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WILFRED BURCHETT & THE UN COMMAND'S MEDIA RELATIONS
DURING THE KOREAN WAR, 1951-1952

Few Cold War correspondents were more controversial than Wilfred Burchett. To the left he was a radical truth-hunter, roving around Asia and uncovering the big stories largely because he was unencumbered by the corporate, ideological, and governmental constraints that made so many Western reporters silent about the errors, even crimes, of their own side. To the right, however, he was nothing more than a communist traitor, beholden to the unsavory Chinese and Vietnamese communist regimes whose false propaganda he tried to disseminate to a global audience. In a journalistic career spanning more than three decades, Burchett gave both his supporters and detractors ample ammunition to fight their battles, from his eyewitness scoop of the Hiroshima destruction to his close contacts with men like Zhou Enlai and Ho Chi Minh. But no period of Burchett's contentious career was more controversial than the two-and-a-half years he spent in Korea covering the protracted armistice talks to end the war.

Burchett arrived in Korea on a hot summer's day in July 1951, planning to spend just a few weeks covering the negotiations for the left-wing Parisian newspaper *Ce Soir*. But as the talks dragged on, he stayed, his presence spawning two controversies that festered for decades. In 1952, he was at the forefront of the communist propaganda campaign that accused the United States of using germ warfare against North Korean and Chinese troops, interviewing soldiers who had seen "a long brown stream emerging from an American plane" and adding praise for the efficiency of

Chinese medicine, which, he claimed, had prevented the outbreak of a lethal epidemic. Later, he was attacked by right-wing critics, who accused him of taking part in the interrogation – and even the brainwashing – of United Nations (UN) prisoners of war languishing in communist camps, allegations that helped to convince the Australian government to deny him a passport, a decision that heated up the debate about Burchett's Cold War record still further.¹

Even now, more than twenty-five years after his death, Burchett remains a figure of intense interest, with fierce partisans on either side continuing to publish articles, anthologies, and biographies, many of them rehashing all the old arguments.² Nonetheless, the passage of time has given a little more perspective to these two eye-catching Korean controversies. Indeed, while many Cold War historians now tend to dismiss or downplay the germ warfare allegations that Burchett helped to disseminate, especially since the available Soviet records seem to suggest that they were indeed little more than Cold War propaganda,³ the charge that Burchett engaged in interrogating or brainwashing UN POWs has been effectively demolished by the declassification of affidavits signed by the prisoners themselves, which tend to confirm that his activity was far from sinister.⁴

In one area, however, Burchett's Korean War record still casts a long lingering shadow. This is his argument of double-dealing, distortion, and even lying by the U.S. military, which, he charged, were the dominant themes of military-media relations during the protracted armistice negotiations at Kaesong and then Panmunjom, especially in 1951 and 1952.

In his memoir, *Again Korea*, Burchett savagely denounced the U.S. military's information policy during this final phase of the

Korean War. He charged, first, that during the summer of 1951 Admiral C. Turner Joy and the United Nations Command's (UNC) negotiating team lied to reporters about their bargaining position on the truce line. According to Burchett, not only did they completely suppress the fact that the United States demanded an end to the war well above the current battle front but they also claimed – in “one of the great hoaxes of history” – that it was the Chinese and North Koreans, not the Americans, who were holding up progress in the talks by refusing to discuss a truce line along the thirty-eighth parallel. By the autumn, when western reporters finally got wind of their negotiators' perfidy, Burchett claimed that Joy's “badly shaken” public-relations setup revamped its press policy. But rather than providing more information, Burchett alleged that its aim was to obfuscate still further, issuing even more distorted briefings to friendly reporters, while trying to intimidate those correspondents who refused to accept the lies. In Burchett's account, however, many correspondents would not be bullied. And, recognizing that the communist-based reporters were more reliable than their own military, the UN-accredited correspondents not only fraternized with them but also based their stories on communist, rather than American, sources.⁵

These are highly damaging allegations. They also remain significant because they form the bedrock for the small but extremely influential literature on the subject. This article critically examines them. It begins by exploring how and why Burchett's account has exerted such an influence over the literature, especially given the enormous controversy his name excites. It then looks closely at the primary record, much of it untapped, in an effort to provide a more solid account of the UNC's media record during this important period of the Korean War.

I.

Wilfred Burchett was not an impartial observer. During the 1940s, he worked as a *Daily Express* correspondent, covering the Sino-Japanese War, the Burma campaign, and the Pacific island-hopping operations for this staunchly conservative and pro-imperial British newspaper. But he had long been a political radical. And his wartime experiences pushed him further leftwards, for in India he was irritated by what he saw as the unwarranted superiority of British officers who presided over an ailing and racist empire; in China he was attracted by the calm dignity and forceful intelligence of Chinese communist leaders like Zhou Enlai; and in Japan he was appalled by the terrible destructiveness of American firepower, which reached its culmination at Hiroshima, a story Burchett covered to enormous acclaim when he provided the first eyewitness account of conditions on the ground just weeks after the bomb was dropped.

Assigned to Europe during the late 1940s, Burchett eventually found his professional and political loyalties tugging in different directions. During the war, while Britain and the United States were fighting fascism alongside the Soviet Union, he had not worried too much about the politics of the Lord Beaverbrook-owned *Daily Express*. Increasingly, however, he saw his principal task as chronicling the great strides in global progress being undertaken by the new communist regimes, and this was a story that the tabloid, anti-communist *Express* had less and less interest in covering. Setting out on his own, Burchett returned to Australia in the summer of 1950 for a four-month lecture tour, in which he regaled audiences with America's use of atomic diplomacy, not to mention the West's harboring of Nazi war criminals. He also

made it perfectly clear that he thought the Americans were responsible for the start of the Cold War, while insisting that the Soviets had no aggressive intentions and had made no warlike preparations.⁶

Arriving in China in early 1951 to write a book on Mao Zedong's budding revolution, Burchett immediately found a more congenial environment. Hailed as an "honored foreign guest writer," he considered the new China a great hope for the causes of progressivism and world peace.⁷ Of course, like any writer based in Mao's China, Burchett was scarcely a free agent. In fact, he was heavily indebted to the communist authorities for his most basic professional needs. "I am treated on the same basis as a local writer," he revealingly wrote home in April 1951,

although you need not spread this news outside our own circle. In other words I am relieved of financial cares and given facilities to see what I want to see, travel where I want to travel, interview who I want to interview.... I would do anything at all for this people and their government because they represent the fullest flowering of all the finest instincts in humanity.⁸

As this last comment suggests, whatever his dependence on the communist government, Burchett was clearly a true believer in the communist cause. Privately, he was convinced that communism would triumph after two more five year plans. In the meantime, he had no doubt that China was winning the war in Korea, and believed that nothing the Americans could do, not even "super techniques as [the] pouring in of more cannon-fodder," would "alter the situation." He even gave credence to "miracle" procedures being

tested by Chinese doctors, such as "tissue treatment," which saved lives, healed long-term ailments, and cured "virtually all sicknesses dealing with the nervous or digestive system." In public, he amplified these views. Indeed, after traveling from Beijing to North Korea in July 1951, he became one of China's most visible polemicists, using his regular *Ce Soir* dispatches to attack American aggression and push the current communist propaganda line.⁹

After the Korean War, Burchett remained a trenchant partisan, spending many years in South East Asia, where he became a major advocate for the North Vietnamese cause. When he published *Again Korea* in 1968, he had an obvious political purpose related to this major new Cold War conflict in Asia. Indeed, Burchett thought a negotiated settlement was the most likely outcome in Vietnam. He therefore wanted to put down a new propaganda marker. No one, his book suggested, should trust anything that emanated from the U.S. military, especially when it was engaged in complex negotiations to end a protracted war in Asia.¹⁰

Because Burchett was such a blatant partisan, it seems surprising that his account has held such a sway over the literature of the Korean period. But on close inspection, the reasons are not difficult to fathom. Burchett was one of the few correspondents with direct Korean experience who published a memoir on the armistice period. Indeed, although a number of American and British reporters wrote accounts of their exploits during the savage but eye-catching early battles of 1950, none felt the tortuous passage of the truce talks worth recounting.¹¹

While Burchett therefore dominated the field partly by default, the publication of his Korean War experiences also came at precisely the right time. *Again Korea* hit the bookstores in

early 1968, in the midst of the Tet Offensive. Many war correspondents covering the searing Vietnam stalemate had already become convinced that U.S. officers had persistently tried to conceal the true facts of the war. When the communist Tet attack erupted in the midst of a concerted administration effort to demonstrate progress in the war, many journalists, commentators, and historians were predisposed to accept claims of U.S. mendacity.¹² Indeed, with Burchett as a guide, the Vietnam credibility gap no longer appeared an aberration. It looked, rather, like part of a familiar pattern that extended back to America's first major military engagement in the Cold War.

This was certainly the view of those writers who gave Burchett's work wider circulation during the 1970s and 1980s. James Aronson led the way. In 1970 Aronson published a book entitled *The Press and the Cold War*, in which he repeated Burchett's account almost verbatim, including tales of the U.S. military's highly restrictive media policy; its mendacious claims in August 1951 about both sides' position on the truce line; Burchett's success in exposing these lies during the late summer; the military's major clampdown in October; and its mounting frustration at the correspondents' continuing fraternization with the more forthcoming enemy. After a few months of the talks, Aronson concluded, Burchett "became a regular source of information for their fact-starved and misinformed American and British colleagues."¹³

Five years later Phillip Knightley published *The First Casualty*, his magisterial history of war correspondents. In a best-selling book that has been repeatedly reissued, Knightley relied heavily on Aronson — and hence Burchett — to launch a full-scale indictment of the U.S. military's handling of the media

during 1951 and 1952. In the first phase of the war, Knightley declared, General Douglas MacArthur's media relations had been bad enough, "but those adopted by his successor, General Matthew B. Ridgway, were disastrous." With Ridgway, Joy, and the rest of the UNC's negotiating team increasingly convinced that reporters had turned against the war, "censorship at the peace talks became total." Correspondents were denied access to the officers actually attending the talks, were not allowed to consult any of the documentation used by the negotiators, and were fed "a mixture of lies, half-truths, and serious distortions." Small wonder that many turned to those like Burchett on the communist side, for they "were a better source of news than the UN information officers."¹⁴

Knightley's book was crucial. Just as Burchett's *Again Korea* has often been cited because it is the only war-correspondent memoir of the truce talks, so Knightley's *First Casualty* remains enormously influential largely because it is one of the few books that explores the whole history of war correspondents. Easily accessible, it is still in print (in its third edition), and is widely used both by teachers and scholars of military-media relations. More to the point, its claims about the UNC's Korean War activities continue to be repeated in a number of books, both scholarly and popular.¹⁵

Because of Knightley's amplification, then, Burchett's highly critical interpretation of the military-media relationship at the Korean War truce talks still matters. But to what extent is this account accurate? It is not based on archival research. What does the documentary record tell us about the reliability of Burchett's influential claims?

II.

For a start, the assertion that Ridgway's press relations were worse than MacArthur's is clearly wide of the mark. During the first six months of the Korean War, when MacArthur was in command, the 200 or so correspondents who flocked to the cover the fighting were initially able to operate in a censor-free environment. MacArthur's hope was that reporters would use this freedom responsibly, which, to him, meant basing stories on the UNC's communiqués and briefings.¹⁶ But, especially during the major military reverses of July-August and November-December 1950, correspondents actually relayed home copy that was often based on graphic eyewitness accounts of battlefield disasters, equipment failures, and demoralized GIs. In December, in the aftermath of the military retreat sparked by China's intervention in the war, MacArthur's command retaliated with a vengeance, condemning reporters for embellishing the extent of the military debacle, as well as publishing stories that placed U.S. troops in severe jeopardy.¹⁷ And as relations between the two spiraled downwards, senior correspondents hit back hard, pointing to a growing credibility gap between Tokyo's optimistic communiqués on the one hand and the reality they had witnessed on the other.¹⁸

It was not until MacArthur's recall in April 1951 that this situation really started to improve. One important reason was Ridgway's promotion to UN commander, for Ridgway was a media-savvy general who had always taken great pains to cultivate his public image. From his first days in Korea, he had introduced, at the Pentagon's suggestion, an important innovation.¹⁹ As well as working closely with the military's own information specialists, Ridgway had recruited his own personal media adviser—James T. Quirk, a man with hands-on experience working for a Philadelphia

newspaper—and had set him the task of making practical improvements to the daily round of briefings and communiqués: a reform that many reporters had enthusiastically welcomed.²⁰ And when Quirk returned to the United States, Ridgway replaced him with Burrows Matthews, an editor at the *Buffalo Courier-Express*, who used his wide knowledge of all aspects of smaller newspaper publishing to improve the command's relationship with correspondents.²¹

Throughout 1951, Ridgway and his senior officers went to great lengths to assess what had gone wrong the year before, as part of a concerted effort to improve their relations with the press. They started with field censorship. Although MacArthur had belatedly introduced a censorship regime in December 1950, its initial implementation had been so clumsy that that it had merely fuelled suspicions among war correspondents that the military was trying to cover up the extent of its mistakes.²² Once MacArthur was out of the way, censorship was streamlined and improved. In June 1951, Ridgway gave the task to a new UNC censorship office placed close to the front, which ultimately adopted a new set of rules. His officers also launched a concerted effort to shift the whole ethos away from suppression. They began by making briefings more effective, in large part because the advent of censorship meant that public information officers could divulge tactical information on a background basis without having to worry that it might turn up in tomorrow's headlines. They then tried to ensure that communiqués and press releases were more accurate and more accessible, encouraging their subordinates to shy away from "cheap, publicity-seeking stunts," and to focus instead on output that was "brief, concise, factual, and readily adaptable" to both radio and the print media.²³

In the field, one of the most pressing problems during the first months of the war had been the lack of trained public information officers who were fully briefed on the military's preferred PR line and able to steer war correspondents in a particular direction. In fact, many of the stories that had so upset MacArthur during 1950 had been the product of reporters bypassing the public information network altogether and interviewing disillusioned, battle-scarred GIs who had just survived harrowing battles.²⁴ During 1951, the UNC sought to address this problem, first, by undertaking a big recruitment drive, increasing public information personnel tenfold.²⁵ With this influx of new men, the UNC public information office (PIO) also made greater efforts coordinate the military's message at the front as well as the rear. Before public information officers left for Korea, they attended a revamped 14-week course, with more time set aside for the practical work of dealing with the media. Once they arrived in Korea, officers and enlisted men were invited to a series of conferences and seminars. Some were designed to acquaint all public information officers with "new problems, policies, and methods of coordination." Others were aimed at improving cooperation between the different layers of the military machine. And still more were intended to acquaint new officers with members of the press, in the hope that they could build a constructive personal relationship from the start.²⁶

Although some of these changes to field censorship had only a tangential impact on the UNC's press relations at the armistice talks, they did help to change the basic atmospherics between officers and correspondents, which, though still haunted by the problems of the past, were at least no longer as gloomy.²⁷ More to the point, Ridgway's willingness to spark improvements—and

especially his determination to appoint men with extensive media experience to senior posts—would prove important once the talks began in early July 1951.

To be sure, not all of Ridgway's appointments at this time were well received. General Frank A. Allen, his new chief of information, was particularly disliked by most reporters, partly because he had stopped a series of major stories during World War II and partly because he had a well-known tendency for "spanking" journalists who disregarded his instructions.²⁸ But the advent of Allen was somewhat compensated for by the selection of Colonel George P. Welch as the UNC's new public information officer, for Welch was a steady old pro who had been responsible for public relations in various commands during World War II. In early July, after the UNC negotiating team established their base in the small town of Munsan-ni, Welch traveled to the new adjacent press camp with six officers and one enlisted man, in order to supervise all public information activities associated with the talks. He was thus on hand to deal with problems as they arose, giving a speed and suppleness to the military's response to reporters' complaints that had been altogether lacking a year before.²⁹

Even more important was the role played by General William P. Nuckols. Described by reporters as "the man in the middle," Nuckols was yet another of the highly knowledgeable officers that Ridgway had placed in an important position.³⁰ Before Korea, he had accumulated enormous experience working for a PR company in New York City during the 1930s, before rising to become the chief information officer for the Allied Expeditionary Force during World War II. Since 1950, he had been based in Korea as the chief public information officer for the Far East Air Forces, so he knew all about the potential pitfalls that awaited him at Kaesong. Each

day, his job was to travel to the talks with the UNC negotiators before returning to brief reporters. In Burchett's account, Nuckols emerges as a rather sinister figure, who was consistently at the forefront of the military's desire to suppress information. At the time, however, American correspondents saw him in a very different light. As the *New York Times* put it in a friendly profile, "Virtually the only reliable source of information about the ceasefire conference these days is a tall air force officer with a casual manner and a slight stammer ... [who] has managed quite skillfully as a mediator between the press and the delegates."³¹

Almost as soon as the talks started, Ridgway's public-relations team went to great lengths to make life easier for correspondents. On the opening day, most reporters were outraged that communist journalists had been present at the talks while they had been denied access to the negotiating site.³² Ridgway immediately promised to rectify this state of affairs. And when the communist negotiators initially balked at the proposed presence of western journalists, he even refused to let his negotiators return until this matter was resolved.³³

Soon after, the UNC PIO provided improved billeting and communications facilities for reporters by establishing a press train, housed in the sidings near the UNC negotiators' base camp. Whereas in 1950 correspondents had often "griped" about the severe lack of logistical support, now, as the command's chief public information officer recorded, facilities at the new press camp, combined with the military's "expeditious handling of news copy and photographs[,] resulted in [a] favorable reaction on the part of correspondents covering the armistice conference." From time to time, senior officers would even tour the train and recommend

changes to make it more comfortable. Within weeks, censors were also placed on board so that they could check radio copy on the spot—an innovation that enabled radio reporters “to make their broadcasts closer to the source of the armistice talks.”³⁴

III.

Still, even with all these efforts, the 100 or so correspondents who thronged to the new press camp in July 1951 were often discontent. During the first two weeks of the talks, when the negotiators haggled over the preliminary matter of what to include on the agenda, they were particularly upset by the lack of hard information that the UNC delegation made available. In one press briefing on 17 July, for example, public information officers were unable to answer even the most basic of questions, such as how many items were likely to be on the agenda, let alone what these were or what had proved to be the main sticking points.

Thereafter, as the talks progressed on to vexed question of where to fix the truce line, the U.S. military initially persisted with its tight-lipped approach. Thus on 27 July, Nuckols merely informed correspondents that the UNC negotiators had taken maps into that day's talks, which detailed the UNC's demands. But he was not authorized to provide any details, other than the meaningless fact that “they were colored, one about 30 by 40 inches and the other 50 by 36 inches.”³⁵

Correspondents were clearly far from happy with the military's reticence. With the truce talks dominating the political agenda back home, their editors frequently pressured them for substantial news stories, even scoops. On the opening day of the conference alone, correspondents filed 300,000 words of copy, while the daily average thereafter was around 180,000.³⁶

Without informative briefings from UNC officers, the fact-starved reporters had to grope for ways to frame the issues. Perhaps inevitably, some even turned to broadcasts from the communist radio station in Pyongyang or comments by communist journalists at the talks, on the revealing grounds that they had frequently "given many more details on the conferences than pass through allied censorship."³⁷ This first happened on 1 August, when a number of correspondents repeated the claims by Pyongyang radio that the UNC was demanding an armistice well above the current battle line—and were unimpressed when military officials tried to dismiss these reports as "a lot of malarkey."³⁸

The same day, Burchett arrived at the talks, accompanied by Alan Winnington, a long-time member of the Communist Party, who had worked for the London *Daily Worker* since the early 1940s and had recently been denounced in the House of Commons as a traitor. The two men caused an immediate splash, as Western-based reporters crowded around them to ask questions about conditions in North Korea and China. In the coming months, Burchett and Winnington would also be viewed by many Western correspondents as a "barometer of communist thinking around the conference table," for the simple reason that they were the only source for what was happening on the other side of the hill.³⁹ Nonetheless, even with their own side providing little information, U.S. reporters were not ready to place much trust in these new arrivals. Thus, at the start of August, *Time* magazine asked pointedly if they would ever write stories critical of Red China. The *Christian Science Monitor* described their first efforts to influence the Western news agenda as "almost comic" propaganda.⁴⁰

Subsequently, Burchett turned this period into one of his main indictments of the UNC's press policy, insisting that

Ridgway, Joy, and Nuckols perpetrated an "enormous" hoax on their correspondents by mischaracterizing the UN and communist bargaining positions. On close inspection, however, his allegations are incorrect on specific points. Crucially, they also ignore the major problems the military faced in trying to craft a public information policy during the hectic, complex, and fraught process of negotiating an armistice.

In devising an information strategy for the talks, officials faced an awkward dilemma. On the one hand, they thought their bargaining strategy often required secrecy. At the heart of this strategy was the familiar American idea that the negotiators should open high, articulating maximum aspirations, which could then be modified and toned down as the talks proceeded, in a tit-for-tat fashion, so that the ultimate outcome would closely approximate the government's real goals.⁴¹ If such a process was carried out in the open, however, officials fretted that they would be denied sufficient flexibility. Indeed, American popular opinion might become so attached to the opening position that it would view any concessions from this as craven appeasement. More generally, America's credibility and prestige in the world might be dented, if others countries saw it retreating from a stance it had carved out in public. Small wonder, then, that the Pentagon initially instructed Ridgway and his negotiators to refrain from giving too much information to reporters on a daily basis.

"Arranging for an armistice during the progress of actual fighting is one of the most delicate negotiations in human affairs," the Defense Department cabled on July 8, "and must necessarily be conducted in strictest secrecy." "Ultimate success," it emphasized, "must depend in some measure upon the willingness of the public to await concrete results and especially to refrain

from violent reaction to incomplete or unfounded reports and rumors."⁴²

Yet such a tight-lipped strategy also contained clear hazards. As even public-relations' neophytes recognized, whenever the officials cut the media out of the equation, correspondents were apt to speculate. As Allen, Ridgway's media adviser, soon complained, in the absence of hard information correspondents were not compliantly mute; rather, they tended to "sit around feeling sorry for themselves and write stories that in many instances are pure 'think pieces' and have no bearing on the conference." "The object lesson in this respect," agreed Welch of the UNC PIO, "is that professional reporters at or near the scene of a major news event do not cease reporting simply because the flow of official information is turned off."⁴³

The military therefore recognized that it was treading a hazardous path. If public information officers said nothing, the press would speculate – or even fraternize with communist reporters. If they said too much, they might inflate public expectations and undermine their whole bargaining strategy. To make matters worse, the public information officers were traversing an unfamiliar path, navigating between unpalatable alternatives without a clear map to guide the way. It was hardly surprising that they made false turns, especially in the first phase of the talks, when they often erred on the side of caution, clamping down hard on the release of information. But they had the capacity to learn – to sketch a safer route the longer the journey continued – especially when they received heavy criticism from correspondents. As a result, they soon made important improvements to the flow of information, which belied some of Burchett's specific claims.

This learning process first occurred during August on the vexed question of the truce line. In the private bargaining sessions with the enemy, Joy opened with America's maximum aims, convinced that the negotiating process would whittle these down to something closer to what the administration thought was an acceptable outcome: a division of Korea based not on the communist demand for the thirty-eighth parallel but on the more defensible current battle line. Joy dubbed his opening gambit the "basic concept." The war, he insisted, consisted of three battle zones — ground, air, and naval. Because the UN enjoyed superiority in the air and naval spheres, he told the communist negotiators, it should be rewarded by additional territory on the ground, somewhere between the current battle line and the Yalu River.⁴⁴

At the start of August, the UNC public information officers were initially reluctant to reveal this "basic concept" to reporters. But they were not driven by an instinctive mendacity or a deep-seated distrust of reporters. They feared, rather, that the American public might become wedded to this opening position and demand an armistice well to the north of the current fighting front. If this happened, they would have much less freedom to haggle and the talks might well collapse. It was safer instead to provide vague briefings; but these were always opaque rather than misleading. Although short on details, they stressed that the UNC claim was for a truce line that "should maintain the approximate military balance of power existing at the time it was signed" — a carefully worded statement that contained the kernel of Joy's "basic concept." Moreover, contrary to the claims of Burchett-inspired accounts, they did not distort the communist position by insisting that it was the enemy, and not the Americans, who refused to accept the thirty-eighth parallel. Far from it:

officials at all levels of the administration were keen to explain that the United States no longer considered the parallel a viable border, even for a temporary truce.⁴⁵

During the middle of August, UNC public information officers then provided much more substance on this "basic concept." They were, to be sure, thrust on to the defensive by a Radio Pyongyang broadcast that tried to expose Joy's opening position. They also had to respond to an embarrassing press briefing by Ridgway's Civil Information and Education Section in Tokyo, which appeared to confirm communist accusations by insisting that the UN "must reach agreement" on a demarcation line somewhere between the Yalu River and the current battlefield.⁴⁶ But UNC negotiators still used the moment to launch their first intensive publicity effort. What the negotiating team really wanted, a series of communiqués declared, was not Korean real estate but "a defensible line." In explaining exactly what this meant, Joy even "went into a detailed outline of the UN stand on the factor of allied air and naval power in the overall military situation in Korea." As he explained to reporters, he had told the enemy that the UN was "prosecuting a war behind your front lines which is not duplicated behind our front lines. As soon as an armistice becomes effective you will acquire a degree of freedom of movement now denied to you. Recognizing your increased capability, the UN must, during the period of the armistice, insure that its ground positions are adequate to balance the advantages you gain by the withdrawal of air and naval power." He was therefore pushing for a truce line further to the north, but the UN stance was not rigid. "We have repeatedly stated that we were willing to discuss the proposal jointly on a map," Joy told reporters, "with a view to making such adjustments as would be acceptable to both sides." The communist

claims that the UN was demanding a specific line from Kosong to Ongjin were false, agreed Ridgway in another public statement, since Washington had granted his command sufficient discretion to ensure that the talks would not bog down over any specific area.⁴⁷

These statements were far more extensive and informative than the Burchett account suggests. And they were by no means the UNC's last major effort to brief the press on its negotiating position. In late October agreement on the truce line seemed possible, after the communists agreed to give up their demand for the thirty-eighth parallel and accept the current battle line. The UNC, however, decided to introduce a new demand: Kaesong, which had important symbolic value as the old Korean capital and whose inclusion in the southern half of the country might appease Syngman Rhee, the South Korean leader, who was vehemently opposed to any deal that divided his country.⁴⁸ In Burchett's account, this was the moment when the UNC initiated a major clampdown; its public information officers, he suggests, were particularly reluctant to inform reporters about the new demand for Kaesong. On close inspection, however, this charge is far too simplistic.

At first, in order to place pressure on the enemy and generate domestic support for the U.S. stance, Ridgway actually decided to launch a major propaganda offensive, issuing a string of press releases that played up "the characteristics of the proposed zone and the fairness of our solution."⁴⁹ Importantly, the military also believed the media was pleased with this new campaign. As Welch noted, the "allied press was grateful for the release of information on a timely basis." Press reports certainly echoed Ridgway's line, emphasizing that "the UN would not give up important parcels of territory won by blood and valor."⁵⁰

But this public position soon ran into an obvious problem: even with Ridgway's PR campaign, officials in Washington were not convinced that the public, or the European allies, would be willing to prolong the war for the sake of Kaesong. In their opinion, it was far safer to compromise on the status of this city, so that the talks could move onto the next agenda items.⁵¹ Ridgway and Joy, for their part, did not agree, and tried to persist with the Kaesong demand, although they ultimately had to give way to their Washington bosses. But while this policy debate was still raging, the UNC was faced with a tricky PR dilemma: it wanted, on the one hand, to keep up the pressure on the communists by stressing publicly the importance of not conceding territory; but it recognized, on the other, that this point might have to be conceded. Nuckols' response was inevitably somewhat tortuous. In his press briefings, he stressed that the UNC negotiators were "strongly demanding" Kaesong, rather than "adamantly" pushing for it. But this "fine distinction" appeared a little too shifty for some correspondents, who turned to Burchett and Winington for additional information, albeit with the caveat that these two men "often propagandize their allied opposite numbers."⁵²

IV.

Although the situation during the fall of 1951 was nowhere near as bad as the Burchett-inspired account suggests, even now relations in and around the press train were not always smooth. In October the UNC PIO released its first written warning to a reporter; two months later it issued the first "discreditation." But these episodes should not be exaggerated. Indeed, neither indicated a major bout of military-media acrimony over a lack of truce talk information: the former was related to the breaking of a news

embargo on a visit to Korea by the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff; and the latter involved a South Korean reporter who "had exchanged currencies of various types in excess of his needs."⁵³

In fact, it was not until the winter of 1951-52, when the truce talks moved on to the emotive question of prisoners of war, that the major bout of military-media friction erupted. Whereas some correspondents had earlier turned to Burchett whenever the UNC was unable or unwilling to provide hard evidence, now the reporters' main motive for listening to the other side was the familiar one of intense competition, which was particularly acute for the main wire services, whose whole professional existence depended upon getting to a story first. "Hell hath no fury," a military public affairs adviser once quipped, "like a wire service scooped."⁵⁴ And in December 1951, when both sides at the talks agreed to reveal how many prisoners they held, the fury of wire-service reporters prodded them towards all types of stratagems to beat their rivals to the punch.

According to U.S. military figures, 10,624 Americans were believed to be missing in action in Korea. When the communists agreed to hand over a list of soldiers they held in camps across North Korea and Manchuria, the media was "intensely interested" in obtaining the names of these survivors as quickly as possible. Ridgway even provided a special jet plane to rush the list to his Tokyo press room, but the Korean winter delayed its departure. With editors applying tremendous pressure on their correspondents "for the utmost speed in obtaining and transmitting the names" — and a lack of prompt information coming from official sources — Burchett had an obvious opportunity to act as a major source; and he seized the moment with alacrity.⁵⁵ Indeed, he positively reveled in the sight of "most of [the] American press ...

virtually crawling on their hands and knees along the road to us, begging us for crumbs of information. We were in a lovely position of ignoring all those who had tried to injure us and handed priceless information to the few who had written honestly about the talks."⁵⁶

After the lists were exchanged, the talks soon stalled over these prisoners' fate. With the communists admitting that they held 3,198 Americans, the correspondents turned their attention to the conditions in the communist camps. They were animated partly by a humanitarian concern for the fate of colleagues who had been captured in the early days of the war, especially after an unauthorized statement by Colonel James N. Hanley, chief of Eighth Army's War Crimes Section, in mid-November that claimed the communists had murdered 5,790 POWs.⁵⁷ But they were also driven by a desire to get a good story about big name prisoners like General William F. Dean. Once again, communist reporters like Burchett were their only obvious source. At the end of December Burchett exploited this opening, when he provided western reporters with details of an interview he had recently conducted with Dean, "over drinks of gin," in which the general had recounted the story of his capture and Burchett had been able to ascertain that he was "in good health."⁵⁸ A few weeks later, Burchett then courted even more controversy when he helped an Associated Press reporter smuggle photographic and sound equipment into a communist camp that contained the Pulitzer Prizewinning photographer Frank Noel.⁵⁹

In Tokyo, Ridgway's and his senior public information officers were appalled by this last incident. Handing over such equipment, they believed, simply gave the communists a perfect propaganda opportunity to emphasize the good treatment the enemy

was according to American prisoners; and soon "carefully screened pictures" were duly returned "of smiling and well fed POWs." According to Welch, the reporters' deeds had now reached a point where "they constitute a threat to security and a travesty in honest reporting." And Welch therefore concluded that "vigorous action" was "essential." After much discussion, he ultimately released a new set of guidelines that would apply to all correspondents entering the conference site. From now on they were instructed to "conduct themselves in such a manner as to avoid any suggestion that military security is being placed in possible jeopardy or that traffic is being held with the enemy."⁶⁰

Correspondents reacted to this missive with a spasm of fury. With the Red Scare raging at home, they were deeply troubled by the implication that they might in some way security risks. To make matters worse, Welch's memorandum suggested that much of the fraternizing had occurred while alcoholic beverages were being passed around. And reporters were highly alarmed by the connotation that, as one complained, members of the press pool had placed themselves in a position where they might, through loosened tongues, divulge sensitive information to the enemy. Indeed, it was this allegation that was particularly resented. "Never at Panmunjom," replied Bill Barnard of the Associated Press, "did I ever see an allied newspaperman show the slightest effects of alcohol. But to listen to the army you'd get the idea that the truce village is a roistering rendezvous for correspondents." Even if a flask was occasionally passed around as western reporters probed their communist counterparts, riposted George Barrett of the *New York Times*, this was "a necessary evil, made necessary partly because the UNC's briefings have been inadequate."⁶¹

Amidst the intense ill-feeling generated by this specific incident, the first major spate of stories emerged complaining of the UNC's media output and lauding the activities of Burchett and his comrades. *Time* magazine, scarcely a pro-communist organ, even ran a story in the middle of February that seemed to confirm Burchett's broader interpretation. "Many UN newsmen disliked fraternizing with Red correspondents," *Time* editorialized, "but feared they would be beaten on stories if they didn't. They thought their job was to get the news, no matter how questionable the sources."⁶²

As this episode demonstrates, some of Burchett's claims do indeed stand up against the documentary record. But they are select instances, invariably occurring when the communist correspondents had obvious sources of information unavailable to the UNC. The big controversy in February 1952 was a major case in point. At this particular moment, with heated charges flying around on both sides, a number of media figures were even kind about Burchett and scathing about their own side. But this was the nadir. For much of 1951 and 1952, the basic pattern of military-media relations was far from "disastrous." Before and after the POW issued flared, the UNC often went to great lengths to learn from its mistakes and institute practical improvements. And in the month after this controversy, the broader changes it was making in its field censorship operations now started to have an important, and positive, impact.

V.

When Welch, the steady old military hand, first heard about the attempt to smuggle cameras into communist POW camps he was determined to get tough. Indeed, he was so outraged that he

drafted a long and impassioned press release, which began with an indictment against the entire media delegation and ended with a list of proscribed actions and future sanctions. Crucially, however, Burrows Matthews, the experienced media man, swiftly intervened to shorten the document, ensuring that only "a few" correspondents were accused of wrongful behavior and toning down the charges to "excessive social consorting" and "unguarded conversations." As already mentioned, even this indictment angered the press and resulted in a spate of stories challenging the military's claim that "the truce village is a roistering rendezvous for correspondents." But with Matthews exercising a careful eye over his more hotheaded colleague, the storm soon blew over. Within days, Welch even did his bit to improve the atmospherics, agreeing to provide the press with more factual background briefings on the complex matter of POWs.⁶³

For the most part, in fact, the POW issue was *not* a difficult sell, at least for officers based at Panmunjom, because the Truman administration was determined to squeeze as much propaganda advantage as possible from its stance at the talks. By the start of 1952, the focus of the U.S. debate shifted from the communist camps to the UNC compounds, for the simple reason that American policy was now wedded to the principle of voluntary repatriation: it would not force any prisoners to return to their homeland against their will. Although this principle contravened the Geneva Convention, officials recognized that voluntary repatriation was a superb propaganda tool. "This issue," claimed one State Department official, "gets to the heart of the contention between communism and the tradition we live by. It bears on the rights of men to make choices and to claim protection."⁶⁴

In the spring, the UNC began screening prisoners to see who wanted to return home. But this soon became a messy process, largely because of the brutal conditions in the camps, with some compounds effectively controlled by communist prisoners, while others were ruled by nationalist "trusties" whose intimidation tactics prevented inmates from expressing their true preferences. As a result of this flawed screening, in early May the UNC negotiators informed their communist counterparts that only just over half of the 130,000 prisoners under UNC jurisdiction wanted to return home—a figure the communists immediately rejected as totally inadequate. With the talks about to collapse, the Truman administration launched a big public relations effort. Ignoring the messy reality, they focused on the human rights dimension. The reason so many communist POWs refused repatriation, UNC public information officers stressed, was simple: these people preferred the freedom of the West to the brutal communist dictatorships in the East.⁶⁵

On 7 May, however, this argument was exposed when communist prisoners on Koje-Do, the island housing the bulk of these communist prisoners, kidnapped General Francis T. Dodd, the camp's commanding officer, and forced him to admit, among other things, that the inmates had not been able to make a free choice. Officials at all levels of the government immediately recognized that Koje was a major propaganda disaster. But in the narrow area of the military's media relations, public information officers again showed an impressive capacity to make swift improvements.⁶⁶

At first, they had a tough job. In the wake of Dodd's kidnap, many correspondents were convinced that they had been sold a bill of goods about conditions in the camps. Until now, the military had carefully controlled access to Koje-Do, and had used

this control to convince any interested reporters that the situation was under control, prisoners were generally content, and the screening process had been conducted efficiently.⁶⁷ Now, none of these claims seemed terribly close to the truth. As *Time* pointed out, some compounds were so out of control that they had "successfully resisted all screening." "Observers," it continued, "were beginning to realize that the prisoner vote on repatriation, which at first seemed the only credible and politically valuable aspect of the whole affair, had not been arrived at by the UN in a true and careful polling but was in some cases a rough and ready guess."⁶⁸

To make matters worse, Dodd's release was initially handled very poorly. Press feelings were certainly not soothed by the imposition of tight censorship in the immediate aftermath of the incident, especially a ban on interviews with Dodd, when the haggard general arrived in Tokyo after his ordeal. As Colonel Roswell P. Rosengren of the Eighth Army's PIO recorded, this restriction immediately "changed a friendly, tired press into a very angry press which picked up telephones and dug generals out of bed—unfortunately not those responsible for the decision." Yet when the military then tried to compensate by releasing the terms negotiated for Dodd's release—terms that included an admission that UN forces had killed and wounded many prisoners—correspondents were still not happy. "To say the press was shocked at its release at all is the mild understatement of the week," Rosengren wired the Pentagon. "It is the first time I have ever heard newsmen say, 'The army suppresses a lot of stuff that shouldn't be suppressed, but there are times for suppression—and this was the time!'"⁶⁹

Once again, however, the military learned from its mistakes, which was particularly important when the time came to regaining control of Koje, for this operation was bound to result in bloodshed. Before the attack was launched, the military maintained tight control over the flow of information, which was used to blame the enemy for all the carnage and killing. Indeed, UNC press releases detailed disturbing hauls of spears, gasoline grenades, knives, clubs, hatchets, and hammers, not to mention emaciated and beaten anti-communist prisoners who had been subjected to "kangaroo justice." And journalists avidly followed these cues, reporting on the "full story of communist terrorism, torture, and murder of anti-Red prisoners," paying special attention to the victims who had been "garroted, stabbed, burned, tied, and hanged."⁷⁰

With the operational plans finalized for the recapture of the communist-dominated compounds, Rosengren then ensured that a group of correspondents would be able to cover this particular story easily and efficiently. On the day before the operation, he flew thirty-seven reporters to Koje-do, putting them up in Quonset huts, plying them with bacon, eggs, and toast, and even ensuring that they had time for a drink before the bar was subjected to the normal curfew. The next morning, these correspondents were driven to seats just 50 yards from the action, in which the army deployed tanks, flamethrowers, and tear gas to methodically break up the communist-dominated compounds and remove the inmates to "smaller, more workable units."⁷¹ "Except for some delay occasioned by the heavy communication load," Rosengren recorded afterwards, "the press was very pleased with the operation." Indeed, the operation went so well that Rosengren was convinced he had discovered a deeper lesson. All this army assistance, he concluded,

"illustrated a sound general rule for army treatment of newsmen during a major news event: tell them what is going to happen, then let them watch it happen."⁷² And back in Washington, the Pentagon fully agreed. The army's chief information officer even thought the whole episode would make a good case study to teach the growing numbers of students enrolling in its improved public information courses.⁷³

VI.

On the other side of the hill, meanwhile, Burchett continued to rail against the Americans. It was solely their fault, he believed, that the armistice talks dragged on so long. "They never relinquished one objectionable point," he declared, "until they had made sure they had raised another just as objectionable. And when the agreement was finally reached, they refuse to carry it out." For Burchett, the only comforting thought was the fact that the aggressive Americans had been bloodied on the battlefield. "They may have been taught such a lesson," he hoped, "as will force them to abandon for all times their plans for world domination by force of arms and turn to normal ways of making a living by producing and trading instead of by grab and plunder."⁷⁴

Burchett's jaundiced perspective naturally infused his writings thereafter, which always contained a polemical, propagandist edge. The surprising thing is that his interpretation of the UNC's media relations has had such a lasting appeal. As this article demonstrates, the UNC made its fair share of mistakes. On occasion, it was infuriatingly unforthcoming. It was not above bouts of outright suppression. And its officers periodically lashed out at "disloyal reporters." But for the most part, the UNC's sins were those of omission rather than

commission. And even these omissions stemmed from clear constraints related to the difficulty of devising an information strategy in the new environment of complicated armistice talks; to some extent, they were also counterbalanced by the improvements Ridgway made to military public information during 1951. In short, then, the Burchett-inspired account is far too negative. The UNC's public information record, compiled during the fraught and complex process of negotiating an end to a bloody and unpopular war, was much more positive than he, and his followers, have claimed.

NOTES

¹ Jamie Miller, "Once Were Warriors: Wilfred Burchett, Robert Manne, and the Forgotten History War," *The New Critic* (September 2008), 8: 1-14. Denis Warner, "He Writes the Enemy's Story," *Melbourne Herald*, 21 June 1952.

² See, for instance, Ben Kiernan, ed., *Burchett Reporting the Other Side of the World* (New York: Quartet, 1986). George Burchett and Nick Schimmin, ed., *Memoirs of a Rebel Journalist: The Autobiography of Wilfred Burchett* (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2005), and *Rebel Journalism: The Writings of Wilfred Burchett* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2007). Tom Heenan, *From Traveller to Traitor* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2006). Robert Manne, "The Fortunes of Wilfred Burchett: A New Assessment," *Quadrant*, August 1985, 27-45.

³ "Interestingly," writes Shu Gang Zhang, "Beijing authorities were more zealous about a stepped-up propaganda campaign against the United States than epidemic prevention on the front-line." See his, *Mao's Military Romanticism: China and the Korean War* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1995), 183. For a similar view, see William Stueck, *The Korean War: An International History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 275-76. On the evidence from Soviet archives, see Kathryn Weathersby, "Deceiving the Deceivers: Moscow, Beijing, Pyongyang, and the Allegations of Bacteriological Weapons Use in Korea." *Cold War International History Project Bulletin* 11 (1998): 176-80.

⁴ Gavan McCormack, 'The Australian Dreyfus? Re-examination of the Case Against Journalist Wilfred Burchett', *Australian Society*, August 1984, 8. See also Andrew M. Condron, 4 February

1960, box 4.9, Wilfred G. Burchett Papers State Library of Victoria, Melbourne, Australia.

⁵ Wilfred G. Burchett, *Again Korea* (New York: International, 1968), 33-37

⁶ These two paragraphs are based on, Biographical Material, undated, Records of 1950 Lecture Tour Folder, box 2, Burchett Papers; Wilfred Burchett, *Passport: An Autobiography* (Melbourne: Thomas Nelson, 1969), and *At the Barricades* (London: Macmillan, 1981); and Burchett and Schimmin, ed., *Memoirs of a Rebel Journalist*, chs. 24-28. Although Burchett found it increasingly difficult working for the *Express*, it is fair to add that Beaverbrook's newspapers were more sympathetic to Soviet actions in Eastern Europe than any other right-wing British organs. See Alan Foster, "The Beaverbrook Press, Eastern Europe, the Soviet Union, and the Coming of the Cold War," *Media, Culture and Society* 8 (1986): 120-22.

⁷ Wilfred G. Burchett, *China's Feet Unbound* (Melbourne: World Unity Publications, 1952).

⁸ Wilfred G. Burchett to George H. Burchett, 16 April 1951, Wilfred's Letters Folder, box 3, Burchett Papers.

⁹ Wilfred G. Burchett to George H. Burchett, 28 December 1951, 18 March 1952, and 13 December 1952, Wilfred's Letters Folder, box 3, Burchett Papers.

¹⁰ Burchett, *Again Korea*, 33.

¹¹ See, for instance, Keyes Beech, *Tokyo and Points East* (New York: Doubleday, 1954); Marguerite Higgins, *War in Korea* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1951); Reginald Thompson, *Cry Korea* (London: MacDonald, 1951). Howard Handleman, who was exhaustively interviewed about his Korean War experience as an INS

correspondent by Jack Pulwers, also dwelt exclusively on the MacArthur period. See Jack Pulwers-Howard Handleman interviews, Jack Pulwers Collection, Military History Institute, Carlisle, PA [hereafter MHI].

¹² On the strained military-media relations in the early Vietnam period, see William Prochnau, *Once Upon a Distant War* (New York: Vintage Books, 1995). On Tet and the progress campaign, see Peter Braestrup, *Big Story* (Garden City: New York: Anchor Books, 1978), esp. 48-63; William M. Hammond, *Reporting Vietnam* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1998), esp. 104-108.

¹³ James Aronson, *The Press and the Cold War* (Indianapolis: Bobs-Merrill, 1970), 114-15.

¹⁴ Phillip Knightley, *The First Casualty*, revised ed. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 2004), 385-88. Knightley also based his account on an interview with Burchett, a fellow Australian journalist. For his sympathy for Burchett during the intense Australian debate over Burchett's career during the 1980s, see Phillip Knightley, "A Tireless Supporter of the Underdog," London *Sunday Times*, 2 October 1988.

¹⁵ See, for instance, Rosemary Foot, *A Substitute for Victory: The Politics of Peacemaking at the Korean Armistice Talks* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990), 67, 232n74; Ted Galen Carpenter, *The Captive Press: Foreign Policy Crises and the First Amendment* (Washington DC: The Cato Institute, 1995), 49-51; Prue Torney-Parlicki, *Somewhere in Asia: War, Journalism, and Australia's Neighbours, 1941-75* (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2000), 126-27.

¹⁶ On Douglas MacArthur's system and reasoning, see Marion P. Echols to Correspondents, July 2, 1950, General Correspondence,

box 4, RG 6, Douglas MacArthur Papers, MacArthur Memorial Library, Norfolk, VA; Marion P. Echols to Virginius Dabney, 31 July 1950, Official Correspondence Folder, box 2, Marion P. Echols Papers, MHI; Ray Erwin, "Voluntary Censorship Asked in Korean War," *Editor & Publisher*, 8 July 1950.

¹⁷ Douglas MacArthur to Frank M. Boykin, December 13, 1950, White House Counsel File, box 1, Sidney W. Souers Papers, Harry S. Truman Library, Independence, MO (hereafter HSTL]; Marion P. Echols to Russ Brines, 13 December 1950, Official Correspondence Folder, box 1, Marion P. Echols Papers, MHI. See also Charles A. Willoughy, "The Truth About Korea," *Cosmopolitan*, 131 (December 1951): 37.

¹⁸ See, for instance, Homer Bigart, "GIs Pull Back Safely"; Editorial, "MacArthur's Disaster"; Editorial, "Two Faces of the War"; all in *New York Herald Tribune*, 1, 6, and 7 December 1950. Keyes Beech, "War-Battered Seoul Shrouded in Gloom," *Chicago Daily News*, 13 December 1950.

¹⁹ On leaving for Korea to take command of the Eighth Army after General Walton Walker's untimely death, Matthew B. Ridgway was given clear instructions to improve public relations by recruiting able personnel. See J. Lawton Collins to Matthew B. Ridgway, 23 December 1950, Correspondence, Eighth Army, Collins Folder, box 9, Matthew B. Ridgway Papers, MHI. As Roy E. Appleman points out, Ridgway was also a far more charismatic commander than Walker, who was "an undemonstrative man in public" and whose dour exterior had not endeared him to the press. See Roy E. Appleman, *South to the Naktong, North to the Yalu, June to November 1950* (Washington DC: Office of the Chief of Military History, 1961), 417. Ridgway, in contrast, was immediately recognizable in the

uniform of an airborne trooper, with a grenade and first-aid kit fastened to his shoulder straps. See Roy E. Appleman, *Ridgway Duels for Korea* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1990), 1-24; and "Airborne Grenadier," *Time*, 5 March 1951.

²⁰ On James Quirk's tasks, see Matthew B. Ridgway to James T. Quirk, 5 February 1951, Korean War Folder 2; and James T. Quirk Diary, 1 and 21 February 1951, Korean War Folder 1; both in box 1, James T. Quirk Papers, HSTL. Positive assessments of Quirk's performance can be found in Bob Euson's and Ed Hoffman's memoranda, 21 June 1951, Korean Folder 2, box 1, Quirk Papers.

²¹ "Buffalo Editor on Way to Tokyo," *New York Times*, 3 January 1952. See also Matthew B. Ridgway, "Notes on First Talk with Matthews," undated, Series 3: Official Papers, Commander-in-Chief, Far East, box 72, Matthew B. Ridgway Papers.

²² See, for instance, 8th Army Censors Subject Press to Court Martial"; Editorial, "Censorship"; both in *Editor and Publisher*, 13 January 1951. "Double Censorship in Korea," *American War Correspondents Association Bulletin*, March-April 1951, box 27, Jacqueline Cochran Papers, Dwight D. Eisenhower Library, Abilene, KS. These charges continued to be made during the controversy that surrounded MacArthur's recall. See, for instance, "Now It Comes Out"; "Now It Comes Out II"; *Washington Post*, 13 and 14 April 1951.

²³ Eighth Army, PIO Command Report, June and August 1951, and February 1952; Far East Command, PIO Command Report, May, June, and October 1951; all in Entry 429, RG 407, National Archives II, College Park, Maryland [hereafter NA].

²⁴ Walter A. Pennino, "Report of Public Information Activities and Press Relations in the Korean Conflict," 28

November 1950, Folder 6, box 1, RG 78, Walter A. Pennino Papers, MacArthur Memorial Library; Douglas MacArthur to Department of the Army, 12 July 1950, WARZXDA Folder, box 149, RG 9, Douglas MacArthur Papers,; SCAP, Communiqué No.72, 13 July 1950, PIO, Subject File, box 27, RG 331, NA.

²⁵ Eighth Army, PIO Command Report, December 1950; Far East Command, PIO Command Report, November 1951.

²⁶ Memo: Officer PI Course, 20 March 1951, Division of Information, General Files: P11-6ER, box 6, U.S. Marine Corps, RG 127, NA.

²⁷ For correspondents' positive assessments of UNC censorship and public information in 1952, see "Simmons Has No Censorship Gripe in Korea" and "Tokyo Correspondents Battle Inflation," both in *Editor & Publisher*, 6 September and 1 November 1 1952.

²⁸ "Ridgway Appoints Allen New Information Chief," *New York Times*, 4 July 1951; "Press Catches Blame for Stalling 'Peace,'" *Editor and Publisher*, 14 July 1951; "Correspondents at Bay," *Time*, 23 July 1951.

²⁹ Far East Command, PIO, Monthly Command Report, July 1951.

³⁰ David McConnell, "Kaesong Resumes Deadlocked Talks," *New York Herald Tribune*, 1 August 1951.

³¹ William P. Nuckols, USAF Biography, <http://www.af.mil/bios/bio>. "Nuckols Proves Able in Role of Mediator between Army and Press on News of Truce," *New York Times*, 1 August 1951. Significantly, when the talks broke down between late August and late October, Nuckols was briefly reassigned to work on the Japanese peace conference, which was the Truman administration's biggest public-relations success during its final

phase in office. See UP, "Nuckols is Reassigned," *New York Times*, 29 August 1951. For Nuckols' long experience in media relations, and close connection with correspondents, see also Charles W. Hinkle to Harold Boyle, 18 July 1950, Correspondence Folder, box 1, Harold Boyle Papers, Wisconsin Historical Society, Madison, WI [hereafter WHS].

³² Fred Sparks, "Sparks Busts Truce City Gap," *Chicago Daily News*, 10 July 1951; UP, "Reporters Call Kaesong a Red Camp, Cry 'Gag,'" *New York Herald Tribune*, July 10, 1951.

³³ Walter G. Hermes, *Truce Tent and Fighting Front* (Washington DC: Center of Military History, U.S. Army, 1992), 26-29.

³⁴ Far East Command, PIO, Monthly Command Report, July 1951, box 502. On the 1950 experience, see Pennino, "Report of Public Information Activities."

³⁵ "Truce Sessions Make 'Some Progress'"; "Foe Gets UN Plan"; both in *New York Times*, 17 and 28 July 1951.

³⁶ "Press Restrained on 'Roaming' Around Kaesong," *Editor & Publisher*, 21 July 1951.

³⁷ "UN Delegates in Tokyo," *New York Times*, 7 August 1951.

³⁸ "Enemy Believed Ready to Accept Present Line as Truce Buffer Zone," *New York Herald Tribune*, 3 August 1951.

³⁹ John Jenks, "Consorting with the Enemy: American Reporters and 'Red Sources' at the Korean Truce Talks, 1951-1953," *The Journal of Conflict Studies* (2002), 22: 1. For an instance of Western reporters turning to Burchett, see George Barrett, "Reds at Truce Site See UN Yielding," *New York Times*, 26 October 1951

⁴⁰ "A Personal Question," *Time*, 6 August 1951; "Korea Conferees Stage 'Marathon' Cease-Fire Talks," *Christian Science Monitor*, 2 August 1951.

⁴¹ Foot, *Substitute for Victory*, 17.

⁴² Melvin B. Vorhees, *Korean Tales* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1952), 15; *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1951*, 7: 594 [hereafter *FRUS*].

⁴³ Frank A. Allen to Floyd L. Parks, 23 July 1951, Chief of Information, Unclassified Central Decimal File, 000.74, box 60, RG 319, NA; Far East Command, PIO, Monthly Command Report, July 1951, box 502.

⁴⁴ *FRUS, 1951, 7: 758, 761*

⁴⁵ "Reds Suggest Breakdown," *New York Times*, 2 August 1951. Allan E. Goodman, ed., *Negotiating While Fighting: The Diary of Admiral C. Turner Joy at the Korean Armistice Conference* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1978), 23.

⁴⁶ "Enemy Believed Ready to Accept Present Line as Truce Buffer Zone"; "Statement to Japanese"; both in *New York Herald Tribune*, 3 and 4 August 1951.

⁴⁷ C. Turner Joy, press conference, 14 August 1951, Korean War Communiqués, box 5, RG 319, NA. "Still No Compromise at Parley"; "Joy Asks Military Logic"; both in *New York Times*, 14 and 15 August 1951. "Reds Spurn Conciliatory Bid by Allies," *New York Herald Tribune*, 16 August 1951.

⁴⁸ *FRUS, 1951, 7: 1080, 1088, 1101-2; Goodman, ed., Negotiating While Fighting, 46, 68.*

⁴⁹ Goodman, ed., *Negotiating While Fighting, 68, 77.*

⁵⁰ Far East Command, PIO, Monthly Command Report, November 1951, box 579. "Things Have Changed," *Time*, 5 November 1951; UP,

"Reveal UN Offer to Pull Back Line," *Chicago Daily News*, 2 November 1951.

⁵¹ *FRUS*, 1951, 7: 1093.

⁵² Lindesay Parrott, "Korean Foe Pressures for Speedy Accord on Red Truce Line," and "UN Offers Compromise," both in *New York Times*, 3 and 4 November 1951. "Allies Soften Demands on Korean Truce Line," *New York Herald Tribune*, 27 October 1951.

⁵³ Far East Command, PIO, Monthly Command Report, July, October, and December 1951, boxes 502, 561, and 597.

⁵⁴ Hammond, *Reporting Vietnam*, 55. For background on the wire services, see Joe Alex Morris, *Deadline Every Minute* (New York: Doubleday, 1957), 321; Donald A. Ritchie, *Reporting from Washington* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 111-18

⁵⁵ Far East Command, PIO, Monthly Command Report, December 1951. Floyd L. Parks for PIOs, 18 December 1951, Chief of Information, Unclassified Central Decimal File, 000.7, box 54, RG 319, NA. For details on the list, see William H. Vatcher, *Panmunjom* (New York: Praeger, 1958), 126.

⁵⁶ Wilfred G. Burchett to George H. Burchett, 18 December 1951, Correspondence Folder, box 1.1, Burchett Papers.

⁵⁷ Matthew B. Ridgway to John E. Hull, 6 December 1951, Series 3: Official Papers, Commander-in-Chief, Far East, box 72, Matthew B. Ridgway Papers.

⁵⁸ "The Dean Story," *Time*, 31 December 1951. William Dean himself later suggested that Burchett was instrumental in ensuring that he received better treatment. See William F. Dean, *General Dean's Story* (New York: The Viking Press, 1954), 238-50. But, as Bill Shinn, a Korean-born AP reporter, points out, Burchett's press briefings at the time emphasized Dean's "excellent

treatment," rather than the fact that, until now, Dean had not been allowed to stand. See Bill Shinn, *The Forgotten War Remembered* (Elizabeth, NJ: Hollym, 1996), 199-200.

⁵⁹ "Father Christmas Sends PW Camp Pix," *Editor and Publisher*, 2 February 1952.

⁶⁰ Far East Command, PIO, Monthly Command Report, January 1952.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, and February 1952. "Truce Reporters Held Indiscreet," *New York Times*, 8 February 1952.

⁶² "Grist for the Mill," *Time*, 18 February 1952.

⁶³ Far East Command, PIO, Monthly Command Report, January and February 1952.

⁶⁴ C.B. Marshall to Paul H. Nitze, 28 January 1952, PPS Files, Subject: Korea, box 20, State Department, RG 59, NA. On this issue, see Barton J. Bernstein, "The Struggle over the Korean Armistice: Prisoners or Repatriation?" in Bruce Cumings, ed., *Child of Conflict: The Korean-American Relationship, 1943-1953* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1983), 261-307.

⁶⁵ On the flawed screening process, see Goodman, ed., *Negotiating While Fighting*, 355, 367-68, 384-86, 396-99; *FRUS, 1952-54*, 15: 22, 58-59, 113, 148, 192-93; Bernstein, "Struggle Over the Korean Armistice," 285-86; Foot, *Substitute for Victory*, 97-99. On the administration's PR campaign, see Joseph B. Phillips to Roger Tubby, April 25, 1952, White House Counsel File, Korean Emergency Folder, box 22, Harry S. Truman Papers, HSTL; *Department of State Bulletin* (1952) 26: 786-87.

⁶⁶ On the kidnap, see Hermes, *True Tent*, 243-47. On the official reaction, see *FRUS, 1952-54*, 15: 222-23, 259. Burchett and Winnington were inevitably at the center of the communist

effort to take propaganda advantage of this episode, see Wilfred G. Burchett and Alan Winnington, *Koje Unscreened* (London: Britain-China Friendship Association, 1953).

⁶⁷ See, for instance, William L. Worden, "Our Lucky Red Prisoners," *Saturday Evening Post*, 3 January 1952; "Beggar's Island," *Time*, 28 January 1952.

⁶⁸ "The Battle for Control," *Time*, June 2, 1952. For allegations of a cover-up, see David McConnell, "Army Hushed Kojé Expose 9 Months Ago," *New York Herald Tribune*, 12 June 1952. On Welch's response, see George P. Welch, Memorandum for the Chief of Legislative Liaison, June 19, 1952, Chief of Information, Unclassified Central Decimal File, 000.73, box 60, RG 319, NA.

⁶⁹ Roswell P. Rosengren, May 17, 1952, Korean Letters Folder, box 2; Roswell P. Rosengren to Floyd L. Parks, General Correspondence, box 1, both in Roswell P. Rosengren Papers, WHS. On the UN press release, see Mark Clark, *From the Danube to the Yalu* (London: George Harrap, 1954), 40-41; Official Press Release, May 12, 1952, FE PIO Printed and Misc. Matter, box 6 Roswell P. Rosengren Papers

⁷⁰ Eighth Army, PIO Command Report, June 1952; Fred Painton, UP dispatches, June 11 and 12, 1952, Korea Reports Folder, box 6, Roswell P. Rosengren Papers.

⁷¹ Roswell P. Rosengren, 17 May 1952, Korean Letters Folder, box 2, Roswell P. Rosengren Papers. On the operation, see Hermes, *Truce Tent*, 255-62.

⁷² Roswell P. Rosengren, Memorandum, undated, FE PIO Printed and Misc. Matter, box 6, Roswell P. Rosengren Papers

⁷³ Floyd L. Parks to Roswell P. Rosenberg, 22 July 1952, General Correspondence, box 1, Roswell P. Rosengren Papers.

⁷⁴ Wilfred G. Burchett to George H. Burchett, 19 November 1952 and 13 December 1952, both in Wilfred's Letters Folder, box 3, Burchett Papers.