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“Serious Concerns: Discrepancies between Qing’s Citations and Her Sources,” by Chen Jian, Cornell University

Re: H-Diplo Roundtable Review of Simei Qing, *From Allies to Enemies: Visions of Modernity, Identity, and U.S.-China Diplomacy*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007. Published on 13 October 2010. URL: <http://www.h-net.org/~diplo/roundtables/PDF/Roundtable-XI-44.pdf>

Stable URL: <http://www.h-net.org/~diplo/roundtables/PDF/RT-XI-44-ChenJian-SeriousConcerns.pdf>

Preamble from the H-Diplo Roundtable Editors:

On 13 October 2010, H-Diplo published a roundtable review of Simei Qing’s *From Allies to Enemies: Visions of Modernity, Identity, and U.S.-China Diplomacy, 1945-1960* (Harvard University Press, 2007) [<http://www.h-net.org/~diplo/roundtables/PDF/Roundtable-XI-44.pdf>]. In February 2011, the H-Diplo Roundtable Editors, Thomas Maddux and Diane Labrosse, were contacted by Professor Chen Jian of Cornell University, who expressed concerns with the citations in Professor Qing’s roundtable response. We invited Professor Chen to articulate his concerns in a formal essay.

In order to assay Professor Chen’s claims, we forwarded his essay to two experts on Chinese-American relations, both of whom are fluent in Chinese, and one of whom is a native Chinese speaker. Both scholars indicated that Professor Chen’s concerns were reasonable. We then informed Professor Qing of the situation and provided her an opportunity to respond. She has done so.

Today we are publishing both Professor Chen’s essay, “Serious Concerns: Discrepancies between Qing’s Citations and Her Sources,” and Professor Qing’s response. They are

available in PDF format at:

<http://www.h-net.org/~diplo/roundtables/PDF/RT-XI-44-ChenJian-SeriousConcerns.pdf>

and

<http://www.h-net.org/~diplo/roundtables/PDF/RT-XI-44-Qing-furtherfurther-response.pdf>

With best regards,

Thomas Maddux,
California State University, Northridge

and

Diane Labrosse
H-Diplo Managing Editor

“Serious Concerns: Discrepancies between Qing’s Citations and Her Sources,”

by Chen Jian, Cornell University

I recently read Professor Qing Simei’s response to the roundtable discussion of her book, *From Allies to Enemies*, published in H-Diplo, Vol. XI, No. 44 (2010), pp.48 -88. I welcome Professor Qing’s critique of my work. I firmly believe that healthy academic discussion and debate promote good scholarship.

I find, however, Professor Qing’s essay problematic in several aspects. For example, Professor Qing’s citations are highly selective—she cites only the sources that seem “useful” to her points and ignores others, even some of the most important ones.¹ In describing her disagreement with me on China’s reasons for entering the Korean War, Professor Qing states that “Chen Jian’s argument is that Mao Zedong actively encouraged Kim Il Sung, the communist leader of North Korea, to launch an offensive campaign against the South throughout 1949 and up to the outbreak of the Korean War” (p.52); “Chen Jian’s argument is that the 38th parallel did not matter” (p. 58); Chen Jian “believes that since Mao had already pushed Stalin to change his mind about the war in 1949 and early 1950, and had attempted to use the Korean War to achieve his ambition of making China the center of an Asian communist revolution, he actively prepared to dispatch Chinese troops to Korea, long before MacArthur’s troops crossed the 38th parallel, and even before MacArthur’s Inchon landing in mid-September” (pp. 58-59). None of these statements fairly represents my arguments, which readers can see for themselves by consulting my writings.²

What does concern me—indeed surprises me—is that several of Professor Qing’s quotes, including direct block quotes, do not match her sources. Some of Professor Qing’s citations do not exist in the original texts, some alter or change the original texts, and some cannot be located in the alleged sources.

The following are several cases drawn from Professor Qing’s essay in which her citations and alleged sources fail to match:

¹ One example in this respect is Professor Qing’s almost dismissive treatment of Mao Zedong’s draft telegram to Stalin dated October 2, 1950 (see Professor Qing’s essay, p. 63). Although we now know that the telegram, most likely, was not dispatched, it remains one of the central texts in which Mao’s motivations and calculations related to China’s entry into the Korean War are extensively discussed by Mao himself.

² For my previous publications on China’s involvement in the Korean War, see Chen Jian, “China’s Changing Aims during the Korea War,” *Journal of American-East Asian Relations*, vol. 1, no. 1 (Spring 1992), pp. 8-41; Chen Jian, “The Sino-Soviet Alliance and China’s Entry into the Korean War,” Cold War International History Project Working Paper Number 1 (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, 1992); Chen Jian, *China’s Road to the Korean War: The Making of the Sino-American Confrontation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994; paperback edition with a new preface, 1996); Chen Jian, “Mao’s ‘Continuous Revolution’ and the Rise and Demise of the Sino-Soviet Alliance” and “China’s Strategies to End the Korean War,” in *Mao’s China and the Cold War* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), pp. 53-61, 85-117; Chen Jian, “In the Name of Revolution: China’s Road to the Korean War Revisited,” in William Stueck ed., *The Korean War in World History* (Lexington, KY: The University of Kentucky Press, 2004), pp. 93-125.

On page 54, Professor Qing states: “Kim Il Sung then appealed to Mao and the CCP leadership to support his plan. On October 21, 1949, Mao informed Stalin of Kim’s request and the CCP leadership’s view that this plan should not be implemented under the current situation. On October 26, 1949, Molotov drafted a telegram for Stalin to reply to Mao’s telegram: ‘We agree with your view that at present, the Korean People’s Army should not (yet) launch an offensive campaign. We have also pointed out to Korean friends that their offensive campaign should not be implemented, because militarily and politically this offensive campaign is not ready.’ (‘yet’ was added by Stalin on the draft).” Professor Qing indicates in the corresponding footnote that the paragraph is from the following source: “Shen Zhihua, ed., *The Korean War: Declassified Russian Archival Documents* (Taipei, Sinica Academia, 2003), p. 276.”³ The quote does not exist on this cited page of the volume; nor can it be found anywhere in the entire collection.⁴

On page 55, Professor Qing states: “On November 15, 1949, one month after the establishment of the People’s Republic of China (PRC), Zhou Enlai candidly told Soviet ambassador N. V. Roshchin that his primary concern was ‘the financial and economic difficulty’ the new China was facing. Domestic economic recovery would become ‘the key factor’ in ‘safeguarding the fruits of the revolutionary victory’ in the new China. At this critical moment, Zhou emphasized, if China had to be involved in a war, it would be a ‘fatal blow’ to the Chinese economic recovery.” In Professor Qing’s source, *Dangdai zhongguoshi yanjiu* (Contemporary China Studies), No. 2, 2006, p. 116, the quotation in the above paragraph does not exist. I then checked the transcript of Zhou Enlai’s meeting with Roshchin on November 15, 1949. The content of the meeting does not support Professor Qing’s description and citation at all. Zhou talked about the financial difficulties that China was facing at that time, but he stated that these difficulties were “neither unpredictable nor irresolvable.” Zhou said that “we believe that after two years we can resolve all of the financial and economic difficulties that we are now facing.” Zhou also discussed the military situation of the ongoing civil war. Nothing in the text, however, matches Professor Qing’s description and citation that “At this critical moment, Zhou emphasized, if China had to be involved in a war, it would be a ‘fatal blow’ to the Chinese economic recovery.”⁵

³ Although Professor Qing provides only the English translation of the volume’s title, it is actually a collection of Chinese translations of Russian documents. The source should be cited as: Shen Zhihua ed., *Chaoxian zhanzheng: eguo dang’anguan de jiemi wenjian* (The Korean War: Declassified Documents from Archives in Russian) 3 vols. (Taipei: Institute of Modern History, Academia Sinica, 2003).

⁴ For this case, though, I cannot exclude the possibility that the quotation might have come from a different source, and Professor Qing mistakenly attributes it to the volume edited by Shen Zhihua. Whether or not this is the case, Professor Qing needs to clarify this reference.

⁵ Memcon, Roshchin’s conversation with Zhou Enlai, November 15, 1949, АВПРФ, ф 07, оп. 22, п. 36, д. 220, л. 57-66. I would like to thank Professor Shen Zhihua for providing me with the Chinese translation of this Russian document with its filing information.

On page 58, Professor Qing states: “On June 23, 1950, Mao ordered the transfer of four more corps from Shanghai areas to the Taiwan Strait region, now altogether 16 corps, for the Taiwan campaign. This was just one day before the outbreak of the Korean War.” Professor Qing’s source for the above statement is: “Liu Wen: *Su Yu Zhuan* (Biography of Su Yu)(Beijing: Dangdai zhongguo chubanshe, 2000), pp. 220-222.” My examination into this source indicates that the press, Dangdai zhongguo chubanshe, published a *Su Yu Zhuan* (A Biography of Su Yu) in 2000 (though Liu Wen was not the author).⁶ Pages 220-222 of the text cover Su Yu’s experience in the late 1930s. The biography does not contain any discussion about either Mao’s or Su Yu’s activities on June 23, 1950. In my research, I have not come across any Chinese source indicating that “On June 23, 1950, Mao ordered the transfer of four more corps from Shanghai areas to the Taiwan Strait region.” I would appreciate it very much if Professor Qing could provide documentary support for the statement.

On page 59, Professor Qing describes a meeting between Zhou Enlai and Roshchin on July 2, 1950. She states that at the meeting, “on behalf of the CCP leadership, Zhou Enlai set down the precondition for China’s entry into the war: ‘If the American troops do not cross the 38th parallel, the Chinese troops will not cross the Yalu. However, should the American troops cross the 38th parallel, the Chinese troops would enter the war.’” Professor Qing provides a long footnote for the paragraph: “ ‘Telegram from Roshchin to Stalin, 7/2/1950,’ in Bai Zhongxuan ed., *Selected Russian Archival Documents on the Korean War, January 1949-August 1953* (Seoul: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Republic of Korea). In 1994, Russian President Yeltsin sent part of the Soviet archival documents on the Korean War to then South Korean President Kim Young-sam. Bai Zhou-xuan, officer of East European Division at South Korean Foreign Ministry, edited and translated these documents, and had it published in South Korea. Part of the collection has been translated and published in China. See: Qi Dexue: *Juren de jiaoliang* (Rivalry of Titans)(Shenyang: Liaoning renmin chubanshe, 2010), p. 68. Also see: Qi Dexue: ‘Four Myths about the Korean War,’ 5/21/2010, sina.com (This article concisely introduced recently declassified Russian, South Korean, as well as Chinese archival documents on the Korean War.)”

This note raises several questions. First of all, it gives the reader an impression that Professor Qing is quoting directly from the volume edited by Bai Zhongxuan. Although Bai Zhongxuan is Korean, his name here is spelled in Chinese pinyin. In what language, then, is the volume published? Is it in Chinese, or in Korean, or in English (as indicated by the title of Professor Qing’s citation), or in Russian? Further, Professor Qing provides neither year of publication nor page number for the citation, so the information in the quotation becomes untraceable. I also checked the two other sources that Professor Qing provides in the note. In Qi Dexue’s *Juren de Jiaoliang*, nothing on page 68 is relevant to Professor Qing’s quotation or discussion; also, nowhere in Qi’s book is the quoted telegram mentioned. In the other source, an article by Qi published on sina.com, Professor Qing fails to provide the complete web address with the exact *Uniform Resource Locator (URL)* for the article. By

⁶ Zhu Ying, Wen Jinghu, Xiong Zhengyan, and Du Kuiyuan, *Su Yu Zhuan* (A Biography of Su Yu)(Beijing: Dangdai zhongguo chubanshe, 2000).

searching online, I find a quite widely-circulated article written by Qi that appears to be the one that Professor Qing quotes, which was originally published in the Chinese journal *Bainianchao* (Hundred Year Tide). In the article, Qi mentions the volume by Bai Zhongxuan; he also discusses a meeting between Zhou Enlai and Roshchin on July 2, 1950. However, Qi's discussion focuses on how, in early July 1950, Mao Zedong, Zhou Enlai and the Chinese leadership already anticipated that American troops could conduct landing operations in the Korean People's Army's rear area. Nothing in Qi's article supports the contention that "on behalf of the CCP leadership, Zhou Enlai set down the precondition for China's entry into the war: 'If the American troops do not cross the 38th parallel, the Chinese troops will not cross the Yalu. However, should the American troops cross the 38th parallel, the Chinese troops would enter the war.'"⁷

On page 61, Professor Qing offers the following block quotation from Mao's statement at the Politburo meeting of August 4, 1950: "Should MacArthur's troops cross the 38th parallel, should American imperialists win the war, it would become arrogant and threaten us. We cannot afford not to help North Korea, we must help North Korea.... We cannot afford not to speed up preparation now." Professor Qing's source for the quote is: "'Mao's talk at the CCP Politburo meeting, 8/4/1950,' in Pang Xianzhi and Li Jie: *Mao Zedong yu Kang Mei Yuan Chao* (Mao Zedong and the Korean War); Beijing: Zhongyang wenxian chubanshe (Chinese archival and documents publisher), 2000; p. 5." In the original text of the source, however, the first sentence of the quotation, "Should MacArthur's troops cross the 38th parallel," does not exist; it was apparently added by Professor Qing herself. Also, Professor Qing's translation of the source's title is imprecise. It should not be "Mao Zedong and the Korean War," but rather "Mao Zedong and Resisting America and Assisting Korea."

On pages 64-65, Professor Qing states: "[A]t his meeting with the USSR Central Committee delegation three years after the war ended, Mao Zedong talked about the 'bottom line' of China's entry into the Korean War. This 'bottom line' was 'whether American troops would cross the 38th parallel.' He emphasized: 'Should American troops intervene, and not cross the 38th parallel, we would not intervene. However, should they cross the 38th parallel, we would enter the war, we would send our troops to Korea.'" Here, Professor Qing repeats the discussion from page 161 of her book, *From Allies to Enemies*, where she provides the following block quotation: "Our 'bottom line' in the Korean War was whether US troops would cross the 38th parallel. If the Americans intervened, but decided not to cross the 38th parallel, we would not join the Korean War. However, should US troops cross the 38th parallel, we would send our troops across the Yalu. That was the 'bottom line' in our final decision to enter the Korean War." The source that Professor Qing provides is: "'Mao Zedong's conversation with USSR Central Committee delegation, 9/23/1956,' in Pang Xianzhi and Li Jie: *Mao Zedong and the Korean War* (Beijing: Chinese archival and documents publisher, 2000), pp. 7-8." In the source, however, it is in fact the argument of the two authors, Pang and Li, that "whether or not China should dispatch troops (to Korea),

⁷ Qi Dexue, "Youguan kangmei yuanchao yi'echuan'e de jijianshi" (Several Cases of Wrong-story Circulation during Resisting America and Assisting Korea," *Bainianchao* (Hundred Year Tide, Beijing), no. 2 (2010), pp. 76-79.

Mao Zedong actually had a ‘bottom-line,’ and it was whether American troops would cross the 38 parallel.” In Professor Qing’s quote, however, she mistakenly turns the views of the two authors into Mao’s own words, and changes the original text’s third person reference to Mao into a first person reference.

On page 61 and page 62, Professor Qing quotes Mao using the term “North Korea” or “North Korean” in five different places. These are all mistaken. While referring to the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, Mao did not use “North Korea” or “North Korean”; he consistently used “Korea” or “Korean.” This is important in order to understand Mao’s and the CCP leadership’s complicated and evolving attitudes toward the various meanings of the 38th parallel.⁸

These examples have very troubling implications, in my view, and need to be treated seriously by all of us. Before reaching any formal conclusions, I invite Professor Qing to explain the problems outlined above. At stake here is a larger matter—one that all of us face—concerning the norms, standards, and codes of behavior in an age of multiarchival, multi-source and multilingual research.

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⁸ This also appears to be a pattern in Professor Qing’s book, *From Allies to Enemies*.