books published in English by the Chinese scholars such as , *Mao, Stalin and the Korean War: Trilateral Communist Relations in the 1950s* , *A Short History of Sino-Soviet Relations, 1917–1991* and *Mao and the Sino–Soviet Partnership, 1945–1959: A New History* all mention the secret involvement of the Soviet Air Force in the Korean War.⁹ Among them, *Mao and the Sino–Soviet Partnership, 1945–1959: A New History* is provides the most detailed writing on this subject. In Chapter 3, Shen Zhihua and Xia Yafeng introduced and analyzed in detail the game between China, the Soviet Union, and the DPRK on secret warfare and other military assistance.¹⁰ *Mao, Stalin and the Korean War* also conducted a very detailed record and analysis of Sino-Soviet relations, but the part about the Soviet Air Force secretly participating in the war is scattered across Chapters VII and VIII.¹¹ Shen Zhihua also published an article in 2010 on *Strategic Studies* entitled “China and the Dispatch of the Soviet Air Force: The Formation of the Chinese--Soviet--Korean Alliance in the Early Stage of the Korean War”, as the name implies, the main content of this article is about the Soviet Union sending air forces into the Korean battlefield.¹² A special article on the secret participation of the

⁸ Chinese Academy of Military Sciences Military History Research Department. *The History of the War to Resist US Aggression and Aid Korea* (抗美援朝战争史) (Beijing: Military science press, 2000.)166-169

⁹ Zhihua Shen. *A Short History of Sino-Soviet Relations, 1917-1991*. China Connections. (Singapore: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020.); Zhihua, Shen, and Neil Silver. *Mao, Stalin and the Korean War*. Cold War History Series. (London: Routledge Ltd, 2012.)

¹⁰ Zhihua Shen, and Yafeng Xia. “Differences and Cooperation during the Korean War” in *Mao and the Sino–Soviet Partnership, 1945–1959*. Harvard Cold War Studies Book Series. (US: Lexington Books, 2015.)69-99.

¹¹ Shen, and Silver. “North Korea crosses the 38th Parallel” and “China desides: ‘whatever the sacrifice necessary’” in *Mao, Stalin and the Korean War*. 133-177.

¹² Zhihua Shen. “China and the Dispatch of the Soviet Air Force: The Formation of the Chinese-Soviet-Korean Alliance in the Early Stage of the Korean War,” *Journal of Strategic Studies* 33, 33, no. 2 (April 1, 2010): 211–30.

Soviet Air Force in its original Chinese version not included in the English version.¹³ However, there seem to be no other English works specifically referring to the political exchanges between China, the Soviet Union, U.S., and the DPRK during this period. Some of these books about the Soviet Union 's secret participation the Korean War somewhat overlap with the narrative of this essay, but this thesis focuses only on Soviet aviation assistance and makes some new arguments.

¹³ Shen. "Soviet Air Force in the War to Resist US Aggression and Aid Korea" in *Mao Zedong, Stalin, and the Korean War*. (毛泽东, 斯大林与朝鲜战争) 329-341.

SOVIET AIR FORCE AID TO CHINA AND NORTH KOREA BEFORE THE WAR

After its victory was accomplished in 1949, the Chinese Communist Party approached Soviet authorities to help speed up its progress in establishing an air force. On July 25, 1949, during a secret visit of several members of the CPC Central Committee to the Soviet Union, a letter by Mao Zedong to Stalin was hand-delivered by Chinese Politburo member Liu Shaoqi.¹⁴ Mao hoped that Chinese pilots could go to the Soviet Union for training and that the Soviet Union would assist with 100 to 200 fighter planes and dozens of bombers to aid the anticipated invasion of Taiwan by the CCP. On September 19, 1949, the Soviet Council of Ministers issued a resolution to provide military assistance to China, including the personnel and aircraft required by the six aviation schools that the PRC was setting up.¹⁵ Soviet personnel to be dispatched included 42 commanders, 96 instructors, 84 pilots-instructors, 238 officers-instructors, and 278 warrant officers and sergeants-instructors. Equipment included 68 Yak-18, 84 Yak-11 and UTB-2, 84 UTI, La-9, Utu-2, 84 La-9 and Tu-2, 12 Yak-12 and 2 Li- 2.¹⁶ In a resolution of the Soviet Council of Ministers on November 4, 1949, the Soviet Union furnished China with 97 aviation

¹⁴Editorial Board of "Russian Declassified Archives: Sino-Soviet Relations". "№00601 Liu Shaoqi to Stalin: Transmitting Telegram of Mao Zedong (July 25, 1949)" (№00601 刘少奇致斯大林函：转交毛泽东的电报(1949年7月25日)) in Vol.2 of *Selected Russian Declassified Archives: Sino-Soviet Relations*. (俄罗斯解密档案选编：中苏关系) (Beijing: Oriental Publishing Center, 2015.) 83-85.

¹⁵ Ibid. "№16542 Resolution of the Council of Ministers of the Soviet Union: Assistance to the People's Liberation Army (September 19, 1949)" (№16542 苏联部长会议决议：为中国人民解放军提供援助(1949年9月19日)). 100-105.

¹⁶Ibid. 100-102

school personnel and six Li-2 trainers.¹⁷ In 1950, Stalin called Kotov, who at that time, was Soviet military attaché to China, to agree to provide all the liquid fuel needed for the training of Chinese pilots.¹⁸ It can be said that the Soviet authorities showed almost no hesitation the training of the Chinese Air Force pilots and provided China with all the necessary personnel and equipment and logistical support.

by that time, meanwhile, the Guomindang troops had been completely defeated by the People's Liberation Army in mainland China in late 1949, and Chiang Kai-shek had relocated the Guomindang government to the island of Taiwan, from where he launched a strategic bombing campaign of the Chinese mainland.¹⁹ The targets of the Guomindang Air Force were mostly important coastal cities under PRC control. for example, Shanghai suffered 26 airstrikes from October 1949 to February 1950. The largest airstrike occurred on February 6, 1950. On this day, the Guomindang Air Force dispatched a total of 17 B-24, B-25 bombers and P-51, P-38 fighters, which bombed targets such as the Shanghai Electric Power Company, the Shanghai South and the Zhabei Hydropower Company, dropping more than 60 bombs and destroyed more than 2000 dwellings, while more than 1,400 residents were killed or injured. The bombs caused damage to power plants and forced most factories to stop production, interfering with the CPC's efforts at the restoration of the country's economy. The Shanghai authorities and residents became

¹⁷Ibid. "№16558 Resolution of the Council of Ministers of the Soviet Union: Provision of military technical assistance to the Chinese People's Liberation Army (November 4, 1949)" (№16558 苏联部长会议决议: 向中国人民解放军提供军事技术援助(1949年11月4日)) 145-148

¹⁸ Ibid. "№16581 Stalin to Kotov: agree to supply aviation fuel to China (January 8, 1950)" (№16581 斯大林致科托夫电: 同意为中国提供航空用油(1950年1月8日)) 231-232

¹⁹ Xianzhi Pang, and Chongji Jin. *Biography of Mao Zedong (1949-1976)*. (毛泽东传(1949-1976)) (Beijing: Central Party Literature Publishing House, 2003.) 62

despondent.²⁰

To cope with this situation, in February 1950, China requested the Soviets to provide air cover. Stalin agreed to provide support but proposed that China and Soviet Union should sign a secret agreement stipulating that, in the Soviet Far East Territory and Central Asia, China's Northeast and Xinjiang, "Concessions will not be provided to foreigners and third countries or their citizens, industrial, financial, commercial, and other enterprises, agencies, companies, and organizations that participate in investment directly or indirectly engage in (business) activities."²¹ The Chinese side agreed after considerable consideration. Later, Stalin stated that he wanted to hand over the Japanese and "Puppet Manchuria" property originally received by the Soviets in the Northeast and the Russian-Orthodox's church in Beijing and a number of other properties.²² As a result of the agreement, the Soviet Union dispatched an air defense group army led by Lieutenant General Bakitsky to Xuzhou and Shanghai, including the 106th Fighter Aviation Division, the 52nd Antiaircraft Artillery Division, the Guards Antiaircraft Searchlight Corps, and an independent radio technology battalion, totaling 127 Planes. The aircraft includes 40 jet fighters, 41 piston fighters, 26 attackers, ten bombers, and ten transport aircraft.²³ a month after negotiations had concluded, on March 7, 1950, the first Soviet Air Force (the 351st Fighter Aviation Regiment) entered Xuzhou Airport and took on security and patrol tasks. In the

²⁰ Yazhi Wang, Zhihua Shen, and Danhui Li. *Memories of Peng Dehuai's Military Staff: Witnesses of Sino-Soviet Military Relations in the 1950s*. (彭德怀军事参谋的回忆：1950年代中苏军事关系见证) 1st ed. (Shanghai: Fudan University press, 2009.) 9-10.

²¹ Pang and Jin, *Biography*, 62; Central Archives, Central Literature Research Office. Vol.2 of *Zhou Enlai's Manuscript since the Founding*. (建国以来周恩来文稿) (Central Literature Publishing House, 2008.) 78-79.

²² Pang and Jin, *Biography*, 62-63.

²³ V. Nabokov, "Soviet Fighter Pilots in China in 1950," *Questions of History*, no. 3 (2002): 140.

subsequent air battles with the Guomindang aircraft, the Soviet Air Force had a clear advantage.

From March 8th to August 1st, it carried out 230 sorties, conducted seven air combats, and shot down six enemy aircraft without any losses. The 106th Fighter Aviation Division completed the combat mission to defend Shanghai and its surrounding areas, shooting down all enemy aircraft trying to invade these areas without them being able to drop one a bomb in this region.

Regarding China's domestic security, although Stalin tried to profit from it, He could not gain much advantage, due to China's strategic position and weak airpower; nonetheless, Stalin did not have much hesitation assisting.²⁴ During this period, whether out of loyalty toward treaty obligations or a so-called proletarian brotherhood, Stalin did not hesitate to give China assistance to fight the Guomindang following this precedent, Stalin did not need much urging in rendering assistance to the Korean battlefield.

²⁴ Ibid. 140-141

STALIN'S ATTITUDE WHEN THE UNITED STATES JUST JOINED THE KOREAN WAR.

After the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950, President Harry S. Truman made a decision to participate in the war on June 25, which surprised Stalin and Kim Il Sung. this surprise found its roots in several previous developments First of all, in a speech of 12 January 1950, US Secretary of State Dean Gooderham Acheson did not place South Korea within the defense circle of the United States in the Far East; secondly, Kim Il Sung expressed the belief in talks with Stalin in April 1950 that the United States had no time to prepare for this.²⁵ However, the United States Air Forces Far East Air Forces (FEAF), stationed in Japan and South Korea, responded quickly to Truman's decision and began a continuous tactical and strategic bombing of North Korea on June 27. The bombing run caused heavy losses to the Korean People's Army, with its air force and navy being the first to bear the brunt. According to soviet ambassador Serentii F. Shtykov's report, on July 2, the U.S. Air Force repeatedly bombed settlements, production facilities and military targets. Residents'(of North Korean) political emotions began to be frustrated, and residents of the liberated areas began to watch the situation, and even a sense of defeatism

²⁵ Dean G. Acheson, *Secretary of State Dean G. Acheson's Speech, Crisis in Asia - An Examination of U.S. Policy*. Department of State Bulletin, XXII, No.551. (Washington, D.C.: Office of Public Communication, Bureau of Public Affairs, 1950.) Zhihua, Shen. "Tunkin to Wisinski about meeting Kim Il Sung" (顿金关于会晤金日成情况致维辛斯基电) in Vol. 1 of *Korean War: Declassified Files in Russian Archives*. (朝鲜战争：俄国档案馆的解密文件) 1st ed. (Taiwan: Academia Sinica Institute of Modern History, 2003.) 238-241.

appeared.²⁶ After this report, Stalin realized that DPRK's victory in the war might not be smoothly accomplished. He needed to consider how to increase direct military assistance to North Korea, but such assistance could not be seen to come from Moscow, as he didn't want the conflict to escalate into a total Soviet-U.S. war.

The assistance of the Soviet Union before the war to the PRK mainly involved training the Korean army, providing weapons and equipment, and formulating combat plans. Stalin barred Soviet soldiers from crossing the 38th parallel and directly participating in the invasion of South Korea.²⁷ At the beginning of the attack, Stalin also ordered the recall of all Soviet advisers in the frontline forces of the Korean People's Army. At that time, Khrushchev asked the reason and Stalin replied: " It's too dangerous to let our advisers live there, they might become captives. We do not want to leave evidence to be accused of our involvement in this incident."²⁸ When Khrushchev further questioned this, Stalin ignored him.²⁹ It was precisely because of the lack of guidance from Soviet advisers that the North Korean army that had continued to advance south collapsed into chaos. After taking Seoul, even Shtykov had to plead with Stalin to approve two Soviet advisers to each army of the People's Army and hoped that military advisor general Vasilyev would join the officer group at Seoul to the front command and stay there with the

²⁶ Editorial Board of "Russian Declassified Archives", "№00281 Shtykov to Stalin: Political sentiment of North Korean leaders (July 2, 1950)" (№00281 什特科夫致斯大林电: 朝鲜领导人的政治情绪(1950年7月2日)) 462-464.

²⁷ D. Volkogonov, "Should We Be Afraid of This? ," Spark, no. 26 (1993): 29.

²⁸ Nikita Khrushchev, *Khrushchev's Memoirs*, (赫鲁晓夫回忆录) Trans. Zhao zhaoli, etc. (Beijing, China Radio and Television Publishing House,1988.)360-361.

²⁹ Ibid..

senior North-Korean commanders.³⁰ Stalin ignored the request to send Soviet advisers and only responded that Vasilyev "is more suitable to live in Pyongyang."³¹ Nevertheless later, in response to a direct request of Kim Il Sung, Stalin promised to send some Soviet advisers into North Korea. On the one hand, he severely condemned Shtykov's actions, and warned him that "you are the ambassador of the Soviet Union, not North Korea" and stated that Shtykov would be held personally accountable to the Soviet government to make sure no Soviet advisers would be captured.³² Meanwhile, it was made clear that these advisors were "sent to (the) front line command, not the combat forces," and that they were sent "dressed as civilians and as *Pravda* reporters," and not as soldiers. Meanwhile, Stalin began to think of asking for assistance from the Chinese army when necessary.³³ When and how to provide such assistance depended on the development of the war situation.

U.S. participation the war attracted the attention of Chinese leaders as well. On July 2nd, CPC politburo member and prime minister Zhou Enlai summoned the Soviet ambassador Roshchin and requested to be allowed to inform the Soviet government of the Chinese leaders' judgment on the situation North Korea. He pointed out that in order to prevent the U.S. troops from landing, the Korean People's Army should accelerate its southward advance, capture ports

³⁰ Shen, "Shtykov to Stalin's Telegram: Questions about the reorganization of the Korean People's Army" (什特科夫关于朝鲜人民军整编问题致斯大林电) in *Declassified Files in Russian Archives*. (俄国档案馆的解密文件) 427-429

³¹ Editorial Board of "Russian Declassified Archives", "№00285 Stalin to Shtykov: Supply of weapons and equipment to North Korea via Northeast China (July 6, 1950)" (№00285 斯大林致什特科夫电: 经中国东北向朝鲜提供武器装备(1950年7月6日)) 465.

³² Shen, "Shtykov to Stalin: to relay Kim Il-sung's request to send Soviet advisers" (什特科夫转呈金日成关于派遣苏联顾问的请求致斯大林电) in *Declassified Files in Russian Archives*. (俄国档案馆的解密文件) 438

³³ Ibid.

in the south, and build a strong garrison important coast areas like Incheon. Zhou Enlai believes that the Chinese army can wear the Korean People's Army clothing and fight as volunteers when necessary, such as when the United Nations forces cross the 38th parallel. To this end, China would concentrate three military forces in Shenyang, with a total of a strength of 120,000. Finally, Zhou Enlai asked whether the Soviet Air Force could ensure air cover for these forces. China 's Northeast Frontier Defense Forces were formally established only a few days later, and ordered to be ready by August 5.³⁴ Zhou Enlai said this before making a formal decision the matter, apparently intent on letting Stalin know that Chinese leaders were willing to help North Korea, but at the same time let Stalin understand that Soviet air force was one of the conditions for China to send troops.

Stalin responded immediately. Replying on July 5:

“We believe that it is correct to immediately concentrate 9 Chinese divisions on the China-DPRK border so that the volunteers will enter North Korea when the enemy crosses the 38th parallel. We will do our best to provide air cover for these forces.”³⁵

³⁴ Central Literature Research Office, Central Archives. Vol.1 of *Mao Zedong's Manuscript since the Founding*. (建国以来毛泽东文稿) (Central Literature Publishing House, 1987.) 428

³⁵ Editorial Board of "Russian Declassified Archives", №00284 Stalin sends a message to Roshchin: Questions about the buildup of Chinese troops at the border between China and North Korea (July 5, 1950), (№00284 斯大林致罗申电: 关于中国军队在中朝边境集结的问题(1950年7月5日)) 563

As no further news from China was received, Stalin again asked Roshchin to tell Zhou Enlai or Mao Zedong on July 13:"

We don't know if you have decided to deploy 9 Chinese divisions on the border between China and North Korea. If you have decided to do so, then we are going to send you an aviation division equipped with 124 jet fighters to cover these forces. We plan to train Chinese pilots with our pilots for two to three months and then transfer all the equipment to your pilots. We intend to let the aviation division Shanghai do the same."³⁶

These two documents show that in order to urge China to make up its mind and prepare for sending troops to North Korea as soon as possible, Stalin made a clear commitment at the time: In addition to the Soviet Union training China 's air force and provide China with air force equipment, it would also provide air cover to Chinese troops "into North Korea." That is, the Soviet Air Force would fight side by side with the Chinese army. However, Stalin did set as a condition here that the timing of China's troop dispatch (of course also the Soviet Air Force) is "when the enemy crosses the 38th parallel."

The FEAF bombing caused Pyongyang to panic. Starting on June 29, the U.S. Air Force continuously launched bombers to bomb North Korean airports in Pyongyang and other regions.

³⁶ Ibid. "№00293 Stalin sends a message to Roshen: Preparations for Air Force Assistance to China (July 13, 1950)" (№00293 斯大林致罗申电：准备向中国提供空军援助(1950年7月13日)) 568.

Carrier-based aircraft of U.S.N. Task Force 77 began to seize air control in North Korea.³⁷ Faced with the advantages of the U.S. Air Force, the Yak fighters of the Korean People's Army Air Force proved completely incapable of stopping the operations of the U.S. bombers, and they could at most occasionally win air battles through unexpected attacks.³⁸ On July 7, Kim Il Sung met with Shtykov and asked the Soviet military adviser to move to Seoul as soon as possible and participate in the military command of the various legions. Otherwise, the People's Army would face "failure" and "collapse." Kim Il Sung added that officials from many places had reported to him that the local area was heavily bombed by the US Air Force. Many railway junctions and bridges had been severely damaged. According to Shtykov, Kim Il Sung was "distracted and slightly frustrated" for the first time since the outbreak of the war.³⁹ Stalin instead hoped China could resolve this. In a July 8 telegram, he instructed Roshchin:

“Please inform Mao Zedong that the Koreans are complaining that there is no Chinese representative in North Korea. Representatives should be sent as soon as possible to facilitate contact and solve the problem, that is, if Mao feels it necessary to contact North Korea.”⁴⁰

³⁷ Robert Frank Futrell, Lawson S Moseley, and Albert F Simpson. *The United States Air Force in Korea, 1950-1953*. (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1961.) 6-13

³⁸ Ibid. 7-19

³⁹ Editorial Board of "Russian Declassified Archives", "№20062 Shtykov to Stalin: transport of weapons via Chinese railways, and more (July 8, 1950)" (№20062 什特科夫致斯大林电：经中国铁路运输武器等事(1950年7月8日)) 566-567

⁴⁰ Shen, "Stalin to Roshchin: China should send representatives to North Korea as soon as possible" (斯大林关于中国应尽快向朝鲜派出代表问题致罗申电) in *Declassified Files in Russian Archives*. (俄国档案馆的解密文件) 437.

communist China was actively preparing at this time to get involved in the Korean war.

While the troops were Amassing northeast, Chinese leaders were stepping up their battle planning. On July 13, Zhou Enlai entrusted the Chinese representative in North Korea to tell Kim Il Sung that American intervention the war in North Korea could not be tolerated, and the Chinese government was prepared to provide as much assistance as possible to North Korea in this war. In order to meet the needs of North Korea promptly, Kim should not hesitate to ask for help; at the same time, China hope North Korea could provide China with a total of Five hundred pieces of maps of North Korea with scales of 1 to 100,000, 1 to 200,000, and 1 to 500,000. China also asks North Korea to report the situation of the front line and send samples of North Korean military uniforms as soon as possible "⁴¹ Kim Il Sung reported this situation to the Soviet ambassador promptly. During the talks, Kim Il Sung sadly noted that the participation of the US military, especially the attack by the United States Air Force, "has led to the destruction of a large number of North Korean cities and industrial enterprises. KPA was constantly suffering bombardment, and the advancement of the People's Army was hindered. "⁴² Kim Il Sung also proposed that, "Since the United States and other countries have stood on the side of Syngman Rhee and participated in the war, then democratic countries such as Czechoslovakia and China can also use their military to help North Korea."⁴³ Shtykov deliberately avoided this issue, but only said that Kim's most important task at present was to mobilize all internal forces, strengthen

⁴¹ Editorial Board of "Russian Declassified Archives", "№20066 Shtykov to Stalin: North Korean government asks China for military assistance (July 15, 1950)" (№20066 什特科夫致斯大林电: 朝鲜政府要求中国给予军事援助(1950年7月15日)) 669

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

the army, consolidate the liberated areas, and ensure and enhance his influence among the Korean people.⁴⁴

On July 19, Kim Il Sung again reported to Shtykov on the talks between his representative in Beijing and Mao Zedong: Mao Zedong believed that the United States would participate in the war for a long time and would deploy more troops in North Korea. Mao Zedong suggested that Kim Il Sung "order the troops to stop attacking the enemy in order to save their main force," and "promise to North Korea 30,000 rifles, 2000 portable machine guns, 200 heavy machine guns, 300 81 mm mortars and 1,000 mules. All these supplies will start shipping on July 25."⁴⁵

Kim Il Sung also reported that in order to understand the situation of the Korean War, Mao Zedong wanted to send Zhou Enlai to North Korea, but because of the difficulty of flying, he had to ask Kim Il Sung to send military representatives to China instead. Besides, Mao Zedong also said that if North Korea needed assistance, China "can send its troops to North Korea. China has prepared four corps for a total of 320,000 people" and hopes that Kim Il Sung will report their situation by August 10. "⁴⁶When Kim Il Sung asked Moscow for his opinion on this issue, Shtykov replied: He knew nothing about it. Kim Il Sung also said that he thought that Mao Zedong might have negotiated with Stalin, but did not expect that this was just Mao Zedong's own thoughts. Shtykov again said he did not know of this. Finally, the Soviet ambassador requested in a telegram that Moscow present its views on China's troop dispatch as soon as

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid. №20067 Shtykov to Stalin: Frontline situation and China's participation the war (July 20, 1950) (№20067 什特科夫致斯大林电：前线状况和中国参战问题(1950年7月20日)) 670.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

possible in order to respond to Kim Il Sung in the future.⁴⁷ Stalin did not answer to this. It seemed that Stalin was calmer than Kim Il Sung and Shtykov. Before the critical moment, Moscow did not want to let the Chinese army intervene in the war. After several trials, Kim Il Sung understood Stalin's attitude.

On July 18, Moscow received a long comprehensive report from the Soviet embassy on the situation North Korea. The central message was that North Korean leaders and residents had shaken off their initial panic and regained their confidence in victory. The report said that immediately after being attacked by the U.S. Air Force, North Koreans feared that they would not be able to defeat U.S. armed interventionists without armed assistance from the Soviet Union and China. However, with the advancement of the People's Army southward, especially after fighting with US forces on July 5 and 11 and inflicting heavy damage and captives on a large number of American soldiers, "the people's fighting spirit has been restored."⁴⁸ The number of people actively requesting to be sent to the front line increased sharply, and within a few days, 745,000 volunteer troops were formed. The liberated cities, especially Seoul, soon resumed normal life, established socialist's power institutions, and mobilized local resources to help the front line. The victories of the People's Army also revived the southern guerrilla movement. The report concluded that North Koreans had restored their confidence to quickly reach a final

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Shen Zhihua. "Report from the Soviet embassy to Gromko on the political situation North Korea." (苏联驻朝使馆关于朝鲜政治形势给葛罗米柯的报告) In Vol. 2. of *Korean War: Declassified Files in Russian Archives*. (朝鲜战争：俄国档案馆的解密文件) 1st ed. (Taiwan: Academia Sinica Institute of Modern History, 2003.)458-468

victory.⁴⁹ In August, the soviet embassy in North Korea submitted a report with the same conclusion to Moscow again, with the incidental mention that North Korean officials and the "Korean masses" expressed their dissatisfaction with the Soviet Union's failure to send the air force in time to stop the bombing of American aircraft.⁵⁰ An optimistic estimate of the development of the war situation is probably one of the reasons why Stalin was not eager to consider providing direct military assistance to North Korea. On the other hand, the eagerness of Mao Zedong to send troops to North Korea may have also caused Stalin's doubts-one consequence of China's sending troops was to expand its position and influence in North Korea. In the long run, this was not good for the Soviet Union's strategic position the far east.

Soon after the us began to bomb North-Korean targets, Mao Zedong was thinking about sending troops, especially after receiving the promise of air force assistance from the Soviet Union. On July 22, Mao Zedong replied to Stalin:

We will use one of your jet divisions to cover our army, and plan to deploy it in the Shenyang area. Two regiments will be deployed in Anshan and one regiment. in Liaoyang, with the cooperation of the fighter aviation groups of our mixed aviation brigade in Andong, this will help to complete the task of providing air cover for our army and the industrial zones of Shenyang, Andong and Fushun.⁵¹

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid. "Stykov's report to Gromyko about political sentiments among South Korean residents." (什特科夫关于南朝鲜居民政治情绪的情况呈葛罗米柯的报告) 488-491.

⁵¹ Editorial Board of "Russian Declassified Archives", "№00295 Mao Zedong to Stalin: Air Force Coverage for the Chinese Army

At the same time, Mao Zedong also discussed the work arrangements for training Chinese pilots and announced that the Chinese planned to complete the work of receiving all the weapons and equipment and modification training of the two Soviet aviation divisions by March to April 1951. In this regard, the Soviet Union wholeheartedly agreed.⁵² The previous day, on July 21, the Soviet Council of Ministers had drawn up relevant resolutions. According to these resolutions, on July 22, Soviet Military Minister Vasilevsky instructed military general counsel Krasovsky and Batitsky in China to hand over all the aircraft of the Batitzki air fleet in Shanghai. On August 1, the formation of the air defense group in Shanghai was canceled, and all equipment was transferred to the Chinese Hybrid Aviation Brigade concentrated in the Shanghai-Xuzhou area waiting for conversion training. On August 10, the 151st Fighter Aviation Division of the Soviet Union finally completed its assembly missions in Shenyang, Liaoyang, Anshan, and other places.⁵³

Perhaps because China's proposal to send troops did not get a response from North Korea, Mao Zedong decided to present this idea to Moscow through another channel. On August 19 and 28, Mao Zedong talked twice with the Soviet philosopher Pavel Yudin, who assisted in editing

in the China-DPRK Border Area (July 22, 1950)" (№00295 毛泽东致斯大林电：在中朝边境地区为中国军队提供空军掩护 (1950年7月22日)) 573-575

⁵² Ibid. "№00296 Wisinski sends a message to Roshchin: Consent to train Chinese pilots (July 25, 1950)" (№00296 维辛斯基致罗申电：同意训练中国飞行员问题 (1950年7月25日)) 575.

⁵³ Editorial Board of "Russian Declassified Archives: Sino-Soviet Relations". "№20071 Vasilevsky Report to Burganin: Provision of Air Cover for the Chinese Army (August 28, 1950)" (№20071 华西列夫斯基致布尔加宁报告：为中国军队提供空中掩护 (1950年8月28日)) in Vol.3 of *Selected Russian Declassified Archives: Sino-Soviet Relations*. (俄罗斯解密档案选编：中苏关系) (Beijing: Oriental Publishing Center, 2015.)26-27.

the Selected Works of Mao Zedong in Beijing, and was known to be close to Stalin. Mao Zedong talked about two possibilities for things to happen: If Americans used only their current forces in North Korea, they might soon be kicked out of the peninsula and never return. However, if the United States was determined to succeed in North Korea, they would need 30 to 40 divisions. In this case, North Koreans alone could not deal with them, and they needed China's direct assistance. If such assistance was provided, these 30 to 40 divisions from in the United States could be eliminated. If this plan could be realized, it would delay the outbreak of World War III, which was beneficial to both the Soviet Union and China. Mao Zedong's remarks were, of course, intended for Moscow's ears.⁵⁴ However, Stalin remained unmoved, although Kim Il Sung continued to request such large-scale military assistance from the PRC.

⁵⁴Ibid.

BEFORE BATTLE OF INCHON AND THE HESITANT MOSCOW AUTHORITIES

After mid-August, the People's Army's offensive was blocked on the front line of the Nakdong River, and Kim Il Sung again showed anxiety and disappointment. On August 19, Kim Il Sung's secretary was entrusted to see Shtykov. The secretary said that, while he was lying in bed, Kim Il Sung had become "worried" about the fact that frontline troops were forced to abandon the offensive due to the uninterrupted cluster bombing of American aircraft. "Kim Il Sung requested to send an international air force to provide air cover for the Korean People's Army forces. Otherwise, the conditions for the troops' fighting would be too difficult."⁵⁵ Without Moscow's instructions, Shtykov could only continue to take an evasive attitude and suggested that the Korean People's Army "should quickly replenish the troop strength and put the reserve forces into combat in order to move forward as soon as possible."⁵⁶ Shtykov also reported that "Kim Il Sung's mood has been somewhat depressed recently," and he was "a little worried about whether the People's Army can stick to the front line."⁵⁷ Because the North Korean Air Force suffered heavy losses and was unable to fight the enemy, Kim Il Sung had to wholly rely on the

⁵⁵ Ibid. "№20069 Shtykov sends a message to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs: North Korean government requests international air force assistance (August 19, 1950)"(№20069 什特科夫致外交部电: 朝鲜政府请求提供国际空军援助(1950年8月19日)) 12-14.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

assistance from the Soviet Air Force.

On August 26, Kim Il Sung informed the Soviet ambassador over the phone that, according to the information he had, the Americans planned to land in Incheon and Suwon. The DPRK planned plans to take the necessary measures to strengthen defense in the areas mentioned above. They were considering the inconvenience of raising the issue that the Soviets had been avoiding again. That night, Kim Il Sung said to Shtykov again through his secretary "still wanted to ask the Chinese comrades to send troops to assist North Korea because the current frontline situation is too difficult. "But he wanted to know Moscow's opinion on this and several times thought of writing to Stalin."⁵⁸ Kim Il Sung also wanted to refer this issue to the Politburo of the Workers' Party of Korea for discussion. Seeing that Shtykov had no intention of talking about this topic, the secretary quickly changed his mind and said that the above issues were all on his initiative, and Kim Il Sung did not ask him to discuss these issues.⁵⁹ Shtykov reported that in the recent period, Kim Il Sung had become increasingly unsure of winning the war on his own strength, and therefore repeatedly tried to obtain the consent of the Soviet embassy in order to ask the Chinese army to help North Korea. However, Kim Il Sung has never mentioned this issue again after this trial. The Chinese provided the information that Kim Il Sung said about the United States' intention to land in Incheon. Mao Zedong wrote to Stalin by telegram on October 2nd:

⁵⁸ Ibid. "№20072 Shtykov sends a message to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs: North Korea asks the Soviet Union's attitude towards Chinese troops (August 29, 1950)" (№20072 什特科夫致外交部电: 朝鲜询问苏联对中国出兵的态度(1950年8月29日)) 28-29

⁵⁹ Ibid.

"Also when Comrade Kim Il Sung arrived in Beijing in April this year, we told him to pay serious attention to the possibility of foreign reactionary forces invading North Korea. In mid-July, late July, and early September, we told comrades of North Korea three times that they would be aware of the danger that the enemy would advance from the sea to Incheon and Seoul to cut off the back road of the People 's Army. They should retreat to the north in a proper time, preserving the main force, and fighting for victory in a long war. "⁶⁰

Mao Zedong did nothing more than remind Kim Il Sung using his war experience: If he wanted to win, he must rely on the assistance of the Chinese army. In early September, on the repeated urging of Mao Zedong, the strength of the Northeast Frontier Force was planned to increase to 700,000, while another 200,000 were recruited, and weapons and equipment were strengthened. China was undoubtedly doing this to guard against possible actions by the United States, and Kim Il Sung asked Moscow for the issue of asking China to send troops.⁶¹

Stalin could not ignore it anymore, but rejected Kim Il Sung's request for international assistance. In a telegram on August 28, Stalin first told Kim Il Sung that "the Central Committee of the Communist Party (Bolshevik) does not doubt that foreign interference will be expelled from North Korea soon."⁶²!Then Stalin reassured, "Don't be uneasy because you haven't

⁶⁰ Pang and Jin. *Biography of Mao*. (毛泽东传) 146-147.

⁶¹ Central Archives, Central Literature Research Office, Vol. 3 of *Zhou Enlai's Manuscript since the Founding*: (建国以来周恩来文稿) (Central Literature Publishing House, 2008.) 247-251.

⁶² Shen, "Stalin to Shtykov: Advice on Korean People's Army operations." (斯大林关于对朝鲜人民军作战的建议致什特科夫电) In *Declassified Files in Russian Archives*. 515.

achieved consecutive victories in the struggle with foreign interferers. Victory is sometimes accompanied by some setbacks or even partial defeat. There is no continuous victory in such a war.⁶³ "The situation of the Russians during 1919 British, French, and American armed intervention was much more difficult than that of the current North Korean comrades. "Stalin finally agreed to Kim Il Sung," If necessary, we can provide the North Korean Air Force with attackers and fighter jets. "⁶⁴After hearing Stalin's clear opinion directly, Kim Il Sung was" very happy and thanked many times "and repeatedly emphasized that this letter was very important and should be communicated to members of the Politburo. Kim Il Sung explained, "Some members of the Politburo are not in the right mood. It is good for them to understand the content of this letter."⁶⁵ On August 31, Kim Il Sung wrote a passionate letter to Stalin: "Dear mentor, we thank you for your uncle's teaching. We have received your great support at the crucial moment of the Korean people's struggle." After Stalin's claim, Kim Il Sung placed all his hopes on Moscow.⁶⁶

However, Stalin became more cautious at this time. Not only did he not provide air force assistance to North Korea in a timely manner, but even the original mission of providing cover for the Chinese army stopped. On August 28, Vasilevsky reported that, in light of the U.S. planes conducting airstrikes and raids on residential areas and train stations in northeast China on

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Editorial Board of "Russian Declassified Archives", "№00299 Shtykov to Stalin: Meeting with Kim Il Sung (August 30, 1950)" (№00299 什特科夫致斯大林电: 与金日成会晤的情况(1950年8月30日)) 30.

⁶⁶ Shen, "Shtkov to Stalin: Letter of thanks from Kim Il Sung." (什特科夫转呈金日成的感谢信致斯大林电) In *Declassified Files in Russian Archives* 517.

August 27, the Ministry of Defense requested permission to let the 151st Fighter Division that had assembled there take the combat mission to provide air cover for the Northeast Frontier Force (13th Corps). The report required approval of the draft order issued to divisional commander Belov. The order said:

"1. While completing the retraining mission for Chinese pilots, starting from September 1 this year, the 151st Fighter Aviation Division, with the cooperation of ground anti-aircraft artillery units, will be deployed in Tonghua, Tieling, Liaoyang and An'an. The 13th Corps of the People's Liberation Army in the East and other regions provide air cover.

2. During the cover mission, the 151st Fighter Aviation Division aircraft must not fly across the border of the Korean People's Democratic Republic.

3. The 13th Corps Command (located in Andong) together with the People 's Liberation Army ground anti-aircraft artillery unit. The division 's air cover action plan must be submitted to the Soviet General Staff (review) through the most convenient diplomatic mail channel of the Consulate General of the Soviet Union Shenyang.

4. Reports of activities involving air combat must be reported to the Chief of the General Staff of the Soviet Union a coded password via the hotline immediately before 20:00 every day.⁶⁷

⁶⁷ Editorial Board of "Russian Declassified Archives", "№20071 Vasilevsky Report to Burganin: Provision of Air Cover for the Chinese Army (August 28, 1950)" (№20071 华西列夫斯基致布尔加宁报告：为中国军队提供空中掩护(1950年8月28日)) 26-27.

The next day, the Vice-Chairman of the Council of Ministers Bulganin instructed in the document: "Return to A.M. Vasilevsky", and that was the end of the reply.⁶⁸ On August 31, Vasilevsky again submitted a report asking, "is it necessary to order the 151st Fighter Division to train Chinese pilots while also providing air cover for the People's Liberation Army in the region?"⁶⁹ Proposed by a decision of the (Soviet) government. This time, Bulganin simply ticked off the few inquiries in the report.⁷⁰ Bulganin obviously did so with Stalin's permission, and probably even with Stalin's intention.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid. "№20074 Vasilevsky Report to Burganin: Covering the Chinese Army (August 31, 1950)" (№20074 华西列夫斯基致布尔加宁报告：关于为中国军队提供掩护(1950年8月31日)) 31.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

In addition, Stalin also decided to redeploy the strength of the Air Force deployed in the Shenyang area to strengthen the Lushun naval base. According to the resolution of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party (Bolshevik) of the USSR on September 13, the Ministry of Defense Order ordered that the 151st Fighter Aviation Division was to end its retraining of Chinese pilots in the Shenyang area on February 1, 1951. While sending its two regiments and the command authority to Lushun base, together with the 177th Regiment of the 303rd Aviation Division and an Aviation Machinery Battalion transferred from Vladivostok on October 6. These units will be formed as a new MiG-15 fighter division.⁷¹ This fully shows that Stalin attached great importance to the status of Lushun Port. At that time, the cover of the Chinese army that is going to fight abroad was no longer on the mission schedule of the Soviet Air Force. However, the rapidly changing situation of Korean War disrupted this deployment of Stalin.

⁷¹ Ibid. “№20075 Vasilevsky presents Stalin's instructions: additional air force to Lushun area (September 13, 1950)” (№20075 华西列夫斯基呈斯大林请示：向旅顺地区增派空军(1950年9月13日)) 35.

AFTER THE BATTLE OF INCHON

From September 14th to 18th, Stalin kept receiving disturbing battle reports: US troops landed in Incheon, and the situation North Korea changed significantly. According to a report by the Soviet General Staff, on September 13, the U.S. military began a small-scale reconnaissance landing operation the Incheon area, but no major changes took place in the frontline battle situation. On September 15, the U.S. military had gathered about 150 ships and began landing in the Incheon area under cover of ship-borne artillery and aircraft. The main force was the 10th U.S. Army. The NK People's Army has only one Marine Corps and two border battalions to defend. Due to road and communication interruptions, the situation of the troops transferred to the areas of Incheon and Seoul was unknown. After the U.S. army successfully landed, it broke through to Seoul, and the People's Army's defense line collapsed. U.S. and South Korean coalition forces on the southern front had begun a fierce counterattack that succeeded. On September 17, the U.S. landing force crossed the Han River, and in the Seoul suburbs the fighting was fiercely. Due to the indiscriminate bombing of the United States Air Force, all railways and bridges from the Chinese border to the front line were destroyed, and traffic had been paralyzed.⁷²

The Chinese leadership responded immediately to the sudden change in the situation North

⁷² Frank Futrell, Moseley, and Simpson, "The Strategic Bombing Campaign" 183-198.

Korea. On September 18, Zhou Enlai summoned Roshchin and the military advisers Kotov and Konov.⁷³ Zhou Enlai was dissatisfied because that information provided by North Korea to China on military issues was few and they were eager to gain that. He indicated China had tried to send some military-technical attachés to North Korea to gain the information of the situation on the battlefield, but so far, they had not received any reply from Pyongyang. The Chinese was lack of the intelligence of the Korean People's Army neither their combat plan nor the real situation on the battlefield. According to official announcements, Zhou Enlai suggested that if North Korea's sufficient reserves was less than 100,000 people, they should withdraw their principal force north to set up an assault group and use it in a decisive battle. Zhou Enlai also repeated and urgent requested the Soviet government that Chinese leadership need more accurate intelligence. In the end, Zhou Enlai indicated inadvertently that, the western world had not prepared for a long, large-scale war, western countries are now anxious that if the Soviet Union and China intervene the military conflict in North Korea. "This fear should be used to take steps that prove our intention. In this respect, the movement of the Chinese army from the south to the northeast is enough to disturb the British and American governments."⁷⁴ Zhou Enlai ask that the Soviet government be notified and responded as soon as possible.⁷⁵ Moscow responded on the 20th that admitted North Korea's failure in provide military information a timely manner, because they were young and inexperienced. As for China's proposal to fight North Korea, the

⁷³ Editorial Board of "Russian Declassified Archives", "№20250 Roshchin to Stalin: Zhou Enlai's advice on the Korean war (September 18, 1950)" (№20250 罗申致斯大林电：周恩来对朝鲜战事的建议(1950年9月18日)) 36-37.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

Soviet Union agreed to immediately withdraw the principal force of the People's Army to the north and establish a Seoul defense line. However, Zhou Enlai's request in Chinese troop dispatch had not responded by Stalin.⁷⁶ Zhou Enlai had to advise Kim Il Sung to concentrate his forces to ensure the 38th parallel, "adhering to the general policy of self-reliance and long-term struggle."⁷⁷ On September 21, Liu Shaoqi once again told Roshchin that "Chinese leaders believed that the Chinese revolution has not ended...Fighting against US imperialism will accelerate the final victory" and that "if the United States prevailed in North Korea, China has an obligation to help Comrade North Korea."⁷⁸

While raising the issue of aid to the DPRK to Moscow, Zhou Enlai also asked North Korea's opinions. On September 19, Zhou Enlai summoned North Korean Ambassador to China Li Zhouyuan, and told him the same things he had told Roshchin the previous day, and further asked, "After the Incheon landing in the United States," what's the North Korean government's requirements for the Chinese government next? "⁷⁹On the same day, Li Zhouyuan telegraphed Kim Il Sung's original words: "The Korean people are preparing for a long battle." In addition, there was no news from North Korea in Beijing.⁸⁰ On the 20th, Kim Il Sung reported the content of Zhou Enlai's talk to the Soviet ambassador and explained that there was an agreement between

⁷⁶ Shen, "Gromyko to Roshchin about the reply on Zhou Enlai's Telegram." (葛罗米柯关于对周恩来的答复致罗申电) In *Declassified Files in Russian Archives*. (俄国档案馆的解密文件) 542-545.

⁷⁷ Central Archives, Vol.3 of *Zhou Enlai*, 311-312.

⁷⁸ Editorial Board of "Russian Declassified Archives", "№20251 Roshchin addressed to Stalin: Liu Shaoqi talked about Chinese views on the Korean War (September 22, 1950)" (№20251 罗申致斯大林电：刘少奇谈中国各界对朝鲜战争的看法(1950年9月22日)) 48-49.

⁷⁹ Ibid. "№20252 Roshchin to Stalin: Zhou Enlai talks about domestic conditions in North Korea and China (September 21, 1950)" (№20252 罗申致斯大林电：周恩来谈朝鲜和中国国内情况(1950年9月21日)) 46.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

China and North Korea that if the enemy landed behind their forces, the Chinese would use their own army to help North Korea. Kim Il Sung hopes Shtykov can give advice on this agreement, Soviet ambassador did not comment on this. Kim Il Sung then expressed his concerns, saying that the Chinese army had gained a lot of experience in previous wars, but what would happen to them in the context of the continuous bombardment of a large number of American aircraft. The Chinese army will struggle to guarantee their operational efficiency. The Koreans present echoed, saying, "If the Chinese army is allowed to fight in North Korea without the air force providing air cover for it, the battle will still be quite difficult."⁸¹ North Korean Foreign Minister Park Hyun-yong made it clear that he "wants China to participate in the war in North Korea." Because he had not been instructed by Moscow, Shtykov "had avoided answering this question."⁸²

On September 21, the Political Bureau of the Korean Workers' Party held a meeting to discuss how to respond to Zhou Enlai's proposal. Park Hyun-Yong, Kim Min-bong (President of the Supreme People's Assembly), and Park Yi-woo (Minister of the Interior) all agreed that North Korea was clearly unable to defeat Americans on its own, and must ask the Chinese government to send troops into North Korea. But Kim Il Sung said in a speech: "We used to think that we had a large population and could do everything with our own strength. The Soviet Union gave us all the weapons we required. Why should we ask the Chinese for help?"⁸³ He believed that "the

⁸¹ Ibid. "№20081 Shtykov addressed to Gromyko: Kim Il Sung asked if the Chinese army could be invited to the war (September 21, 1950)" (№20081 什特科夫致葛罗米柯电：金日成询问可否请中国军队参战(1950年9月21日)) 44-45.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Ibid. "№20082 Shtykov to Gromyko: The Central Committee of the Korean Workers' Party discusses China's participation the war" (№20082 什特科夫致葛罗米柯电：朝鲜劳动党中央讨论中国参战问题(1950年9月22日)) 46-48.

Soviet Union and China would not allow Americans to completely occupy North Korea." In the end, Kim Il Sung suggested: "for the time being not to pass a resolution on requesting assistance from the Chinese government, but to write a letter to Comrade Stalin first and consult his opinions on whether to ask for assistance from the Chinese military."⁸⁴ Kim Il Sung emphasized, "If you ask the Chinese army for help without asking the Soviet Union, the Soviet Union may complain that is it not enough for us to use consultants and weapons to assist North Korea?"⁸⁵ He also said that if North Korea accelerated the formation of a new army, there is no need to ask the Chinese. As a result of the discussions at the meeting, no resolution was adopted.⁸⁶ Kim Il Sung was now watching Stalin's attitude, but as long as the enemy has not crossed the 38th line, Stalin would not be willing to send Chinese troops. On September 26, Stalin's military representative sent to North Korea noted that the 3,400 cars shipped to North Korea did not have enough drivers. In order to solve the transportation problem, "Can you suggest that Kim Il Sung ask Chinese friends to send more than 1,500 drivers to North Korea?"⁸⁷ Stalin responded four days later: "You can suggest this to Kim Il Sung, but don't say: This is what Moscow means."⁸⁸

Shortly after the Incheon landing, Stalin conceived of the idea of sending the Soviet Air Force to protect Pyongyang. According to Stalin's instructions, Vasilevsky reported on

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Shen, "Matviyev addressed Stalin on the Korean situation" (马特维耶夫关于朝鲜战况致斯大林电) in *Declassified Files in Russian Archives*.550-551;

⁸⁸ Shen, "Matviyev addressed Stalin on the Korean situation" (马特维耶夫关于朝鲜战况致斯大林电) in *Declassified Files in Russian Archives*.550-551;" Resolution of the Politburo of the Communist Party (Bolshevik): instructions to Matveev"(联共(布)中央政治局关于给马特维耶夫指示的决议) 560.

September 21 that 40 Jacques 9 aircraft of the 84th Regiment of the 147th Aviation Division could be sent to protect Pyongyang. The aviation regiment could arrive in two days but was not fully prepared. Preparation was to take 8-10 days.⁸⁹ Two days later, Vasilevsky reported that he had decided to relocate the 304th Regiment of the 32nd Fighter Aircraft Division:

"On October 3rd, the regiment can begin the combat mission to defend Pyongyang." (However, Vasilevsky finally reported): "After the first air battle, the battle of our pilots to defend Pyongyang will be discovered by the Americans, because all the command of the air battle will be conducted by wireless telephone in Russian."⁹⁰

Maybe the military minister's words reminded Stalin that perhaps the drastically changing situation North Korea forced him to reconsider his countermeasures. In short, at the critical moment, Soviet fighters did not appear over Pyongyang.

On September 30, Moscow received a report from Shtykov: Seoul may have fallen, and the road to the north of the People's Army's main force has been cut off and lost contact. Kim Il Sung was worried that the enemy would cross the 38th parallel, and North Korea was unable to form new troops to resist effectively. The NK Politburo discussed and approved a letter to Stalin, asking the Soviet Union for air force assistance, and also drafted a letter to Mao Zedong pleading

⁸⁹ Ibid. "Vasilevsky Reports Stalin on Air Force Dispatch to North Korea" (华西列夫斯基关于向朝鲜派遣空军问题呈斯大林的报告) 546-547.

⁹⁰ Ibid. "Vasilevsky Reports Stalin on Fighter Regiment Dispatch to North Korea" (华西列夫斯基关于向朝鲜派遣歼击机团问题呈斯大林的报告) 548-549.

for help. They were now panicking and lacking confidence, and didn't know what to do.⁹¹ On the night of the same day, Kim Il Sung came for a letter of help asking for Stalin's "direct military assistance," and if that did not work, "please help us build an international volunteer force in China and other people's democratic countries."⁹² Facing such an emergency, Moscow finally gave the green light to the Chinese army. On October 1, Stalin called Mao Zedong:

"I'm on vacation away from Moscow, and I don't know much about the situation North Korea. However, from the report that Moscow gave me today, I learned that Comrade North Korea was in trouble."⁹³

A dangerous situation, that is, North Korea has no resistance force, and the road to the 38th parallel was not fortified. Stalin asked the Chinese army to enter the war in the form of volunteers and organize the defense in the area north of the 38th parallel. Perhaps because of Moscow's previous reactions to China's troop dispatch, Stalin finally said: "I haven't talked to Comrade North Korea about this, and I don't plan to talk about it... But I don't doubt when they learn that It will be very happy afterward."⁹⁴

After receiving the telegram, Mao Zedong couldn't wait to draft a callback, agreeing to send

⁹¹ Ibid. "Shtkov to Gromike on the talks with Kim Il Sung" (什特科夫关于与金日成的会谈情况致葛罗米柯电) 561-562.

⁹² Ibid. "Shtkov to Gromike on forwarding Kim Il-sung's letter to Stalin" (什特科夫关于转呈金日成给斯大林的求援信致葛罗米柯电) 563-565.

⁹³ Ibid. "Stalin to Roshchin on suggesting that China send troops to aid North Korea" (斯大林关于建议中国派部队援助朝鲜问题致罗申电) 571.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

troops early the next morning. However, this idea was questioned at the meeting of the CCP leaders, and Mao Zedong had to reply to Moscow: China will not send troops for the time being, but the relevant issues will be discussed again. Under the vigorous support of Mao Zedong and Peng Dehuai, the enlarged meeting of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China on the afternoon of October 5 decided to send troops to fight in North Korea. Subsequently, the Chinese People's Volunteer Army was formally established, and the troops entered the final preparation stage before the war.⁹⁵ Although the decision to send troops has been made, the hesitation and worry of Chinese leaders were justified. Regarding the timing of sending troops, if the Chinese army could help defend the rear before Incheon's landing so that the main force of the People's Army could hold the front line; after the Incheon's landing, the Chinese army could establish a line of defense on the 38th parallel to prevent the enemy's continued northward advance. Then, by the beginning of October, when the main force of the People's Army was completely exhausted and the 38th parallel had been breached, a good opportunity for the Chinese army to enter North Korea no longer existed. No wonder MacArthur pledged to Truman on Wake Island that China would never send troops to North Korea at this time, otherwise, "for them, that would be the biggest slaughter."⁹⁶ However, MacArthur also pointed out another possibility, that is, China's provided the ground forces, the Soviet Union dispatched the Air Force, "to carry out joint operations."⁹⁷ But he thought it was nothing

⁹⁵ Pang and Jin, *Biography of Mao*, 153-155.

⁹⁶ Harry S. Truman *Memoirs By Harry S. Truman Volume Two Years of Trial and Hope*. (杜鲁门回忆录 第二卷 考验和希望的年代) Trans. Li Shi. (Beijing: SDX Joint Publishing Company, 1974.) 429-430.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

terrible.⁹⁸ This was exactly what Mao Zedong and the Chinese leaders were expecting at that time.

From a combat point of view, compared with the US military, the biggest weakness of the Chinese army was that its weapons and equipment were obsolete, and there was no air support. Mao Zedong noticed this problem from the beginning and informed Stalin. In a telegraph drafted on October 2, Mao Zedong not only listed a large number of weapons and equipment, including tanks, heavy artillery and thousands of cars, but also mentioned that "the enemy has air dominance, and the batch of air forces we started training will not reach 1951... only more than 300 aircraft can be used for combat in February," so the Soviet Union was required to provide air force support when the Chinese army was dispatched.⁹⁹ If Stalin did not know the content of this telegram because it had not been sent, the information transmitted from other channels should be very clear. On October 7, Matviyev, Stalin's personal representative in North Korea, reported that Park Yiyu had returned from Beijing on October 5. During his stay in Beijing, he twice met Mao Zedong and the leaders of the Chinese Communist Party for a total of 10 hours. Mao Zedong said, I can do my best to help North Korea, but I cannot send troops. The reason is that, first, China's troop dispatch will inevitably drag the Soviet Union to war, which will lead to the Third World War; second, although the Chinese army is large in number, it does not have modern weapons and equipment, Anything like either a serious Air Force or a Navy.¹⁰⁰ Mao Zedong's

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Central Literature Research Office, Central Archives, *Mao Zedong*, 540.

¹⁰⁰ Editorial Board of "Russian Declassified Archives", "№20088 Matveiev to Stalin: Park Yiyu briefs on China's decision to send troops (October 7, 1950)" (№20088 马特维耶夫致斯大林电:朴一禹通报中国出兵决策的情况(1950年10月7日)) 72-73.

conversation with the Soviets was even more direct. Mao spoke with Roshchin on October 6th, saying that he was very pleased with Stalin's statement that China and the Soviet Union should jointly attack the United States, and emphasized that if they were to fight, they should do it immediately. He had said the same thing at the Politburo meeting just concluded. Speaking about the issue of Chinese troops, Mao Zedong emphasized that the technical equipment of the Chinese army was very backward and "completely counted on Soviet assistance."¹⁰¹ In the talk, Mao Zedong "was particularly concerned about the Air Force."¹⁰² He pointed out that China 's troop dispatch "must have an Air Force," and its tasks were to cover Chinese ground forces sent to North Korea; participate in front-line operations; and cover China 's major industries Centers-Shanghai, Tianjin, Beijing, Shenyang (Anshan and Fushun). Mao Zedong finally said that in order to report on China's relevant situation and all thoughts, he must immediately send Zhou Enlai and Lin Biao to the Soviet Union.¹⁰³

On October 8, Mao Zedong officially notified Kim Il-sung and Stalin, respectively, that China had decided to form a volunteer army to assist North Korea. The troops began to enter the DPRK around October 15. Following this, the news was exchanged between Moscow and Pyongyang. Everyone was relieved that China finally decided to send troops, , and Kim Il Sung was really happy and made arrangements for the time, place, and method of Chinese army

¹⁰¹ Ibid. "№11821 Roshchin to Stalin: Mao Zedong's attitude towards sending troops to Korea (October 7, 1950)" (№11821 罗申致斯大林电：毛泽东对出兵朝鲜的态度(1950年10月7日)) 74-75.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

assembly in North Korea.¹⁰⁴ But it all seemed too late, given the rapid us advance northward.

Stalin did not feel happy, he was waiting uneasily for Zhou Enlai and Lin Biao, who had entered the border of the Soviet Union.

On October 11, Zhou Enlai and others flew to Stalin's retreat at Sochi on the Black Sea via Moscow and held talks with Soviet leaders that afternoon. Zhou Enlai introduced the situation of the CPC Political Bureau meeting to discuss the situation in the DPRK and the issue of troop assistance. It shows that China would face huge practical difficulties in sending troops, emphasizing the need for the Soviet Union to provide weapons and equipment and air force support. Stalin pointed out that it could fully meet the military equipment requirements such as aircraft, tanks, and artillery that China needed to resist the United States and aid North Korea. However, the Soviet Air Force was not ready and could only be dispatched after two or two and a half months. After repeated discussions, the two sides believed that since everyone was not ready, they had to abandon North Korea and notify Kim Il-sung as soon as possible to arrange a withdrawal. After the meeting, Stalin and Zhou Enlai jointly called Mao Zedong to point out: If direct assistance is not provided within a month by a considerable number of well-equipped troops, North Korea will be invaded by Americans because the North Korean army north of the 38th parallel cannot stop them. Because the air force performing cover missions would not be in place for at least two months, it would take at least six months to equip and train Chinese troops,

¹⁰⁴ Ibid. "№20092 Shtykov to Stalin: Kim Il Sung feels bright (October 8, 1950)" 81; "A Set of Telegrams about the Chinese People's Volunteers Dispatching North Korean Operations," (关于中国人民志愿军出动朝鲜作战的一组文电) *Archive of the Party* (党的文献), no. 5 (2000): 3-4..

and at that time, assistance to North Korea would be meaningless, so China had decided not to send troops. The telegram concluded asking for Mao's decision.¹⁰⁵

The reason why Zhou Enlai accepted that China should not send troops is obviously because the Soviet Union did not fully meet China's conditions for sending troops, and this should be Mao Zedong's condition he had promised Peng Dehuai to which Zhou Enlai had agreed in advance. Peng Dehuai convened a meeting of cadres Commanding the volunteer army in Shenyang on October 9 to explain the current situation and the central intentions. Although "all preparations are not sufficient, but in order to fight for time," it was decided to send two troops to begin dispatching on October 15th to gather in the front lines of Heecheon and Tokugawa.¹⁰⁶ However, many questions were raised during the discussion, including the Air Force issue, before the meeting concluded. Peng Dehuai and Gao Gang sent an urgent telegram to Mao Zedong: "How many fighters and bombers can the military commission spend to cover when our army goes abroad to fight? Who can be dispatched from time to time, and who is in charge of the command?"¹⁰⁷ The telegram sent after the meeting also mentioned: "Land and air communications have not been stipulated. It is said that it must be prescribed by the Military Commission. Many leaders at the headquarters believe that sending troops without the

¹⁰⁵ "Mao Zedong Talked about China's Decision on 'Resisting the United States and Assisting the DPRK and Defending the Country and Defending the Country' .," (毛泽东谈中国关于“抗美援朝，保家卫国”的决定) *Archive of the Party*, (党的文献) no. 5 (2000): 13; Editorial Board of "Russian Declassified Archives", "№16008 Stalin and Zhou Enlai wrote to Mao Zedong: Abandoning military assistance to North Korea (October 11, 1950)" (№16008 斯大林、周恩来致毛泽东电：放弃对朝鲜的军事援助(1950年10月11日)) 82-83.

¹⁰⁶"A set of telegram", 4

¹⁰⁷ Wang Yan. *Biography of Peng Dehuai*. (彭德怀传) (Beijing: Comtempoary China Publishing House, 1993.)404.

cooperation of the Air Force will do more harm than good.”¹⁰⁸ Therefore, it is suggested that "new equipment can be guaranteed within three or two months (especially the Air Force can be deployed). Otherwise, it can be carried out as originally planned. Otherwise, the idea of delaying the dispatch is well worth considering.”¹⁰⁹ This is enough to show that the Chinese army had been promised aid by the Air Force before it was dispatched, but it was not clear how and when. Now that Zhou Enlai did not get any definite guarantee from Stalin, he naturally agreed to give up North Korea's opinion.

Stalin said that the Soviet Air Force's lack of readiness was obviously an excuse, because, as mentioned above, not only the Belov Aviation Division assembled in the Shenyang area was already on standby, but also a few days prior, Vasilevsky also sent a request to Stalin. It is reported that the 304th Regiment of the 32nd Fighter Aviation Division and the two anti-aircraft artillery battalions and other auxiliary forces, which are to be transferred from the Primorsky Krai to Pyongyang, could be in place within 5 to 6 days, and on October 3, "Started the mission to defend Pyongyang.”¹¹⁰ The real reason why Stalin clearly stated that the Soviet Air Force could not be dispatched at the same time as the Chinese Army move in may have been threefold:

First, Stalin had always forbidden direct conflict between the Soviet army and the U.S. forces on the front, although air cover might be provided in the rear. On October 2, MacArthur's forces

¹⁰⁸ Du Ping. *At the Headquarters of Volunteer's Army*. (Beijing: People's Liberation Army Press, 1989.)41

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Shen, "Vasilevsky Reports Stalin on Fighter Regiment Dispatch to North Korea" (华西列夫斯基关于向朝鲜派遣歼击机团问题呈斯大林的报告) in *Declassified Files in Russian Archives*. 548-549.

crossed the 38th parallel.¹¹¹ That meant that, North Korea was about to become a theater of war. Stalin became more cautious as a result, and was reluctant to show any signs that the Soviet Union would confront the United States directly and openly. If Soviet planes appeared over North Korea at this time, American intelligence would no doubt break their code/communication lines them.¹¹²

Second, Stalin was skeptical of China's determination to send troops to fight and the prospect of victory. After the United States entered the war, Stalin hoped that China would be ready to send troops, and expressed his willingness to use the Air Force to assist, but he was not in a hurry to ask China to send troops. After the North-Korean positions were overwhelmed, Stalin strongly encouraged China to send troops in order to stabilize the front, but when the U.S. military had crossed the 38th parallel and continued to advance northward, and when China, believed that troops should not be sent at this time, Stalin's trust in China was seriously hurt.¹¹³ As Mao Zedong later said: "At that time, because China hesitated, Stalin was discouraged and said: Forget it!"¹¹⁴ Stalin stated that the launch of the Soviet Air Force two months later was to see if the leading Chinese army could stand still in North Korea, thus leaving Moscow a room for maneuver in time and space.

Thirdly, Stalin also hoped that the issue could be resolved peacefully through secret

¹¹¹ Truman, *Memoir*. 424.

¹¹² Even after disguising, Americans still have the opportunity to learn about this by means of radio monitoring, see "The U.S. Effort to Oppose Escalation" below.

¹¹³ Editorial Board of "Russian Declassified Archives", "№00316 Roshen to Stalin: Retransmit Mao Zedong's Opinion on China Not Sending Troops (October 3, 1950)" (№00316 罗申致斯大林电: 转呈毛泽东关于中国暂不出兵的意见(1950年10月3日)) 65-67.

¹¹⁴ "Mao Zedong Talked about China's Decision" 13-14.

diplomatic channels. When the North Korean army was losing ground under the attack of the UN forces, Soviet Foreign Minister A.I. Vyshinskii in New York on September 27 telegraphed the pro-Soviet American entrepreneur Lancaster to the Soviet representative to the United Nations that he could arrange with the Secretary of State or the ambassador to the United Nations to meet to discuss a peaceful solution to the North Korean issue. The Soviet Politburo convened a meeting and resolved the same day to contact the United States, and listen to its opinions.¹¹⁵ Obviously, If the Soviet Union's diplomatic efforts succeeded, even if China did not send troops to North Korea, Stalin could get an acceptable result without risking war with U.S..

After receiving the call from the Black Sea, Mao Zedong began to waver. Mao had just seen a telegram from Stalin and Zhou Enlai at 3:30 pm on October 12th. His first reaction had been was: "I agree with your decision."¹¹⁶ At 10:22 pm, Mao Zedong again informed them that the Chinese army had not yet set off and had ordered "the execution of the plan to enter North Korea" be stopped.¹¹⁷ Stalin then sent a telegram to notify Kim Il Sung of the results of the Black Sea talks and asked him to organize an immediate retreat.¹¹⁸ In fact, Mao Zedong's attitude was not as resolute as he said in his telegram. The instructions he gave to Peng Dehuai and others were: "October 9 order will not be implemented", the troops "will not be dispatched

¹¹⁵ Shen, "Resolution of the Politburo of the Communist Party (Bolshevik) on agreeing to contact with the United States" (《联共(布)中央政治局关于同意与美方接触的决议》) 555.

¹¹⁶ Editorial Board of "Russian Declassified Archives" "№16009 Roshchin to Stalin: Mao Zedong agrees not to send troops to North Korea (October 12, 1950)" (《№16009 罗申致斯大林电: 毛泽东同意暂不出兵朝鲜(1950年10月12日)》) 83-84

¹¹⁷ Ibid. "№16010 Mao Zedong addressed to Stalin: Order to stop sending troops to North Korea (October 12, 1950)" (《№16010 毛泽东致斯大林电: 已下令停止出兵朝鲜(1950年10月12日)》) 84-85.

¹¹⁸ Ibid. "№16011 Stalin addressed to Shtykov and Vasilyev: immediately organized the withdrawal of the Korean government (October 12, 1950)" (《№16011 斯大林致什特科夫和瓦西里耶夫电: 立即组织朝鲜政府撤退(1950年10月12日)》) 85-86.

temporarily," and Peng Dehuai and Gao Gang would need to come to Beijing to talk.¹¹⁹ The reason why Mao Zedong did not tell Stalin all his true thoughts is that he might may not have been sure whether the idea of continuing to send troops under such conditions could be accepted again by the Chinese leaders. However, after the Politburo's expanded meeting on the 13th, Mao Zedong showed China's determination to Stalin.

¹¹⁹ "A set of telegram", 5-6.

CHINESE VOLUNTEERS AND SOVIET AIR FORCE ENTERED THE WAR

When the meeting had just ended, at 21 o'clock on October 13th, Mao Zedong summoned Roshchin and announced that after discussion, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China decided, "We should help the Koreans."¹²⁰ Earlier, Kim Il Sung had received Stalin's notice on the retreat. Although he was surprised, he had to show compliance.¹²¹ As a result, Stalin sent an urgent telegram to Kim Il Sung: "In view of the new decision made by Chinese comrades, please delay the time for the evacuation of North Korea and the withdrawal of North Korean troops in the telegram mentioned yesterday."¹²² After receiving Roshchin's supplementary report on China's troop dispatch in the early morning of the 14th, Stalin again told Kim Il Sung: "The recommendations you were previously notified about the talks between the leaders of China and the Soviet Union should be withdrawn."¹²³ The report specifically pointed out Air Force issues. Mao Zedong said, "Our comrades were unable to make up their minds because they were unclear about the international situation, the Soviet military assistance,

¹²⁰ Editorial Board of "Russian Declassified Archives" "№16012 Roshchin to Stalin: Mao Zedong notified China of its decision to send troops to North Korea (October 13, 1950)" (№16012 罗申致斯大林电：毛泽东通知中国决定出兵朝鲜(1950年10月13日)) 87-88.

¹²¹ Ibid. "№00330 Shtykov to Stalin: Kim Il Sung decides to implement the withdrawal plan (October 14, 1950)" (№00330 什特科夫致斯大林电：金日成决定执行撤退计划(1950年10月14日)) 91.

¹²² Shen. "Stalin's telegram to Kim Il Sung about China's decision to aid North Korea" (斯大林关于中国决定援助朝鲜致金日成电) 600

¹²³ Ibid. "Stalin's telegram to Kim Il Sung about China sending troops to aid North Korea" (斯大林关于中国出兵援助朝鲜问题致金日成电) 601.

and air cover. All these issues are now clear."¹²⁴ "The main problem is we need to be able to cover our air force. We hope that the air force can arrive as soon as possible, no later than two months in any case." ¹²⁵Mao Zedong also mentioned that he hoped to get weapons and equipment from the Soviet Union on loan. Zhou Enlai must re-discuss these issues with Stalin.¹²⁶

In a telegram to Zhou Enlai at 22 o'clock on the 13th, Mao Zedong made clear the arrangements and requirements for China's decision to send troops. First, after the Chinese army entered the DPRK, it "can specialize in hitting the Puppet South Korean troops" and establish bases to boost morale.¹²⁷ After the Soviet voluntary air force and weapons and equipment arrive, strike the US military. Second, strive to obtain weapons and equipment provided by the Soviet Union on a lease basis. Third, we must ask the Soviet Union to send a voluntary air force to help us in North Korea within two or two and a half months. Fight and cover Beijing, Tianjin, Shenyang, Shanghai, Nanjing, Qingdao, and other places.¹²⁸ At 3 o'clock on the 14th, Mao Zedong once again urged Zhou Enlai: The main question is whether the Soviet Union can actually send a front-line volunteer air force and cover the air force in major cities in the next two months; whether additional weapons and equipment can be leased from them.¹²⁹ At 21:00 on the 14th, Mao Zedong telegraphed to Zhou Enlai and decided to send a total of 260,000 soldiers to Korea on October 19, including 12 infantry divisions and three artillery divisions, and

¹²⁴ Ibid. "№00326 Roshchin to Stalin: Mao Zedong decides to send troops and demands on the Soviet Union (October 13, 1950)" (№00326 罗申致斯大林电: 毛泽东决定出兵及对苏联的要求(1950年10月13日)) 89-91.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ "A set of telegram" 6-7.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Ibid.7-8

asked him to immediately notify Stalin.¹³⁰ In view of Pyongyang's embattled situation urgency, in the early morning of October 15, Mao Zedong decided to dispatch the volunteer army in advance. That is, one army would be dispatched on the 17th and 18th, and the entire army would cross the river in about ten days.¹³¹ Mao Zedong's final determination had been made, and he had repeatedly pointed out that the core issue remaining was still the dispatch of the Soviet Air Force. The Chinese position and requirements forced Stalin to make a clear statement.

At this time, Zhou Enlai had returned to Moscow, and wrote a letter to Stalin on the 14th, conveying Mao Zedong's opinions, and also specifically mentioned the issue of the command relationship between the "Soviet Volunteer Air Force" and the Chinese Volunteers during the battle.¹³² V. M. Molotov, as the First Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Soviet Union, probably did not understand Stalin's actual intentions, and, in general, agreed that the Soviet Union could first send 16 fighter jets to cover the Chinese army. When Zhou Enlai further proposed "Can bombers continue to be deployed to North Korea to cooperate with Chinese military operations," in addition to participating in North Korean operations, "Can the Soviet Air Force be stationed in major cities off the coast of China" and the "How should the command relationship between the Soviet Air Force and the Chinese Volunteers be resolved"¹³³ In other issues, Stalin made it clear that even if the Soviet Air Force was deployed, it could only go to the

¹³⁰ Ibid.8

¹³¹ Ibid.10

¹³² Central Archives, Central Literature Research Office, *Zhou Enlai*.404-405.

¹³³ "A set of telegram" 9

Yalu River, and could not cooperate with the volunteer army when it entered North Korea.¹³⁴

This was undoubtedly a severe blow for the Chinese leaders. On the 17th, Mao Zedong rushed to call Peng Dehuai and Gao Gang to discuss matters in Beijing and postponed the troop release date. After discussions at the 18th meeting, China decided to return to North Korea on the 19th.¹³⁵ Mao Zedong finally said: “Now that the enemy has besieged Pyongyang, it will reach the Yalu River in a mere few days. No matter how serious our difficulties are, the volunteer army crossing the river to help the DPRK cannot be changed, nor can the time be delayed, and we still cross the river as originally planned. Even if we can't beat the United States, he¹³⁶ will always owe us a bill. Whenever we want to fight, we can fight again.”¹³⁷

In fact, Moscow did not sit idly by, and Stalin always had two strings to his bow. Just as China was determined to fight alone, the Soviet Air Force was nervously reorganizing and gathering. According to the order of the Ministry of Military Affairs, since October 14, the Soviet Air Force has successfully formed the 144th, 17th, 328th, and 20th Fighter Aviation Divisions in preparation for traveling to China.¹³⁸ On October 19, the day of China's troop dispatch into Korea, Vasilevsky reported on the preparation and specific time of the Air Force and Tankers to be sent to China: before November 3, the 151st Fighter Aviation Division already deployed in the Northeast was to be expanded to Two divisions; before November 28th, the newly formed

¹³⁴ “A set of telegram” 9. “Mao Zedong Talked about China’s Decision” 14.

¹³⁵ “A set of telegram” 11.

¹³⁶ “He”(他) is the original text, which may refer to the United States.

¹³⁷ “Mao Zedong Talked about China’s Decision” 13.

¹³⁸ Editorial Board of “Russian Declassified Archives” “№20102 Batitzki's report: Newly formed aviation unit will depart for China (October 28, 1950)” (№20102 巴季茨基的报告：新组建的航空兵部队将开往中国(1950年10月28日)) 96.

four destroyer aviation divisions had assembled in Shenyang and entered combat readiness before December 15th; before November 30th, ten tank regiments mobilized from various military regions arrived in Shenyang; 12 Before January 1, the three newly formed attacker regiment completed their assembly in Shenyang.¹³⁹ On October 24, the day before the first battle of the Volunteers entered the DPRK, the formation of air divisions and tank regiments ended, and shipments to China began as planned.¹⁴⁰

Despite adequate preparations, the Soviet Air Force did not receive operational orders. It was not until October 25 that the military clashes between the Volunteers and the United Nations began, and Stalin finally believed that the Communist Party of China was not a nationalist or "Pro-American" party.¹⁴¹ As a result, on October 29, Soviet advisers informed Zhou Enlai that Moscow had agreed that the Soviet Air Force would "operate as an air defense in Anton" and could fly over the border between China and North Korea. It also promised to move the base from Shenyang to Anton 10 days later.¹⁴² On November 1, the Soviet Air Force entered combat for the first time over the Yalu River. On this day, the Belarus Aviation Division's MiG-15 aircraft took off eight sorties each from Shenyang and Anshan airports, shot down two US F-82 aircraft and hit another two with antiaircraft guns over Anton-Sinuiju. The Soviet side did not

¹³⁹ Ibid. "№20095 Vasilevsky and Stemenko report: Soviet troops will gather in Northeast China (before October 19, 1950)" (№20095 华西列夫斯基和什捷缅科报告：苏军将在中国东北集结(1950年10月19日以前)) 92-94.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid. "№20103 Vasilevsky reports to Stalin: Aviation units gather and depart for China (October 30, 1950)" (№20103 华西列夫斯基致斯大林报告：航空兵部队集结并开往中国(1950年10月30日)) 98.

¹⁴¹ This is most likely due to the Communist Party's departure from the Communist International directive after the Long March. Zhou, Enlai. Vol.2 of *Selected Works of Zhou Enlai* (周恩来选集) 1st ed. (Beijing: People's Publishing House, 1997.) 305.

¹⁴² Central Archives, Central Literature Research Office, *Zhou Enlai*. 427.

lose anything in this air battle.¹⁴³

On November 15, Stalin informed China that the Soviet Union was preparing to send 120 MiG-15 fighters to Belov's division, and thus to establish an army-level command agency (64th Fighter Aviation Corps). On November 20, the Soviet Council of Ministers resolved to send a second batch of air forces to China.¹⁴⁴ According to this plan, in addition to the 151st Fighter Division China and the 19th Fighter Division newly established in Anshan, from November to the beginning of the next year, there were to be 12 fighter divisions, two attacker divisions and two bomber divisions entering China and is deployed around the northeast and central cities such as Beijing, Shanghai, Qingdao, and Guangzhou.¹⁴⁵

On November 30, the General Staff of the Soviet Army reported that all personnel of the army command agency had arrived in Shenyang, and the aviation divisions had arrived or were in the process of relocation. In addition, artillery, ammunition, cars, and other equipment planned to be supplied to China had also begun to depart, and some had already arrived at their destinations.¹⁴⁶ According to the Air Force General Staff Report, by December 4, the Air Force sent to China consisted of 11 fighter divisions (17, 20, 28, 50, 65, 144, 151, 297, 309, 324, 328

¹⁴³ Shen, "Zakharov to Stalin about Soviet and North Korean Air Force operations" (扎哈罗夫关于苏联和朝鲜空军作战情况致斯大林电) 613-614.

¹⁴⁴ Editorial Board of "Russian Declassified Archives" "№00346 Mao Zedong to Stalin: agrees to the proposal to strengthen the Air Force (November 15, 1950)" (№00346 毛泽东致斯大林电: 同意加强空军的建议(1950年11月15日)) 108.; "№20117 Resolution of the Council of Ministers of the Soviet Union: On the second batch of aviation divisions to be dispatched to China (November 20, 1950)" (№20117 苏联部长会议决议: 关于向中国境内派遣第二批航空师(1950年11月20日)) 123.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid. "№20125 Report of the General Administration of Operations of the General Staff of the Soviet Army on the dispatch of air forces to China (November 30, 1950)" (№20125 苏军总参谋部作战管理总局报告: 关于向中国派遣空军部队的情况(1950年11月30日)) 136-137.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid. "№20126 Report of Stjemenko to Stalin: Sending troops and weapons and ammunition to China (November 30, 1950)" (№20126 什捷缅科致斯大林报告: 关于向中国发送部队及武器弹药情况(1950年11月30日)) 137-139.

divisions), two bomber divisions (162nd and 186th divisions), and some personnel of the 64th Fighter Aviation Command and the 6th Flight Technical School, totaling five generals, 5,058 officers, and a total of 17,950 troops. At the same time, for the formation of the Chinese Air Force, 1,653 aircraft have been handed over to China, including 900 fighters (350 MiG-15, 372 MiG-9, 40 La-11, and 130 La-9). There were 117 strike aircraft (IL-10), 132 bombers (Tu-2), 412 trainer aircraft, 44 transport aircraft, and 56 communication aircraft. In addition, 1871 various support vehicles had been delivered.¹⁴⁷

After the Chinese Air Force entered the war in the spring of 1951, the "MiG Alley" over the Yalu River to the Qingchuan River, as it was ~~is~~ often referred to later, had been formed. However, Stalin's ban on Soviet soldiers from entering the front line was not broken. In the air battle, Moscow limited the combat range for the 64th Aviation Army, that is, it must not surpass the Pyongyang-Yuanshan line south, and the east and west sides must not exceed the coastline. According to Belov, this was "our guiding principles for combat and must be strictly adhered to," although this restrictive rule prevented MiG aircraft from fully performing well¹⁴⁸ Stalin's instructions to the Soviet General Counsel in China were clearer: "Absolutely necessary" was that "the Chinese can only rely on their own air force at the front."¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁷ Ibid. "№20132 General Staff Report to the Chief of Staff of the Soviet Air Force: Information on Air Force Forces and Equipment to China (December 4, 1950)" (№20132 苏联空军参谋部致总参报告：关于派往中国的空军部队及装备情况(1950年12月4日)) 146-148.

¹⁴⁸ Editorial Board of "Russian Declassified Archives: Sino-Soviet Relations". "№20161 Belov's work report: Summary of combat experience of the 64th Fighter Aviation Army (September 1951)" (№20161 别洛夫的工作报告：第六十四歼击航空军作战经验总结(1951年9月)) in Vol.4 of *Selected Russian Declassified Archives: Sino-Soviet Relations*. (俄罗斯解密档案选编：中苏关系) Beijing: Oriental Publishing Center, 2015.) 1-5.

¹⁴⁹ "№00414 Stalin to Mao Zedong: On the Armistice and Air Force Use (June 13, 1951)" (№00414 斯大林致毛泽东电：关于停战和空军使用问题(1951年6月13日)) 336-338.

THE U.S. EFFORT TO OPPOSE ESCALATION

The United States was not as ignorant of the fact that the Soviet Union entered the war as the communist countries imagined. they integrated the interception formation of US intelligence agencies with the observation formation of American pilots who had gone into dogfights.

Americans knew in 1951 that the Soviet Union had secretly entered the war. Fortunately, there was a tacit understanding between the US and Soviet governments observed to try to control the scale of the war. Just as North Korea launched the unification war against South Korea in 1950, Acheson asked George Kennan about the true intentions of the Soviets. The most authoritative expert on Soviet issues at the time, George Kennan believed that the Soviet Union did not expect a larger war with the United States. By contrast, what the Soviet Union wanted to see more was that North Korea and China participated in the war as proxies of the Soviet Union and make the United States suffer.¹⁵⁰ The United States also tried to control the scale of the war. In Truman's memoirs, it is evident that he tried to prevent MacArthur from expanding the war. After several crises, he knew very well that the Soviets would not miss even the tiniest chance to gain the name of an offensive against the West. And this concern indeed became a tacit understanding between the two sides.¹⁵¹

¹⁵⁰ Issacson, Walter, and Evan Thomas. *The Wise Men Six Friends and the World They Made*-Simon Schuster. (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2013.) 512.

¹⁵¹ Truman, *Memoir*. 454-458.

Truman's first telegram in which he was informed about the operations of the "Chinese" Air Force was probably the second telegram sent to Truman by MacArthur on November 7, 1950. In this telegram, MacArthur discovered that Chinese military planes could take off from behind the Yalu River and implemented a tactic of hit-and-run. This took a toll on the morale and combat effectiveness of the U.S. military. Truman and Acheson and others discussed this issue several times in November and ~~to~~ December 1950. According to a summary by the intelligence and military departments, the Chinese army 's airstrikes undoubtedly caused considerable damage to US troops, especially aircraft at North Korean airports. Truman still rejected the offer to attack China, and he did not want to escalate the war.¹⁵² Although he did not mention his memoirs that the Soviets sent the Air Force in secret, it can be concluded that he wanted to avoid head-on conflicts with China and the Soviet Union.

According to Paul Nietzsche, then Director of Policy Planning, after the United Nations' forces pushed the north Koreans from Pyongyang (he likely referred to 1950), the US Policy Planning Staff organized a team to investigate in North Korea. They discovered that many aircraft of the North Korean Air Force was piloted by Soviet pilots. Policymakers even prepared a paper later called "Removing the Fig Leaf from the Hard Core of Soviet Responsibility."¹⁵³ It detailed the evidence linking the Soviet Union to attacks on South Korea. But the paper was eventually scrapped because the United States was not ready to advocate any major action to punish the Soviets, as too many other issues needed to be addressed and no appetite existed for

¹⁵² Ibid.442-443.

¹⁵³ Nitze, Paul H. *From Hiroshima to Glasnost*. (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1990.) 111-112.

another global conflict.¹⁵⁴ The fact that the Soviet Union secretly participated in the war was carefully guarded by both sides of the war until the Cold War came to an end in 1988-1989. Through the continuously open archives and memoirs of both sides, civilians could finally know the truth.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

CONCLUSION

The Soviet Union began to assist the Chinese Communist Party's air force long before the Korean War to counter hostile forces led by the Guomindang Air Force. This action set a precedent for the Soviet Union to formally intervene in the Asian Communist-capitalist clashes, paving the way for subsequent intervention the Korean War. After the outbreak of the Korean War, although both China and the Soviet Union thought of sending troops directly to the war, their fragile relationship caused each to hesitate and wait for the Other. As the United States entered the war but initially remained passive, North Korean forces advanced quickly. Although Stalin allowed Kim Il Sung to unify the Korean peninsula, he temporarily cut off some, perhaps crucial, military aid to Kim Il Sung because he was afraid that the Soviet Union would be directly confronting the United States in an escalated war. Mao Zedong hoped that he could send troops to win victory as soon as possible before the United States changed the situation by landing. During this period, Stalin did not want China to participate in the game, although he promised to give Chinese volunteers air cover. On the one hand, this was still because of the fear of escalating the war into the third world war, but, on the other hand, it was hoped that North Korea could be controlled, and China's participation the war would shake it with no doubt. After the US landing in Incheon, Mao Zedong hoped to dispatch volunteer troops to assist North Korea

as soon as possible. But Stalin's worries about direct confrontation with the United States grew, and he doubted the sincerity and effectiveness of China's troop dispatch. Only when the Chinese Volunteers directly entered the battle and achieved results, Stalin, who was ready to play both hands, allowed the Soviet Air Force to enter the battle.

The intervention of the Soviet Union fact brought the fear of escalating the war back to the White House. US policymakers were forced to choose to refuse to disclose the truth when they knew that the Soviet Union was already involved. They could only close their eyes to fight the "Chinese" Air Force. The Chinese Air Force could thus be trained for a longer period of time, and the ground forces of China and North Korea in the rear could conduct safer operations under the protection of the Soviet Air Force than before.

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