

and prime minister somehow got through their meetings and smoothed out their differences. Truman convinced Attlee that the only basis for a solution in Korea was a free, united nation, and Attlee persuaded Truman to promise publicly to provide prior notification of any projected use of nuclear weapons.⁹⁰

But in the last midcentury month these were peripheral concerns. The real question was Stalin's intentions. It was easy to conclude that his malice toward the West was unbounded and that he had brought the Chinese Communists into his orbit. But what would he do? Three days after the Chinese offensive, Truman decided that Stalin would never again have the advantage of exploiting weaknesses in the Western decision-making process. MacArthur could no longer be allowed to unilaterally make U.S. policy decisions that would send misleading signals to the Kremlin and Peking. Truman told Marshall that henceforth "all instructions to General MacArthur from the Chiefs of Staff be processed through the Secretary of Defense to the President personally." Marshall promptly passed the word to Bradley.⁹¹

Meanwhile, the CIA was ordered to prepare intelligence estimates of short-term Soviet intentions. The agency submitted reports to the White House on December 5 and 11, 1950, and January 10, 1951, after receiving concurrence from the intelligence offices at the State Department and in each of the armed services. The three documents were based on information available to U.S. sources between December 1 and December 15. Their depressing conclusions coincided with public opinion.

The December 5 report depicted the Soviet leadership as reckless and irresponsible. Stalin and his men "have resolved to pursue aggressively their world-wide attack on the power position of the United States and its allies regardless of the possibility that global war may result, although they may estimate that the Western Allies would seek to avoid such a development." China had intervened in Korea "in realization of the risk of general war" with the United States "and perhaps in expectation of such a development." They never would have done so "without explicit assurance of Soviet support," which soon might include direct involvement of Russian "volunteers."⁹²

Six days later, the CIA projected an even gloomier scenario.⁹³ Soviet bloc responses to recent developments in Korea indicated that the Kremlin assessed its current military and political position "as one of great strength in comparison with that of the West" and that it would "exploit the appar-

ent conviction of the West of its own present weakness."⁹⁴ Moscow, "seconded by" Peking, had made it clear "through a series of authoritative statements" that it was going to challenge the West in Asia as well as in Europe. Stalin intended to force U.S. troops to withdraw from Korea, establish Communist China as the predominant power in the Far East, and reduce Western control over Japan. "Moscow has given no real indication that it will compromise on any one of these points," the CIA declared. The Kremlin had also demonstrated repeatedly its determination to drive a wedge in the close working relations between the Western powers in order to isolate the United States and end all European efforts at rearmament. Finally, "the scope of Soviet bloc preparations and the nature and extent of Soviet Communist official statements and propaganda raise the question of Soviet or Satellite moves in other areas. The points that appear most critical are Berlin and Germany, Indochina, Yugoslavia, and Iran."

The third paper, devoted to the Soviet Union's capabilities in unconventional warfare, was the most chilling. The CIA concluded that there was a "high" probability that the Kremlin could successfully mount biological and chemical attacks against the United States in the event of hostilities between Russia and the West.⁹⁴



Truman was determined to check the rapid erosion of government and public morale with vigorous action. On December 13, he met with top congressional leaders, including Taft and Wherry, to "inform them of my decision regarding the declaration of a national emergency." The president got an earful of congressional opinion, all of it alarmist. Senator Connally noted that Korea "had made everybody very jittery." Tydings added that "the United States was in deadly peril. The question now is whether we can survive."

⁹⁴Soviet diplomats in Washington and New York had obviously been reading the American press carefully. Luce's reporters wrote scornfully about American unpreparedness (see "What Mobilization? Manpower Is Low, Training Is Long," *Life*, 11 December 1950, pp. 42-45), which was also a lively topic of conversation on Capitol Hill. The Federal Civil Defense Administration announced that it planned to spend two-thirds of its three-billion-dollar fiscal-year budget to provide bomb shelters for fifty million people in critical areas across the nation. State governors, who were expected to finance about one-third of the project, reacted sharply. No known bomb shelter could adequately protect against an atomic raid, they responded. The whole program was a boondoggle. See "Civil Defense: A Place To Hide," *Time*, 18 December 1950, p. 21.

Cold War Lens of Millon Street
America in 1950
A Rose
A Rose
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U Press of Kansas

Once again the people and government had "made a great mistake of underestimating the power of the enemy and as a result we are far too weak." Korea had demonstrated communist military strength and effectiveness far beyond what had been assumed in the West. "We still have some time left," Senator Tydings said, "but damn little. I am in favor of giving the President the power to get ready as fast as we can." Other Senate and House leaders more or less echoed Tydings's alarmism. The Chinese offensive had apparently demonstrated that communists were ten feet tall. It would take a mighty national effort to defeat them. Two nights later, Truman spoke to the country over national radio about his plans for dealing with the crisis in Korea and the threat from the communist world.⁹⁵

It had been a bad week for the president. First Charlie Ross died suddenly. Then music critic Paul Hume of the *Washington Post* published a stinging review of daughter Margaret's Washington recital, which both Truman and Attlee had attended. Truman, struggling with a national crisis and personal grief, lost his temper and wrote a bitter letter to Hume that soon appeared in the press, further damaging the president's reputation among those who had long ago decided that the man was an incompetent fool.

There was nothing foolish in Truman's speech to the people. "Our homes, our Nation, all the things we believe in, are in great danger," he began. The Chinese intervention in Korea was the final proof that the communists "are now willing to push the world to the brink of a general war to get what they want." America had the strength to curb the international march of communism, and "here are the things we must do:" create a vast, permanent military machine; continue to support the United Nations and cooperate with free world allies; expand the national economy and "keep it on an even keel." The official presidential proclamation of national emergency followed within twenty-four hours.⁹⁶

In some ways, the president's speech and proclamation were remarkably restrained. America would rearm, but there would be no wartime rationing, no brownouts or blackouts of coastal and key inland cities, and no resumption of crushing wartime controls on business. Detroit would not be shut down and reopened as a huge war plant, and Pittsburgh would not divert all steel production to wartime uses. There would be no bond drives and no calls for victory gardens, scrap iron, or nylon stockings to support the war effort. But Truman clearly put the country on notice that the United States had entered a new era of potentially unlimited confrontation with the nuclear armed forces of the communist world.



In Korea the situation continued to deteriorate. The Eighth Army completed its evacuation of the north, while the last elements of X Corps at last left Hungnam on Christmas Eve. Major General Frank Lowe sent a personal, priority message to the president, stating that he and his staff were on their way to Seoul via Tokyo and Pusan. "All secure safe and good health absolute minimum casualties in Tenth Corps and Third Div throughout entire operation." The troops had heard "reports of dire predictions at home of disaster here. Such erroneous reports must affect no less than 30,000 families. These reports should now be repudiated immediately as a Christmas act for the peace of mind of the men out here and their kin folk at home."⁹⁷

By the end of the year, X Corps had landed at Pusan and rushed back toward the parallel, seeking a strong defense line. In the confusion of general retreat, Walker had been killed in a jeep accident; few in Korea or elsewhere dared to express the relief they felt. The general's reputation had understandably plummeted. Who would replace him? The Joint Chiefs had the perfect man in mind: Matthew Ridgway. If anyone could stop the retreat and halt the terrible erosion of morale, it was he. On Christmas Eve, Ridgway flew to Tokyo. His mission was to save the U.S. Army. Meanwhile the Department of Defense began to grease the skids for MacArthur's eventual departure.

On December 29, the Joint Chiefs sent a remarkable message to the supreme commander. It was marked personal and secret, and a typed draft bore the handwritten notation: "OK HST." The Chiefs began by stating that the message's existence was known to only a handful in Washington and that MacArthur should limit knowledge of its contents to himself and Ridgway plus their respective chiefs of staff. Then the Chiefs plunged in. "It appears from all estimates available that the Chinese Communists possess the capability of forcing United Nations forces out of Korea if they choose to exercise it." Peking could only be stopped by committing substantial additional UN forces, an action that would "seriously jeopardiz[e] other commitments including the safety of Japan." Because of "the increased threat of general war" the highest levels of the administration had decided that Korea was not the place to wage a major conflict or commit the bulk of U.S. ground forces.⁹⁸

MacArthur's orders were to hold onto the peninsula if he could, to

But for those who covered him daily at the White House, who had traveled with him in 1948, who had been to Key West, he had no such feelings—Cabell Phillips and Tony Leviero of *The New York Times*, Edward Folliard of the *Washington Post*, Merriman Smith of *United Press*, Robert Donovan of the *New York Herald-Tribune*, Robert Nixon of the *International News Service*, Joe Short of the *Baltimore Sun*. And it was they, his friends, not the “newslars” or the Bertie McCormicks, who again stood to ask their questions at a sensational press conference the morning of November 30, 1950, when Truman stumbled into still more trouble, blundering as he had never before with reporters, his remarks sending shock waves around the world.

The Indian Treaty Room was packed—more than two hundred stood as he came in—and at first all went well. He began by reading a prepared text, a strong, compelling statement of policy.

Neither the United States nor the United Nations had any aggressive intentions against China. What was happening in Korea, however, was part of a worldwide pattern of Russo-Communist aggression and consequently the world was threatened now with a serious crisis.

As he had once decided to take a stand at Berlin, Truman was now resolved to stay in Korea, and he said so. He was not bombastic, he was not eloquent, only clear and to the point.

We may suffer reverses as we have suffered them before. But the forces of the United Nations have no intention of abandoning their mission in Korea. . . .

We shall continue to work in the United Nations for concerted action to halt this aggression in Korea. We shall intensify our efforts to help other free nations strengthen their defenses in order to meet the threat of aggression elsewhere. We shall rapidly increase our military strength.

The statement had been worked over with extreme care by a dozen or more of the White House staff and State Department. It said nothing about the atomic bomb. The subject of the bomb had never even been discussed during preparation of the statement.

But then the questions began, reporters rising one by one, Folliard of the *Post* first asking Truman if he had any comments on the criticism of MacArthur in the European press.

“They are always for a man when he is winning, but when he is in a little trouble,” Truman replied, “they all jump on him with what ought to be done, which they didn’t tell him before.” General MacArthur was doing “a good job.”

Taking an exaggeratedly deep breath, Folliard then said the particular criticism was that MacArthur had exceeded his authority, went beyond the point he was supposed to go.

“He did nothing of the kind,” Truman snapped.

Other reporters began pressing him. What if the United Nations were to authorize MacArthur to launch attacks across the Yalu into Manchuria?

Truman stood erect as always, his fingertips pressing on a tabletop; he spoke. Sometimes between questions he would sip from a glass of water or twist the heavy gold Masonic ring on his left hand.

“We will take whatever steps are necessary to meet the military situation, just as we always have.”

Did that include the atomic bomb?

“That,” said Truman unhesitatingly, “includes every weapon we have. Did this mean there was “active consideration” of use of the bomb?

The room was still. The topic that had never been considered appropriate for a press conference had suddenly become the focal point. Truman should have cut off discussion of the bomb before this. But he seemed not to have understood where the questions were leading him, while the reporters saw no reason to refrain from pressing him, if, as it appeared, he meant to rattle the bomb a little.

“There has always been active consideration of its use,” Truman replied, adding, as he shook his head sadly, that he did not want to see it used. “It is a terrible weapon and it should not be used on innocent men, women, and children who have nothing whatever to do with this military aggression. That happens when it is used.”

Merriman Smith, sensing that the President had said more than he meant to, offered him a chance to back off by asking for clarification. “Do we understand you clearly that the use of the bomb is under active consideration?”

Yet Truman insisted: “Always has been. It is one of our weapons.”

Did this mean use against military objectives or civilian, another of the veteran White House press, Robert Nixon, started to ask, but Truman cut him off, saying, “It’s a matter that the military people will have to decide. I’m not a military authority that passes on those things.”

The correspondent for NBC, Frank Bourgholtzer, wished him to be more specific.

“Mr. President, you said this depends on United Nations action. Does that mean we wouldn’t use the atomic bomb except on a United Nations authorization?”

“No, it doesn’t mean that at all,” Truman shot back. “The action against Communist China depends on the action of the United Nations.”

David McCullough
Simon & Schuster
1992

military commander in the field will have charge of the use of the weapons, as he always has."

He had said far more than he ever intended and had been inaccurate besides, but the reporters had their story. The press conference ended at 10:30 A.M. By 10:47 a United Press bulletin was on the wire: *President Truman said today that the United States has under consideration use of the atomic bomb in connection with the war in Korea.* The Associated Press followed, adding that whether the bomb was used depended on American military command in the field, the clear implication being that *the decision was being left to MacArthur.* Huge headlines filled the early editions of the afternoon papers.

Truman's answers had been devastatingly foolish, the press conference a fiasco. *The White House was besieged with calls.* An exhausted Eben Ayers, writing privately that night, would describe it as one of the "wildest days" ever. *The reaction in Europe was extreme alarm, and especially in Britain, where the news threw the House of Commons into a state of panic such as old-time members had never seen.* Acheson hurried to the White House with the draft of a "clarifying" statement. Charlie Ross, under greater pressure than at any time since becoming press secretary, was called into the Oval Office to lend a hand in "damage control." The statement, ready by mid-afternoon, said that while *"the use of any weapon is always implicit in the very possession of that weapon,"* only the President, by law, could authorize use of the atomic bomb, and "no such authorization had been given." Ross, as he presented the statement, looked and sounded completely spent, the circles under his eyes deeper and darker even than usual, his voice husky. *The damage, he knew, had already been done.*

By late afternoon came word from London that Prime Minister Clement Attlee was on his way to "confer" with the President. "PRESIDENT WARNS WE WOULD USE ATOM BOMB IN KOREA," said the front page of *The New York Times* the next morning. "NO NO NO," ran a headline in the *Times of India*.

The air of crisis rapidly compounded. The next morning, Friday, December 1, Truman met with the congressional leadership in the Cabinet Room to hear Walter Bedell Smith, head of the CIA, explain before a huge map of the Soviet Union and its satellites how events in Korea related to events in Europe. The Russians, Smith reported, had just completed maneuvers involving more than half a million men and consolidated their Siberian forces under a single command, an unusual step that "deserved watching."

There were joint State-Defense "crisis meetings" in the War Room at the Pentagon later in the day and again on Sunday, December 3, some six hours of talk.

As Acheson would write, all the President's advisers, civilian and military, knew something was badly wrong in Korea, other than just the onslaught of the Chinese. There were questions about MacArthur's morale, grave concern over MacArthur's strategy and whether on the actual battlefield a "new hand" was needed to replace General Walker. It was quite clear, furthermore, that MacArthur, the Far East Commander—contrary to the President's reassuring remarks at his press conference—had indeed deliberately disobeyed a specific order from the Joint Chiefs to use no non-Korean forces close to the Manchurian border.

But no changes in strategy were ordered. No "new hand" replace Walker. No voices were raised against MacArthur. Regrettably, the President was ill-advised, Bradley later observed. He, Marshall, the Joint Chief had all "failed the President." Here, in a crucial few days, said Acheson later, they missed their chance to halt the march to disaster in Korea. Acheson was to lament their performance for the rest of his life. Truman would never put any blame on any of them, but Acheson would say Truman had deserved far better. "I have the unhappy conviction," Acheson wrote nearly twenty years later, "that none of us, myself prominent included, served him as he was entitled to be served."

Matthew Ridgway would "well remember" his mounting impatience "that dreary Sunday, December 3," as hour after hour in the War Room discussion continued over the ominous situation in Korea.

Much of the time the Secretaries of State and Defense participated in the talks, with no one apparently willing to issue a flat order to the Far East Commander to correct a state of affairs that was going from bad to disastrous. Yet the responsibility and authority clearly resided right there in the room. . . .

Unable to contain himself any longer, Ridgway spoke up, saying immediate action must be taken. They owed it to the men in the field and "to the God to whom we must answer for those men's lives," to stop talking and do something. For the first time, Acheson later wrote, "someone had expressed what everyone thought—that the Emperor had clothes on." But of the twenty men who sat at the table, including Acheson, and twenty more along the walls behind, none spoke. The meeting ended without a decision.

Why didn't the Joint Chiefs just send orders and tell MacArthur what to do, Ridgway asked General Vandenberg afterward. Because MacArthur would not obey such orders, Vandenberg replied.

Ridgway exploded. "You can relieve any commander who won't obey orders, can't you?" he said. But Vandenberg, with an expression Ridgway remembered as both puzzled and amazed, only walked away.

The day following, in another closed session, this time at the State Department, Dean Rusk would propose that MacArthur be relieved of command. But again, no one chose to make further comment.

MacArthur, meanwhile, was being taken to task by the press, as he had never been. *Time*, which had long glorified him, charged him with being responsible for one of the worst military disasters in history. The "colossal military blunder" in Korea, declared an editorial in the *New York Herald-Tribune*, had shown that MacArthur would "no longer be accepted as the final authority on military matters." Unused to such criticism, his immense vanity wounded, MacArthur started issuing statements of his own to the press. He denied that his strategy had precipitated the Chinese invasion and said his inability to defeat the new enemy was due to restrictions imposed by Washington that were "without precedent."

Truman did not hold MacArthur accountable for the failure of the November offensive. But he deplored MacArthur's way of excusing the failure, and the damage his statements could do abroad, to the degree that they implied a change in American policy. "I should have relieved General MacArthur then and there," he would write much later.

As it was, he ordered that all military officers and diplomatic officials henceforth clear with the State Department all but routine statements before making them public, "and . . . refrain from direct communications on military or foreign policy with newspapers, magazines, and other publicity media." Dated December 6, the order was widely and correctly seen as directed to MacArthur. He was still expected to express his opinions freely—it was his duty to express his opinions—but only within the councils of the government.

Truman did not relieve the Far East Commander, he later explained, because he knew no general could be a winner every day and because he did not wish to have it appear that MacArthur was being fired for failing.

What he might have done had Acheson, Marshall, Bradley, and the Joint Chiefs spoken up and insisted that MacArthur be relieved is another question and impossible to answer.

For now the tragedy in Korea overshadowed everything. If MacArthur was in trouble, then everything possible must be done to help. "We must get him out of it if we can," Truman wrote in his diary late the night of December 2, following an intense session at Blair House with Acheson, Marshall, and Bradley that had left him feeling desperately low. "The conference was the most solemn one I've had since the Atomic Bomb conference in Berlin."

The talk had been of evacuating all American troops—of an American

Dunkirk in Korea after all. Marshall was not even sure such an operation would succeed, should the Chinese bring in their own airpower. "It looks very bad." Truman wrote.

Yet bad as it was, there was no mood of panic, and this, as those around him would later attest, was principally because of Truman's own unflinching response. "Mr. President, the Chinese simply must not be allowed to drive us out of Korea," Acheson said at one point, when things looked darkest, and Truman calmly agreed. When Clement Attlee arrived in Washington and argued, in effect, that the Far East should be abandoned in order to save Europe, Truman said no.

The bloody retreat in Korea continued. Pyongyang fell "to overwhelming masses of advancing Chinese," as the papers reported. General Walker's Eighth Army was heading for the 38th parallel. "World War III moves ever closer," said *Life*. "The Chinese Communist armies assaulting our forces . . . are as truly the armies of the Soviet Union as they would be if they wore the Soviet uniform." Everywhere in Washington the talk was of the "desperateness" of the situation. Senator McCarthy called on Acheson and Marshall both to resign and talked of impeaching Truman. But Truman remained calm and steady. "I've had conference after conference on the jittery situation facing this country," he wrote in his diary. "Attlee, Formosa, Communist China, Chiang Kai-shek, Japan, Germany, France, India, etc. I've worked for peace for five years and six months and it looks like World War III is here. I hope not—but we must meet whatever comes—and we will."

[The President] thought that if we abandoned Korea the South Koreans would all be murdered and that we could not face that in view of the fact that they have fought bravely on our side and we have put in so much to help them [read the official minutes of his discussions with Attlee]. We may be subject to bombing from Manchuria by the Russians and Chinese Communists which might destroy everything we have. He was worried. He did not like to go into a situation such as this and then to admit that we were licked. He would rather fight to the finish. That was the way he had felt from the beginning. . . . He wanted to make it perfectly plain here that we do not desert our friends when the going is rough.

When Attlee urged that no decision be made on use of the atomic bomb without prior consultation with the British government, and possibly a formal agreement, Truman declined. He would not use the bomb without consulting the British government, Truman replied, but then

neither would he state that in writing. If a man's word wasn't any good, he said, it wasn't made better by putting it on paper.

The goal of uniting Korea by force had been abandoned. The best hope now was to arrange an armistice back at the 38th parallel, and to this end the British agreed to help through the United Nations. On the policy that the war must not be widened, Truman and Attlee were in full agreement.

Attlee arrived in Washington on Monday, December 4. Little was said to the press about the substance of the first day's meeting, but at the end of the second day, Tuesday, December 5, in response to the pressures on him to release something, Charlie Ross met with some forty reporters at the White House. It was early evening, and Ross, like the President and the prime minister, was planning to attend a concert by Margaret Truman scheduled to begin in another few hours at Constitution Hall.

Limited as to how much he could say, Ross took time to describe in detail the luncheon held for the prime minister on board the *Williamsburg*, and with mock patience, spelled out such terms as "au jus" for the benefit of the reporters. "Charlie," wrote Eben Ayers, "seemed in good form. . . ."

The briefing over, Ross agreed to repeat the essence of what he had said for Frank Bourgholtzer and the NBC television crew. A microphone was set up on his desk. As he waited, Ross lit a cigarette and leaning back in his chair, smiled at his secretary, Myrtle Bergheim.

"Don't mumble," she kidded him.

"You know I always speak *very* distinctly," he joked, then fell over sideways.

Bourgholtzer thought he was clowning. Myrtle Bergheim grabbed for the phone and called Wallace Graham, whose office was on the floor below and who immediately dashed upstairs. But Charlie Ross was already dead of a coronary occlusion.

In the tribute he wrote shortly afterward in longhand, alone at his desk in the Oval Office, Truman said:

The friend of my youth, who became a tower of strength when the responsibilities of high office so unexpectedly fell to me, is gone. To collect one's thoughts to pay tribute to Charles Ross . . . is not easy. I knew him as a boy and as a man. . . .

Patriotism and integrity, honor and honesty, lofty ideals and nobility of intent were his guides and ordered his life from boyhood onward. He saw life steady and saw it whole . . .

But when Truman walked down the corridor to the press lounge where the reporters waited, he found he was unable to read what he had written. His voice broke on the first sentence.

"Ah, hell," he said. "I can't read this thing. You fellows know how I feel anyway . . ." He turned and with tears running down his face walked back to his office.

Ross had been sixty-five, a year younger than Truman. As Wallace Graham now revealed, Ross had had two or three prior mild heart attacks, but had refused to retire, preferring to remain on the job.

Concerned that the news of Ross's death would be too upsetting for Margaret before she went on stage, Truman gave orders that she was to be told nothing until after the concert, a decision she would later resent. Had she known, she could have said something in tribute to Ross, or possibly changed her repertoire.

The President and First Lady accompanied the prime minister to Constitution Hall, where all 3,500 seats were taken, the place aglow with a "brilliant audience." When Margaret came on stage, radiant in pink satin, and made her bow to the presidential box, Truman smiled and applauded. No President had ever been such a frequent concertgoer in Washington. He was a "regular" at Constitution Hall, at times, if the program included Mozart or Chopin, bringing the score with him. But tonight, even with his "baby" on stage, Truman looked extremely downcast.

She sang a light program that included selections from Schumann, Schubert, and a Mozart aria from *The Marriage of Figaro*. She drew waves of applause and was called back for four encores. A complimentary review in the Washington *Times-Herald* the next day would say she sang "better than ever before in her brief career." The Mozart aria was "fresh" and "unforced," her voice "charming."

"Afterward, Dad was effusive, even for him," she herself would write. "He hugged me and said he had never heard me sing better."

But others in the audience had found the performance wanting. She was "really pretty bad that night," recalled John Hersey. "She had a nice voice, but somebody, her coach, must have been pushing her too far." And the *Times-Herald* review was not the one her father saw first thing the next morning.

At Blair House at 5:30 A.M. Truman opened the *Washington Post* to a review in the second section, page 12, by music critic Paul Hume. "Margaret Truman, soprano, sang in Constitution Hall last night," it began.

Miss Truman is a unique American phenomenon with a pleasant voice of little size and fair quality. She is extremely attractive on stage.

side Story:

THE KOREAN MUDDLE

Reported from TOKYO, LAKE SUCCESS and WASHINGTON

lose look at the Korean mess
vs how war with China came.
ally started before the Com-
mists struck in June.

ecisions on when to retreat,
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attack on Formosa when the
7th Fleet interposed its
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ide story of the Korean muddle
urn out to be comparable to the
of the beginnings of other world
-the assassination at Sarajevo
started World War I, the attack
arl Harbor in World War II.

Build-up of Korean war has been swift. Outwardly, it was Koreans vs. Koreans at the outset. But the U. S. stood behind one side; Communist China, encouraged by Russia, stood behind the other. There is evidence now that the Chinese Communists actually planned and mounted the initial invasion, then sent their own forces in. Five months after war began, Chinese Communists, who have a full-time army of 5 million men, met the greater part of the existing combat forces of the U. S. Army in the mountains of North Korea and split them with a smashing counterattack. War with China was on, and out in the open. Forces from all over the world—but not Russian forces—were engaged.

Somewhere between June 25, when Communists started the Korean war, and the present are points where the world moved deeper into World War III. Where these points are, what top decisions were taken and why is best judged by a chronological account of what really happened in Washington, in Lake Suc-

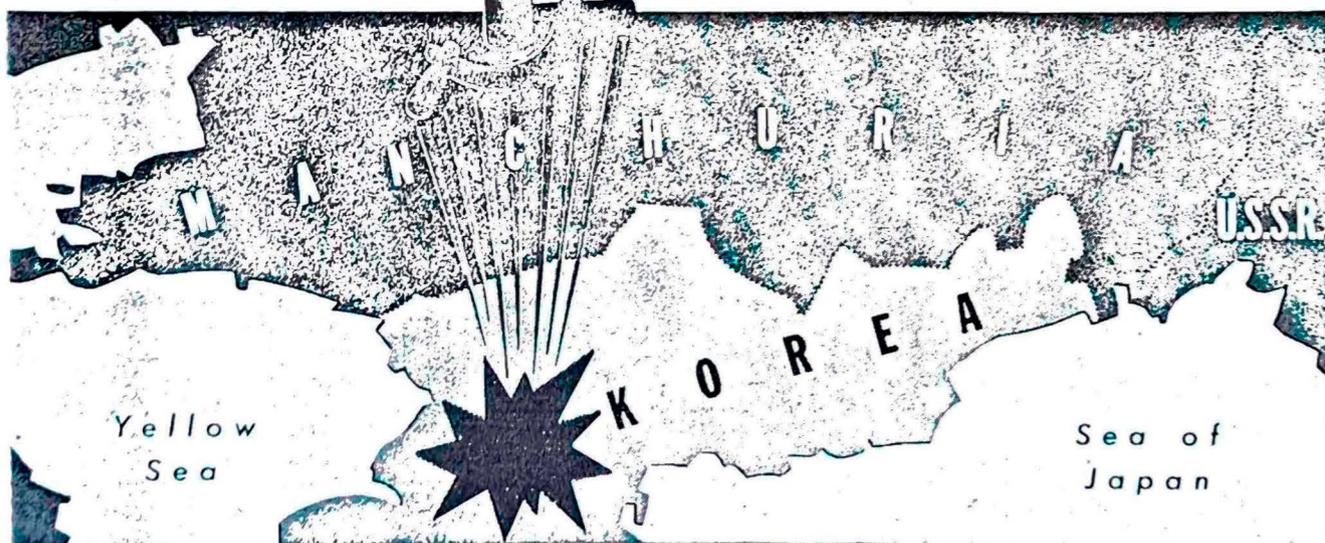
cess and in General Douglas MacArthur's headquarters in Tokyo.

Behind the scenes this was the thinking and the action, as reported by top officials on both sides who had a hand in making the decisions:

At the start, when North Korean Communists armed and trained by Russians and Chinese Communists drove across the 38th parallel into South Korea, there was little evidence on the surface of differences of opinion on what the U. S. and its allies should do. Congress acclaimed President Truman's decision to send U. S. air, naval and ground forces into Korea. A big majority of the United Nations agreed to make this war against aggression a United Nations war.

There were, however, undercurrents of opinion. Some U. S. officials felt and said in policy conferences that the U. S. might do better to restrict intervention in Korea to air and sea forces, conserving its limited combat ground forces. At the United Nations some delegates from Western Europe expressed fears that the bulk of

Is This Where World War III Started?



OFFENSIVE . . . MacArthur launches "knout punch" against 60,000 Chinese Communists on November 23.

COUNTEROFFENSIVE . . . Chinese armies, swelled to 200,000, smash the MacArthur offensive.

WORLD WAR III? . . . Will a strike-back against China touch off a full-scale war with Russia?

the armed strength of the West might be sucked into an endless war or series of wars in Asia while Europe was left unprotected. Once ground forces were committed, however, this debate became a discussion of how far they should go when retreat turned to advance.

At the 38th parallel, at the end of September, there was a two-week pause in the war, a time for decisions.

General MacArthur, whose prestige as a military leader was higher than ever due to the success of the Inchon landings and the drive back to the 38th parallel, had general orders from the United Nations to restore order to a "united Korea." He planned to go ahead, to seek out the North Korean Communist forces and destroy them if they would not surrender. He felt that the U. N. forces could not remain on the 38th parallel,

the Chinese Communists would intervene if the U. S. and United Nations forces crossed the 38th parallel. But India's warning drew little support. MacArthur got the green light from Washington and Lake Success to drive north.

At Korea's waistline, when the Allied forces reached the narrowest part of the Korean peninsula, north of the Communist capital of Pyongyang, the division of opinion among the United Nations countries and within the U. S. Government became more evident.

Great Britain's delegates at Lake Success urged the U. S. and other U. N. members, privately but officially, to consider the possibility of halting the advance right there and, by negotiation with Chinese Communists, to create a "buffer state" between this point and Manchuria. The French supported the plan.

forces. Once again there were hurried consultations among Western capitals.

Britain and France urged a halt. At Lake Success and in Washington, U. S. diplomats, in the talks designed to form U. S. policy, urged a halt too. MacArthur, from Tokyo, asked for authorization for U. S. planes to pursue Russian-made jet fighters to their bases in China's Manchuria, across the Korean border. President Truman refused it.

Communist China took precautions against bombing. Moves to decentralize industry in Mukden, 100 air miles from the Korean frontier, were speeded up. But, in the foothills of the mountains spilling down into Korea from Manchuria, U. S. and United Nations patrols reported that the Chinese forces, estimated then at 60,000, had apparently pulled back. The Chinese released 26 U. S. soldier prisoners who reported they had been treated well. But General MacArthur's intelligence reported the Chinese were regrouping, preparing some action.

Once again, MacArthur—backed by military leaders in Washington—urged attack. The reasoning was this: The military was convinced that Communist China actually mounted and prepared the first Korean Communist attack against South Korea in June. When that failed, the Chinese sent their own forces into the war. With their troops committed to Korea, U. S. military leaders reasoned, the Chinese Communists were sure to launch an all-out attack sooner or later. MacArthur urged an attack by his own forces that would take Allied troops on up to the Yalu River boundary—an offensive to end the war in Korea before the Communist forces could get set.

Attack by 180,000 U. S. and U. N. forces, with Korean divisions in the mountainous center, began on Thursday, November 23, U. S. time. But the attackers ran into elaborate preparations for a Communist offensive, apparently scheduled to be launched in a day or so.

Counterattack of an estimated 200,000 Chinese troops came within 48 hours. Massed Chinese forces struck the Korean divisions in the mountains where air support was difficult. The Allied armies were split in two armies of about 90,000 men each. The Allied advance halted; retreat began. U. S. and other Allied forces in the Northeast, apparently overextended, were threatened by encirclement.

Military estimates of Communist China's land power in Korea ballooned upward. Allied strategy went in for quick changes. Danger that Communists, driving through the center of the Allied line, might link up with North Korean Communists, by-passed weeks before by the Allies but still fighting, was an immediate threat. Almost overnight a retreating and



GENERAL MacARTHUR AND GENERAL WALKER (LEFT) . . . suddenly, a "new war"

sitting ducks for attack when the North Koreans reorganized.

In Washington, nonmilitary opinion was divided. Some policy makers—notably George F. Kennan, who designed the U. S. global policy of "containing" Russia when he directed the State Department's Policy Planning Staff, warned of the risks involved in sending Western forces much closer to the borders of Communist China and Communist Russia. Other policy makers noted that the South Koreans were fighting not just to get back a war-battered half of their country, but to get a united country. There was general agreement, however, that, while it might be wise to have U. S. and United Nations forces stop somewhere short of the Manchurian border, the 38th parallel was not the place.

At Lake Success, India warned that

In Washington, policy makers in the State Department, while they rejected the British scheme on the ground that negotiations with Communists would be interminable and fruitless, also felt that the advance should be halted short of the Manchurian border. State Department experts felt that U. S. military leaders in Tokyo and in Washington were inclined to underestimate the determination of the Chinese Communists to keep Western forces off their frontiers.

Military opinion carried the day. General MacArthur reported that he could not be held responsible for the security of the forces under his command if the victories gained in the South were not pressed. The armies moved on.

In the North Korean mountains on Thursday, November 2, Chinese cavalry led an attack of Chinese infantry on U. S.

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apparently defeated enemy became an advancing and apparently victorious enemy fed by tremendous pools of Chinese man power and stores of arms from the Chinese side of the Manchurian border.

Reaction to bad news from Korea was swift. General MacArthur called it "a new war." U. S. delegate Warren Austin at Lake Success branded China publicly as an "aggressor." President Truman ordered a speed-up in U. S. defense preparations. He declared that the U. S. would continue to fight in Korea for its own national security and survival. He said that, if the United Nations yielded to aggression, no nation would be safe or secure.

Actually, officials at Lake Success and in Washington said privately that what happened in Korea had become not a diplomatic matter but a military affair. Even were China condemned as an aggressor by the Assembly, U. N. members now engaged in the Korean war had little additional man power in or near Korea to commit to the war. U. S., too, was short of troops. On Formosa, Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalists offered 33,000 troops, but U. S. military chiefs think most of these forces, if used at all, might be more effective in an attack on Communist China's flank than in Korea. Communist China still has a large force concentrated on the coast opposite Formosa and has assembled a fleet of armed junks for the invasion of the island.

What's ahead, how much deeper the world goes into World War III, depends largely on China right now and, later, on Russia.

For the U. S., and for its allies in the U. N., the immediate task lies in the effort to stabilize the Korean front. Once that is done, as U. S. military leaders see it, the U. S. may be forced to hold the Korean line on land in order to protect Japan while launching all-out air and naval attack on the centers of Chinese communications and war industry in Manchuria and in China proper.

For Communist China, it's a period when quick decisions must be made in consultation with Moscow. The Chinese Communists still can call the turn on all-out war or limited war by their action in Korea. So far, to U. S. officials, Communist China appears to be bent on conquering the whole of Korea, bent on more war.

For the world, what has happened is a long stride into World War III, in the view of U. S. officials at the top levels in all branches of Government. But World War III, full scale, would involve Russian troops, U. S. and Russian A-bombs. These, so far, are not involved. All-out World War III still awaits top decisions in Moscow.

Korea: Only Three Other Wars Cost U. S. More Men in Killed, Wounded and Missing



Revolutionary War		12,200
War of 1812		7,000
Mexican War		17,000
(Union Forces) Civil War		650,000
Spanish-American War		10,000
World War I		350,000
World War II		1,100,000
Korean War		31,000*



*About six weeks behind actual fighting

Statement for the Record (Release Signed)

Lt. Colonel (Retired) Robert B. Willingham, U.S. Air Force

Pa., May 1978

Transcript:

"My name's R.B. Willingham."

Q: What does the "R" stand for?

"Robert."

Q: Your rank in the Air Force?

"Lt. Colonel."

Q: Where were you stationed when this (incident) occurred?

"Down at Dias Air Force Base in Texas. We were testing what turned out to be the F-94s —that's a jet aircraft, radar-interceptor."

Q: You were up in an F-94...

"Right."

Q: ...and what did you see?

"We had more or less reconnaissance missions that we were flying and uh they reported on the scope that they had a Unidentified Flying Object flying at a high speed—(it was) going to intercept our course. So then we conferred it with the radar control station on the DEW Line and uh we wanted to intercept following but they wouldn't let us. And they kept following it, and they claimed that it crashed somewhere down off of between Texas and old Mexico border."

Q: Did you see this thing?

"Uh huh." (Affirmative)

Q: Ok, what did it look like?

"Just a great big ball of light, more or less, to me."

Q: How fast was it going—did you calculate its air speed?

"What we figured it was doing was about twenty-two hundred (2,000) miles

an hour."

Q: What did you think when you saw that?

"We never had anything that fast—we thought it was a missile, at first, of some type."

Q: What makes you think that it wasn't?

"Well uh they conferred it one the scope and things; it wasn't a missile because it made a ninety (90) degree turn. So a missile can't do—at that time couldn't do that. Besides, it couldn't do it today, but they make radius full turns. This made more or less a square turn."

Q: Now where did this thing crash according to your information?

"Well I'd say it was somewhere up from Laredo, Texas. I was down there this summer looking that over, too."

Q: This was on the Mexican side?

"Yeah, it was on the Mexican side. We got a light aircraft—me and my radar...or co-pilot—and we went down to the site and landed. And the Mexican authorities ran us off; they wouldn't let us go in."

Q: Where did you land?

"We landed out in the pasture, right across from where it hit at."

Q: Who was with you?

"This Jack Perkins, Captain Jack Perkins."

Q: Ok, you got out of the aircraft. What did you do then?

"We started running over to where everybody was at—we figured they knew where the site was already. So we had about a quarter of a mile, I guess, to get over to it. So we got over there—they told us to leave and everything else, and then armed guards came out and they started forming a line around

the area. So on the way back I seen a little piece of metal, so I picked it up and brought it back with me."

Q: How close did you get to the actual crash site?

"Oh I guess we were up within seventy-five (75) feet of it."

Q: What did you see there? Was there a canopy covering the wreckage?

"No, there were two little sand mounds—there were two sand mounds and it looked to me like this thing crashed right in between them. But it went into the ground, according to the way the people were acting around it. So we actually never did get right up to the site to see what crashed. But you could see for three-(3) to five-hundred (500) feet where it had went across the sand, like in there. And it looked to me like , I guess from the metal I found, ^{either} it had a little explosion or it had begun to disintegrate or something caused this metal to come apart, you know."

Q: On this piece of metal that you found, was there any charring or signs that it had burned?

"Nah, it kind of looked to me like...oh what would you call it...in a way it looked like a magnesium-steel, but it had a lot of carbon it, because I tried to heat it with a cutting torch and it just wouldn't melt."

Q: Did it look as though it had been manufactured?

"Oh yeah, it looked like it was something made—because it was honey-combed, you know, for coolant; you know how you make metal so it would cool faster? It was honey-combed with two rows of holes in it. I drew you a picture of that, remember?"

Q: Any seams in it or rivets?

"No. Man, it was just as smooth as silk, too. There wouldn't be no drag on it whatsoever. It wasn't a meteorite or anything like that—you could tell that it wasn't anything like that, because I've seen a lot of those meteorite stones."

Q: You didn't see any of the wreckage itself?

"Well, before we left they put ropes around it, they put a canopy thing like a tent over it—because it was hotter than blue blazes down there."

Q: Did you talk to anybody?

"Well, we tried to talk to some of those people. I speak a little Spanish; I talked to some of them and about the only thing they'd tell us (was) that it was just something had crashed in there and we weren't allowed to go in."

Q: Let's go back. You walked up to within 75 feet of this thing and then what happened?

"These guys kept pushing on us, trying to get us to get back—these Mexicans or Spanish garrison, I guess you'd call them. They were in uniforms. They kept pushing us trying to get us to go back, and that's when they brought in the armed guards out there. So there was more people all the time coming in there."

Q: Where were they coming from?

"I guess probably from the little neighboring town around there."

Q: When the armed guards came out what did you do?

"We left; we got up and left; got back in our aircraft and left. I went

to Dias and about three days later I went to try and get this piece of metal analyzed, and nobody around there...they told me about this guy down here below Haggerstown that done this kind of work for the Air Force and Marines and everybody else. So we—that weekend we decided we'd fly up there and see what we could find out about it."

Q: Ok, let's hold that thought right there. When you got back in your aircraft, did you try to pass over the site to see what you could see?

"Yeah, by then they had a canopy up over the top of it.

Q: How big do you think it was, judging from the size of the tarp?

"I think it was mostly all buried in the ground. But I'd say that tarp was probably fifty (50) or seventy-five (75) feet square."

Q: Ok. you took the metal to the metalurgist. What did he come up with?

"He said he would analyze it for us and everything, and it would take him about three (3) days; so we went back to Dias. So we called him after three (3) days and they said 'aw it was just a piece of metal' (and) there wasn't nothing to worry about. Well we said we'd like to know what it was made out of; we'd like to get a complete report on it. So then we called back and he wasn't there. And the next day we called back and he wasn't there. And the next day well we called and told them what we wanted, and they said they didn't know nothing about it—didn't know nothing about the piece of metal. And I said you're a you-know-what—'cause I was getting a little perturbed at 'em. So we did fly up there—I guess it was three weeks or a month later, I guess it was, and that guy was already gone."

Q: Which guy?

"Fisher."

Q: Major Robert Fisher?

"This Fisher had already left."

Q: Major Robert Fisher?

"Yeah."

Q: Now where was he out of—was he working for the government?

"He was in a Marine uniform."

Q: This was at the Fairchild-Republic aircraft plant? He was a metallurgist there?

"Right. A metallurgist. He done experimental..."

Q: What city was this at?

"Just below Hagerstown, Maryland...and I went back and just forgot about it."

Q: What about the briefing in Washington?

"Well, we had a briefing in Denver, Colorado—we had a briefing—they took—of the whole crew, which made up four aircraft, which we were flying cover missions for B-47s. That was our main job. And they took all of the people that was on the B-47 and the four aircraft that was flying wing for 'em, to Washington, I understand. Now the only ones that actually went to Washington, that I knew of, was me and Perkins—because they didn't let us all get together after that. I was under the impression that there was psychiatrist, two doctors, a scientist and a couple of Air Force investigators, briefed us on what we seen."

Q: What did you tell them?

"We told them exactly what happened—we were flying along and this object came on the scope, and directly it came invisible...er, it came visible to us. And we watched it and we wanted to take after it, but headquarters wouldn't let us go after it. And it played around a little bit, and we got to watching how it made ninety (90) degree turns at this high speed and everything—we knew it wasn't a missile of any type. And also the DEW Line—it came from up toward Washington—it came across the United States from up in there. And I guess it must of came down probably close to the line of California and Arizona, and came across Arizona, New Mexico and into Texas. Is the way—after we talked to everybody that we could get any information out of them—how it had came around."

Q: Now let's go back to the crash site. Try to remember in as much detail as you can how you were shooed away from that site. First the Mexicans came out and tried to get you away, and then the armed guards came out.

"Well, after the first guard came to us, an officer of the Spanish galeon, or whatever what it was, came over and asked us if we had papers to land on that side of the border—'cause we weren't actually authorized to cross the border... with anything, you know without having a visa or some military releasement or something like that. And that kind of shook us up a little bit, 'cause they could have impounded the plane and us, too—if they wanted to. But we talked to him a little bit and tried to get him to tell it and he said he didn't know what it was. And they wouldn't know until they had it dug out. And that was another reason I figured most of it was all buried. But I still believe

it came apart—ever what it was."

Q: Alright now, and then the armed guards came out. What happened then?

"We left; we went out and got into the aircraft and left."

Q: Did they get rough with you?

"No, they didn't get rough with us or anything; they just said we couldn't get any closer. So I even asked one of them what he'd seen in there and he said he hadn't gotten close enough to see it either."

Q: Did you see any Americans there?

"The only one I thought was an American—and I wouldn't swear he was American, because a lot of them down there you don't know...he was in civilian clothes...pretty light complected. And he was speaking English to one of the officers there. And he was asking him what it was, and the officer told him he couldn't tell him nothing. He said something—I don't know what it was then—in Spanish. The guy who was light complected he talked back to him in Spanish, but I wasn't close enough to tell what they were saying."

Q: He wasn't Lt. Leon Jeffers, a Naval Intelligence officer from Mexico City?
too familiar with

"I have no idea, because I wasn't familiar with those people at that time."

Q: Bob, previously you mentioned something to me that as you flew across the border there was unusual activity, that there was unusual activity by the border patrol—how they seemed to be scrambling around...

"Yeah. Right."

Q: ...as though they'd been alerted to something...

"Something had went down or something..."

Q: So they knew about it?

"I'm sure they did; yeah. 'Cause we weren't flying at too high an altitude anyway. If they'd picked us up on radar going across the border, they'd had planes flying at us, probably."

Q: Was the way they treated this crash, in your opinion, unusually different from the way they might treat the crash of a known aircraft?

"Well, I believe they did. Except—now we treat our aircraft that crash with atomic warheads on them the same way today. But back then I don't believe the Spanish had any atomic warheads or anything. So I would say they treated this with a little bit more caution than they did otherwise. Now they may have thought that that was something the Americans had shot in there, and it had crashed, or maybe even a missile they were testing—'cause they were testing missiles in Arizona then. I mean they weren't extra good at that time, you know...

(Equipment interruption)

Q: My question is was there any doubt in your mind that this was some kind of spacecraft—probably an extraterrestrial spacecraft?

"Well, I'd say yes—or some kind of flying object—because it stopped, flying along say at a thousand miles per hour and it would come to a dead stop; it would also be flying along at a thousand, fifteen-hundred (1,500) miles an hour and it'd make a ninety (90) degree turn. Those things at that time wasn't possible for us; we had nothing that flew that fast. Today when you're flying F-104s or any aircraft of that speed—let's say 600 miles an hour—it takes three-and-a-half ($3\frac{1}{2}$) miles to turn it. I mean your side drift is that much. You execute your turn and three-and-a-half ($3\frac{1}{2}$) miles later you got it made—or five, whatever your speed is. It made a ninety (90) degree turn."

Q: The piece of metal which in your estimation was a manufactured item and something you weren't familiar with as being part of a known aircraft. Is that right?

"Well, you take a cutting torch where acetylene and oxygen burns it anywhere from thirty-two to thirty-eight hundred (3,800) degrees Farenheit, and it would make the metal hot but it wouldn't even start to make it yield."

Q: We'd like to have a metal with such a high melting point...

"Well, you take the afterburners on an F-86: they'll start yielding about thirty-two hundred (3,200)—well we don't use afterburners anymore, but at that time we'd love to have had some. Because you had to change them every-so-often 'cause they'd burn out on you."

Q: Seemingly, this metal is something we don't ^{HAVE} available even today?

"As far as I'm concerned: yes. It's some kind of high-carbon steel of some type."

Q: What about the briefing now? One thing we didn't discuss was that you originally stated today that...(Interruption) Let me ask you one question: why were you debriefed on this?

"Well at that time, all unidentified flying objects that anybody had seen and reported one through the Air Force, had to be debriefed on it. Even the radar operators were debriefed on what they had followed on the screens—the scopes or whatever."

Q: This wasn't a debriefing of what you'd seen at the crash site...

"No. Right. 'Cause I didn't want them to know I was at the crash site; it was very much illegal."

Q: So your debriefing was...

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"No. Right. 'Cause I didn't want them to know I was at the crash site; it was very much illegal."

Q: So your debriefing was...

"...was what I had seen in flight."

Q: And there were three other planes besides yours?

"Right...Plus a B-47, and they had three men on it."

Q: When you got back, the Air Force didn't want you to talk about what you had seen...

"We were not to even discuss among the pilots that had seen it, that had been on this mission. We weren't even to discuss it among ourselves."

Q: Did you sign oaths?

"We signed papers that we would not discuss it with nobody."

Q: Do you remember what those papers said? Did they threaten you?

"Well, you could have been discharged from the service and maybe even get a Section 8 from the service. That's a mental discharge, a Section 8. And I noticed the people today even, right at the present time, if you go tell someone you saw something, they fire people right off their jobs and everything."

Q: When you signed this thing, did it make you think that it was actually what you thought it was?

"We actually thought that they knew what it was and we weren't supposed to discuss it—and we thought maybe it was some kind of secret aircraft they were testing, at that time, you know. Then later on, we got to reading about them hitting in Arizon, you know, and about the one that took all the blood out of the horse out there in Arizona (Note: Apparently refers to the famous "SNIPPA" case) and the sheep, and first one thing and another had disappeared.

And we got to thinking, 'well, probably there might be something out there.'

Q: The point is that the Air Force seemed to know what was there...

"By the questions that they asked us: no. They did not know what it was; they did not give us the indication one way or the other that they didn't know what it was or they did know what it was. All of their questions pertained to what we actually seen, and we told it in our own words. Now that made the third debriefing of this same thing that we had, and they had stenographers taking down everything that we told them."

Q: Was it routine in a debriefing for them to have you sign papers that you wouldn't divulge...

"No."

Q: This was out of the ordinary?

"Yes."

Q: Today, Colonel, are you convinced that there is some sort of a cover-up, that they have one of these things?

"All the investigation I've done since I talked to Todd (when I traveled to Harrisburg last June to interview him), I don't think they know what's going on; I don't ~~no~~ more believe they got one in captivity than nothing. I really don't. 'Cause I've talked to too many people, that if they had one in captivity, they'd know about it. And they know of nothing of that type—unless they're sworn to secrecy."

Q: I could give you any number of examples (Zechel speaking) of information that if I hinted at it you would say it isn't true because you haven't heard about it....

(Short exchange follows in which Willingham finally agrees with Zechel's point that because someone doesn't know about something doesn't preclude its existence.)

Q: Was the Air Force aware of the crash?

"They had to know about it, because they had debriefed the radar people first. But you wouldn't know it by the questions they were asking us."

Q: There was no indication that this was end of the investigation?

"Right. I'm sure that they had people there the next day after it had crashed—right there at the site."

Q: Did you ever hear any rumors to the effect that they had determined what it was?

"No, I sure didn't."

Q: Did you ever try to determine that afterward?

"After I found out that I couldn't get no analysis on the metal, and the man and piece of metal both had disappeared, and it wasn't too long after that and we was getting ready to go to Korea—so I just quit thinking about it, period."

Q: Did you think it was a big secret?

"I kind of figured that—yes."

Q: Did you think it was time to back off?

"Nah. I don't back off too easy; I just had too many other things I had to do. I was trying to get a squadron ready to go to Korea about that time, so I had to start thinking about something else."

Q: If they could have identified this thing other than in terms of an extra-terrestrial spacecraft, do you think that would have been disseminated to you?

"I doubt if they would have ever said anything to us—unless it was actually proved that it was an aircraft, they would have put that in with our briefing papers." (Apparently referring to pre-flight briefings)

(Interview concluded with brief exchange)

SUMMARY

Attempts to locate other personnel involved with this incident have so far been fruitless. Jack Perkins (John W. Perkins, AO 412738) retired from the Air Force as a Lt. Colonel, also. A letter to be forwarded to him through the Air Force was returned with the notation that Perkins had died on April 17, 1973. No indication was given of where he had resided. Names of other persons who were involved with the interceptors or the B-47 which Willingham supplied me with, brought replies from the Air Force that they could not find records pertaining to such personnel. A cover-up in this regard seems entirely possible and plausible.

A check with Theron Rhinehart, historian at the Fairchild-Republic aircraft plant, determined that a Marine Major named Robert Fisher had in fact been stationed at the plant during the late 1940s. He was an aircraft inspector/metalurgist. Attempts to locate Fisher through the Marines were also fruitless, in that the Marines refused to aid such a search unless I could provide more

specific information such as a serial number. The Marines state there were a number of Robert Fishers holding the rank of Major during that era; they refused to search for one who had been assigned to Fairchild-Republic. Given the opportunity, I feel Fisher can be eventually located with adequate funding.

Historian Rhinehart managed to locate a Fairchild employee who had been in the metalurgy department since the mid-1940s. This person recalled, vaguely, two Air Force officers bringing a piece of metal to be analyzed during the period in question. This was without prompting from me. He attempted to locate analyses records from the late 1940s but found they had been destroyed. He did not recall the results of the analysis of Willingham's metal, if in fact they were made known.

Willingham is a Texan who speaks with an obvious drawl and is not particularly articulate. He is, however, quite obviously intelligent and honest. He speaks his mind no matter what the circumstances. His attitude about UFOs is one of the most open-minded and objective I've seen. He seems more inclined to try to explain something, if possible, than to believe in something without overwhelming evidence. But he is not extremist in either direction.

I'm impressed that he is telling the truth. I'm also impressed by the fact he could jump to a lot of conclusions about the incident, but he doesn't. He sticks to the facts as best he can recollect them. Frankly, unlike most military career officers I've met, he seems to be quite healthy mentally, and is free of the paranoia usually found in these types. Unless something happens to him, I feel he can be relied on to support his testimony 100%.



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[Biographies](#) | [Oral Histories](#) | [Photos](#) | [Resources](#)

From: Skywatcher [mailto:skwatcher@presidency.com] on behalf of the Hoover Presidential Library & Museum and the Truman Presidential Museum & Library
 To: presidentialufo@presidency.com
 Cc:
 Subject: Re: 1950 El Indio Crash
 Date: Mon, 1 Dec 2003 10:59:31 EST

The creation of this online resource was made possible in part by funding from the William T. Kemper Foundation - Commerc Bank, Trustee.

Hi Grant, Re El Indio, the FBI has released a one-page teletype document dated 2 days after the reported events at El Indio (8 Dec 1950). From the FBI office at Richmond to HQ DC, it reads:

RE FLYING SAUCERS. THIS OFFICE VERY CONFIDENTIALLY ADVISED BY ARMY INTELLIGENCE, RICHMOND, THAT THEY HAVE BEEN PUT ON IMMEDIATE HIGH ALERT FOR ANY DATA WHATSOEVER CONCERNING FLYING SAUCERS. CIC HERE STATES BACKGROUND OF INSTRUCTIONS NOT AVAILABLE FROM AIR FORCE INTELLIGENCE, WHO ARE NOT AWARE OF REASON FOR ALERT LOCALLY, BUT ANY INFORMATION WHATSOEVER MUST BE TELEPHONED BY THEM IMMEDIATELY TO AIR FORCE INTELLIGENCE. CIC ADVISES DATA STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL AND SHOULD NOT BE DISSEMINATED.

At the bottom of the document is a barely legible, scribbled message that includes the word "Sandia," where the El Indio wreckage was supposedly taken, according to the MJ12 papers. Might be an idea to FOIA the Army for any Intel files from Richmond from this date and surrounding dates. Potentially of interest to this is the following FBI teletype of 5 December 1950 (one day before El Indio), which states:

DETECTION OF UNIDENTIFIED OBJECTS OVER OAK RIDGE AREA, PROTECTION OF VITAL INSTALLATIONS. REURTEL DECEMBER 4 LAST REGARDING POSSIBLE RADAR JAMMING AT OAK RIDGE.
 ARRANGEMENTS SHOULD BE MADE TO OBTAIN ALL FACTS CONCERNING POSSIBLE RADAR JAMMING BY IONIZATION OF PARTICLES IN ATMOSPHERE. CONDUCT APPROPRIATE INVESTIGATION TO DETERMINE WHETHER INCIDENT OCCURRING NORTHEAST OF OLIVER SPRINGS, TENNESSEE, COULD HAVE ANY CONNECTION WITH ALLEGED RADAR JAMMING.

Also, although I haven't seen them, there are now declassified files available for viewing at the British Public Record Office on the visit by UK Prime Minister, Clement Atlee, to the US at the time of the event. I would be very surprised if there wasn't at least something in those files that refers to at least part of this story (and probably in connection with the fear that this was a Soviet attack). I may have a few more things on this; I'll have a look and see if I can find anything. Bruce Maccabee wrote a paper on aspects of this story I think. All best, Nick

Print

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Tuesday, December 5, 1950

- 9:40 am (The President left for the National Guard Armory)
- 10:15 am The President made a nation-wide broadcast, opening the White House Conference on Children and Youth from the National Guard Armory)
- 10:45 am (Honorable Steve Early) OFF THE RECORD
- 11:00 am Honorable Frederick Lawton, Director, Bureau of the Budget
(One-half hour)
- 11:30 am The President's Advisory Committee on Management
(The following were present:)
Mr. Thomas A. Morgan, President, Sperry Corporation
Mr. Lawrence A. Appley, President American Management Assn., Inc.
Mr. Vincent Burke, Deputy Postmaster General
Hon. Oscar L. Chapman, Secretary of the Interior
Hon. Gordon R. Clapp, Chairman of the Board, Tennessee Valley Authority
Hon. Herbert Emmerich, Executive Director, Public Adm. Clearing House
Mr. James R. Killian, Jr., President, M.I.T.
Mr. Edward Mason, Dean, Harvard University
Mr. Otto L. Nelson, Vice President, New York Life Insurance Co.
Hon. Frank Pace, Jr., Secretary of the Army
Mr. James Palmer, President, Marshall Field & Co.
Mr. Marcellus C. Sheild, 3 East Irving St.
Hon. James E. Webb, Under Secretary of State
Hon. Frederick Lawton, Director, Bureau of the Budget
Mr. William F. Finan, Bureau of the Budget
Mr. Charles Stauffacher, Bureau of the Budget
Mr. Elmer B. Staats, Bureau of the Budget
- 11:45 am Mrs. Albert Lasker
(Arranged at suggestion of David Niles)
- 12:00 The President received a delegation from the National A.H. Club Congress
(The following were present:)
- | | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| AITON, E. W. | ANDERSON, Kenneth |
| BOWE, Phyllis V. | BOWMAN, Don |
| BROZOVICH, Donald Sherman | CURTIS, Eileen R. |
| ELDER, Mary Jenet | HARKNESS, Leonard |
| HARRILL, L. R. | HILTON, Conrad |
| KEPNER, P. V. | QUAIN, R. F. |
| LEE, Porter, Jr. | LOVING, Kent |
| MATHRE, Dianne | MCCORMICK, C. J. |
| MCDOWELL, Jack, Jr. | SMITH, Carolyn Durham |
| THOMPSON, T. W. | TROTH, Edna |
| TURNER, Ray A. | WARREN, Gertrude L. |
| WILLISFORD, Robert F. | |
- 12:30 pm Honorable George Marshall, The Secretary of Defense
- 12:45 pm (The President left for Naval Gun Factory)

Tuesday, December 5, 1950 (Continued)

1:00 pm The President gave a luncheon aboard the USS WILLIAMSBURG in honor of Prime Minister Attlee. The following were present at luncheon:

- Honorable Sam Rayburn, The Speaker
- Honorable Dean Acheson, Secretary of State
- Honorable George Marshall, Secretary of Defense
- Honorable John Snyder, Secretary of the Treasury
- Honorable W. Stuart Symington, Chairman, N.S.R.B.
- General Omar N. Bradley
- Honorable W. Averell Harriman
- Senator Tom Connally, Texas
- Senator Alexander Wiley, Wisconsin
- Congressman James P. Richards, South Carolina
- Congressman Charles A. Eaton, New Jersey
- Honorable Walter Gifford, American Ambassador Designate to Great Britain
- Senator Walter George, Georgia
- Right Honorable Clement R. Attlee, Prime Minister of Great Britain
- Sir Oliver Franks, the British Ambassador
- Field Marshal Slim, Chief of the Imperial General Staff
- Sir Roger Makin, British Foreign Office

The following were present at a Conference aboard USS WILLIAMSBURG after luncheon:

- Honorable Dean Acheson, Secretary of State
- Honorable George Marshall, Secretary of Defense
- Honorable John Snyder, Secretary of the Treasury
- Honorable W. Stuart Symington, Chairman, N.S.R.B.
- General Omar N. Bradley
- Honorable W. Averell Harriman
- Honorable Walter Gifford, American Ambassador Designate to Great Britain
- Ambassador Philip Jessup
- Honorable George Perkins, Assistant Secretary of State
- Honorable Dean Rusk, Assistant Secretary of State
- Right Honorable Clement R. Attlee, Prime Minister of Great Britain
- Sir Oliver Franks, the British Ambassador
- Field Marshal Slim, Chief of the Imperial General Staff
- Sir Roger Makin, British Foreign Office

5:00 pm Cabinet Meeting
(All present except Agriculture and the Attorney General. The Solicitor General and Under Secretary McCormick attended)

8:20 pm (The President and Mrs. Truman left for Constitution Hall, where they attended concert of Miss Margaret Truman. They met their guests, the British Ambassador and Lady Franks, and the Prime Minister, at Constitution Hall)

Wednesday, December 6, 1950

- 9:45 am Hon. Edmond G. Brown, Attorney General elect of California
Mr. Ed Hills, campaign manager
(In Washington and called Mr. Connelly yesterday to ask if
he might call and pay respects to the President)
- 10:45 am Edward McKim
- 11:00 am The President received delegation from Army & Navy Union, U.S.A.,
and received from them a gold Life Membership Card and Plaque.
The following were present:
- | | |
|----------------------|-------------------------|
| ABRAMS, David | BARRISFORD, William A. |
| BLADEN, George | CALLAHAN, James M. |
| CARR, George | CATER, Paul |
| LORETH, Charles | OLCZAK, Edward A. |
| RUSSELL, H. C. John | STEHLIN, Col. Joseph C. |
| YOUNG, Mrs. Sally F. | |
- 11:15 am Honorable Joseph M. Darst, Mayor of St. Louis, Mo.
(Wired Mr. Connelly that he would be here at this time attending
meeting of American Municipal Association and would appreciate
seeing the President on matter of extreme importance)
- 11:30 am Honorable Dean Acheson, The Secretary of State
Honorable W. Averell Harriman
Honorable Stuart Symington, Chairman, W. S. R. B.
Honorable Jess Larson
Honorable John Snyder, Secretary of the Treasury
Honorable Charles Sawyer, Secretary of Commerce
Honorable Ralph S. Trigg, Commodity Credit Corporation
Honorable Richard S. Bissell, Deputy Administrator, Economic
Cooperation Administration
Honorable George Marshall, Secretary of Defense
Honorable Williard L. Thorp, Assistant Secretary of State
Honorable George W. Perkins, Assistant Secretary of State
Honorable Walter Gifford, American Ambassador Designate to Great Britain
Ambassador Philip Jessup
Right Honorable Clement R. Attlee, Prime Minister of Great Britain
The British Ambassador, Sir Oliver Franks
Sir Edwin Plowden
Sir Roger Makins
Sir Leslie Rowan
Mr. Robert Hall
Mr. Dennis Richett
Field Marshall Slim
Lord Tedder
- 12:45 pm H. E. Dr. John Myun Chang, Ambassador of Korea
Hon. Sae Sun Kim, Counselor of the Korean Embassy
(The Ambassador asked for this thru Division of Protocol.
Expects to return to Korea to become Prime Minister and will be
succeeded as Ambassador here by Mr. Sae Sun Kim. Mr. John Simmons
of Division of Protocol will accompany them)

Wednesday, December 6, 1950 (Continued)

1:00 pm (LUNCH)

3:00 pm Honorable William M. Boyle
(Usual Wednesday appointment)

3:30 pm Honorable Dean Acheson, Secretary of State
Honorable George Marshall, Secretary of Defense
Honorable John Snyder, Secretary of the Treasury
General Omar N. Bradley
Honorable W. Averell Harriman
Honorable W. Stuart Symington
Ambassador at Large Philip Jessup
Amb.-designate Walter S. Gifford
Assistant Secretary of State Perkins
Mr. George Elsey
Prime Minister Attlee
Sir Oliver Franks
Field Marshal Sir William Slim
Sir Roger Makins
Lord Tedder
Mr. Denis Rickett

4:45 pm (Honorable John Snyder, Secretary of the Treasury) OFF THE RECORD

8:00 pm (The President left for the British Embassy)

Thursday, December 7, 1950

- 10:00 am (Staff Meeting)
- 11:00 am Council of Economic Advisers
Honorable Leon H. Keyserling, Chairman
Honorable John D. Clark
Honorable Roy Blough
(Asked if they might come in and present facts on economic controls) HALF HOUR
- 11:30 am Honorable William C. Foster, Administrator, E. C. A.
(Asked if he might come in to make report)
- 11:45 am Honorable Oscar Chapman, Secretary of the Interior
Honorable Ingram M. Stainback, Governor of Hawaii
(Asked if Stainback might deliver to the President copy of the proposed Constitution for Hawaii)
- 12:00 Honorable John Shaw Young, Special Ambassador to the Haitian Exposition
Honorable John Simmons, Chief, Division of Protocol
(Mr. Simmons asked if he might bring in Mr. Young to hand to the President a diploma from the people of Haiti, expressing gratitude to the President for the Exposition, etc.)
- 12:15 pm (Honorable Frank Pace, The Secretary of the Army) OFF THE RECORD
- 12:30 pm (The President left for the Pentagon, where he attended luncheon given by General Marshall for Prime Minister Attlee)
The following were present at the luncheon:
Honorable Dean Acheson, Secretary of State
Honorable George Marshall, Secretary of Defense
Honorable Walter S. Gifford
Honorable W. Stuart Symington
Honorable W. Averell Harriman
Honorable Robert A. Lovett
Honorable Frank Pace, Jr.
Honorable Francis P. Matthews
Honorable Thomas K. Finletter
General Omar N. Bradley
General Wad H. Haislip
General Hoyt S. Vandenberg
Admiral Forrest P. Sherman
Right Honorable Clement Richard Attlee
Right Honorable Sir Oliver S. Franks
Field Marshal Sir William Slim
The Lord Tedder of Glenquin
Sir Roger Makins
Mr. Denis H. F. Rickett
Sir Edwin N. Plowden
- 1:45 pm (The President left Pentagon at this time to drive to Blair House, where he was joined by Mrs. Truman, and then proceeded to the home of Secretary Ross for funeral services)