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Wrestling the Initiative: Ridgway as Operational
Commander in the Korean War, December 1950 to April 1951

by

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This monograph examines the conduct of operations of the United States Eighth Army under the command of General Matthew B. Ridgway in the Korean War. During the period of Ridgway's command, from late December of 1950 through April of 1951, the Eighth stopped an offensive campaign conducted by Chinese Communist Forces. After completing a successful withdrawal and defense, Ridgway's Army mounted a series of offensive operations to regain lost territory and reestablish a defensive line along the 38th parallel. Thus, this case study examines the campaign of an operational commander who successfully wrested the initiative back from the enemy, and illustrates the significance of the AirLand Battle tenet of "initiative" at the operational level of war.					
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ABSTRACT

WRESTING THE INITIATIVE: RIDGWAY AS OPERATIONAL COMMANDER IN THE KOREAN WAR, DECEMBER 1950 TO APRIL 1951 by MAJ Joseph R. Cerami, USA, 48 pages.

This monograph examines the conduct of operations of the United States' Eighth Army under the command of General Matthew B. Ridgway in the Korean War. During the period of Ridgway's command, from late December of 1950 through April of 1951, the Eighth Army stopped an offensive campaign being conducted by Chinese Communist Forces. After completing a successful withdrawal and defense, Ridgway's Army mounted a series of offensive operations to regain lost territory and reestablish a defensive line along the 38th Parallel. Thus, this case study examines the campaign of an operational commander who successfully wrested the initiative back from the enemy and illustrates the significance of the AirLand Battle tenet of "initiative" at the operational level of war.

The monograph is divided into four major sections. After an introduction in Section I, Section II discusses the current doctrine concerning the tenet of initiative as described in Field Manual 100-5, Operations. Section III examines the theoretical foundations of the concept of initiative as expressed in the writings of Clausewitz. Section IV describes Ridgway's conduct of withdrawal, defensive and offensive operations in early 1951. The concluding section evaluates Ridgway's operational design using the key concepts found in FM 100-5 -- centers of gravity, lines of operation, and culminating points. KFA 4

In sum, this monograph uses classical theory, current doctrine, and history in evaluating Ridgway's operational design, planning and execution during the Eighth Army's withdrawal, defensive and offensive operations. This case study examines the linkages between the tactical, operational and strategic levels of war. The physical, cybernetic and moral domains of war are employed as a framework for analysis. Several insights emerge from this case study including the significance of: gaining and retaining the initiative in the conduct of both defensive and offensive operations; seeking tactical and operational success, even in the absence of clear strategic aims; building an army's will to fight and win, and the overriding importance of the moral domain; conducting realistic and deliberate planning, and the difficulty of transitioning from the operational defense to the operational offense; and using strength against weakness. Finally, and perhaps most significantly, this study reveals the importance of the operational commander and the genius of Matthew B. Ridgway in the Korean War.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Ridgway had been an enthusiastic supporter of MacArthur's OPERATION CHROMITE, the plan for the Inchon-Seoul Campaign.¹ MacArthur's operational concept was guided by his belief in the importance of gaining the initiative, and he clearly relayed this in a message to the Joint Chiefs of Staff, prior to Inchon:

There is no question in my mind as to the feasibility of the operation and I regard its chance of success as excellent.... It represents the only hope of wresting the initiative from the enemy.²

The genius of MacArthur conceived the Inchon operation. CHROMITE was bold and decisive. The skillful use of an amphibious assault in an operational envelopment appealed to Ridgway, the commander of US airborne forces in the Second World War. Given his appointment as Commander of Eighth Army in late December of 1950, how would Ridgway react in a situation similar to the one MacArthur found himself in during the early days of the Korean War?

In those earlier days the North Korean forces had pushed the Eighth Army into defensive positions in the Pusan perimeter. The offensive conducted by the North Korean Peoples Army (NKPA) had gained and retained the initiative from June to September of 1950. Poorly trained and equipped US forces were dispatched to Korea in a frantic and piecemeal manner. Eighth Army barely managed to hang on to territory in the the Pusan perimeter, in the southeast corner of the Korean peninsula. CHROMITE changed the situation dramatically. MacArthur's operation unhinged the

communist's offensive and destroyed the NKPA as a fighting force. The entry of Chinese Communist Forces (CCF) in October 1950 again shifted the initiative to the enemy side. At the time of Ridgway's arrival in Korea the US forces were once again withdrawing south. The problem facing Ridgway was similar to MacArthur's: how could he wrest the initiative from the enemy?

The operational concepts of both MacArthur and Ridgway stressed the importance of gaining and retaining the initiative. As operational commanders, each General emphasized initiative in his campaign design, planning and execution. Like MacArthur's use of initiative in CHROMITE, Ridgway would demonstrate the importance of initiative in his operations during the period from December 1950 through April 1951. By examining Ridgway's ability to seize the initiative in the course of Eighth Army operations, this monograph will highlight several significant aspects of the operational art. This case study demonstrates how the emphasis on initiative created an environment that stressed an offensive spirit in battle -- which, in turn, gave commanders freedom of action in their duel with the communist forces and clear guidance for operating within their higher commander's intent. Leaders who were audacious and took prudent risks were rewarded. Operational and tactical boldness were key ingredients in the successful operations of MacArthur and Ridgway.

Initiative, as practiced by MacArthur and Ridgway, is one of tenets of AirLand Battle. It is a concept that also has firm roots in classical military theory. The first part of this study

will examine the concept of initiative as described in current Army doctrine in Field Manual 100-5, Operations. This monograph will also examine the theoretical foundations of the concept of initiative, as expressed in the writings of Clausewitz. In the second half of the monograph, the tenet of initiative will be illustrated in the historical record of the design, planning, and execution of Eighth Army operations under General Ridgway.

Ridgway's belief in the overriding importance of gaining the initiative through offensive action was never in doubt. His conversation with MacArthur on December 26, 1950, in the American Caesar's headquarters in the Dai Ichi Building in Tokyo, illustrates this point. At the end of MacArthur's in-briefing for the new Eighth Army Commander, Ridgway had a final question for the Supreme Commander in the Far East: "If I find the situation to my liking, would you have any objections to my attacking?" MacArthur's reply was encouraging and gratifying to the new commander: "The Eighth Army is yours, Matt. Do what you think best."³

This monograph will examine why initiative is so important at the operational level. MacArthur's operational genius in gaining the initiative is illustrated in the success of the Inchon invasion. Less publicized, but of no less significance, are the actions of Ridgway in wresting the initiative back from the Chinese Communist Forces during the period from December 1950 through April of 1951.

Initiative means setting or changing the terms of battle by action. It implies an offensive spirit in the conduct of all operations.

FM 100-5 ⁴

II. INITIATIVE IN AIRLAND BATTLE DOCTRINE

Initiative, as described in FM 100-5, can be characterized by three primary notions.⁵ The first requirement for gaining the initiative is to set or change the terms of battle by action. The second requirement is in forcing the enemy to conform to your operational purpose and tempo while retaining your own freedom of action. Third, gaining the initiative requires soldiers and leaders who are willing to act independently while operating within the higher commander's intent. This requires an offensive spirit, audacity and risk-taking in both leaders and soldiers in all operations. Each of these notions can be analyzed in terms of the physical, cybernetic and moral domains of war; and each notion includes aspects of all three domains. However, the following discussion will focus on what is considered the primary domain for analyzing each of the three elements of the tenet of initiative.

The physical domain and the battle: setting or changing the terms of battle by action

The physical domain of war involves the "whole process of destruction."⁶ Setting or changing the terms of battle includes actions involving the destruction, or the threat of destruction, of the opposing force. There are three possible conditions for seizing the initiative in combat operations. The friendly force may gain the initiative in the absence of an enemy attempt to

gain it. This would include initiating action in a preemptive strike, or after an operational pause or stalemate. A second condition would include retaining the initiative by actions over a longer period of time than the opening phase of combat, unless the enemy force can be completely annihilated in a single operation. The third and most difficult condition is what is commonly referred to as "wresting" the initiative from the enemy. Under this condition the terms of battle must be changed decisively. Action must be taken that will end the enemy's ability to set the terms of battle, while allowing the friendly force to begin setting the terms.

Each of these conditions -- gaining, retaining, or wresting the initiative -- requires undertaking offensive or defensive operations. Over time, forces will undertake combinations of both types of operations. Doctrine prescribes that gaining the initiative using defensive action requires turning the table on the opponent, negating the enemy's initial advantages stemming from his choice of the time and place of attack.⁷ Physical action in the offensive requires not letting the enemy recover from the attack's initial shock. An ideal operation, one that would lead to the physical destruction of the opposing force, includes synchronizing actions through surprise, concentration, speed, audacity and violence to create a fluid situation from which the opponent could not recover. Retaining the initiative requires linking current and future operations, which falls primarily in the cybernetic domain of war.

The cybernetic domain and the duel: gaining freedom of action

Retaining the initiative primarily involves maintaining freedom of action, while causing the enemy to lose his freedom of action. This aspect of initiative most clearly resembles a zero-sum game. Forcing the enemy to conform to your operational purpose and tempo requires dominating the enemy in the cybernetic domain. Doctrine addresses this factor by prescribing that: "Retaining the initiative over time requires thinking ahead, planning beyond the initial operation, and anticipating key events on the battlefield hours, days, and weeks ahead."⁸ The cybernetic factors -- organization, command, control, communications, and information -- are all key elements for shaping the conduct of operations over time.

Organization gives the unit its structure and basic "shape." Command provides purpose and direction by means of an aim. Control ensures that deviation from the established aim is minimized. Communication ensures that the flow of information through the organizational structure continues to support command and control elements.⁹

Physical destruction of the enemy force, short of complete annihilation, must occur over time and, thus, must be linked to dominance in the cybernetic domain. Establishing dominance may mean getting inside the enemy's decision cycle or otherwise forcing him to conform to your initiative.¹⁰ For the operational planner this means making accurate estimates of the current friendly and enemy situations, anticipating future enemy aims and courses of action, assessing friendly force capabilities, and

designing operations which further friendly aims and frustrate enemy aims. To get inside the enemy decision cycle means planning and executing actions faster, and with greater physical effects, than the enemy can design, plan and execute counteroperations. At the operational level, because of the relative size of the organizations and the wider time windows involved, the duel falls primarily within the cybernetic domain of war.

The moral domain and will: leadership, the offensive spirit, and the commander's intent

The third and most important domain of war is the moral domain. The moral domain includes the will of the operational commander in designing and planning decisive physical actions -- battles, major operations and campaigns -- to achieve strategic goals in the theater of war. It also includes the will of lower level leaders and their soldiers in executing bold and violent tactical operations in keeping with their higher commander's intent. James J. Schneider's description of the moral domain explains why it is the most important domain:

The moral domain is concerned with the disintegration and breakdown of will. Morale can be viewed as the magnitude of will within an army. Will is the engine of all action.... Leadership plays a particularly critical role, especially at the tactical level, in sustaining and revitalizing morale.¹¹

Decision-making and command and control in the cybernetic domain, and tactical engagements and battles in the physical domain must begin with an individual's will to plan and execute

the action. And these activities fall within the realm of the moral domain -- the engine of all action -- at both the very highest and the very lowest levels of warfare.

A fundamental prescription of AirLand Battle doctrine is the need for decentralizing decision authority to the lowest practical level without losing precision in execution.¹² While certain circumstances may require a greater degree of centralized control at the highest level, in general, the thrust of the doctrine is to force involvement in the decision-making process to the lowest levels of command. The requirement for initiative under AirLand Battle doctrine is applied at the level of the individual soldier and small unit leader. Thus, doctrine prescribes the need for soldiers with the will and ability to act independently within the framework, or direction, provided by the higher commander's intent.¹³

The moral domain of initiative, as described in AirLand Battle doctrine, also requires audacity and risk-taking by leaders at all levels.¹⁴ Risk-taking is of two types. First is the risk of losing men and equipment to attain the mission. The second form of risk is that a course of action may not succeed or may fail to achieve the end-state desired. AirLand Battle doctrine requires leaders and soldiers who take risks, and superiors who nurture the willingness and ability of subordinates who take risks. It also requires sound staff work and command practices that reduce risk for us and, where possible, increases risk for the enemy.

Linking initiative in tactics, operations, and strategy

The framework presented in this monograph provides a method for examining the use of initiative in conducting combat operations and linking the levels of war. The moral domain provides insights into the fundamental importance of leaders and soldiers who have the will to fight -- the offensive spirit to seek and destroy enemy forces. The battle is the environment for gaining tactical effects. This is, in its most basic form, the physical dimension of combat. The orchestration and sequencing of battles, major operations and campaigns falls within the cybernetic domain. At the operational level, the cybernetic domain includes the ways that physical actions are arranged in time and space to achieve strategic aims.

The successful linking of tactics, operations and strategy is a critical aspect of practicing the operational art. Doctrine should assist in clarifying these linkages. For instance, in AirLand Battle doctrine there is a direct linkage between initiative at the tactical and operational levels of war. FM 100-5 clearly expresses this direct linkage: "Tactical successes in seizing the initiative are used as leverage to seize the initiative at the operational level."¹⁵ Is this also true in linking the operational and strategic levels? The doctrinal answer is found in an explanation of a principle of war called the "offensive."

The FM 100-5 discussion of the offensive involves the use of initiative for linking the means, ways and ends of war. The

offensive is defined as an army's ability to: "Seize, retain, and exploit the initiative."¹⁵ Maintaining the initiative through offensive action is the most effective and decisive way to pursue and attain "a clearly defined, common goal."¹⁶ In discussing the principle of the offensive, FM 100-5 also points out that gaining and maintaining the initiative through offensive action to achieve decisive aims is true in the strategic, operational and tactical senses.¹⁷

This monograph's examination of Ridgway's operations will look at the use of initiative in the physical, cybernetic and moral domains. It will also further examine the linkages between the tactical, operational and strategic levels of war in the Korean context. First, we will continue analyzing the tenet of initiative by examining its foundations in Clausewitz's classical writings on war.

III. INITIATIVE IN CLASSICAL THEORY: Clausewitz

The editors of On War point out that Clausewitz used the term initiative in a general sense meaning "surprise attack."¹⁸ In a chapter on "The Relationship between Attack and Defense in Strategy," Clausewitz writes that the attacker has the advantage of initiative. However, in his analysis, the advantage of selecting the time and place of attack is more important in what he calls the strategic (which corresponds to what FM 100-5 considers the operational level) than at the tactical level.

In strategy as well as tactics, the defense enjoys the advantage of terrain, while the attack has the advantage of initiative. As regards surprise and initiative, however, it must be noted that they are infinitely more important and effective in strategy than in tactics. Tactical initiative can rarely be expanded into a major victory, but a strategic one has often brought the whole war to an end at a stroke.¹⁹

Clausewitz also writes that success in using initiative, in the form of the surprise attack, is due to its "effect on lines of communication."²⁰ This was MacArthur's concept in CHROMITE. Cutting the NKPA lines of communication by means of an operational envelopment at Inchon did result in a major victory. And MacArthur's Inchon-Seoul Campaign did wrest the initiative from the NKPA at the operational level and almost brought the Korean War to an end at a stroke.

However, Clausewitz also notes that there is risk involved in taking the initiative through an operational offensive:

By initiating the campaign, the attacking army cuts itself off from its own theater of operations, and suffers by having to leave its fortresses and depots behind. The larger the area of operations that it must traverse, the more it is weakened -- by the effect of marches and by the detachment of garrisons.²¹

This passage, in effect, reflects the concept of culminating points. In time, for a variety of factors, the offensive will run out of steam. At that point the planner must be prepared to resume the defense: "Indeed, any attack that does not immediately lead to peace must end on the defensive."²² Thus, in this one chapter in particular, Clausewitz writes of the significance of

initiative and combinations of offensive and defensive action in the conduct of warfare.

Clausewitz also writes of the significance of operational combinations in a chapter entitled, "The Character of Strategic Defense."²³ Here he prescribes that when on the defensive "merely parrying a blow goes against the essential nature of war, which certainly does not consist merely in enduring."²⁴ In this chapter Clausewitz gives us a most memorable passage:

A sudden powerful transition to the offensive -- the flashing sword of vengeance -- is the greatest moment for the defense. If it is not in the commander's mind from the start, or rather if it is not an integral part of his idea of defense, he will never be persuaded of the superiority of the defensive form....²⁵

Recall that attacking was on Ridgway's mind from the time of his first meeting with MacArthur in the Dai Ichi Building. Similarly, in both his island-hopping campaigns in the Pacific in World War II, as well as in the Inchon-Seoul Campaign, MacArthur sought decisive combat to wrest the initiative through offensive, physical action.

In the physical domain, Clausewitz clearly recognizes the importance of initiative as a key element of both offensive and defensive operations. From the very beginning of On War he writes of the overriding importance of the physical domain:

Everything is governed by a supreme law, the decision by force of arms....To sum up: of all the possible aims in war, the destruction of the enemy's armed forces always appears as the highest...we must not fail to emphasize that the violent resolution of the crisis, the wish to

annihilate the enemy's forces, is the first-born son of war.²⁶

For Clausewitz, what we now call the cybernetic domain includes arranging the right conditions for physical actions to occur:

There is then no factor in war that rivals the battle in importance; and the greatest strategic skill will be displayed in creating the right conditions for it, choosing the right place, time and line of advance, and making the fullest use of its results.²⁷

It is the general, the operational commander, who must arrange the physical actions of combat in time and space to produce victory. The general's campaign gains the initiative through the masterful arrangement of battles. Clausewitz writes that the strategist must define the aim for the purpose of the war. The draft plan of the war determines a series of actions intended to achieve the aim and the general "will in fact shape the individual campaigns and, within these, decide on the individual engagements."²⁸ The general must select the aim and chart the direction of the entire campaign. In Clausewitz's words: "The strategist, in short, must maintain control throughout."²⁹

Clausewitz reinforces the importance of maintaining freedom of action in the duel in Chapter One of Book Three, "Strategy." Here, he writes that war and its separate campaigns are composed of a chain of linked engagements, each leading to the next.

By looking on each engagement as part of a series, at least in so far as events are predictable, the commander is always on the high road to his goal.

The forces gather momentum, and intentions and actions develop with a vigor that is commensurate with the occasion, and impervious to outside influences.³⁰

Thus, the idea of arranging and linking the separate physical actions in the campaign to suit the strategic aim of the war is evident in Clausewitz's writing.

In addition, he notes that it is the general who is most taxed in the area of strategy. The general's genius is shown in the ultimate success of the whole, and the smooth harmony of the whole of the activity of war is only evident in its final success.³¹ Clausewitz also notes that it takes more strength of will to make important decisions in strategy than in tactics.³² This was true for both MacArthur and Ridgway. We know of MacArthur's anxieties prior to Inchon, caused in part by the Joint Chiefs of Staff's lack of confidence in CHROMITE.³³ Ridgway also felt the burdens of operational-level command.³⁴ Fortunately, when the time came for decisiveness at critical periods of their campaigns, each of these great captains was noted for his nerves of steel.

In the moral domain the notion of will, especially the commander's strength of will, is central to Clausewitz's theory of war. On the first page of On War he writes that "War is an act of force to compel our enemy to do our will."³⁵ The way to achieve this object is to "render the enemy powerless" through the use of physical force.³⁶ Thus, like James J. Schneider, he presents the idea that it is the will that serves as the engine

for all action in war. According to Clausewitz, boldness and daring are necessary qualities of a great leader. But it takes more than will to be an operational commander. Operational command requires the meshing of two key elements in an individual: "Boldness governed by superior intellect is the mark of a hero."³⁷

Clausewitz also writes of the importance of an army's military spirit: "Military spirit, then, is one of the most important moral elements in war."³⁸ This spirit is created through two sources. First, it occurs as the result of a series of victorious wars. Second, it can be built upon the "frequent exertions of the army to the utmost of its strength."³⁹ He also notes that no great captain in history was able to achieve success without an army which possessed the military virtues of bravery, adaptability, stamina, and enthusiasm.⁴⁰ Ultimately, in Clausewitz's analysis, the general is only as good as his army.

Military spirit always stands in the same relation to the parts of an army as does a general's ability to the whole. The general can command only the overall situation and not the separate parts. At the point where the separate parts need guidance, the military spirit must take command One would have to be blind to all the evidence of history if one refused to admit that the outstanding successes of these commanders [Alexander, Caesar, Alexander Farnese, Gustavus Adolphus, Charles XII, Frederick the Great, and Bonaparte] and their greatness in adversity were feasible only with the aid of an army possessing these virtues.⁴¹

However, these virtues, "this spirit can be created only in war and by great generals...."⁴² An army trained in peacetime

presents a special problem for the commander. Even if it possesses "discipline, skill, goodwill, a certain pride, and high morale" it has no strength on its own, and one crack can cause it to shatter, "like glass too quickly cooled."⁴³ The remedy for inexperience lies in the strength of will and superior intellect of the commander.

An army like this will be able to prevail only by virtue of its commander, never on its own. It must be led with more than normal caution until, after a series of victories and exertions, its inner strength will grow to fill its external panoply. We should take care never to confuse the real spirit of an army with its mood.⁴⁴

The army's inner strength, the true measure of its fighting qualities, must be demonstrated by aggressive physical action. In a chapter entitled, "Boldness," Clausewitz writes that: "A soldier, whether drummer boy or general, can possess no nobler quality; it is the very metal that gives edge and luster to the sword."⁴⁵ Both the general and his army must possess boldness. For the general, "higher up the chain of command, the greater is the need for boldness to be supported by a reflective mind, so that boldness does not degenerate into purposeless bursts of blind passion."⁴⁶ Perhaps overstating his case, Clausewitz writes: "Happy the army where ill-timed boldness occurs frequently; it is a luxuriant weed, but indicates the richness of the soil."⁴⁷ He also writes that "Given the same amount of intelligence, timidity will do a thousand times more damage in war than audacity."⁴⁸

Boldness is only to be discouraged when it violates what we now call the commander's intent:

Only when boldness rebels against obedience, when it defiantly ignores an expressed command, must it be treated as a dangerous offense; then it must be prevented, not for its innate qualities, but because an order has been disobeyed, and in war obedience is of cardinal importance.⁴⁹

Thus, boldness is a requirement for both the commander and the army. Boldness is the "noble capacity to rise above the most menacing dangers."⁵⁰ It springs from two causes:

An army may be imbued with boldness for two reasons: it may come naturally to the people from which the troops are recruited, or it may be the result of a victorious war fought under bold leadership. If the latter is the case, boldness will at the outset be lacking.⁵¹

As will be seen in the next section of this monograph, boldness was lacking in the army that Ridgway took charge of in the cold winter of 1950. Even though it had been "blooded" in combat operations, the Eighth Army had not yet grown its inner strength. In a relatively short period of time, it was the actions of the operational commander that developed boldness and initiative in a struggling American Army. By studying Ridgway's campaign design and operational command of the Eighth Army in Korea we can gain important insights into the tenet of initiative, as relayed by the classical writings of Clausewitz, and as captured in current AirLand Battle doctrine.

Ridgway made legions. --T.R. Pehrenbach⁵²

IV. RIDGWAY'S OPERATIONAL ART: CAMPAIGN DESIGN AND OPERATIONAL COMMAND

The history of Ridgway's command of Eighth Army can be divided into three distinct phases. These phases also provide an analytical context for examining the tenet of initiative: the army's retreat in the face of an enemy offensive; the defensive as the enemy culminates; and, finally, the counteroffensive and pursuit -- unleashing the flashing sword of vengeance.

Phase one occurred after the Inchon-Seoul Campaign and the Eighth Army's march to the Yalu River. It began when the Chinese Communist Forces entered the conflict around October 9, 1950.⁵³ From November 25 to December 31 they completed the CCF Offensive in North Korea. Phase two, from January 1 to 24, included the CCF's invasion of South Korea and the Eighth Army's withdrawal. It was during this phase, on December 26, that Ridgway assumed command, after the death of General Walker in an automobile accident. The third phase includes the UN Counteroffensive, from January 25 to April 21, 1951. These three phases cover a fluid series of friendly and enemy actions, with the initiative shifting from the United Nations Command (UNC) to the CCF and then back to the UN forces.

The Eighth Army began offensive operations within thirty days of Ridgway's assumption of command and never again lost the initiative.⁵⁴ The rest of this monograph will analyze the underlying causes of Ridgway's success in wresting the initiative

from the CCF in the Korean War. Ridgway was able to take command of a beaten army and through his genius in the operational art, design, plan and execute a campaign in which his Eighth Army achieved the strategic aim in the Korean theater of operations.

Phase I -- Eighth Army's Retreat -- A Mission Vacuum

MacArthur had given Ridgway a cloudy strategic picture when they first met in the Dai Ichi Building. Ridgway's own record of the meeting revealed MacArthur's concern over the "mission vacuum" created while US diplomacy was attempting to "feel its way."⁵⁵ In MacArthur's view, lacking clear strategic guidance from Washington, Ridgway's mission would be to gain a "military success...[to] strengthen our diplomacy."⁵⁶ At the time of the interview, on December 26, 1950, MacArthur's maximum goal was "inflicting a broadening defeat making possible the retention and security of South Korea."⁵⁷ However, his current operational planning, as reported to the Department of the Army Staff, was for "a withdrawal in successive positions to the Pusan area."⁵⁸ In fact, at this time, the Eighth Army was in a headlong retreat to the south.

Towards the end of the in-briefing MacArthur's overall guidance to his new army commander was: "Form your own opinions.... Use your own judgment. I will support you. You have my complete confidence."⁵⁹ This freedom of action would work to the benefit of Ridgway, the commander in the Korean theater of operations.

Clausewitz writes that at the highest realms of strategy "there is little or no difference between strategy, policy and statesmanship...."⁶⁰ His advice is that the strategist, the general "who drafts the plan of war" and "defines an aim for the entire operational side of the war" must go on the campaign himself to "maintain control throughout."⁶¹ Such was Ridgway's intent during his tenure as operational commander.

The mission vacuum could not exist for long in the ongoing duel with the CCF. Ridgway acted as a soldier-statesman in the Korean theater of operations. His overarching duty was to achieve a military condition that would further the state's strategic aim in the theater. The political end-state for terminating the conflict on favorable terms was not clearly spelled-out for the Eighth Army Commander by General MacArthur, the Supreme Commander of the theater of war. While MacArthur was responsible for overall strategic direction and policy, it was Ridgway who determined the conduct of operations for the Korean theater. In Ridgway's view, MacArthur's maximum goal of retaining and securing South Korea would create a military condition which, through diplomacy, could stop the war at the political status quo ante bellum. This maximum goal would fill the mission vacuum in Korea. It was Ridgway's sole responsibility to find the way to do this on the battlefield.

Ridgway's concern with resuming the offensive reflects the fact that he clearly envisioned the requirement to end the conflict on terms favorable for the United States as soon as

possible. Having served on the Department of the Army Staff prior to his Korean assignment, he knew the war was unpopular with Washington and the American people. In the absence of domestic political support the war would have to be won quickly. And, in his view, this could only be accomplished by wresting back the initiative -- by stopping the CCF offensive and winning back the lost territory of South Korea. In other words, the military means of tactical and operational success could set the military conditions for achieving a favorable political end-state. To figure out a campaign plan, the way to do this, Ridgway would first have to evaluate the condition of his army on the ground. He would spend the first several days of his command on an inspection of the situation at the front, determining the condition of the Eighth Army and its South Korean ally, and following MacArthur's advice of using his own judgment -- as operational commander -- on how best to proceed.

Phase II -- Eighth Army's Defensive -- Ridgway Takes Charge

The situation facing the Eighth Army in December of 1950 was serious but not desperate. The UN forces had gone beyond their culminating point in their advance towards the Yalu on two separate lines of operations. In facing the Chinese offensive, the Eighth Army, under General Walker, and the separate X Corps, under Major General Almond, were unable to set up effective defenses and were forced to retreat. In parallel, if not coordinated, actions the South Korean forces also began their withdrawal.

Of the difficult situation facing Ridgway, Fehrenbach writes:

But over a defeated--even though not shattered--army lies a grayness of spirit. A retreat, once started, is the most difficult of all human actions to reverse....The grayness spread upward, to staffs and even to commanders. Men who had burned their fingers were now wary of the flame.⁶²

The Eighth Army had suffered a series of setbacks in the north. The 2d Infantry Division had been overrun and driven through a devastating gauntlet.⁶³ The Indian Head Division would have to be reconstituted from top to bottom before it could reenter combat as an effective fighting formation. In the eastern sector the 1st Marine Division had suffered, but it had added a heroic chapter to the Corps' history in its retreat from the Chosin Reservoir. The action of the US 7th Infantry Division has been described as a rout -- especially in light of the tragic fate of Task Force Faith, a brave team of soldiers, sent on an ill-conceived operation and then abandoned in the snows east of Chosin.⁶⁴

Yet, despite these serious setbacks, the Eighth Army had not been destroyed. Although disorganized and withdrawing in great haste, the Eighth Army's situation was far from hopeless. Ridgway sized-up the posture of his army relatively quickly. It was not the first time he had seen an American Army in a chaotic withdrawal. As commander of the 18th Airborne Corps he had participated in the Ardennes during the Battle of the Bulge. At that time he had also rushed to the front, stopped retreating

soldiers, and set units into a hasty defensive.⁶⁵ He would be conducting a similar operation during his first days in the Korean theater.

Right off the bat Ridgway was concerned with the state of his combined army, especially the morale of the South Koreans. In country, after making a quick aerial reconnaissance of the inhospitable terrain, he visited President Rhee.⁶⁶ After assuring Rhee of the strong US resolve to stay and fight in Korea, Ridgway inspected the front for three days.

Overall, his assessment was that Eighth Army lacked an offensive, fighting spirit. He observed that the US forces lacked the aggressiveness and alertness of the army he had known in Europe in World War II.⁶⁷ As Fehrenbach has recorded, Ridgway also noticed the grayness covering the Army from the highest levels on down to the individual soldiers. The new commander's first impression was decidedly unfavorable, starting from the moment he discovered that the majority of his headquarters staff was located in Taegu, two hundred miles to the rear of the front lines.⁶⁸

In the physical domain, the CCF had the initiative and was setting the terms of battle. Many American and South Korean units had fled south at a pace faster than the CCF could keep up. While the majority of US forces were withdrawing in fairly good order and killing large numbers of attacking Chinese, the South Koreans were another story.⁶⁹

The Koreans were in danger of complete destruction as a fighting force in the early days of January 1951. In Ridgway's words: "the ROK's had broken and had begun to run."⁷⁰ Not only were they running, but they had abandoned their artillery and crew-served weapons. Many had lost their rifles. Failing in his personal attempts to influence the retreating ROKs, Ridgway finally gave up trying to stop them north of the Han River. In desperation he went to Syngman Rhee in Seoul for help. Ridgway and Rhee immediately flew back to the front, where Rhee gave a speech to his demoralized soldiers.⁷¹ The MP's detailed by the Eighth Army Commander had physically stopped the retreat, but it was the words of their national leader that reinstalled the will to fight in the Korean forces. On leaving, Rhee assured Ridgway saying: "Do not be discouraged They will fight again."⁷² Later, the rejuvenation of the army of the South Korean allies would give Ridgway great satisfaction.

On January 2, after completing his command estimate and visiting all the corps and division commanders, Ridgway gave the order to fall back south of the Han River, abandoning Seoul for a second time in the war.⁷³

As far as the cybernetic domain of war is concerned, Ridgway had been thinking ahead and planning beyond the initial operation. The withdrawal south of the Han River, a major obstacle, in the face of the expected Chinese offensive, had been on his mind since he first arrived in country.⁷⁴ To gain a degree of freedom of action Ridgway had planned for a

defense-in-depth. Realizing that it would take some time to reestablish the confidence and combat effectiveness of the Eighth Army, he prepared plans for withdrawing to successive defensive positions. Although regaining the initiative remained his goal, his assessment told him that it would be awhile before he could mount an offensive. The experienced Ridgway, while possessing an offensive spirit, understood the limited capabilities of his army at that time and place. His boldness was tempered by his superior intellect -- he did not order his soldiers to hold at all costs, or engage in premature, Custer-like cavalry charges.

During this period, in addition to planning for his army's immediate defense, Ridgway had conducted contingency planning. Facing an unclear enemy situation, and determined to remain on the peninsula, he ordered the building of the "Davidson Line."⁷⁵ Engineer and Brigadier General Garrison H. Davidson was assigned the task of building a defensive zone, including trenches and obstacles, to cover the Pusan port area. Ridgway's army would not leave Korea. And Davidson's efforts were an insurance policy, anticipating the potential for a further retreat in the face of a yet undetermined threat. Thousands of Korean laborers may have wondered about the wisdom guiding their efforts. But this episode reveals the depth of Ridgway's planning of the defensive, so vital as the first step in wresting the initiative in the war.

On January 1, at the time of the Chinese push into South Korea, the UN forces were outnumbered, with 365,000 UN forces

facing around 500,000 Chinese.⁷⁶ Ridgway had planned his defenses and traded space for time, relying on the weak CCF logistics support to slow their advance. By January 24 the CCF advance was halted. The Chinese attack had culminated before they reached the most rearward UN forces' defensive position. Their offensive had failed -- they culminated before reaching a decisive objective or destroying the opposing force. Heavy casualties, devastating US firepower and air interdiction, growing lines of operations and resulting supply shortages contributed to their failure; all combined to force the CCF to return north for rehabilitation in late January. Ridgway's defense had held along a line roughly seventy five miles below the 38th Parallel. There, in Fehrenbach's words, the Eighth Army got "straightened out" and never moved south again for the remainder of the war.⁷⁷

Phase III -- Eighth Army's Counteroffensive -- Gaining and Retaining the Initiative

From the start of his initial inspection tour, Ridgway was concerned with the moral domain. He found the Eighth Army lacking in fighting spirit. At the same time, Ridgway also acknowledged the duty of the commander not to squander his soldiers' lives.⁷⁸ There were four separate, but related, activities Ridgway was concerned with in preparing the Eighth Army for its counteroffensive.

First, he expected an offensive attitude on the part of his staff and subordinate commanders. Even during the dark days

after abandoning Seoul, his message to his commanders was to: "Stimulate offensive spirit among all troops."⁷⁹ He must have sent a shock wave through his staff when, at his very first staff briefing he relieved the I Corps G3, who made the mistake of presenting a run down of his contingency plans for withdrawing.⁸⁰ There were no plans for attacking. The defeatist operations officer had chosen the worst possible way to meet the new boss, although he did make a lasting first impression and added to the Ridgway legend. Ridgway would spend the next few months handpicking young and aggressive subordinate commanders. By late February the Eighth Army had four new division commanders.⁸¹

Second, Ridgway was concerned with the tactical skills of his infantry formations. In his book on the history of the Korean War, he writes that prior to the conflict the Army had forgotten that its primary purpose was to be ready to fight effectively at all times.⁸² In simple terms, the Eighth Army units had to be reminded of the basics of the duel at the tactical level -- to find, fix, fight, and finish your enemy.⁸³ Ridgway had formed a tactical vision of how his army ought to fight. The tactics would include occupying the high ground and inviting the enemy to penetrate during the night. At daylight they would rely on American firepower to destroy the CCF.⁸⁴ In a tactical sense, Ridgway's vision called for sequencing small unit actions to force his opponent to create vulnerable masses of troops. He could then use his strength, his firepower advantage, to attack the massed Chinese formations. Like Napoleon and

Clausewitz, Ridgway understood the importance of tactical success in battle. And tactical success served as the foundation necessary in creating the structure for further operational success.

Third, Ridgway also appreciated Clausewitz's dictum that a great captain needs a great army. He saw the nature of the binding contract between leaders and their men. It was vital that the leaders of the Eighth Army show their concern for protecting the lives of their soldiers.⁸⁵ To reflect this concern at the the highest level, the Eighth Army Commander's policy was that only he could issue orders for troops to hold at all costs.

Ridgway also appreciated the need for caring for the basic needs of his troops. At the Dal Ichi Building MacArthur had raised his concern about the poor supply status of the army and the fact that the American soldiers were not taking care of themselves in the harsh Korean winter.⁸⁶ Ridgway found this to be true. He set about getting food and gloves to his soldiers, along with stationery for them to write home.⁸⁷

In addition to caring for these overlooked material needs, Ridgway was concerned with the mental state of his soldiers. He found that many soldiers did not understand what they were fighting for, in an Asian country so far from the United States. Ridgway understood the importance of will as the engine of all action. American soldiers needed a reason for risking their lives while fighting the war. On January 21 Ridgway sent a

personal message to all of his troops, laying out the reasons US forces were fighting in Korea. The letter addressed the simple, but to that point unanswered questions: "Why are we here? What are we fighting for?" Historian D. Clayton James has evaluated this relatively minor effort as a most significant element in reestablishing the will of the American soldiers fighting in Korea. He writes of the message as one of the eloquent expressions of the reasons for the United States's participation in the war.⁸⁸

In part, Ridgway was compelled to dispel doubts about the war created by his senior commanders. The JCS Chairman, General Bradley, had commented that in his view Korea was the "wrong war in the wrong place at the wrong time."⁸⁹ Later, on March 7, MacArthur had made what has been called his "die for a tie" speech.⁹⁰ In the absence of a clear will expressed from above, it was up to the operational commander, operating at times in both a mission and moral vacuum, to provide for both the direction and the will of his army.

Fourth, was Ridgway's concern with personally directing the upcoming series of offensive operations. One of his first steps was to set up an austere forward command post on a barren hill, close to the fighting.⁹¹ Ridgway fully intended to design the plan of the campaign, set the operational aim for the theater, and maintain control throughout. Finally, on January 25, 1951 the Eighth Army went on the counteroffensive. But to start the ball in motion Ridgway began with prudent, and controlled probes

to the north. It would take a series of operations for the Eighth Army to gain its full operational momentum.

Ridgway's described his approach to operational design in his history of the Korean War.⁹² He placed particular importance on terrain study. On his entry to Korea he insisted on personal reconnaissance of the area of operations, both on the ground and in the air. In preparing his operations plans he stressed the importance of conducting intensive map study. In Ridgway's own words, he felt compelled to be familiar with terrain to insure he understood that the missions he was assigning did not exceed the capabilities of his forces. The operational commander, as campaign planner, had to answer the questions about the height of the ridges the infantry had to crawl up, the width of the streams they had to cross, and the trafficability of the roads their vehicles would depend on.⁹³

Time is another significant factor in Ridgway's approach. Ridgway writes of the personal burdens of command at the operational level. He compares his time as Eighth Army Commander with his experiences in Europe, as a division and corps commander in combat. While leading major tactical formations against the Germans he had a Joe Collins or Omar Bradley to report to, and depend upon for guidance and direction.⁹⁴ His position in the Korea War was very different. MacArthur was in Tokyo and Ridgway was on his own for the first time in his career. Thus, he felt an additional responsibility to think ahead and do detailed planning before beginning any operation. In his words: "To a

conscientious commander, time is the most vital factor in his planning."⁹⁵ His prescription is that time is essential to think ahead, make simple but detailed tactical plans, and get a first-hand look at the ground.

In addition, he saw the need to sell the plan to his subordinates. According to Ridgway: "He [the higher commander] checks each task in the plan with the man to whom he intends to assign it."⁹⁶ His technique would assure him that the commander's concept and intent were understood by his subordinates, those who Ridgway expected to execute their operations boldly. It was also a means to eliminate some of the risk inherent in the confusion of combat.

Connected to his concern for knowing the terrain is the commander's need for timely and accurate intelligence. Ridgway complained of his lack of information on the enemy situation when he first arrived in Korea. His intelligence officers were briefing him by showing a 'big red goose egg out in front of us with "174,000" scrawled in the middle of it.'⁹⁷ In addition, he faulted his ground commanders for failing to patrol aggressively and gain vital tactical intelligence. The situation had not progressed very far by the time he was ready to launch the counteroffensive. As a result, he felt personally compelled to confirm the enemy situation facing his army. With the Commander of the Fifth Air Force as his pilot in a two-seater trainer plane, Ridgway flew twenty miles into what was considered enemy held territory. He would begin to attack only when he was

satisfied in his own mind that his plan "was not sending Eighth Army into a trap in which it could be destroyed."⁹⁸ Perhaps with better intelligence, and a confident and aggressive army, such personal reconnaissance measures and strict operational control by the army commander would not be necessary. Given Ridgway's situation and the time available, his caution seems warranted. His offensive could not fail if he were to succeed in wresting the initiative.

In World War II, while leading the elite and battle-hardened 82d Airborne Division and then the 18th Airborne Corps, Ridgway had developed a command style of leading from the front. This placed additional responsibilities on his chief of staff, "Doc" Eaton, but the chief and his commander developed a "dual personality."⁹⁹ Ridgway had great success with this method of command in Europe. It was a method that he expected his subordinate commanders to emulate in Korea. Ridgway talked to them about his philosophy of combat leadership:

The job of the commander was to be up where the crisis of action was taking place. In time of battle, I wanted division commanders to be up front with their forward battalions, and I wanted corps commanders up with the regiment that was in the hottest action. If they had paper work to do, they could do it at night. By day their place was up there where the shooting was going on.¹⁰⁰

In the Eighth Army operations, from January 15 to April 21, Ridgway initiated what has been described as a "war of maneuver" in Korea.¹⁰¹ His counteroffensive featured carefully coordinated, limited objective attacks. Ridgway started with a

series of broad-front attacks with units from two corps, IX and X, advancing at a slow pace of about two miles a day.¹⁰²

Confidence would grow by expanding the size and scope of the units involved in the attacks. Ridgway intended to capitalize on the American's superiority in air, armor, and field artillery combat power. Eighth Army operations would be joint and combined operations integrating allied air, naval, and ground forces. The prime objective would be to use firepower to kill enemy forces and keep them off-balance. This in turn would prevent the CCF from launching major offensives and permit the Eighth Army to regain lost South Korean territory. Initiative gained at the tactical level, relying on firepower and maneuver, would create the conditions for seizing the initiative in large unit operations. These operations would not stop until the enemy had been pushed back across the 38th Parallel.

OPERATION WOLFHOUND, on January 15, was the first in the series of operations planned by Ridgway. WOLFHOUND was a "reconnaissance in force" conducted by the 27th Infantry Regiment of the 25th Division, supported by tanks and tactical air strikes, designed primarily to boost morale, and start the ball rolling.¹⁰³ It was quickly followed by OPERATION THUNDERBOLT, a two division assault, by a division from the I and IX Corps, on January 25. In the course of the operation Ridgway added two more American divisions, a Turkish brigade, and two ROK regiments. His tactics were paying huge dividends. On February 9, after a four day battle, "over 4000 Chinese soldiers were

killed (compared to 70 American troops)."¹⁰⁴ The I Corps reached the Han River west of Seoul on February 10; while X Corps, in OPERATION ROUNDUP, advanced to straighten the center of the Eighth Army's line across the Korean peninsula.¹⁰⁵

Suddenly, on February 11, the Chinese launched their Fourth Phase Offensive.¹⁰⁶ Once again it was the 2d Infantry Division, in positions around Chip'yongni, that bore the brunt of a massed CCF attack. Permission to retreat was denied by the Eighth Army Commander.¹⁰⁷ This time the 2d Division's 23d Regimental Combat Team, aided by a battalion of French Legionnaires, prepared their defenses, fought tenaciously, and relied on the coordinated actions of reserves and airpower to defeat the enemy. As a result, "For the first time in the war an all-out Chinese offensive had been broken."¹⁰⁸ The CCF's 5000 fatalities in the battle for Chip'yongni, where the 2d Division had fought off five CCF divisions, from February 11 to 14, so seriously crippled the Chinese that they would not be able to mount another offensive effort until April 22.¹⁰⁹

By February 18 the enemy was again withdrawing north and on February 21 the Eighth Army continued its advance in OPERATION KILLER.¹¹⁰ By now all five corps of Eighth Army participated in a broad front advance: I Corps in the west, IX Corps in the west-center, X Corps in the center, ROK III Corps in the east-center, and ROK I Corps in the east. In addition to the US and ROK armies the UNC combined forces included integrated Turkish, British, Greek, and Philippine units. During this time

Ridgway praised the marked improvements in the ROK forces fighting alongside his US units.¹¹¹ KILLER succeeded in bringing the UNC forces back to the Han River.

The overall success Ridgway's rebuilding efforts was demonstrated in OPERATION RIPPER. Starting on March 7, the Eighth Army made a surprise crossing of the Han River, and seized a dominating mountain ridge, driving a salient into the CCF's central front.¹¹² The possession of this key terrain threatened the CCF supply and communications route into Seoul. Ridgway had succeeded in placing the enemy on the horns of a dilemma:

By pointing a dagger at the enemy's heart-line, actually at the brain of the enemy commander, it forced him to choose between attacking us at tremendous disadvantage to himself (inasmuch as we controlled the high ground) or abandoning the South Korean capital.¹¹³

Finding this situation unacceptable, the enemy withdrew without fighting a battle. Divisions of the I Corps, pushing north of the Han River on each side of Seoul "forced the CCF defenders to evacuate in order to avoid encirclement."¹¹⁴

Ridgway's operational envelopment, like MacArthur's CHROMITE, although on a smaller scale, succeeded "with hardly a single casualty."¹¹⁵ On March 14 the Eighth Army found the city abandoned. The next day the ROK flag was once again raised over the "ancient and battered city."¹¹⁶

Ridgway kept the pressure up. In OPERATION COURAGEOUS on March 22, the pursuit continued across the 38th Parallel by all five of Eighth Army's corps, keeping the enemy off balance, and

not allowing him time to regroup. In the following eight days most of the remainder of South Korean territory was cleared of CCF regulars. By March 31 the UNC forces had pushed above the 38th Parallel.¹¹⁷

This mopping-up period was followed by OPERATION RUGGED on April 5, which led to the capture of the Hwachon Reservoir. By April 9 the Eighth Army established the "Kansas Line," a defensible belt of dominant terrain stretching across the Korean peninsula. "For the first time since the Chinese had appeared in the war UN forces stood along a relatively stable line...."¹¹⁸ This would be Ridgway's last major operation in the Korean War. On April 11 Truman relieved MacArthur. Ridgway would be leaving the Eighth Army to assume the post of Supreme Commander in the Far East.¹¹⁹

Americans in 1950 rediscovered something that since Hiroshima they had forgotten: you may fly over a land forever; you may bomb it, atomize it, pulverize it and wipe it clean of life -- but if you desire to defend it, protect it, and keep it for civilization, you must do this on the ground, the way the Roman legions did, by putting your young men in the mud.

T.R. Fehrenbach¹²⁰

V. CONCLUSIONS

The conduct of Eighth Army's withdrawal, defensive and offensive operations is an important case study for examining the notion of wresting the initiative. In Fehrenbach's words: "By April 1951, the Eighth Army had again proved Erwin Rommel's assertion that American troops knew less but learned faster than any fighting men he had opposed."¹²¹ An American Army possessing superior firepower, with air and naval supremacy, faced a technologically inferior opponent. The Chinese peasant army was fighting in a conventional style, one that the American's learned to counter using their strength. Under the firm guiding hand of Ridgway, after a series of defeats in late 1950, the Eighth Army rebounded in a remarkably short period of time.

Ridgway's operations reflect an appreciation of the key concepts of operational design found in current army doctrine and in classical theory. The centers of gravity were the enemy's massed formations. Throwing them off balance required using the strength of American firepower against the enemy's ground forces. Once he wrested the initiative by physically setting the terms of battle and gaining freedom of action, Ridgway sought the fruits of victory in the pursuit. And through thorough planning Ridgway

was able to transform tactical success into operational success, forcing the CCF to conform to the UNC's purpose and tempo.

Ridgway understood the importance of lines of operation. One of his first actions was to bring Almond's X Corps under Eighth Army command and control.¹²² He also demonstrated an important lesson of operational design in OPERATION RIPPER, where he protected his own lines of operation and threatened the enemy's. RIPPER is a textbook case of the effectiveness of launching an offensive operation to gain key terrain and then assume a tactical defensive which threatens the enemy's lines of communication.

The concept of culminating points is also present in Ridgway's writings. He points out that an army commander must be "ambidextrous" with one hand guiding his ground commanders while the other hand controls his vast logistical network.¹²³ Just as his army depended upon its sustainment base, the CCF was vulnerable as it extended the length of its operations from the Yalu River. Ridgway took special care in his planning to insure that he did not exceed his army's culminating point. By closely controlling operations at the front, he insured that the army's advances ended on defensible terrain and did not go beyond the point where they had firepower support. When the CCF advanced beyond their culminating point, Ridgway was quick to capitalize on their vulnerability. It was a mistake the Chinese paid for during their Fourth Phase Offensive.

This monograph also illustrates the linkages in the tactical, operational and strategic levels of war. In the absence of clear strategic guidance, it was up to the operational commander to select the aims of his campaign. Tactical success was key to gaining operational success. And correspondingly, it was tactical initiative that set the preconditions for achieving operational initiative. Thorough planning by the operational commander insured the smooth harmony of the whole -- and was reflected in the success of the entire campaign.

Several significant insights emerge from this case study. Ridgway's operations demonstrated the importance of gaining and retaining the initiative in the conduct of both defensive and offensive operations. As operational commander, he recognized the necessity for gaining the initiative at the tactical, operational and strategic levels of war. Ridgway also understood what we now call the physical, cybernetic and moral domains of war. He sought and achieved tactical and operational success through the physical effects of battle. At the tactical level, he demonstrated the ability to focus his forces' combat power, targeting the strength of his army against the vulnerabilities of his opponent's center of gravity. He arranged and sequenced engagements and battles to dominate his opponent in the cybernetic domain, and gained freedom of action in his duel with the CCF. Through his deliberate and realistic planning, Ridgway shifted his army from the operational defense to the operational offense -- a most difficult transition, especially for an army

that had been defeated and suffered from a "grayness" in spirit. In the moral domain, Ridgway consciously built his army's will to fight and win.

Finally, and perhaps most significantly, this study reveals the importance of the operational commander and the genius of Matthew B. Ridgway, as Commander of the United States Eighth Army. In the Korean War one man made a difference. In praising the dramatic operational successes of the Eighth Army during this period, Clay Blair writes:

Behind these independent and widespread battles constituting the mosaic of this great victory stood its architect, Matthew Bunker Ridgway. Omar Bradley, who did not lightly bestow praise, characterized Ridgway's generalship as a "magnificent job." Indeed so. In a mere fifty-four days Ridgway had totally turned Eighth Army around. He had cleaned out the incompetent leaders, infused his men with that vital self-confidence required for success in battle, and refreshed them by lecture or example on the fundamentals of tactics and firepower. In his autobiography Bradley elaborated: "It is not often in wartime that a single battlefield commander can make a decisive difference. But in Korea, Ridgway would prove to be the exception. His brilliant, driving, uncompromising leadership would turn the tide of battle like no other general's in our military history."¹²⁴

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80. Clay Blair, The Forgotten War: America in Korea 1950-1953 (1987): 574.
81. Goulden, p. 437.
82. Ridgway, The Korean War, p. 88.
83. Ibid., p. 89.
84. Ibid., p. 90.
85. Ibid.
86. Ibid., p. 82.
87. Ibid., p. 87.
88. James, p. 552.
89. Goulden, p. 428.
90. Ibid., p. 453.
91. Ridgway, The Korean War, p. 98.
92. Ibid., p. 100.
93. Ibid.
94. Ibid.

95. Ibid., p. 102.
96. Ibid.
97. Ridgway, Soldier, p. 205.
98. Ibid., p. 216.
99. Blair, Ridgway's Paratroopers, p. 371.
100. Ridgway, Soldier, pp. 106-107.
101. Esposito, Map 11.
102. Goulden, p. 448.
103. James, p. 556 and Blair, The Forgotten War, p. 634.
104. James, p. 571 and Blair, The Forgotten War, p. 654.
105. James, p. 571 and Blair, The Forgotten War, p. 670.
106. Esposito, Map 11, and Ridgway, The Korean War, p. 106.
107. Goulden, p. 449 and Blair, The Forgotten War, p. 697.
108. Ibid., p. 451.
109. James, p. 571.
110. Ibid., p. 571.
111. Ridgway, The Korean War, p. 112.
112. James, p. 572 and Blair, The Forgotten War, p. 737.
113. Ridgway, The Korean War, p. 113.
114. James, p. 572.
115. Ridgway, The Korean War, p. 113.
116. Ibid.
117. Paragraph is a summary of James, pp. 572-573. Also note that on March 23, in OPERATION TOMAHAWK, the 187th Airborne Combat Team made an airborne assault on Munsan. This relatively minor operation failed to meet its objective of trapping the 60,000 soldiers of the NKPA I Corps. For details see Blair, The Forgotten War, p. 762.

118. Goulden, p. 457.

119. Ridgway, Soldier, p. 220. On April 11 the I Corps was just beginning another offensive, OPERATION DAUNTLESS, designed to advance the Eighth Army's front to Line Utah. For details see Blair, The Forgotten War, p. 797.

120. Fehrenbach, p. 427.

121. Ibid., p. 443.

122. Blair, The Forgotten War, p. 573.

123. Ridgway, Soldier, p. 211.

124. Blair, The Forgotten War, p. 712.

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