

The Application of Operational Art to the Korean War

A Monograph

by

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Fort Leavenworth, KS

2018

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REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE

*Form Approved
OMB No. 0704-0188*

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1. REPORT DATE (DD-MM-YYYY) 27-06-2017	2. REPORT TYPE Master's Thesis	3. DATES COVERED (From - To) July 2017 - May 2018
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4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE The Application of Operational Art to the Korean War	5a. CONTRACT NUMBER
	5b. GRANT NUMBER
	5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER

6. AUTHOR(S) MAJ Dong Pil Lee Republic of Korea Army	5d. PROJECT NUMBER
	5e. TASK NUMBER
	5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER

7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) School of Advanced Military Studies ATTN: ATZL-SWD-GD Fort Leavenworth, KS 66027-2134	8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER
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9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)	10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)
	11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)

12. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT
Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited.

13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES

14. ABSTRACT
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15. SUBJECT TERMS
The Korean War, Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK, North Korea), Chinese Forces, Operational Art, the Korean War History-Theory-Doctrine. Element of Operational Art in the Korean War. Operation Chromite. Future Operations.

16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT	18. NUMBER OF PAGES	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON
a. REPORT	b. ABSTRACT	c. THIS PAGE			19b. TELEPHONE NUMBER (Include area code)
(U)	(U)	(U)	(U)		

Monograph Approval Page

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Abstract

The Application of Operational Art to the Korean War, by MAJ Dong Pil Lee, Republic of Korea Army, 46 pages.

The purpose of this research paper is to provide lessons from the Korean War on operational art, which is the pursuit of strategic objectives, in whole or in part, through the arrangement of tactical actions in time, space, and purpose. Future operations, strategic contexts, and history-theory-doctrine integration comprise the three main points concerning the application of operational art. This research uses a comparison method for war planning by North Korea, the United Nations, and China, from the perspectives of a political aim, theory, and doctrine. The three findings are as follows. First, the operational artist must focus on future operations and should not intercede in current tactical operations. Second, the operational artist must pay attention to the ever-changing international and domestic environment to understand the strategic context of operational art from both enemy and ally. Lastly, the operational artist must integrate history-theory-doctrine into planning. Regardless of time, these three findings could apply to other war applications of operational art analysis.

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Acknowledgments

I appreciate the efforts of monograph director, Mr. Eric Price, my seminar leader, COL Christopher McGowan, Learning Resource Center Director, Ross Pollack and John M Lorenzen, and Kansas City sponsor, Martha Patton Childers for their helpful assistance in the development of this monograph.

Acronyms

ADP	Army Doctrine Publication
ADM	Army Design Methodology
JP	Joint Publication
SAMS	School of Advanced Military Studies
US	United States
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

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I. Introduction

War is not an affair of chance. A great deal of knowledge, study and meditation are necessary to conduct it well.

Frederick the Great, Prussia, 1747

On the Korean Peninsula, the strategic and operational environment is exceedingly complicated because of the diversity of the actors. The United States (US), the People's Republic of China, the Republic of Korea, North Korea, and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) had distinct national interests and competed aggressively for them on the Korean Peninsula in the years before 1950. Though almost seventy years have passed, the operational environment has not changed much since then. In 2017, North Korea claimed to have developed an intercontinental ballistic missile, and though their test flights have not demonstrated the missile's maximum range, Western analysts believe that it is capable of reaching much of the United States. North Korea also claims to have established the ability to launch nuclear weapons on a missile. As a result, tensions on the Korean Peninsula have increased significantly.¹

The possibility of another Korean War seems more imminent than at any time in recent years; it is therefore essential to revisit the Korean War for operational art lessons that could apply in the future. Study of the Korean War can help organizations apply operational art more precisely in the future. More specifically, the early phases of the Korean War provide important lessons about the application of operational art. Political aims, military history, military theory, and military doctrine were integrated into operational planning during the early phases, but few previous studies have been written on this aspect of the Korean War. Planning is essential for the successful wartime application of operational art. Sun Tzu wrote in *The Art of War*, "The commander attempts to defeat the enemy through careful planning rather than with military

¹ "How Close Is North Korea To Having A Missile That Can Hit LA?" *Economist*, August 15, 2017, accessed August 16, 2017, <https://www.economist.com/news/briefing/21725764-closer-was-previously-thought-and-far-too-close-comfort-how-close-north-korea>.

might.”² In other words, planning can be one of the intellectual tools that contribute to decisive victory. Thus, critical and creative thinking is vital to planning. Carl von Clausewitz wrote in *On War* that the influence of truths on the practical battle is through critical analysis of planning.³ Conducting a critical analysis of past war plans is an essential way to develop and improve the practice of operational art, because of the limited opportunities and the high cost of applying operational art in war.

Literature Review

There are few similar studies about the application of operational art during the early stages of the Korean War. Major Remco van Ingen, for one, wrote a School of Advanced Military Studies (SAMS) monograph called *Operational Art in the Korean War: A Comparison between General MacArthur and General Walker*. In it, Ingen focuses on the effects of Douglas MacArthur’s and Walton Walker’s personalities and experiences on their application of operational art.⁴ This study argues that a commanding general’s personality contributes to the success or failure of operational art.

In another study, Major Thomas Ziegler focused on case studies of Operation Chromite, the attack on North Korea, and the United Nations’ counteroffensive. He argued that Operation Chromite was a successful operation even though it was high risk, but attacking North Korea was a failure because of MacArthur’s cognitive bias. The United Nations counteroffensive phase was successful due to Matthew Bunker Ridgway’s personal experience and judgment during World War II.⁵

² Sun-Tzu, *The Art of Warfare*, ed. and trans. Roger T. Ames (New York: Ballantine Books, 1993), 93.

³ Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. and trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), 156.

⁴ Major Remco van Ingen, “Operational Art in the Korean War: A Comparison between General MacArthur and General Walker” (Monograph, School of Advanced Military Studies, 2013), 30-39.

⁵ Major Thomas G. Ziegler, “Operational Art Requirements in the Korean War” (Monograph, School of Advanced Military Studies, 2012), 21-38.

In general, previous studies about the Korean War focused on how US generals applied operational art. However, those studies did not analyze the influence of political aims, history, theory, and doctrine from both enemy and friendly sides. Thus, this study analyzes the Korean War through the lens of the political aim, history, theory, and doctrine, not only from the United Nations or American perspective but also from that of the North Korean and Chinese sides.

This study focuses on the conflict's strategic level analysis of political aims and operational level planning as it played out in 1950. Thus, a later study can expand on this study with analysis of another planning period from 1951 to 1953.

Research Questions

The primary research question is: What are the operational art lessons from the Korean War? This question assumes that all the planners tried to arrange tactical actions in time, space, and purpose to achieve political aims in the Korean War.

The sub-research questions are: Why is focusing on future operations important to operational artists?⁶ Why is having an understanding of the strategic context of operational art significant to operational artists? To what degree does each nation integrate military history-theory- doctrine during the planning?

For these questions, this study sets three hypotheses. First, operational artists must focus on future operations. Second, operational artists must understand the strategic context of war from the domestic and international perspectives of both friendly and enemy sides. Third, history-theory-doctrine must integrate into planning for the successful application of operational art.

⁶ US Department of Defense, Joint Staff, Joint Publication (JP) 3-33, *Joint Task Force Headquarters* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2012), II-12; Functional Chief, Deputy and Administrative Section consist of three functions: Current Operations (Direct and Monitor), Future Operations (Planning and Assessment), Future Plans (Planning and Assessment).

Research Layout

The study compares each planning case using political aims, history, theory, and doctrine. Section one introduces the definition and meaning of operational art. Section two examines how political aims, theory, and doctrine integrated into the North Korean preemptive attack planning. Section three examines the same process for the United Nations planning of Operation Chromite. Similarly, section four analyzes the process as it applies to China's preemptive attack planning during the United Nations' approach on the Yalu River. Section five compares the cases and extracts lessons.

This monograph uses elements of the McCune-Reischauer system of romanizing Korean and Chinese words. However, for simplicity, this study drops the diacritical marks (breve and apostrophe) used to distinguish unaspirated consonants from aspirated consonants and simple vowels from compound vowels. When a specific romanization usage has been sanctioned by history and personal choice, this paper has not changed that usage. In addition, all Asian names are given in normal order, family name first and given name second, such as Kim Il Sung, Mao Zedong.⁷

⁷ "McCune-Reischauer system of romanizing Korean," US Library of Congress, accessed April 11, 2018, <https://www.loc.gov/catdir/cpsd/romanization/korean.pdf>; Wada Haruki, *The Korean War: An International History* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2014), 1.

II. Operational Art

Operational art is the application of intuition and creative imagination by commanders and staff.⁸ In other words, operational art is cognitive thinking, so its interpretation might vary according to the commanders' and staff's personalities and background knowledge.⁹ It is necessary to have a common understanding of operational art concepts before discussing its application in the Korean War. Therefore, this section introduces the concept of operational art from history, theory, doctrine, and planning standpoints.

History

Operational art existed as a practice, if not a coherent concept, before it was written into Soviet military theory in 1926.¹⁰ One could argue that Genghis Khan, Alexander the Great, and Napoleon all demonstrated operational art.¹¹ For example, when evaluating Napoleon's campaigns, the 1805 Ulm-Austerlitz Campaign was considered Napoleon's masterpiece.¹² He

⁸ US Department of Defense, Joint Staff, Joint Publication (JP) 5-0, *Joint Planning* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2017), xiii.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Michael D. Krause and R. Cody Phillips, *Historical Perspectives of the Operational Art* (Washington, DC: Center of Military History US Army, 2005), 8.

¹¹ Major Dana J. H. Pittard, "Thirteenth Century Mongol Warfare: Classical Military Strategy or Operational Art?" (Monograph, School of Advanced Military Studies, 1994) stated that the Mongol conquest of Khwarezmia from 1219 to 1221 marked the beginning of the Mongol conquest of the Islamic states. The Mongol invasions also occurred in Central Europe, which led to warfare among fragmented Poland factions, such as the Battle of Legnica (9 April 1241) and the Battle of Mohi (11 April 1241), in the Kingdom of Hungary. For example, Genghis Khan, who commanded Mongol campaigns in the thirteenth century, showed that the Mongol method of warfare was successful because of operational art thinking. During the Khwarezmian Campaign (1219-1223) and the Central European Campaign (1241), he examined his idea in combat using the definition of operational art found in Field Manual 100-5, Operations as criteria. Khan connected tactical actions to achieve Mongols political aims of expansion. These campaigns showed that Mongols practiced a form of operational art; Major William J. A. Miller, "The Evolution of Operational Art: A Neverending Story" (Monograph, School of Advanced Military Studies, 1993) stated that another military leader was Alexander the Great. He designed the campaign to destroy the Persians, which he divided into three distinct stages: securing of an overseas base or lodgment in Asia, destruction or neutralization of the Persian naval superiority, and finally, destruction of the Persian army and seizure of the Persian Empire.

¹² Michael V. Leggiere, *Napoleon and the Operational Art of War: Essays in Honor of Donald D. Horward* (Boston: Brill, 2016), 171.

developed and demonstrated an operational art of planning and execution.¹³ He did not use the term operational art when he described his plan, yet it seems clear that he understood the elements of operational art and visualized them effectively during the planning and execution process. Napoleon's campaigns were the antecedent to later developments that became known as operational art.¹⁴ Thus, Napoleon would have had no difficulty in understanding and applying the modern concept of operational art.¹⁵ Such examples show that earlier militaries used operational art as a cognitive way of thinking.

Theory

Soviet military theorists invented the concept of operational art as a theory. Aleksandr A. Svechin first used the term "operational art" in his book *Strategy*, originally published in 1926.¹⁶ Svechin noted, "Operational art sets forth an entire series of tactical missions and several logistical requirements. Operational art also dictates the basic line of conduct of an operation, reliant on the substance available, the time which may be prearranged to the management of diverse tactical missions, the forces which may be organized for battle on a certain front."¹⁷ In 1920, the USSR identified and used operational art for the analysis of armed conflict.¹⁸

¹³ Leggiere, *Napoleon and the Operational Art of War*, 8.

¹⁴ Krause and Phillips, *Historical Perspectives of the Operational Art*, 26.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 27.

¹⁶ Aleksandr A. Svechin, *Strategy*, ed. Kent D. Lee (Minneapolis, MN: East View Publications, 1992), 68-69. Carl von Clausewitz and Antoine-Henri Jomini codified the concept of operational art as a theory in the nineteenth century. Clausewitz and Jomini observed Napoleon's warfare and developed their theories. The usage of the term "strategy" by Clausewitz and Jomini is equivalent to what is called "operational art," in modern times. Clausewitz wrote, in *On War*, that the use of engagement for the war is operational art. Similarly, Jomini wrote, in *The Art of War*, that operational art is the art of making war upon the map. Jomini developed the idea of the nineteenth-century strategy, and by extension, campaign planning amounted to the selection of the theater of operation, base of operation, lines of operation, and decisive points. Jomini argued that at the end of this process of selection was the final deployment for a decisive battle. Thus, operational art theory started from Clausewitz and Jomini.

¹⁷ David M. Glantz, *Soviet Operational Art and Tactics in the 1930s* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: US Army Combined Arms Center, 1991), 3, accessed November 28, 2017, Academic OneFile, <http://www.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/a232954.pdf>.

¹⁸ David M. Glantz, *Soviet Military Operational Art: In Pursuit of Deep Battle* (Hoboken: Taylor and Francis, 2012), 10.

Doctrine

Like the example of Napoleon, the United States also exercised operational art in practice prior to its development as an intellectual concept, as demonstrated by the extended campaigns and independent maneuver seen in the American Civil War, especially in the Vicksburg and Gettysburg campaigns.¹⁹ After the Vietnam War, the US Army published AirLand Battle doctrine in 1982, which was designed to counter Soviet multi-echelon attacks.²⁰ The US Army used the term “operational level of war” to fill a gap in how wars had been conceived of in the past.²¹ Also, the 1982 manual inserted the operational level between strategic and tactical, defined as the theory of large-unit operations through the planning and execution of campaigns.²² Linking the tactical to the highest echelon of government was “operational art,” the idea that national political decisions governing war directly influenced tactical battles through the conduct of operational campaigns.²³ To provide an environment to study operational art, the Army established SAMS in 1983 at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. Researchers at SAMS studied the Soviet-German war of 1940-1945 combined with theoretical readings by Soviet Colonel V. K. Triandafillov, Marshal M. N. Tukhachevsky, and Carl von Clausewitz.²⁴ From the studies, the US Army used the term “operational art” in the 1986 manual.²⁵ US Joint Publication (JP) JP 3-0, *Joint Operations*, addresses the relationship between strategy and operational art.²⁶ (See Figure 1.) Operational art

¹⁹ Krause and Phillips, *Historical Perspectives of the Operational Art*, 331.

²⁰ Walter E. Kretchik, *U.S. Army Doctrine from the American Revolution to the War on Terror* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2014), 204.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid., 205.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Richard M. Swain, “Filling the Void: The Operational Art and the U.S. Army,” in *The Operational Art: Developments in the Theory of War*, ed. B.J.B. McKercher and Michael Hennessey (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1996), 164.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ US Department of Defense, Joint Staff, Joint Publication (JP) 3-0, *Joint Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2017), II-3.

is not a level of war but instead applies to the strategic, operational, and tactical levels of war.²⁷

Figure 1 shows how operational art links tactical and operational level actions and objectives to strategic objectives and highlights leaders who typically focus on those levels.²⁸

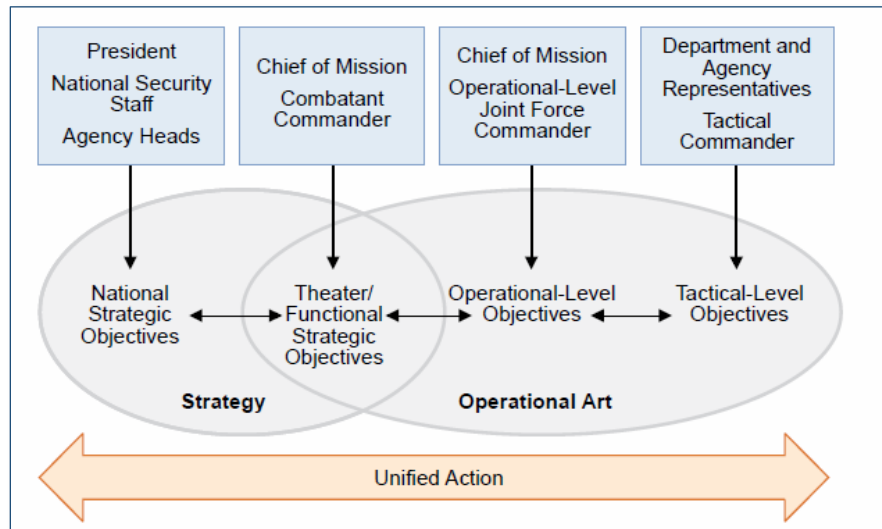


Figure 1. Relationship between Strategy and Operational Art. Joint Publication (JP) 3-0, Joint Operations, 2017, II-3.

Joint doctrine publications provide reasons as to why the planners apply operational art. According to JP 3-0, “The commander’s ability to think creatively enhances the ability to employ operational art to answer the ends-ways-means-risk questions.”²⁹ Furthermore, “Operational art strengthens the relationship between strategic objectives and the tactics employed to achieve them.”³⁰

Similar to Joint doctrine, US Army Doctrine Publication (ADP) 3-0 defines operational art as “The pursuit of strategic objectives, in whole or in part, through the arrangement of tactical

²⁷ Huba Wass de Czege, "Thinking and Acting Like an Early Explorer: Operational Art is Not a Level of War," *Small Wars Journal*. No. 1 (March 2011): 4-6, accessed March 6, 2018, <http://smallwarsjournal.com/blog/journal/docs-temp/710-deczege.pdf>.

²⁸ US Joint Staff, JP 3-0, *Joint Operations* 2017, II-3.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, II-3 – II-4.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

actions in time, space, and purpose.”³¹ This study applies the ADP 3-0 definition because it is more focused on the land domain rather than broader joint operations.

What is the relationship between operational art and planning? ADP 5-0 notes that planning is the art and science of understanding a situation, envisioning a desired future, and laying out effective ways of bringing that future.³² For effective planning, operational artists must integrate both conceptual ideas and detailed, executable information components. This happens in current US Army doctrine by employing the Army Design Methodology (ADM).³³ ADM helps commanders and staff with the conceptual aspects of planning and applying operational art.³⁴

More importantly, the application of operational art results in the planning of campaigns, which is a “series of related major operations aimed at achieving strategic and operational objectives within a given time and space.”³⁵ ADM emerged, in part, from a curious mixture of modified Clausewitzian and Jominian theory, incorporating such terms as center of gravity, lines of operation, decisive points, and culmination, which underlie both operational art and doctrinal aspects of campaign planning.³⁶ Thus, the study of the application of operational art is equivalent to the study of campaign planning.

³¹ US Department of the Army, Army Doctrine Publication (ADP) 3-0, *Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2016), 4. According to Joint Publication (JP) 3-0, operational art is “The cognitive approach by commanders and staff - supported by their skill, knowledge, experience, creativity, and judgment - to develop strategies, campaigns, and operations to organize and employ military forces by integrating ends, ways, and means.”

³² US Department of the Army, Army Doctrine Publication (ADP) 5-0, *The Operations Process* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2012), 6.

³³ US Department of the Army Techniques Publication (ATP) 5-0.1 *Army Design Methodology* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2015), 1-3; ADM is a methodology for applying critical and creative thinking to understand, visualize, and describe unfamiliar problems and approaches to solving them.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 1-5.

³⁵ ADRP 3-0, Glossary-2.

³⁶ William R. Richardson, “FM 100–5: The AirLand Battle in 1986,” *Military Review* 66, no. 3 (March 1986): 4; US Department of the Army, Army Doctrine Reference Publication (ADRP) 3-0, *Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2016), 2-9; Culmination point is a point at which a force no longer has the capability to continue its form of operations, offense or defense.

The conduct operational art and planning by both enemy and friendly sides must be examined to decrease bias. When describing an enemy, emotions start to engage, and it is a starting point for biased thinking because of enmity. Thus, it would be proper analysis to focus objectively on the planning itself, without division of friend or foe, to learn about operational art. In other words, study planning should examine both enemy and friendly sides because human emotion can interrupt deliberate thinking. For example, Athenian historian and military general Thucydides attempted to decrease bias, and thus the potential for fallacious conclusions, by researching both sides in the Peloponnesian War.³⁷ This study takes a similar approach to Thucydides' method, examining operational art from the perspective of North Korea, China, and the United Nations to lessen bias and better understand the whole picture of the application of operational art during the Korean War.

³⁷ Thucydides, *The Landmark Thucydides: A Comprehensive Guide to the Peloponnesian War*, ed. and trans. Victor Davis Hanson (New York: New York Free Press, 2014), xiii.

III. North Korea Invasion Planning

It is well known that North Korea imitated the USSR's operational art. North Korea integrated Soviet theory and doctrine in their planning primarily because the USSR's planners supported them with their World War II experiences.³⁸ They employed a highly inflexible Soviet-style military doctrine that emphasized decisions made at the top and carefully scripted war plans, which discouraged operational flexibility and initiative.³⁹ Thus, North Korea did not have the capability to anticipate future operations after the United Nations' forces became involved during phase two of their plan. In other words, North Korea failed to achieve its political aims because the operational artists did not correctly anticipate future operations, but instead overly focused on current operations.

Political Aims

According to Clausewitz in *On War*, "War is an instrument of policy."⁴⁰ Moreover, as Clausewitz notes in *Two Letters on Strategy*, "Strategic plan is largely political, and political character increases the more the plan encompasses the entire war."⁴¹ Thus, it is imperative that war planning inquiry starts from understanding the political aims.

³⁸ Andrew Scobell and John M. Sanford, *North Korea's Military Threat: Pyongyang's Conventional Forces, Weapons of Mass Destruction, and Ballistic Missile* (Carlisle, PA: US Army War College, 2017), 8, accessed October 10, 2017, <https://ssi.armywarcollege.edu/pdffiles/PUB771.pdf>; David Dallin, *Soviet Foreign Policy After Stalin* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott, 1961), 60; "Stalin planned, prepared and initiated the North Korea's attack"; David Rees, *Korea: The Limited War* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1964), 19. "The North Korean invasion as a Soviet war plan."

³⁹ Mark Fitzpatrick, *North Korean Security Challenges: A Net Assessment* (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2011), 89.

⁴⁰ Clausewitz, *On War*, 610.

⁴¹ Carl von Clausewitz, *Two Letters on Strategy*, ed. and trans. Peter Paret and Daniel Moran (Fort Leavenworth, KS: US Army Command and General Staff College, 1994), 21, accessed December 3, 2017, <http://purl.access.gpo.gov/GPO/LPS68448>.

Domestic politics and international relations are often somehow entangled.⁴² North Korea is a prime example of this because they enmeshed their domestic aims (unification) with the broader international political aims of the Communist movement. First, North Korea's domestic political aim was to unify Korea under the Communist Party.⁴³ Leader Kim Il Sung claimed that they needed, "The war to liberate the Republic of Korea."⁴⁴ North Korea's domestic political aims used ethnic appeal in an effort to unify all Koreans.

There were two major political reasons for the decision to invade. First, by June 29, 1949, the last of the American forces had withdrawn from the Republic of Korea and left 500 military advisers to help train the Republic of Korea Army.⁴⁵ Second, US policy, represented by the Acheson Line, dictated that the US would not intervene in Korea and Taiwan.⁴⁶ The Truman Doctrine provided another political reason for North Korea's decision. Dean Acheson noted in December 1947: "I remember when it was accepted doctrine to say in the United States, 'We do not care if another country wants to be communist, that is all right, that is an internal matter for them to decide.'"⁴⁷ The Acheson Line excluded Korea from the defensive line before the Korean War started.⁴⁸ From the North Korean perspective, the enemy's strategic level center of gravity was the Republic of Korea-US alliance. North Korea mistakenly perceived the enemy's strategic level center of gravity lost its balance because of the Acheson Line, and this was an appropriate

⁴² Robert D. Putnam, "Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: The Logic of Two-Level Games," *International Organization* 42, no. 3 (1988): 427, accessed January 23, 2018, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2706785>.

⁴³ Nikita Sergeevich Khrushchev, *Khrushchev Remembers*, ed. and trans. Strobe Talbot and Edward Crankshaw (Boston: Little Brown, 1970), 368.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Bevin Alexander *Korea: The First War We Lost* (New York: Hippocrates Books, 2004), 16.

⁴⁷ John Lewis Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of American National Security Policy During the Cold War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 62.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 63-64.

time for unification.⁴⁹ Also, North Korea perceived their strategic center of gravity as the North Korea-China-USSR alliance, and North Korea sought to protect their alliance from the United Nations forces' operational reach.

Second, from the international political aims perspective, North Korea was not a completely independent actor, but rather was heavily influenced in its pursuit of aims by the influence exerted by the USSR and China, who were able to manipulate North Korea through the aid they provided. Thus, the relationship between the three is highly nuanced. That said, North Korea, China, and the USSR broadly agreed about the ends (unification), ways (by force), means (military forces), but they disagreed about when to attack the Republic of Korea.⁵⁰ Cooperation between the three countries were fought with tension and reaching an agreement was not certain because the possibility of US intervention.⁵¹ For example, Stalin gave his conditional approval for the invasion in April of 1950, contingent upon Kim's consultation with Mao Zedong, but there was no concurrence with China and North Korea.⁵² However, under their common interests, the Soviet and China ultimately provided military aid and support to North Korea. Thus, from international political aims viewpoint, another reason for the invasion was to further the USSR's and China's political aims of spreading communism.

Furthermore, the USSR and China wanted to secure their border buffer zone using North Korea.⁵³ With certain limitations in 1902, conceptualizing that the Korean peninsula was the buffer zone, the USSR claimed all of Manchuria as a Russian sphere of influence.⁵⁴ North Korea

⁴⁹ North Korea assumed that the United Nations would not intervene in the Korean War because of the Acheson Line.

⁵⁰ Wada Haruki, *The Korean War: An International History* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2014), 44, 57, 61.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 44-45.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 66-67.

⁵³ James I. Matray and Donald W. Boose, *The Ashgate Research Companion to the Korean War* (London: Ashgate, 2014), 37.

⁵⁴ Stuart D. Goldman, *Nomonhan, 1939: The Red Army's Victory that Shaped World War II* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2013), 8.

served as a cushion zone between them. Hence, from the USSR's and China's perspectives, they needed a buffer space to secure their borders.

In summary, North Korea wanted to achieve the domestic political aims of unification, so they took advantage of the international political aims of spreading and protecting communism and buffer zone to gain support from the USSR and China.

Planning to Invade the Republic of Korea

The USSR and China supported North Korea with superior weapons, combat forces, and planning.⁵⁵ North Korea had a material and technology advantage over the Republic of Korea in the beginning phase.⁵⁶ From the North Korean leader Kim Il Sung's perspective, it was a matter of time before Korea would be unified.⁵⁷ The North Korean military leaders were also confident that they could occupy the Korean Peninsula quickly because of support from southern guerrillas and an expected popular uprising against the Republic of Korea President Yi Sung-man's regime.⁵⁸ The North Korean political leaders' overconfidence and wishful thinking distracted the operational artists from the main focal point of operations, which was future plans.⁵⁹ North Korea's preemptive attack planning failed because the operational artist did not focus the operations' future phasing and transitions, which ultimately affected the culmination points at phase three.⁶⁰

Their planning consisted of irregular and traditional plans. First, the irregular warfare plans failed to anticipate future operations phasing and transition because they relied too much on

⁵⁵ Matray and Boose, *The Ashgate Research Companion to the Korean War*, 40.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 37.

⁵⁸ Matray and Boose, *The Ashgate Research Companion to the Korean War*, 313.

⁵⁹ Daniel Kahneman, *Thinking, Fast and Slow* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2015), 199.

⁶⁰ US Army, ADRP 3-0, (2016), 4-7 – 4-8. A phase is a planning and execution tool used to divide an operation in duration or activity. The culminating point is that point in time and space at which a force no longer possesses the capability to continue its current form of operations.

theory. The success of the North Korean operational artists' future operations depended upon the irregular warfare activities by communist sympathizers in the South, which proved to be wishful thinking.⁶¹ Before the Korean War started (1950), North Korea initiated irregular warfare almost five years prior (1945) to set the stage for the peninsula's ultimate unification.⁶² When Kim Il Sung highlighted Marxist-Leninist's theories for irregular warfare in 1948, the North Korean military forces and police numbered about a hundred thousand.⁶³ A group of southern Korean guerrillas who had established their headquarters at Hyeju reinforced them.⁶⁴ Thus, the Republic of Korea was harassed by partisan war before the Korean War. To block the creation of an independent the Republic of Korea, southern dissidents, primarily members of the South Korean Labor Communist Party, attempted to throw southern Korea into chaos with a general strike in March, 1948.⁶⁵ Irregular warfare transformed into traditional warfare.

Second, regarding the conventional war planning, except for the first phase of the invasion plan, North Korean plans failed because they did not anticipate the nature of future operations. Combined with irregular partisan activities, North Korea, assisted by the USSR, planned to invade the Republic of Korea using the Soviet conventional warfare method of Deep

⁶¹ Republic of Korea Ministry of National Defense, *Counter-Irregular Warfare History* (Seoul: Institute for Military History, 1988), 148–149; 국방부, *비정규전사* (서울: 국방부 전사편집위원회, 1988), 148-149.

⁶² Allan R. Millett, *The Korean War: The Essential Bibliography* (Dulles, VA: Potomac, 2007), 8–9; Joung Cheon Back, *North Korea military power and Military Strategy* (Seoul: Board of National Unification, 1989), 19-20; 백종천 외, *북한의 군사력과 군사전략* (서울: 국토통일원, 1989), 19–20.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid; Haeju was a small city in central-western Korea on the Ongjin Peninsula.

⁶⁵ Millett, *The Korean War*, 9.

Battle Operations.⁶⁶ The operational plan for a preemptive strike was comprehensive and thorough, consisting of a combat plan for unit movement, logistics, and deception.⁶⁷

In North Korea's operational planning the operational level center of gravity was the Republic of Korea Army itself, and the decisive point was the geographical location of Seoul. Table 1 shows that the plan was to envelop and annihilate the core units of the Republic of Korea Army in the vicinity of Seoul and aggressively exploit early successes to advance to the southern shores.⁶⁸

The North Korean operational artists made an effort to annihilate most of the Republic of Korea Army during the initial phase of the operation, but they did not pay much attention to the second and third phases. (See Table 1 with Figure 2.) In the first stage of the preemptive strike operations, the ten divisions of North Korean ground forces were organized into two attacking corps.⁶⁹ The planners did not set the future campaign condition for the second and third stages because the planners visualized future operations as mop-up operations with little resistance. Thus, the planners did not synchronize tactical actions between the different corps and did not plan for an operational pause to mitigate risks of an extended ground line of communications. North Korea's forces culminated near phase line three because of lack of logistical support.

⁶⁶ Matray and Boose, *The Ashgate Research Companion to the Korean War*, 315; Peter J. Vlakancic, *Marshal Tukhachevsky and the "Deep Battle": An Analysis of Operational Level Soviet Tank and Mechanized Doctrine, 1935-1945* (Arlington: Institute of Land Warfare, 1992), 1.

⁶⁷ Korea Institute of Military History, *The Korean War: Volume One* (Seoul: Bison Books, 2000), 143.

⁶⁸ Ibid; An intelligence plan for North Korea's offensive operation (dated June 20, 1950) that was seized during the Korean War contained the following operational stages and similar objectives for intelligence planning.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 118; the 1st corps was to be the primary attacking force and was charged with the mission of applying pressure on Seoul from the north. The 2nd corps was to cross the 38th parallel from the Hwach'on area and employ a turning movement to provide a supporting attack from the east of Seoul. Under close coordination, the two attacking corps were to envelop and occupy Seoul and secure Seoul-Wonju-Samch'ok line. During the second stage of the war, North Korea was to make a rapid transition to the exploitation phase and overwhelm the Republic of Korea reserves to advance to the Kunsan-Taegu-P'ohang line. In the third stage of the war, North Korea was to mop up the remaining the Republic of Korea troops and secure the last line.

Furthermore, the planners did not modify the plan by rearranging corps' actions in time, space, and purpose. On the contrary, they mistakenly believed revolt actions would set up advantageous conditions for stages two and three. Indeed, the planning assumptions, based on both Marxist-Leninist's theories, turned out to be faulty.⁷⁰

Table 1. Operational Stages and Intelligence Planning Objectives

Operational Phase	Operational Area	Intelligence Planning Objective
1st Phase: Penetration of Defense Line, Annihilation of Main Effort	From 38th Parallel to Seoul-Wonju-Samchok line	Forward Defense Organization Seoul Defense Organization Commitment of Reserve
2nd Phase: Exploitation, Annihilation of Reserves	From Seoul-Wonju-Samchok line to Kunsan-Taegu-Pohang	Rear Defensive Positions Forward Movement of Divisions Reinforcements and Supplies
3rd Phase: Mop-up Operations, Pursuit of the Southern Coast	From Kunsan-Taegu-Pohang to Pusan-Yousu-Mokpo	Defense along Approaches Harbor Activities Harbor Defense Plans

Source: Korea Institute of Military History, *The Korean War: Volume One* (Seoul: Bison Books, 2000), 116.

⁷⁰ Korea Institute of Military History, *The Korean War*, 118; Expecting to meet little resistance from the Republic of Korea forces and seeking to advance to the southern coast before the deployment of US reinforcements, the invasion plan emphasized rapid maneuvers in the second and third stages of the war. Unlike the first stage, the second and the third stages needed little synchronization between corps. The plan was to drive swiftly for deep strategic objectives.



Figure 2. North Korea's Invasion Plan (preemptive strike). Created by author with data from Korea Institute of Military History, *The Korean War: Volume One* (Seoul: Bison Books, 2000), 119; Spencer Tucker, *The Encyclopedia of the Korean War A Political, Social, and Military History* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2010), xxvi; Schnabel, James F. *Policy and Direction: The First Year* (Washington, DC: Center of Military History US Army, 1992), 61.

North Korean operational artists did not focus beyond the catastrophic success of phase-one and underestimated the importance of future operations. As a result, North Korean planning failed because it did not achieve the political aim of unification.

Theory

North Korea's history affected its theory of operational art. Japan occupied the Korean Peninsula from 1910 until 1945.⁷¹ After Korea gained independence from Japan in 1945, the USSR and the US separated Korea into two states, which provided the Koreans a five-year breathing space before the Korean War (1950-1953).⁷² Subsequently, North Korea did not have enough time to develop its own theory and doctrine but inherited them from the USSR.⁷³ North Korea's operational art applied Karl Marx's, Vladimir Lenin's, and Vladimir Triandafillov's theories for irregular and conventional warfare, which came from the USSR.

The reason for studying Soviet theory and doctrine regarding the Republic of Korea invasion plan is that the draft plan was written by the USSR's officers, not North Korea's. According to Yu Song-Chol, a retired North Korean lieutenant general who translated the operational plan in 1950, "This Soviet military advisory group made the draft plan for the invasion. Its title was 'Preemptive Strike Operational Plan.' After the plan was handed over to Kang Gon, the chief of the General Staff of the North Korean Army, Kang instructed, 'Translate the Soviet Union plan into Korean and formulate a plan.' That was in early May 1950."⁷⁴

Furthermore, in May 1950 the USSR began a complete changeover of personnel, replacing the military advisers who had been dispatched to North Korea with individuals who had extensive combat experience.⁷⁵

⁷¹ S. C. M. Paine, *The Sino-Japanese War of 1894-1895 : Perceptions, Power, and Primacy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 318.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Matray and Boose, *The Ashgate Research Companion to the Korean War*, 37; military historians Walter G. Hermes, Jr. and Roy E. Appleman have examined North Korea's preparation to wage war, focusing primarily on the USSR aid to the North Korea. Results show that Moscow sent to North Korea a Special Soviet Military Mission to supervise formation of a strike force with modern maneuverability and firepower. It consisted of Soviet artillery officers and Polish intelligence officers who studied the Soviet theories.

⁷⁴ Kathryn Weathersby, *Soviet Aims in Korea and the Origins of the Korean War, 1945-1950: New Evidence from Russian Archives* (Washington, DC: Florida State University, 1993), 30.

⁷⁵ Weathersby, *Soviet Aims in Korea and the Origins of the Korean War, 1945-1950*, 30.

The USSR's military theory originated from Clausewitz's ideas. Carl Schmitt wrote in *Theory of the Partisan* that "Lenin studied Clausewitz's *On War* intensively."⁷⁶ Lenin thought that only revolutionary war was real war because it arises from absolute enmity, and everything else is regular play.⁷⁷ Both Marxist-Leninist's theories had anticipated the outbreak of a proletarian revolution in a given country on the achievement of a sufficiently high level of industrial development and the presence of a working class that constituted the bulk of the population.⁷⁸ From these theories, North Korea planned an irregular warfare type of revolutionary war inside of the Republic of Korea.

North Korea used Vladimir K. Triandafillov's deep operations theory for their regular warfare plans.⁷⁹ Triandafillov developed a strategic theory of successive operations based on the Soviet military failure against Poland in 1920 and the failed German offensives in France during 1918.⁸⁰ Between strategic context and tactics, the intermediate level became known as operational art.⁸¹ To the Soviet military community, operational art was the realm of senior commanders who plan and coordinate operations of large formations within the context of an entire war.⁸²

The Soviets debated and adopted the strategy of destruction, which meant the defeat of the enemy's forces by the overwhelming application of military power.⁸³ The USSR's operational

⁷⁶ Carl Schmitt, *Theory of the Partisan* (New York: Telos Press Publishing, 1975), 51.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 51-52; Clausewitz, *On War*, 89.

⁷⁸ Richard W. Harrison, *The Russian Way of War: Operational Art, 1904-1940* (Lawrence, KS, University Press of Kansas, 2001), 109.

⁷⁹ A. A. Svechin (1878-1938) invented the operational art with Tukhachevsky (1893-1937) but in North Korea, planning influenced more "shock army" concept. Thus, this study focuses on the Triandafillov's theory.

⁸⁰ David M. Glantz and Jonathan M. House. *When Titans Clashed: How the Red Army Stopped Hitler* (Lawrence, KS: The University Press of Kansas, 2015), 5.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² *Ibid.*

⁸³ Harrison, *The Russian Way of War*, 137.

art was developed as a part of this destruction strategy. Among the few operational art theorists, Triandafillov developed Soviet operational art during the 1920s.⁸⁴ He argued that Soviet operational art should destroy the enemy force swiftly.⁸⁵ Triandafillov calculated the spatial depth of modern defensive arrangements, which enabled the defender to withstand severe offensive shocks without collapsing and allowed him to maneuver his reserves to meet any threat.⁸⁶ Figure 3 depicts that Triandafillov chose the “shock army,” which is a combined-arms force. The shock army was designed not only to break through the enemy’s tactical defense but also to continue the offensive through the enemy’s operational depth and beyond to overcome an enemy defense zone.⁸⁷ These theories affected North Korea’s invasion planning, which used to mechanized corps as a shock army. Triandafillov also recommended launching some secondary attacks to deceive the defender as to the place and direction of the main blow as well as pinning down the enemy’s frontline forces and reserves.⁸⁸ The most crucial parts of Soviet operational art were the Red Army’s uninterrupted offensive, operational pursuits, avoiding pauses, and halts by consecutive operations.⁸⁹ Chief among these was their division into three identifiable stages: the initial operations, the pursuit operations, and the decisive operations.⁹⁰ These theories and concepts were reflected in North Korea’s invasion plan of three stages because the USSR sent a Special Soviet Military Mission to North Korea to supervise the development of the detailed invasion plan.⁹¹

⁸⁴ Ibid., 141.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 144.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 147.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 155-156.

⁹⁰ Harrison, *The Russian Way of War*, 161.

⁹¹ Matray and Boose, *The Ashgate Research Companion to the Korean War*, 37.

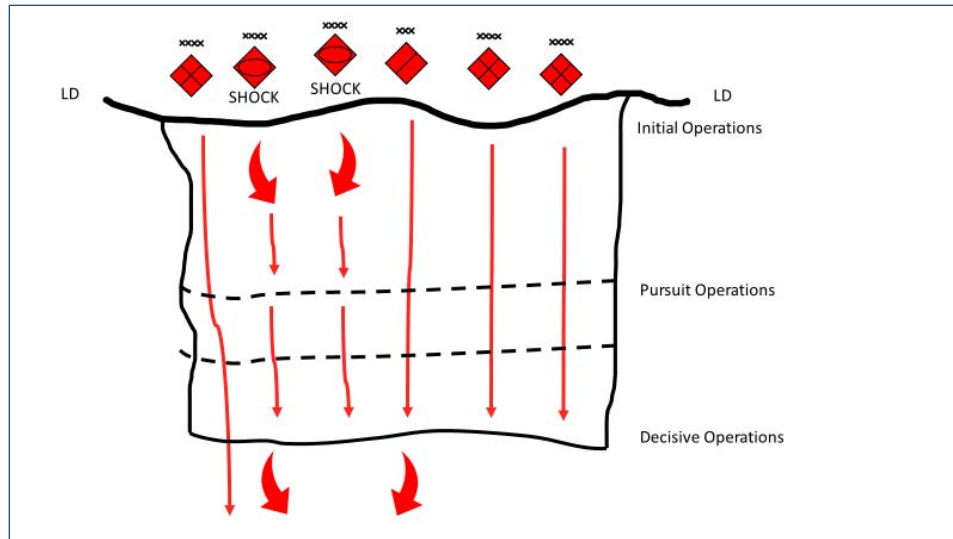


Figure 3. The Soviet Theory of Consecutive Operations. Created by the author with data from Richard W. Harrison, *The Russian Way of War: Operational Art, 1904-1940* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2001), 161.

In summary, the draft plan for the North Korean attack was written by the Soviets. North Korea's planners accepted it and applied the Marxist-Leninist theory of revolutionary war and Triandafillov's deep operations theory. North Korea tried to imitate these theories, blending the two of them together and filling the gaps with the integration of history-theory-doctrine.⁹²

Doctrine

North Korea shaped operational art from Soviet Deep Battle doctrine before the Korean War. Since North Korea's military evolved into a hybrid force with elements of Soviet doctrines, it was necessary to have a working knowledge of how Soviet military doctrine evolved to

⁹² North Korea theories, "*The Evolution of North Korean Military Thought*," last modified June, 1993, accessed January 19, 2018, <http://www.country-data.com/cgi-bin/query/r-9632.html>. The North Korean military writings derive from Marxist-Leninist theories through the conduit of "Kim Il Sung Thought." Kim Il Sung is credited with virtually everything in the North Korean military thought, from Lenin's reformulation of Clausewitz's classic definition of war to basic squad tactics. North Korean military thinking began as a mixture of Soviet strategic and Chinese tactical influences. At the Third Plenum of the Second Korean Worker's Party Central Committee in December 1950, Kim Il Sung's report, "The Present Condition and the Confronting Task," for the first-time interjected the North Korean combat experience into military doctrine and thought. From 1951 to December 1962, the North Korean military orthodoxy was a conventional warfare doctrine based on Soviet military doctrine and operational art modified by the Korean War experience.

understand North Korea's doctrine.⁹³ Initially, Soviet Deep Battle doctrine did not survive Stalin's purges.⁹⁴ Nevertheless, the doctrine of Deep Battle would see a rebirth in the struggle with Germany and would be employed with telling effects during the later stages of the conflict in World War II.⁹⁵ Table 2 shows the Deep Battle doctrine stressed close cooperation among all arms; it focused mainly on the most mobile arms, and the tenets of Deep Battle were solidified into doctrine and published in field regulations in 1936.⁹⁶ Figure 4 depicts that the Deep Battle doctrine envisioning a four-echelon offensive in depth and the draft North Korean invasion plan developed from this doctrine's influence.⁹⁷ Thus, during the execution, North Korea initiated the attack with the USSR's support aircraft.⁹⁸ Then armored units were used as a shock army.⁹⁹ Subsequently, mechanized units followed, exploited, and seized the objective.¹⁰⁰ Therefore, the Soviet military doctrine had a close connection to the invasion plan.

Table 2. The Doctrine of Deep Battle Assault Echelons

Echelon	Composition	Purpose
First	Aircraft	Gain air superiority, bomb enemy positions
Second	Combined arms (shock armies)	Punch through enemy lines
Third	Mechanized units	Exploit breakthroughs
Fourth	Reserves	Consolidate gains

Source: Peter J. Vlakancic, *Marshal Tukhachevsky and the "Deep Battle": An Analysis of Operational Level Soviet Tank and Mechanized Doctrine, 1935-1945* (Arlington: Institute of Land Warfare, 1992), 2.

⁹³ Scobell and Sanford, *North Korea's Military Threat*, vii.

⁹⁴ Vlakancic, *Marshal Tukhachevsky and the "Deep Battle"*, 1.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Ibid. The first echelon consisted of aircraft for gaining control of the air and bombing enemy positions. The second echelon, was composed of a shock army with a combination of tanks, infantry, and artillery, that hit a hole in the enemy line. The third echelon was the heart of Deep Battle. Mechanized units that were to aggressively exploit the breakthrough and drive deep into the enemy's flank on a mission to encircle enemy units. The fourth echelon contained reserves that followed the third echelon and consolidated the gain.

⁹⁸ 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, no. 2 (April 2010): 211.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

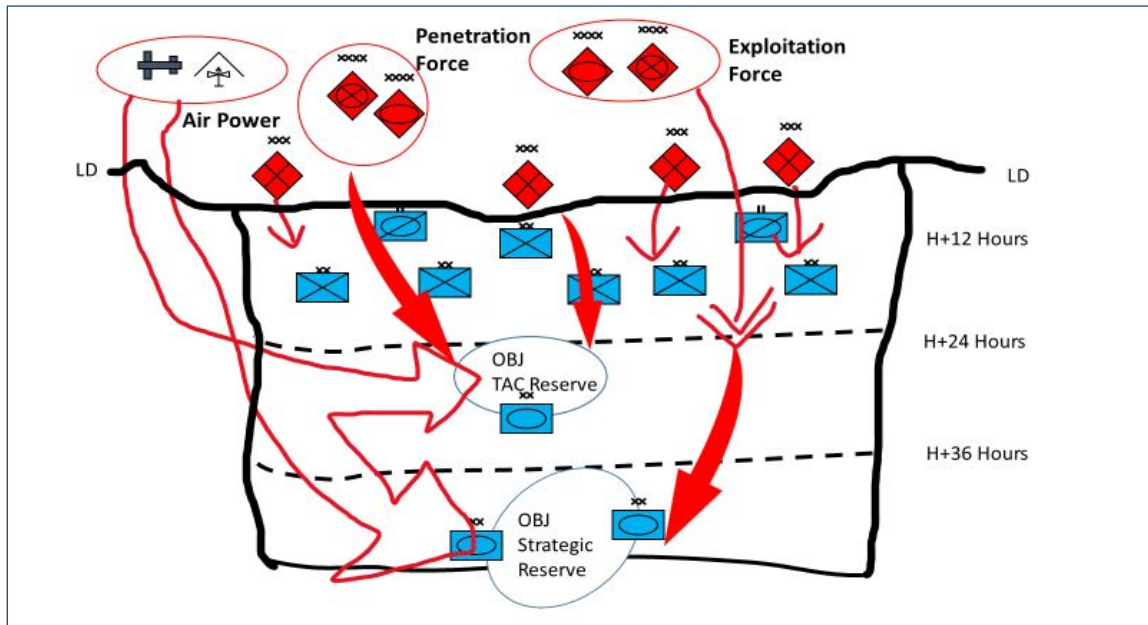


Figure 4. The Soviet Deep Battle Doctrine (1938). Created by the author with data from Richard W. Harrison, *Architect of Soviet Victory in World War II* (NC: McFarland & Company, 2010), 114.

In conclusion, operational artists are better served by contemplating future operations and continuously modifying the plan as an iterative process. However, the North Korean planners did not fully integrate doctrine and theory into their plan. Instead, they imitated the USSR's operational art. In other words, the planners lacked redesign capability which would have led them to continuously change their approach to match changes in the operational environment.¹⁰¹ As a result, they lost flexibility. Therefore, the North Korean operational artist failed to reassess the operational center of gravity, decisive points, phasing, transition, and culmination during operations.

¹⁰¹ From the beginning, North Korea had many advantages due to coach by experienced USSR planners. However, the lack of flexibility and failure to consider the future operations hindered them from achieving their political aims.

IV. Operation Chromite Planning

Operation Chromite planning was started in order to achieve US political aims.¹⁰² To achieve these strategic goals, the US operational artists relied less on theory and doctrine and counted more on previous amphibious operations during planning. World War II history impacted Operation Chromite planning directly without being written as military theory or doctrine. However, despite less integration between history-theory-doctrine and planning, the US operational planning was successful because American operational artists focused on seeking the enemy's operational center of gravity's through its critical vulnerability.

Political Aims

By the General Assembly resolutions of November 14, 1947; December 12, 1948; and October 21, 1949, the political objective of the United Nations in Korea was to bring about the complete independence and unity of Korea with the approval of United Nations members.¹⁰³ The United States broke new policy ground when it went on enunciate a potential larger military goal.¹⁰⁴ "If the present United Nations action in Korea can accomplish this political objective without substantially increasing the risk of general war with the Soviet Union or Communist China, it would be in our interest to advocate the pressing of the United Nations action to this conclusion."¹⁰⁵ However, the US government was not willing to commit its forces to the task of

¹⁰² Dennis D. Wainstock, *Truman, MacArthur, and the Korean War* (CT: Westport, Greenwood Press, 1999), 26; Truman described American participation in the Korean War as a United Nations police action. Truman told Acheson to emphasize that the increased involvement of American armed forces did not constitute a decision to engage in war with the Soviet Union. If Soviet forces intervened, American forces should defend themselves but take no action to aggravate the situation.

¹⁰³ Executive Secretary, *National Security Council Report 81*, "United States Courses of Action with Respect to Korea," September 1, 1950. Truman Papers, President's Secretary's Files. Meetings: 67: September 7, 1950. Paragraphs 4, 9, 16, accessed March 7, 2018, https://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/study_collections/koreanwar/documents/index.php?documentdate=1950-09-01&documentid=ki-17-1&pagenumber=1.

¹⁰⁴ Steven William Nerheim, *NSC-81/1 and the Evolution of U.S. War Aims in Korea June - October 1950* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: US Army War College, 2000), 16.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 16-17; Executive Secretary, *National Security Council Report 81/1*, "A Report to the President by the National Security Council on the United States Courses of Action with Respect to Korea,"

creating an independent and united Korea initially.¹⁰⁶ The 28 June 1950 US National Security Council meeting future confirmed President Truman's limited aims of restoring the 38th parallel and peace.¹⁰⁷ Thus, the United Nations' forces conducted Operation Chromite for the limited political aims of restoring the 38th parallel line until the end of Incheon landing operation.¹⁰⁸ Therefore, the scale of effort was limited, but still sufficient to achieve the primary American objective.¹⁰⁹ For example, the United States did not commit itself to full national mobilization.¹¹⁰ Also, the US maintained a majority of their weapons and ammunition in stock.¹¹¹ Similarly, US public opinion did not strongly support another war because US citizens did not perceive the advance of communism in distant Korea as a direct threat to the continental United States.¹¹² Overall, the US enmity toward the population of North Korea was low.¹¹³ Hence, the Korean War was a limited war for the US.

The Europe-first policy was another reason for the limited political aims. Harry Truman, who used a nuclear weapon to end World War II, decided not to do so in Korea; although Dwight Eisenhower hinted at the prospect of nuclear use, he also proved reluctant to do so.¹¹⁴ The United States proved willing to bear very high costs fighting the Confederacy, Germany, and Japan

September 9, 1950. Truman Papers, President's Secretary's File, accessed April 12, 2018, <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/116194.pdf>.

¹⁰⁶ Dean Acheson, *Present at the Creation* (New York, W. W. Norton & Company, 1969), 448-449.

¹⁰⁷ Nerheim, *NSC-81/1 and the Evolution of U.S. War Aims in Korea June - October 1950*, 8.

¹⁰⁸ Acheson, *Present at the Creation*, 448.

¹⁰⁹ Richard K. Betts, "Is Strategy an Illusion?," *International Security* 25, no. 2 (Fall 2000): 45, accessed December 2, 2017, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2626752>.

¹¹⁰ William V. O'Brien, *The Conduct of Just and Limited War* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1981), 251-252.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹¹² O'Brien, *The Conduct of Just and Limited War*, 251-252.

¹¹³ Clausewitz, *On War*, 89.

¹¹⁴ Joseph S. Nye, *The Future of Power* (New York: Public Affairs, 2011), 33.

because the objectives at stake were very high in value.¹¹⁵ On the other hand, the United States was willing to bear moderate costs against Korean communists when they were seen to be the wedge for worldwide Leninism.¹¹⁶ In summary, the United States started a limited war in Korea.

Planning to Counterattack at Incheon

Operation Chromite was achievable because the planners immersed themselves in future operations. From the beginning, American operational artists concentrated on future-plans on how to cut North Korea's extended line of operations.¹¹⁷ They did not focus on Task Force Smith's failure or contemporary battles along the Nakdong River defense.¹¹⁸ It was relatively easy to react to current operational failures, but the American planners did not. Even though the United States did not have explicated and codified operational art concepts within their doctrine during the Korean War, the US planners understood the importance of anticipating future operations, as is evidenced by the language in NSC 81. The United Nations' forces would not have achieved their political aims with great success if they had only responded and heeded current battles and engagements.

Operation Chromite was influenced by previous World War II amphibious operational experiences, which heretofore had best represented the American practice of operational art. The "Blueheart" operations concept provided the basis for the Incheon landing plan. The landing at the Incheon had been mulled over by the United Nations' forces during the first week in July of

¹¹⁵ Betts, *Is Strategy an Illusion?*, 46.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ US Army, ADRP 3-0, (2016), 2-5; Line of operations is defined by the directional orientation of a force in time and space in relation to the enemy and links the force with its base of operations and objectives.

¹¹⁸ Task Force Smith was the first U.S. Army ground maneuver unit to enter combat in Korea. Major General William Dean, 24th Division commander, ordered Smith to block the main road to Pusan as far north as possible. Under heavy enemy fire, the poorly-trained American troops abandoned weapons and equipment in a sometimes-precipitous flight. Not all of them had received word of the withdrawal, and it was at this point that the Americans suffered most of their casualties.

1950, with the Korean War a little more than a week old.¹¹⁹ However, “Bluehearts,” the code name for this attempt, was abandoned by July 10 because of the inability of the Republic of Korea and US forces to hold off the southward drive of the enemy.¹²⁰

As a result of previous planning, the Joint Strategic Plans and Operations Group (JSPOG) postulated three plans: (1) Plan 100-B, landing at Incheon; (2) Plan 100-C, landing at Kunsan; (3) and Plan 100-D, landing near Chumunjin.¹²¹ According to Plan 100-B, the United Nations’ forces employed landing attack troops.¹²² With the simultaneous landing of troops at Incheon, other ground troops farther south on the Nakdong riverfront were able to pass from the defensive to a massive offensive.¹²³

Operation Chromite represented American operational art using the strategy of annihilation. Figure 5 depicts MacArthur’s use of an exterior line turning movement to destroy the enemy.¹²⁴ His aggressive approach represented the American practice of using annihilation strategy as a way of war.¹²⁵ MacArthur thought that speed was the bedrock of triumph and that the United States must destroy the North Korean Army as soon as possible.¹²⁶ This aggressive approach was a refinement of the regular warfare of World War II, which formed the primary

¹¹⁹ Korea Institute of Military History, *The Korean War: Volume One*, 591; These plans were undertaken by the Joint Strategic Plans and Operations Group (JSPOG), Far East Command, headed by Brigadier General Edwin K. Wright, the Assistant Chief of Staff (G-3) of General MacArthur’s United Nations Forces Command.

¹²⁰ Schnabel, James F. *Policy and Direction: The First Year* (Washington, DC: Center of Military History US Army, 1992), 140; Korea Institute of Military History, *The Korean War: Volume One*, 592; (1) Draft Plan, Opn BLUEHEARTS, JSPOG, GHQ, FEC, Jul 50, copy in JSPOG, GHQ files. (2) For other coverage of the plans and preparations for the Inch’on landing.

¹²¹ Korea Institute of Military History, *The Korean War: Volume One*, 593.

¹²² Ibid; the United Nations’ forces conducted demonstrations and feint operations at the plan 100-C and 100-D areas.

¹²³ Ibid; the JSPOG perfected Plan 100-B by using the 1st US Marine Division and the US 7th Infantry Division, the sole reserve unit in Japan.

¹²⁴ Russell F. Weigley, *The American Way of War: A History of United States Military Strategy and Policy* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1977), 382; Krause and Phillips, *Historical Perspectives of the Operational Art*, 419.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Schnabel, *Policy and Direction*, 145-146.

foundational focus for American operational art.¹²⁷ From the turning movement by the sea, the United Nations' forces were able to cut North Korea's line of communications. The Incheon-Seoul area was the critical vulnerability of the North Korean Army's operational level center of gravity.¹²⁸

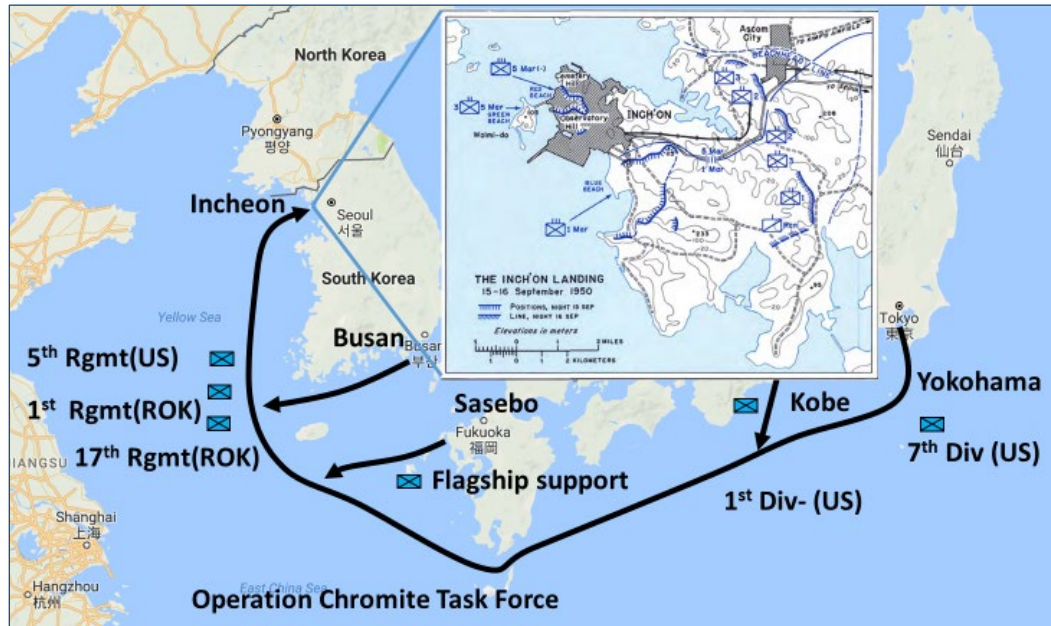


Figure 5. Plan for Incheon Landing Operations. Created by author with data from Schnabel, James F. *Policy and Direction: The First Year* (Washington, DC: Center of Military History US Army, 1992), 173; Clay Blair, *The Forgotten War: America in Korea, 1950-1953* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2003), 267.

The planners arranged Operation Chromite with other military actions in time, space, and purpose based on their World War II experience. The plan specifically named the Incheon-Seoul area as the decisive point that the 1st Marine Division would seize by amphibious assault. The plan postulated that the First Marine Division should accomplish the landing operations in close coordination with an attack by the Eighth Army on the Nakdong front.¹²⁹ Additionally, massive

¹²⁷ John Andreas Olsen and Creveld Martin Van, *The Evolution of Operational Art from Napoleon to the Present* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 151.

¹²⁸ US Army, ADRP 3-0, (2016), 2-4. Center of Gravity (COG) is the source of power that provides moral or physical strength, freedom of action, or will to act.

¹²⁹ Korea Institute of Military History, *The Korean War*, 593-594.

raids on the east and west coasts, especially on Kunsan, were designed as diversions to confuse and to knock out North Korea military defenses.¹³⁰ Thus, the plan was designed to coordinate with other areas in Kunsan and Nakdong. The operational artists scheduled time in advance of the Kunsan raid for an operation in Nakdong which was to follow. World War II operational experiences generated these concepts. In other words, Operation Chromite echoed WWII operations such as Tarawa, Iwo Jima, Normandy, and Okinawa.¹³¹ Thus, the United Nations' forces planned to deceive the enemy into exposing vulnerabilities by providing misinformation about possible amphibious landings. Again, the United Nations' planners set the planning concept based on previous war experience.

Theory

Operation Chromite did not strictly adhere to any previous military theory. American operational artists incorporated some elements of Julian Corbett's theory into the plan, but other theoretical elements somewhat bastardized his theory. Corbett thought sea power was important, but not decisive, and argued that it rarely won wars by itself, an assertion supported by Britain's campaign against Napoleon's army during the Peninsular War.¹³² Instead, Corbett's work tightened the connection between both naval and land warfare.¹³³ Moreover, he emphasized that naval war is only one branch of the phenomenon of war.¹³⁴ Equally, he pointed out that men live upon the land and not upon the sea.¹³⁵ It appears Operation Chromite adopted his theory, but there is no evidence that Operation Chromite embraced the entire theory. Moreover, Corbett picked up

¹³⁰ Clay Blair, *The Forgotten War: America in Korea, 1950-1953* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2003), 269.

¹³¹ Robert J. Dvorchak, *Battle for Korea: A History of the Korean Conflict-Fiftieth Anniversary Edition* (Buchanan, PA: Combined Publishing, 2000), 50.

¹³² Julian Corbett, *Classics of Sea Power* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1972), 13.

¹³³ Azar Gat, *A History of Military Thought: From the Enlightenment to the Cold War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 486.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 486-487.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 487.

Moltke's proposition that strategic offensive combined with the tactical defense was the most effective form of war.¹³⁶ Some might argue that Operation Chromite applied Corbett's theory of strategic offense to seize Incheon, which the United Nations' forces could defend easily against the North Korean Army counter-offensive by cutting lines of communication. However, it was hard to find substantial evidence of a connection between Corbett's theory and the Incheon landing planning concept.

It can be argued that the US Army adopted Antoine-Henri Jomini's theory before the Korean War because of the US Army's institutionalization of French Warfare from 1808-1812.¹³⁷ Jomini's idea of campaign planning amounted to the selection of the theater of operation, base of operation, lines of operation, and decisive points.¹³⁸ Jomini argued that at the end of this process of selection was the final deployment for a decisive battle.¹³⁹ US military officers internalized the Army's intellectual framework from Jomini's fundamental elements of the French combat method.¹⁴⁰ However, its influence was not apparent during Operation Chromite, and there was no mass maneuver from the plan and execution. Thus, Jomini and Corbett were theorists who would have partially influenced Incheon amphibious operational planning, but their theories did not dominate the planning.

¹³⁶ Ibid., 488.

¹³⁷ Michael A. Bonura, *Under the Shadow of Napoleon: French Influence on the American Way of Warfare from the War of 1812 to the Outbreak of World War II* (New York: New York University Press, 2016), 42.

¹³⁸ Baron de Jomini, *The Art of War*, trans. CPT G.H. Mendell and LT W.P. Craighill (Philadelphia, PA: J.B. Lippincott, 1862), 62-65.

¹³⁹ Colonel Michael R. Matheny, *The Roots of Modern American Operational Art*, 3, accessed September 14, 2017, Academic OneFile, http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/army-usawc/modern_operations.pdf.

¹⁴⁰ Bonura, *Under the Shadow of Napoleon*, 80; The United States Military Academy (USMA) acquired several of Jomini's books throughout the 1820s and 1830s which were very popular with cadets. Jomini highlighted in *The Art of War*, the importance of decisive points, line of operations, and mass forces in planning.

Doctrine

The US doctrine did little to influence the Incheon landing operation. For example, the US forces used World War II period Europe-focused military doctrine during the Korean War. Thus, its doctrine created friction because the mountainous terrain of Korea did not fit the doctrine based on the open terrain of Europe.¹⁴¹ Moreover, the US Army's tactics, equipment, organizations, and the doctrine for the employment of American tactical units in the Korean War (1950-1953) remained akin to that of World War II (1939-1945).¹⁴² Similarly, Lieutenant-General Walton H. Walker, Eighth Army commander, indicated that there were no real changes in tactical doctrine or tables of organization and equipment as compared to World War II.¹⁴³ Indeed, the doctrine *Field Service Regulations (1949)* stressed Europe's flat terrain style envelopment over the penetration used during World War II.¹⁴⁴ Thus, after the landing in Incheon, from the Pusan perimeter line, the United Nations' forces began the penetration of the North Korean army's front defense area for envelopment. However, most North Korean units escaped from envelopment because the mountainous terrain limited maneuver to the flank and rear. The combination of terrain, weather, and the North Korean tactics tended to hinder employment of much of the United Nations forces' Europe-style tactical doctrine.¹⁴⁵ Correspondingly, the mountainous terrain restricted the full use of the UN mechanized and motorized might that was fit for Europe.¹⁴⁶ In summary, the mountainous terrain produced difficulties, and Korea's terrain did not

¹⁴¹ The US *Field Service Regulations (1949)* were the primary drivers of United Nations planning because American troops dominated United Nations' forces.

¹⁴² Bonura, *Under the Shadow of Napoleon*, 80.

¹⁴³ Robert A. Doughty, *The Evolution of US Army Tactical Doctrine, 1946-76* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute, 2001), 7.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 6.

¹⁴⁵ Doughty, *The Evolution of US Army Tactical Doctrine, 1946-76*, 6.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*; Mountains cover seventy five percent of Korea.

fit with a Europe-focused doctrine. Therefore, there was little connection with doctrine for the Incheon landing planning.

In conclusion, despite the United Nations' forces not having operational art concepts with less integration between theory-dctrine and planning, operations were successful. The planners understood the importance of future operations and planned a turning movement against North Korea's line of communications, which was the operational center of gravity's critical vulnerability.

V. China's Preemptive Attack Planning

China developed operation planning after the failure of North Korea's invasion plan and the success of Operation Chromite. China did not have a codified concept of operational art, but rather a well-integrated theory and doctrine. Chinese operational artists reflected the Second Sino-Japanese War and the Chinese Civil War experience in their planning. However, Chinese operational art failed to apply the integrated history-theory-doctrine while planning. Sun Tzu noted the timeless maxim that, "Know the enemy and know yourself; then, you can fight a hundred battles without imperiling."¹⁴⁷ In the Korean War, China was not well-informed of the enemy's political aims or their troops' situation.¹⁴⁸ The United Nations limited its objectives to the Korean peninsula, but Chinese operational artists misinterpreted the enemy's political aims and initiated a premature preemptive attack to protect their mainland.¹⁴⁹ As a result, its preemptive attack brought unnecessary casualties to both Chinese and United Nations' forces. Thus, it is imperative to analyze the political aims of the enemy during planning.

Political Aims

There were two fundamental political aims driving Chinese intervention, and these were based on the faulty assumption that United Nations' forces would invade China after the Korean War.¹⁵⁰ As noted previously, Clausewitz wrote in *Two Letters on Strategy* that war planning was mainly political in nature.¹⁵¹ In other words, an operational artist must understand the enemy's political aims to surmise the enemy's war plan. However, operational artist Paeng Tokhoe and

¹⁴⁷ Sun Tzu, *Art of Warfare*, 113.

¹⁴⁸ Xiaobing Li, Reed Allan, and Bin Yu, *Mao's Generals Remember Korea* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2001), 9; the potential threat to China's security seems to come only from the United States, the lone military superpower. China had to prepare for a variety of scenarios, ranging from a crisis across the Taiwan Straits to the defense of its territorial claims in the South China Sea. China feared the US invasion into their territory.

¹⁴⁹ Betts, *Is Strategy an Illusion?*, 45; O'Brien, *The Conduct of Just and Limited War*, 251-252.

¹⁵⁰ Xiaobing Li, *China's Battle for Korea: The 1951 Spring Offensive* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana Univ. Press, 2014), 12.

¹⁵¹ Clausewitz, *Two Letters on Strategy*, 21.

political leader Mao Zedong misread the United Nations' political aims, so they assumed the United Nations' forces would attack communist China from Korea and Taiwan.¹⁵² China considered Korea, Vietnam, and the Taiwan Straits areas as the threat.¹⁵³ China believed it would be much more likely to win in Korea since it had a better chance of victory in a land war, compared to an amphibious landing on Taiwan.¹⁵⁴ After all, the Chinese had conducted land operations during the previous war, not amphibious operations. Mao thought that if the US placed itself along the Yalu River and in Taiwan, it could find an excuse any time it wanted to launch an invasion.¹⁵⁵

After the Sino-Japanese War, China realized that they should intervene in Korea, rather than waiting to be attacked by the West or Japan. Thus, China decided to secure North Korea by a preemptive attack rather than delay until the United Nations' forces arrived at the Yalu River, the boundary between China and North Korea. Mao was not content merely to drive the Americans out of North Korea but wanted them out of the whole Korean Peninsula.¹⁵⁶ It was his first political aim. Therefore, from the Chinese perspective, intervention in the Korean War was the optimal choice to achieve their limited political aims, even though they had faulty assumptions.¹⁵⁷

China's second political aim was to eliminate the domestic insurgency. In 1950, the soldiers of the Chinese Red Army had been fighting against the Kuomintang for the previous two years.¹⁵⁸ The civil war against the Kuomintang had ended in the fall of 1949, but after the

¹⁵² Li, Allan, and Yu, *Mao's Generals Remember Korea*, 9.

¹⁵³ Li, *China's Battle for Korea*, 19.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 24.

¹⁵⁶ Arthur Mitchell, *Understanding the Korean War: The Participants, the Tactics and the Course of Conflict* (McFarland, NC: McFarland & Company, 2013), 230; Li, *China's Battle for Korea*, 2014, 1.

¹⁵⁷ Edwin Palmer Hoyt, *The Day the Chinese Attacked: Korea, 1950* (New York: Paragon House, 1993), 80-81.

¹⁵⁸ Hoyt, *The Day the Chinese Attacked: Korea, 1950*, 79; Kuomintang is a major political party in Taiwan.

surrender, the Red Army still had to defend against some four hundred thousand Kuomintang guerrillas who remained in Chinese mainland territory.¹⁵⁹ China decided to solve the problem of domestic guerrillas with a preemptive attack in Korea. After the Chinese Civil War, China had a problem with how to deal with the 1,500,000 Kuomintang prisoners of war.¹⁶⁰ Kuomintang prisoners of war were expendable manpower for the communist Chinese government. China decided to put the Kuomintang prisoners of war in the Korean War because the government could solve the domestic instability problem by decreasing the number of prisoners of war during the war. After the end of the Korean War, most Kuomintang prisoners of war did not want to return to mainland China, so they generally chose Taiwan as their country.¹⁶¹ By making the United Nations' forces the enemy of all Chinese, Mao was able to counter domestic instability which achieving international political aims. China's instability came from their Civil War, and Mao changed people's attention in the direction of the international conflict. Thus, Mao could unite a divided China into one and boost people's acceptance of communism. Consequently, Mao's political aims were to drive the Americans from the whole Korean Peninsula and gain domestic stabilization through war intervention.

Planning For Preemptive Attack

Paeng anticipated future operations and arranged Chinese forces in time, space, and purpose, as depicted in Figure 6. Following Mao's strategic guidance, Paeng anticipated future operations at the operational level and decided to send troops to Korea. Once Paeng received the mission, he defined the problem and predicted future operations. Paeng visualized the problem: the United Nations' occupation of the Korean Peninsula, separated from China only by the Yalu

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ Yong-bong Chŏng, Meari ōmnŏn chongsori: kukkun p'orodŭl ūn wae mot tora onŭn'ga? (LA: Korean War Prisoners of War Affairs, 2015), 43; 영봉 정, *메아리 없는 종소리: 국군 포로는 왜 못 돌아 오는가?* (LA: 한국 포로수용문제연구소, 2015), 43.

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

River, would threaten northeast China.¹⁶² Also, the United Nations' control of Taiwan posed a threat to Shanghai and eastern China.¹⁶³ Again, Marshal Paeng considered the United Nations' forces movement to North Korea as a vital national security threat.¹⁶⁴ He began planning and mobilizing for intervention on August 4, 1950, and then deployed the army to the border area on September 6.¹⁶⁵ The Chinese operational artists well understood the necessary type of battle combined with time and space by deploying combat forces ahead, which was essential to win on the battlefield.



Figure 6. People's Liberation Army Deployment, June-October 1950. Created by the author with data from Xiaobing Li, *China's Battle for Korea: The 1951 Spring Offensive* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2014), 21.

However, at the operational level, the Chinese operational artists did not “know yourself,” and disconnected theory from planning.¹⁶⁶ China's immature preemptive attack plan

¹⁶² Hoyt, *The Day the Chinese Attacked: Korea, 1950*, 80-81.

¹⁶³ Ibid.

¹⁶⁴ Li, *China's Battle for Korea*, 2014, 30.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 21.

¹⁶⁶ Sun Tzu, *Art of Warfare*, 113.

had problems with operational reach.¹⁶⁷ Due to poor sustainment planning, Chinese forces required extensive reinforcements of supplies and soldiers.¹⁶⁸ For example, the Ninth Army Group was ill-prepared for combat, and they dressed in canvas shoes and cotton uniforms.¹⁶⁹ Thus, Chinese forces were insufficiently prepared for the cold Korea winter.¹⁷⁰ The planners of the Chinese People's Volunteer Forces headquarters were not aware that the Ninth Army Group would need to fight at minus 8 degrees Fahrenheit in heavy snow. The Ninth Army Group came from an area in China that had an average annual temperature of 70 degrees Fahrenheit.¹⁷¹ Thus, the Ninth Army Group's morale declined rapidly because of cold weather injuries, and many soldiers surrendered during operations.

Tempo was another problem for China at the operational level. Tempo is the relative speed and rhythm of military operations over time in relation to that of the enemy.¹⁷² Compared to the mechanized United Nations' forces, Chinese troops were slow because they traveled by foot, moving at night and holing up in the forest in the daytime to avoid the prying eyes of the United Nations' aircraft.¹⁷³ The Ninth Army Group approached culmination far earlier than the planners anticipated.¹⁷⁴ Hence, for the Group, the winter season was the point in time and space at which the preemptive attack could no longer maintain momentum.¹⁷⁵

¹⁶⁷ US Joint Staff, JP 3-0, *Joint Operations* 2017, GL-13. Operational reach is the distance and duration across which a force can successfully employ military capabilities.

¹⁶⁸ Mitchell, *Understanding the Korean War*, 232.

¹⁶⁹ Li, *A History of the Modern Chinese Army*, 96.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

¹⁷¹ Ibid., 97.

¹⁷² US Army, ADRP 3-0, (2016), 2-7.

¹⁷³ Hoyt, *The Day the Chinese Attacked: Korea, 1950*, 85.

¹⁷⁴ US Army, ADRP 3-0, (2016), 2-9; culmination point is a point at which a force no longer has the capability to continue its form of operations, offense or defense.

¹⁷⁵ US Joint Staff, JP 5-0, *Joint Planning* 2017, IV-36.

In this application of Chinese operational, Paeng judged that the operational enemy's center of gravity was the United Nations' forces themselves. However, its critical vulnerability, that is, the means by which to indirectly attack the center of gravity, was the Republic of Korea forces. Thus, Paeng planned to defeat the UN forces by destroying the Republic of Korea Army because they lacked mechanized forces as compared to the US. He visualized how to separate the US and the Republic of Korea forces and gave directions that China should selectively engage with the Republic of Korea forces, while remaining cognizant of Chinese forces' operational reach at the 38th parallel line.¹⁷⁶ Also, he understood the People's Liberation Army's own critical vulnerability was inferior fire-power and lack of protection. Paeng took advantage of terrain and deception, using mobile warfare against a stronger enemy. Chinese forces did not pursue the US forces because mechanized troops moved quickly, so it was unfavorable to them.¹⁷⁷

Theory

Sun Tzu and Mao's theories influenced China's preemptive strike planning.¹⁷⁸ Marshal Paeng used Sun Tzu's theory of strategic advantage and strategic positioning during the Korean War's planning and execution. Paeng demonstrated his understanding of Sun Tzu and Mao during the planning and execution of the Chinese operational art. For example, Sun Tzu illustrated strategic positional power: "In combat, victor used troops like accumulated water for which one opens a breach in the precipice."¹⁷⁹ Inspired by this illustration, Marshal Paeng suddenly massed his forces at the vulnerable points of the United Nations' forces gap, along with US-Republic of Korea coordination points. As stated by Sun Tzu, "A military genius would first make himself

¹⁷⁶ Li, Allan, and Yu, *Mao's Generals Remember Korea*, 2001, 33.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

¹⁷⁸ Both Marxist-Leninist's theories impacted Mao. Those theories will be skipped in this section because Marxist-Leninist's theory were already mentioned in the North Korea discussions.

¹⁷⁹ Francois. Jullien, *A Treatise on Efficacy*, trans. Janet Lloyd (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2004), 172.

invincible and then wait for the enemy to expose his vulnerability.”¹⁸⁰ From this idea, Marshal Paeng waited under the mountain snow until the X Corps, and Eighth Army separated into two because of the high ground terrain of the Rangrim Mountains. Furthermore, Sun Tzu noted, “The expert at battle seeks his victory from strategic advantage and does not demand it from his men.”¹⁸¹ In addition, he said, “Strategic advantage makes one’s army fall upon the enemy as stone hitting at an egg.”¹⁸² Marshal Paeng sought to hide during the day to escape the United Nations forces’ air reconnaissance and conducted offensive operations against a vulnerable enemy during the night. By using strategic advantage, the Chinese military could overcome its inferior technology, firepower, and nuclear weapons.

The Chinese application of operational art was also a combination of the orthodox and unorthodox elements which came from Mao’s guerrilla warfare theory. For example, Mao wrote in *Guerrilla Warfare*, “Orthodox forces may under certain conditions operate as guerrillas. However, both guerrilla and traditional forces have their development and proper combinations.”¹⁸³ Mao had read Clausewitz and T.E. Lawrence and then applied their ideas to the battlefield with guerrilla tactics from Lawrence and using people’s enmity from Clausewitz.¹⁸⁴ Additionally, Mao followed Sun Tzu’s theory in his execution of guerrilla warfare. The influence of Sun Tzu was clear in his observations on how to wear down a superior enemy while avoiding battle. He gave the following example, “The enemy advances, we retreat; the enemy camps, we harass. The enemy tires, we attack; the enemy retreats; we pursue.”¹⁸⁵ Other examples included

¹⁸⁰ Sun-Tzu. *The Art of Warfare*, 115.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 120.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*, 119.

¹⁸³ Tse-Tung Mao, *On Guerrilla Warfare* (Champaign, IL: Universality of Illinois Press, 1961), 56.

¹⁸⁴ Lawrence Freedman, *Strategy: A History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 185; the Arab Revolt began in June 1916, with an attack by the half-armed and inexperienced tribesmen upon the Turkish garrisons in Medina and around Mecca. T.E. Lawrence conducted guerrilla tactics there.

¹⁸⁵ Freedman, *Strategy*, 185.

the importance of intelligence to get a better grasp of the situation. Sun Tzu stated the importance of intelligence: “Know the enemy and know yourself; then, you can fight a hundred battles without imperiling.”¹⁸⁶ Mao’s basic campaign plan in the Chinese Civil War had three phases: phase one, a political organization to seize initiatives; phase two, conducting guerrilla warfare; and phase three, the transition to regular operations to defeat the enemy in decisive battles.¹⁸⁷ Thus, Mao developed a strategy against the Chinese Nationalist Army by utilizing Sun Tzu’s elements of strategic advantage and strategic positional power. Similarly, Mao and Marshal Paeng developed their military theory and practiced it as guerrilla warfare during the Japanese invasion in July 1937.¹⁸⁸ Hence, Mao’s empirical operational art started from the Second Sino-Japanese War, evolved during the Chinese Civil War, and was applied in the Korean War. During the Korean War, Marshal Paeng followed Sun Tzu’s and Mao’s theories and conducted a large-scale conventional type of guerrilla warfare, as they had done in the previous war.

Doctrine

The Mobile Warfare was Mao’s fundamental military doctrine. It was designed to fight against the United Nations, which had nuclear weapons. The Mobile Warfare doctrine was defensive and sought to wage a protracted war using both guerrilla and traditional warfare against the United Nations. The Central Intelligence Agency declassified the special report, *Chinese Communist Military Doctrine (1964)*, and in it reported that Mao developed a doctrine in the 1930s to encounter pre-nuclear military situations that continued into the 1960s.¹⁸⁹ This period

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.

¹⁸⁷ Collin Gray, “Chapter 2, Strategy, Political, Ethics,” in *Modern Strategy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 293.

¹⁸⁸ Freedman, *Strategy*, 184.

¹⁸⁹ Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), *Special Report Chinese Communist Military Doctrine* (Farmville, Virginia: Office of Current Intelligence, 1964), 1, accessed October 19, 2017, https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/DOC_0000413519.pdf.

includes the Korean War (1950—1953). The major problem facing the Chinese military forces was an enemy armed with nuclear weapons and other unconventional arms.¹⁹⁰

Chinese military doctrine focused on defensive war and argued that the effectiveness of nuclear weapons used tactically would be reduced markedly by maintaining close contact with the United Nations' forces and by fighting at night.¹⁹¹ Also, China tried to mitigate the risk of a United Nations strategic nuclear threat by remaining under the Soviets' nuclear umbrella.¹⁹²

Mao's conviction that any battle could be conducted using the principles of guerrilla warfare dominated Chinese military doctrine during the early offensive campaigns.¹⁹³

In conclusion, operational artist Paeng anticipated the importance of future operations and arranged tactical movement in time, space, and purpose. However, he did not fully internalize and integrate theory and doctrine into planning. He applied Sun Tzu's and Mao's theory and doctrine partly, but sometimes it did not fit well with the conditions associated with the Korean War. Furthermore, operational art could not overcome the strategic mistakes of misunderstanding political aims, even though China conducted their operational art by integrating theory and doctrine into planning. Mao and Paeng assumed the United Nations' political aims were to invade China after the Korean War victory. However, US political leaders had limited political aims. Therefore, it is imperative that operational artists trace constantly changing domestic and international political contexts from both ally and enemy sides. If not, it could bring whole nations into disaster again.

¹⁹⁰ Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), *Special Report Chinese Communist Military Doctrine*, 1.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 2.

¹⁹² *Ibid.*

¹⁹³ Li, *A History of the Modern Chinese Army*, 100.

VI. Conclusion

Summary

After introducing the operational art concept, this study analyzed the early stages of the Korean War planning in North Korea, the United Nations, and China from the perspectives of political aims, theory, and doctrine. The Korean peninsula's history, including the Korean War, cannot be separated from North Korea's intercontinental ballistic missile and nuclear weapons tensions in 2017. Thus, it is essential to review the Korean War (1950—1953) through the lens of operational art as practiced by all sides. Clausewitz and Sun Tzu highlighted the essential role that planning plays in achieving victory in war. Planners can improve their competence and skills and conduct mental training by studying planning in previous wars. Therefore, this study analyzed the application of operational art in the Korean War by using the SAMS triad (history, theory, and doctrine) combined with the strategic context of operational art.

Findings

From the study, these are the primary findings. First, Figure 7 depicts that operational artists must focus on future operations' decisive points rather than current tactical operations.¹⁹⁴ North Korea's operational artists failed because they ignored subsequent operations. In contrast, the US successfully conducted Operation Chromite while on the verge of defeat, and China executed a preemptive attack by anticipating the United Nations' continued drive to the North. Both countries' operational artists remained focused on future operations despite challenges or setbacks faced in current operations.

¹⁹⁴ US Army, ADRP 3-0, (2016), 2-5; decisive Points (DPs) are a geographic place, specific key event, critical factor, or function that, when acted upon, allow a commander to gain a marked advantage over an enemy or contributes materially to achieving success.

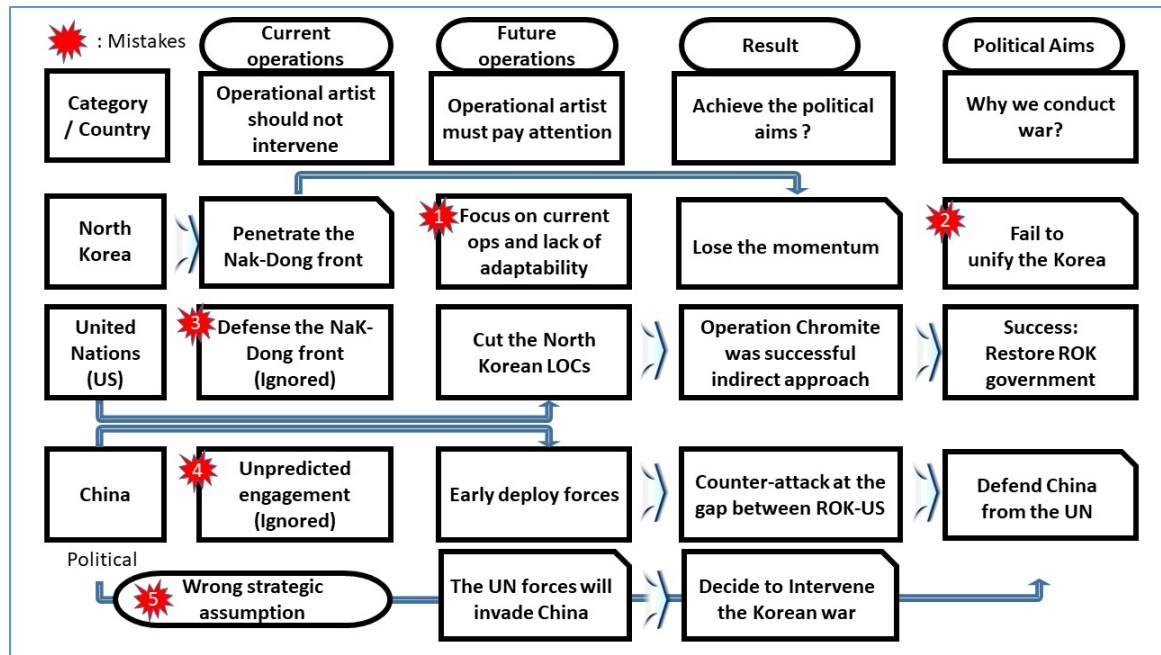


Figure 7. Anticipate the Future and Achieve Political Aims. Created by the author.

Second, misunderstanding the strategic context of the enemy government and military provided faulty assumptions in planning. For example, Figure 7 depicts that China decided to get involved in the Korean War because the political leader Mao and operational artist Paeng both assumed that the United Nations' forces would invade China's mainland once they had finished unifying the Korean peninsula.¹⁹⁵ In other words, China interpreted the United Nations' political aims as unlimited. However, the political objective of the United Nations in Korea was initially only to end the fighting and reestablish the status quo, and even later only extended to the long sought after goal of bringing about the complete independence and unity of Korea.¹⁹⁶ It was limited political aims of international police actions, not for invading China.¹⁹⁷ Thus, China

¹⁹⁵ Li, *China's Battle for Korea*, 12; according to Mao, "The great achievements of the three-glorious movement," October 23, 1951, in Mao, *Mao's Manuscripts since 1949*, 2:481. After June 1950, Mao stated, "The American armed forces have occupied Taiwan, invaded Korea, and reached the boundary of northeast China. Now we must fight against the American forces in both Korea and Taiwan."

¹⁹⁶ Executive Secretary, *National Security Council Report 81*, Paragraphs 4.

¹⁹⁷ Wainstock, *Truman, MacArthur, and the Korean War*, 1999, 26; Truman described American participation in the Korean War as a UN police action.

mistakenly intervened in the war and suffered more than six hundred thousand casualties out of a baseless fear of Western motives.¹⁹⁸

Third, operational art which integrates military history-theory-doctrine into planning is best. However, Figure 8 suggests that such integration varied widely among the participants in the Korean War. For example, Korea's tumultuous history, which included four decades of occupation by the Japanese and subsequent isolation from the widespread military and political participation, meant that Koreans had no real theory and doctrine of their own; the North Korean military relied almost exclusively on assistance from the USSR. So, when the operational artist conducted planning and execution, there was not always an effective integration between history-theory-doctrine. Also, the North Korean operational artists demonstrated inflexibility in contingencies because they did not internalize the history-theory-doctrine into their conception of a creative approach for fighting the United Nations. Additionally, Figure 8 depicts that the US's World War II amphibious operational experiences influenced the use of operational planning, though operational art was not codified as a concept in American military theory or doctrine at the time. Indeed, the US practiced their operational art within the land domain almost exclusively from the analysis of previous operation experiences; it was not straight from theory or doctrine. China integrated part of their theory with doctrine, but sometimes it was not applied well in planning.

¹⁹⁸ Thucydides, *The Landmark Thucydides*, 1.

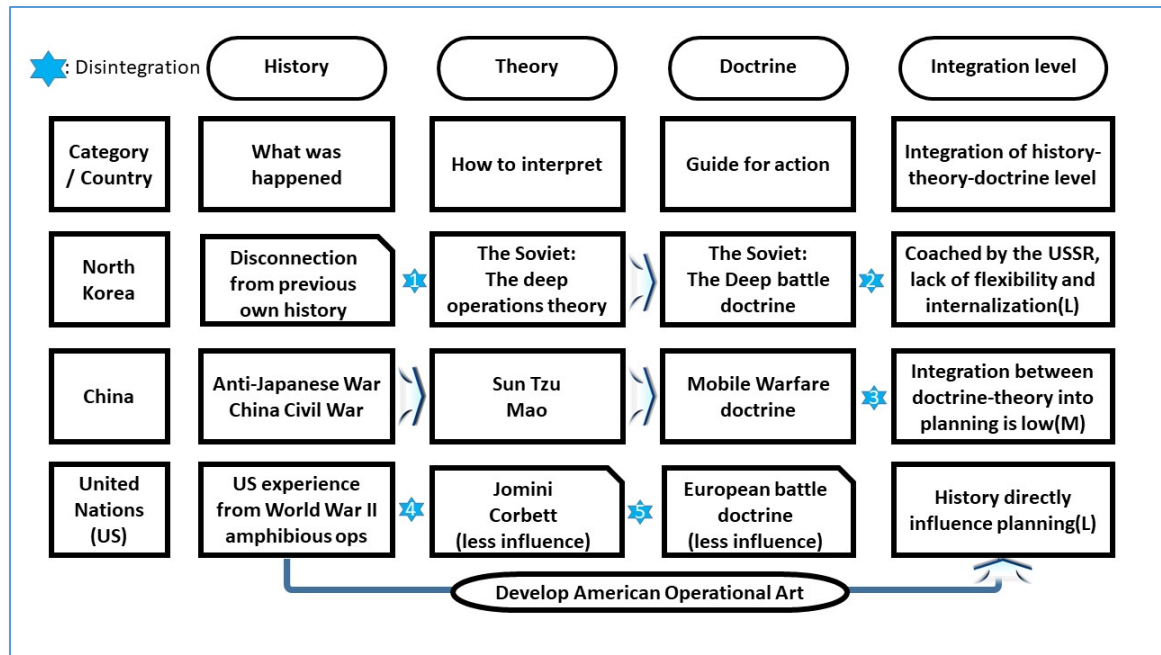


Figure 8. History, Theory, and Doctrine Integration During the Korean War. Created by the author.

The goal of this study is to improve the preparedness of the United Nations' forces in the event of the future Korean conflict. The situation on the Korean peninsula in 2018 is different from that of 1950, although there are many similarities. Even these differences do not lessen the importance of trying to anticipate future operations. Domestic and international political aims will impact those operations. Furthermore, the capabilities of integrating history-theory-doctrine into planning will be beneficial to future planners, despite differences in the two time periods. Thus, future United Nations' operational artists can benefit from the findings of this study.

In summary, this study provides three operational art lessons. First, operational artists must focus on future operations. Second, the operational artist must trace a strategic context. Third, operational artists must integrate and synthesize history-theory-doctrine into planning.

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