

From the Dixie Mission to the Marshall Mission: U.S. Relations with the Chinese Communist Party and the Guomindang, 1943-1946

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Introduction

During World War II and in the immediate post-war years, a deep economic and political crisis gripped China. Ever since 1927, the Chinese Guomindang (GMD) had tried to suppress the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) politically and militarily. This struggle took new forms during World War II, when Japan occupied much of China and the U.S. government actively intervened in Chinese politics. From 1943-1945, a four-star U.S. general and several Foreign Service and Army officers attempted to pressure Chiang Kai-shek's Guomindang to prioritize military operations against Japan and to form a coalition government with the CCP, led by Mao Tse-tung.

With the support of Presidents Roosevelt and Truman and two Presidential Envoys, Chiang demanded that the CCP merge its military forces into the GMD's armies, and that the CCP give up control of its base areas in north China. Chiang also opposed the CCP's proposals for a coalition government, since it would have ended his one-party regime.

Beginning in the summer of 1944, a U.S. Army Observer Group stationed at the headquarters of the CCP in north China (the Dixie Mission) developed proposals to send limited amounts of aid to the CCP's military forces. The assessment of these Foreign Service and army officers concerning the corruption and lack of popular support for Chiang Kai-shek's government and armies proved to be much more accurate than that of two Envoys to China and the Presidents they served.

Instead Presidents Roosevelt and Truman responded to the crisis in China by supplying Chiang Kai-shek's regime with hundreds of millions of dollars annually in military and economic assistance with no strings attached during and after World War II. This made a civil war in China inevitable.

A secondary theme of this paper will be the relationship of the Soviet Union to the Guomandang and to the CCP during these same years. Up to the fall of 1945, Stalin and the Soviet Union believed that only Chiang's GMD could successfully resist Japan and unify China.

One of the most important books on the relations between the GMD, the CCP and the U.S. from 1943 to 1945 is Barbara Tuchman's *Stilwell and the American Experience in China, 1911-1945*¹ In her chapters on the 1943-1944 period, Tuchman focuses on General Joseph Stilwell's attempts to force Chiang Kai-shek to take the field against the Japanese military and to institute democratic reforms. Tuchman's book is primarily political and military; she devotes relatively little attention to social conditions in the Guomindang areas and the CCP's base areas,

¹ Barbara Tuchman, *Stilwell and the American Experience in China, 1911-1945* (Grove Press, 1970).

which had a population of 90 million in 1944. Tuchman's narrative ends with Stilwell's recall from China by President Roosevelt in October 1944. Thus the scope of her book does not include the three-way negotiations between the GMD, the CCP and the U.S. in August 1945 and early 1946, and the outbreak of civil war in the summer of 1946.

A second book that focuses on the work of the Dixie Mission is Carolle Carter's *Mission to Yen-an: American Liaison with the Chinese Communists, 1944-1947*.² Carter provides a useful description of the political and military conditions in the CCP base areas from 1944 to 1945. With a Yen-an focus, Carter's book provides relatively little description of the Guomindang and the social conditions in the areas it controlled. These conditions are essential in order to understand the GMD's refusal to engage with the Japanese military, and its stubborn opposition to a coalition government with the CCP and independent democratic forces.

A third book that provides important material for this paper is Michael Sheng's *Battling Western Imperialism: Mao, Stalin and the United States*.³ Sheng's book contains chapters on the CCP's united front policy towards the U.S. from 1942-1945, the impact of the Cold War on China beginning in late 1945, and the CCP's approach to the Marshall Mission in 1946. Sheng's book is principally political history, and provides little on social and economic conditions in the CCP and GMD areas.

One of the earliest academic studies of this time period which is still useful is *America's Failure in China, 1941-1950* by Tang Tsou.⁴ Written at the height of the Cold War, Tsou argues that the U.S. should have applied more substantial and direct military power in China with the goal of building a "Sino-American position of strength in China," and averting a communist victory in the civil war.

Yenan and the Great Powers: The Origins of Chinese Communist Foreign Policy, 1944-1946 by James Reardon-Anderson also provides valuable material for this paper.⁵ However, Reardon-Anderson provides little description and analysis of the politics of the Guomindang and its relationship to the Chinese people, without which it is impossible to understand the politics of the CCP and its relationship to the

² Carolle Carter, *Mission to Yen-an: American Liaison with the Chinese Communists, 1944-1947* (The University Press of Kentucky, 1997).

³ Michael Sheng, *Battling Western Imperialism: Mao, Stalin and the United States* (Princeton University Press, 1997)

⁴ *America's Failure in China: 1941-1950, Volumes 1 and 2* (University of Chicago Press, 1963). Quote from 258-259, also 217.

⁵ *Yenan and the Great Powers: The Origins of Chinese Communist Foreign Policy, 1944-1946* by James Reardon-Anderson (Columbia University Press, 1980). On the CCP's diplomacy, see 115, 163; on its military expansion and the development of civil war, see 78, 132, 161.

⁶ *The Nationalist Era in China, 1927-1949*, with submissions by Lloyd Eastman, Jerome Ch'en, Suzanne Pepper and Lyman Van Slyke (Cambridge University Press, 1991). Pepper's article for this 1991 compilation followed her book, *Civil War in China: The Political Struggle, 1945-1949* (University of California Press, 1978).

Chinese people. Furthermore, Reardon-Anderson claims that the CCP's diplomatic proposals for a coalition government were a political charade, and that the CCP was mainly responsible for the development of civil war.

Another important source for this paper is an article by Suzanne Pepper, "The KMT-CCP Conflict, 1945-1949." It appeared in *The Nationalist Era in China, 1927-1949*.⁶ Pepper's article describes conditions in both the GMD and CCP-controlled areas that were the backdrop to the negotiations between the GMD, the CCP and the U.S. in 1945-1946 and to the outbreak of nationwide civil war in mid-1946. Pepper's description of the political and military nexus between the U.S. government and the Guomindang provides an in-depth understanding of the GMD's defeat at the hands of the Chinese Communist Party in 1949.

Jay Taylor's book, *The Generalissimo: Chiang Kai-shek and the Struggle for Modern China*,⁷ defends Chiang Kai-shek and the GMD in several areas. Taylor claims that "ultra-reactionaries" in the GMD rather than Chiang himself were responsible for sabotaging negotiations and using military force against the CCP.⁸ In addition, according to Taylor, "agents" of CCP leader Chou En-lai "fabricated or exaggerated many accounts of corruption in the postwar period" in the Guomindang.⁹

The most important primary sources for this article are the State Department's *United States Relations with China with Special Reference to the Period 1944-1949* ("The China White Paper"); the two volume set of *Marshall's Mission to China*; memoirs of members of the Dixie Mission; reports by Foreign Service officers John Service and John Davies; official statements by the CCP and the Guomindang; and articles and speeches by Mao Tse-tung and Chiang Kai-shek.

Since the above-mentioned books and the Pepper article cover different subjects and time periods, this paper will draw on all of them. At the same time, they are not sufficiently critical of Presidents Roosevelt and Truman, who made the final decisions to send substantial amounts of military and economic aid to the GMD. They propped up Chiang's one-party dictatorship, and when its military equipment was captured, the U.S. became the quartermaster for the CCP's armies.

The growing popular support for the CCP, the steady erosion of support for the Guomindang, proposals by the CCP to form a coalition government that were rejected by the GMD, the contradictory role of the Soviet Union in China, and above all, increasing support by the U.S. government and military for a corrupt and reactionary Guomindang, will be ongoing themes of this paper.

Stilwell and Others Advocate the Formation of the U.S. Army Mission to Yanan

The initial impetus for a U.S. Army Observer Mission to north China came from General Joseph Stilwell, who was the Chief of Staff for the U.S. Army in China,

⁷ *The Generalissimo: Chiang Kai-shek and the Struggle for Modern China* (Harvard University Press, 2009)

⁸ Ibid. 347, 363.

⁹ Ibid. 330. Taylor does not provide any references for this assertion.

Burma and India. Stilwell first encountered the CCP in 1936 while on a trip to north China as a military attache.

Stilwell observed widespread corruption in Guomintang China. At a major American base in southwest China he observed: "No item, from medicine to half-ton trucks, was not for sale on the black markets of Kunming."¹⁰ In July 1943, Foreign Service officer John Service observed large groups of conscripts being marched, roped together, under the watch of armed guards.¹¹

According to Suzanne Pepper, in the Honan famine of 1944, "Neither the Chongking government nor the authorities in Honan prepared for the famine, though its coming was clearly foreseen. Far from providing relief when the famine hit, the authorities collected taxes and other levies as usual." When elite Japanese troops attacked Honan in the spring of 1944, angry peasants turned on their own troops. Many GMD soldiers dropped their guns and fled.¹²

Stilwell wrote in his diary in early 1944 that Chiang Kai-shek was viscerally opposed to sharing power with the CCP. "Chiang is bewildered by the spread of Communist influence. He can't see that the mass of Chinese people welcome the Reds as being the only visible hope of relief from crushing taxation, the abuses of the Army, and Tai Li's Gestapo (the GMD's secret police) ... Chiang hates the Reds and will not take any chances on giving them a toehold in the government."¹³

In June 1943, John Davies, a young Foreign Service officer detailed to General Stilwell, wrote a prescient memorandum about the contest between the Guomintang and the CCP:

The Kuomintang and Chiang Kai-shek recognize that the Communists, with the popular support which they enjoy and their reputation for administrative reform and honesty, represent a challenge to the Central Government and its spoils system. The Generalissimo cannot admit the seemingly innocent demands of the Communists that their party be legalized and democratic processes be put into practice. To do so would probably mean the abdication of the Kuomintang and the provincial satraps.

¹⁰ Tuchman 354.

¹¹ "Military Movements Noted Along Road from Chungking to Lanchow," *Lost Chance in China: The World War II Despatches of John S. Service*, edited by Joseph Esherick (Random House, 1974) 35.

¹² The KMT-CCP Conflict by Suzanne Pepper 354; Reardon 25. During an investigation of a famine in Honan in 1942, Service found that in addition to increased taxation, starving peasants were burdened by higher rates of labor and military conscription, and more grain was taken from them for the use of the Guomintang military, making it a "man-made famine." *Lost Chance* 12-13.

¹³ *The Stilwell Papers: General Joseph W. Stilwell's Iconoclastic Account of America's Adventures in China*, edited by Theodore White (Shoken Books, 1948) 317, 321.

The Communists, on the other hand, dare not accept the Central Government's invitation that they disband their armies and be absorbed in the national body politic. To do so would be to invite extinction.

This impasse will probably be resolved, American and other foreign observers in Chungking agree, by an attempt by the Central Government to liquidate the Communists. This action may be expected to precipitate a civil war from which one of the two contending factions will emerge dominant.¹⁴

Davies concluded that the U.S. government should not commit itself unalterably to Chiang Kai-shek, but should work for a political realignment and a coalition government that included the CCP. Davies was one of the first to propose sending an official U.S. observer mission to Yen-an to obtain first-hand information about the work and views of the CCP.

Ambassador Clarence Gauss was under no illusion about the future of Guomintang-CCP relations. In the fall of 1943 he reported to Washington that "the continued struggle between the two rival parties" pointed to one conclusion—"civil war will come prior to the conclusion of the war against Japan or after that date would seem to depend largely upon the Kuomintang's estimate of the possibilities of success."¹⁵

In the fall of 1943, William Donovan, the head of the U.S. Office of Strategic Services (OSS), approached Chiang Kai-shek about sending a small U.S. army observer group to the CCP's headquarters in Yen-an. Chiang stalled, stating that he would permit such a U.S. military mission only to an area controlled by the GMD.

Chiang's position was consistent with his strategy of seeking a military solution to the challenge of the CCP. At the 11th Plenary Session of the Guomintang in September 1943, Chiang stated for public consumption that its differences with the CCP should be settled by political means. However, he also told the GMD leadership that the CCP had to "abandon its policy of forcibly occupying our national territory, give up its past tactics of assaulting National Government troops [and] discard the policy of confiscating our land by force."¹⁶ A year later Chiang wrote in his diary:

The essentials of the organization of the Communist Party are: (1) violence (i.e. oppression) and ruthless killing; (2) special agents (i.e. control and surveillance) and repression. The purposes of its training are: (1) elimination of

14 John Davies, "Memoranda by Foreign Service Officers in China, 1943-1945," 24 June 1943 in *The China White Paper* 571.

15 FRUS 1943 cited in Tsou, *America's Failure in China, 1941-1950, Volume 1*, 161

16 "Statement by Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek to the Fifth Central Executive Committee of the Kuomintang," 13 September 1943, *The China White Paper*, Annex 39.

nationalistic spirit and development of internationalist spirit ... (2) elimination of human nature and development of animal nature (arbitrarily dividing the society into classes and causing hatred and struggle) . . . When there is no other alternative, then the only way to deal with the situation is to cut the entangled hemp with a sharp knife.

Chiang thought that once the CCP's military forces were defeated, "if our armies reach these areas, the people will welcome our liberating them." Chiang also believed that, when they had the opportunity, many CCP members and cadre would come over to his side.¹⁷

According to Barbara Tuchman, at the time of Chiang Kai-shek's speech, the GMD had stationed 450,000 of its best trained and equipped troops in a blockade of CCP base areas in north China instead of engaging Japanese forces.¹⁸ Two years later, CCP Chairman Mao Tse-tung reported that communist guerilla units pinned down 64 per cent of the one million Japanese occupation forces in China, while the Guomindang faced 36 per cent.¹⁹ In reports from 1943-1945, the U.S. Foreign Service officers recognized that the Guomindang was not fighting the Japanese because it was conserving its military forces in order to "eliminate all political opposition, by force of arms if necessary."²⁰

In 1943, when Japanese armies were attacking Chinese positions in the Yangtze River valley, General Stilwell drew up a plan to use CCP forces to execute a diversionary attack in northwest China. He also proposed that the CCP be given supplies from the stock of U.S. arms and equipment in the possession of the GMD. In 1944, Stilwell and Chief-of-Staff George Marshall proposed that the CCP launch an attack to blunt a major Japanese offensive in east China, code-named ICHIGO. Both plans were rejected by the Generalissimo.²¹

In September 1944, General Stilwell stepped up his pressure on Chiang Kai-shek to take to the field against the Japanese forces. Stilwell argued that the sixteen GMD divisions that blockaded the communist rear areas in north China must be redeployed to the East China front, where the forces of ICHIGO had overrun the U.S. air bases in southeast China and were approaching Kweilin, the main U.S. military center in China.

Stilwell also objected to the fact that "G-mo" [the Generalissimo] demanded a

¹⁷ *My Father* by Chiang's son, Chiang Ching-kuo (Taipei, 1956), chapter 3, 1-4, August-October 1944.

¹⁸ Tuchman 440, 461.

¹⁹ "On Coalition Government," *Selected Works, Volume III* (Peking, 1975) 218.

²⁰ "Memoranda by Foreign Service Officers," *The White Paper*, 569-575; report by John Service and Raymond Ludden, 14 February 1945, 575.

²¹ *Stilwell's Mission to China* (Government Printing Office, 1953) cited in Tsou 171.

“blank check “ on U.S. Lend-Lease aid.²² This was at a time when U.S. marines and army units were taking heavy casualties from entrenched Japanese forces in their island-hopping campaigns in the Pacific. Due to Chiang Kai-shek’s obstructionism and the opposition of the War and State Departments to use Lend-Lease aid as leverage, Chiang did not move his blocking armies south during World War II.

One of the most effective opponents of Chiang’s blockade of the communist areas was Madame Sun Yat-sen, the widow of the founder of the Guomindang in the early 1920s. She sent messages to newspapers and organizations in the U.S. and Britain calling for lifting the blockade so that medicine and other supplies could reach north China, and all Chinese could be given an equal chance to fight Japan. Due to her stature, she told John Service “All they can do is to keep me from traveling.”²³

Chiang Kai-shek’s top advisers successfully used blackmail to obtain ever larger amounts of aid from the U.S. In 1943, T.V. Soong, the Guomindang’s second-in-command, threatened to make a separate peace with Japan unless the GMD’s demands for U.S. aid were met.²⁴ In the years after the Japanese invasion in 1937, Chiang Kai-shek made repeated secret overtures to Japan for an “honorable peace” rather than its complete defeat. In 1943, Soong demanded that the U.S. supply the Guomindang with \$1 billion in economic aid. Four months later, the U.S Treasury Department granted a credit of \$500 million to the GMD.²⁵

According to Roosevelt’s administrative assistant, Colonel Albert Elsey, the President believed that “no other Chinese figure appeared to have so many of the elements of leadership or to offer so good a chance for cooperation with the U.S.”²⁶ The worse military and political conditions became in Guomindang China, the more willing President Roosevelt was to support Chiang Kai-shek’s one-party dictatorship. In a meeting with the Joint Chiefs of Staff in late 1943, Roosevelt stated that “the situation of Chiang Kai-shek was critical,” and that he was “determined to give Chiang Kai-shek as far as possible what he wanted, without a quid pro quo.”²⁷

Roosevelt’s alarm at the deteriorating position of the GMD was exploited by Chiang Kai-shek, his American-born wife and the right-wing “China Lobby” in the U.S.²⁸ At the insistence of Chiang Kai-shek and the China Lobby, President Roosevelt

²² Theodore White’s editorial notes, September 1944; Stilwell Papers, 8 September 1944, 327, 329.

²³ *Lost Chance in China*, February 14, 1944, 108-109.

²⁴ Tuchman 371

²⁵ “Secretary of War Stimson to President Roosevelt,” 26 May 1944 in *The China White Paper* 496.

²⁶ “The President and U.S. Aid to China” in *Sino-Soviet Relations, 1945-1955*, edited by Harry Harding and Yuan Ming (SR Books, 1989) 55.

²⁷ Tuchman 368-369.

²⁸ A powerful group of conservative congressmen, retired generals, corporate executives, publishers and missionaries who fought for more military and economic aid for Chiang. *The China Lobby in American Politics* by Ross Koen (Harper & Row, 1974).

finally recalled General Stilwell in October 1944, and failed to impose the condition that the GMD armies engage mainly with the Japanese occupation forces.

In May 1944, President Roosevelt sent Vice-President Henry Wallace to China to try to break the deadlock between the Guomindang and the CCP.²⁹ Chiang told Wallace that he had heard of “criticism of China appearing in the American press, and said that this criticism should be stopped.” Chiang claimed that “the low morale of the people and army was due to Communist propaganda.” In a telegram to Washington D.C., Wallace “expressed amazement at this statement.”³⁰

After President Roosevelt sent Chiang Kai-shek a telegram on June 23 that stressed the need for U.S. intelligence from north China in order to rescue crews of downed B-29 bombers, Chiang finally agreed that the U.S. Army could send a small military observer mission to Yen-an. Three days before Wallace met with Chiang Kai-shek, Foreign Service officer John Service, who was detailed to Stilwell, described the deteriorating conditions in Guomindang China in a lengthy report:

China faces economic collapse. This is causing disintegration of the army and the government's administration apparatus. . . .Peasant resentment of the abuses of conscription, tax collection and other arbitrary impositions has been widespread and is growing. ... The government does nothing to stop large-scale profiteering, hoarding and speculation—all of which are carried on by people either powerful in the Party or with intimate political connections. ... The multiple and omnipresent secret-police organizations, the gendarmerie and so forth—it continues to strengthen as a last resort for internal security.

Obsessed by the growing and potential threat of the Communists, who it fears may attract the popular support its own nature makes impossible, the Kuomintang, despite the pretext—to meet foreign and Chinese criticism—of conducting negotiations with the Communists, continues to adhere to policies and plans which can only result in civil war.

Service called for reforms in the GMD, using Lend-Lease aid as a lever.

We must seek to contribute toward the reversal of the present movement toward collapse and the rousing of China from its military inactivity. . . by the careful exertion of our influence, which so far has not been consciously and systematically used. ... If we come to the rescue of the Kuomintang on its own terms, we would be buttressing—but only temporarily— a decadent regime. Both China and ourselves would be gaining only a brief respite from the ultimate day of reckoning.³¹

²⁹ Roosevelt also chose Wallace for the China mission in order to remove him from the U.S. during the Democratic Party's 1944 Presidential Nominating Convention. This cleared the decks for the nomination of the more conservative Senator Harry Truman as vice-presidential candidate, who became President upon Roosevelt's death in 1945. Garver 233.

³⁰ “Ambassador Gauss to Secretary Hull,” 31 August 1944 in The China White Paper, Annex 45.

³¹ John Service, “The Situation in China and Suggestions Regarding American Policy,” Lost Chance, 20 June 1944, 149-155; also The China White Paper 567-573.

In this memorandum, Service held out hope for the replacement of the Guomindang by “a progressive government able to unify the country and help us fight Japan.” However, Service did not explain how this could happen under the GMD’s one-party police state that was recognized as the sole legitimate government in China by the U.S.

As for the CCP, Service stated that the U.S. should cooperate with communists who were willing to resume the United Front, and pointed out that advancing active operations against the Japanese in north China raised “the question of assistance to or cooperation with Communist and guerilla forces.”

In the fall of 1944, two top-level CCP reports proposed how the party should approach the upcoming Dixie Mission and President Roosevelt:

He is on the one hand dissatisfied by Jiang’s fascist tendency and the passivism in fighting the Japanese; he nonetheless continues to support Jiang politically, militarily and financially. . . The U.S. will never give up its domination over Chinese politics and economy, nor will it reduce its power to influence China’s central government. . . We have to go through the process in which [our] new democracy must struggle against [U.S.] old democracy.³²

The second report, “On Diplomatic Work,” which was most likely authored by Chou En-lai, marked the official beginning of the CCP’s foreign policy. With the goal of achieving greater growth of the liberated areas, the report instructed party cadre to welcome foreign military, diplomatic, economic and cultural delegations as part of developing an international united front.

“The military personnel and armed forces of the Allies may . . . enter our areas in order to carry out the joint tasks of fighting against the enemy and obtain our assistance. Meanwhile we should also welcome military, medical, material and technological assistance.

The report also stated that:

We should enhance our confidence in and self-respect in our nation, but avoid xenophobia; on the other hand, we should learn from the advanced experience of other peoples and should be willing to cooperate with them, but we should not fear them or fawn on them.³³

³² “The Analysis on Diplomacy and Suggestions to the Party Center by the Comrades in the South China Bureau,” 16 August 1944, Sheng 81.

³³ CCP Central Committee, “On Diplomatic Affairs,” 18 August 1944. *Chinese Communist Foreign Policy and the Cold War in Asia: New Documentary Evidence, 1944-1950*, edited by Shuguang Zhang and Chen Jian (Imprint Publications, 1996) 13-17. These documents were released by the Chinese government in the 1980s.

These reports concluded that there was a possibility that the U.S. would provide military aid to Yen-an and force the GMD to enter a coalition government with the CCP, but it was only because Washington wanted Japan's total defeat.

In interviews with Service in the fall of 1944, Mao and other CCP leaders explained that it sought the rapid economic development of China in order to raise the living standards of the Chinese people, and that under present conditions this could only be accomplished by means of capitalism with foreign assistance. Since the Soviet Union was facing years of reconstruction, Mao explained, only the United States could provide the necessary economic assistance. However, he warned that this did not preclude the CCP from turning to the Soviet Union "in order to survive an American-supported Kuomintang attack."³⁴

In 1944, the CCP's three-year Zheng Feng (Rectification) campaign ended. Under Mao's leadership, the CCP developed self-reliant responses to the economic and military hardships imposed by the Japanese army. Zheng Feng popularized the method of communist leadership embedded in the concept of the mass line—which stated that ideas and policies must be developed and tested "from the masses, to the masses." Zheng Feng called for the integration of Marxism-Leninism with Chinese conditions, and rejected attempts to impose Soviet policies on China. The dissolution of the Soviet-dominated Comintern in 1943 contributed to the success of this campaign. It also established Mao as the undisputed leader of the CCP, and allowed him to walk a thin line of supporting the Soviet Union while retaining the CCP's political independence of action.³⁵

The Dixie Mission Comes Into Existence

After Roosevelt and Wallace neutralized Chiang Kai-shek's opposition to a U.S. military observer group, the Dixie Mission geared up in the summer of 1944. A number of Foreign Service and Army officers agreed with Stilwell's assessment of the government in Chungking. They believed that the U.S. should explore the development of closer political and military ties with the CCP in north China.³⁶

The U.S. Army Observer Group to Yen-an—called the Dixie Mission because it was sent to rebel territory—came into existence in July 1944. The first commanding officer and the person most closely associated in people's minds with the mission was Colonel David Barrett from Army intelligence, G-2. Barrett had been in China on active duty since 1924 and spoke fluent Chinese. However, Barrett credits Foreign Service officers John Service and John Davies with playing the principal roles in the

³⁴ John Service, "The Orientation of the Chinese Communists Toward the Soviet Union and the United States," *Lost Chance* 308-309.

³⁵ Garver 242.

³⁶ This was not completely new territory for the U.S. In the late 1930s, before the imposition of the Guomindang blockade on the communist base areas in north China, several foreign correspondents had visited these areas and reported favorably on what they found. In *Red Star Over China*, Edgar Snow wrote in detail about the Long March and conditions in Yen-an, and published the first interview of Mao by a foreign journalist.

formation of the mission and writing about its work.³⁷ Service was identified as the leading political officer in the mission to whom CCP Chairman Mao Tse-tung, the CCP's chief negotiator Chou En-lai (Zhou Enlai) and Eighth Route Army commander Chu Teh (Zhu De) gave lengthy interviews up to Service's recall in April 1945. In one of his first reports from Yen-an, Service wrote that:

Reports of two American officers, several correspondents and twenty-odd foreign travelers regarding conditions in the areas of North China under Communist control are in striking agreement. . . The Japanese are being actively opposed . . . This opposition is possible and successful because it is total guerilla warfare aggressively waged by a totally mobilized population. . . There is complete solidarity of the Army and people.

This total mobilization is based upon and has been made possible by what amounts to an economic, political and social revolution. This revolution has been moderate and democratic. It has improved the economic condition of the peasants by rent and interest reduction, tax reform and good government. . . The common people, for the first time, have been given something to fight for. The Japanese fought now not merely because they are foreign invaders but because they deny this revolution.³⁸

Writing from Yen-an, Foreign Service officer John Davies advocated that the U.S. government shift its strategy to head off Soviet influence in China:

We must for the time being continue recognition of Chiang's government. But we must be realistic. We must not indefinitely underwrite a politically bankrupt regime. And if the Russians are going to enter the Pacific War, we must make a determined effort to capture politically the Chinese Communists rather than allow them to go by default wholly to the Russians. . . By reason of our recognition of the Chiang Kai-shek Government as now constituted we are committed to a steadily decaying regime and severely restricted in working out military and political cooperation with the Chinese Communists.

Davies also reported that from 1937 to 1944, the population of the CCP base areas had grown from 1.5 million to 90 million, "and they will continue to grow."³⁹

In December 1944, Davies pointed out that "the Generalissimo will continue to refuse us permission to exploit militarily the Chinese Communist position extending into the geographical center of Japan's inner zone. With the war against Japan proving so costly to us . . . it is time that we unequivocally told Chiang Kai-shek

37 Colonel David Barrett, *Dixie Mission: The United States Army Observer Group in Yen-an, 1944* (The Center for Chinese Studies: University of California at Berkeley, 1970) 23.

38 John Service, "Memoranda of Foreign Service Officers," 9 October 1944, The White Paper 566.

39 John Davies, "Memoranda of Foreign Service Officers," 7 and 15 November 1944 in The White Paper 566-567, 574.

that we will work with and, within our discretion, supply whatever Chinese forces we believe can contribute most to the war against Japan.”⁴⁰

In January 1945, Secretary of State Edward Stettinius. informed Roosevelt that “Chiang is in a dilemma. Coalition would mean an end of conservative Kuomintang domination and open the way for the more virile and popular Communists to extend their influence to the point perhaps of controlling the government. Failure to settle with the Communists, who are daily growing stronger, would invite the danger of an eventual overthrow of the Kuomintang.”⁴¹ The positions of Stilwell and Stettinius helped to open the door for the work of the Dixie Mission.

The objectives of the Mission were to generate reports on conditions in the CCP areas and proposals for U.S. relations with the CCP; to obtain intelligence on the Japanese forces; to teach communist soldiers U.S. tactics and the use of American weapons; and most importantly, to gather intelligence on the CCP’s military forces in north China.

In late 1944, the generals of the CCP’s Eighth Route Army briefed Barrett on the deployment of their military forces and their strategy in the anti-Japanese war. This information enabled Barrett to compose reports on the strength of the communist forces and “what they were likely to be able to contribute in the future.” Barrett recommended that “initially the Communists should be given a relatively small number of rifles, machine guns, trench mortars, bazookas, and some light artillery. If they made good use of the arms and equipment in fighting the Japanese, I recommended they be given additional larger amounts.”⁴² A briefing for Service in August 1944 demonstrated the importance to the CCP of acquiring weapons; out of 2,610,000 regulars and members of the People’s Militia, only 282,000 had rifles, mainly captured from the Japanese or Japanese-led puppet troops.⁴³

In September 1944, the CCP Party Center held a meeting on how to relate to the Dixie Mission and the Roosevelt administration. After the meeting, Chou En-lai wrote a letter to General Stilwell in which he raised three points: The crisis in China was caused by the GMD’s political fascism and military defeatism and it should therefore be replaced by a coalition government; in contrast to the GMD, the CCP

⁴⁰ John Davies, *Ibid*, 12 December 1944, 574-575.

⁴¹ Feis Herbert, *The China Tangle: The American Effort in China from Pearl Harbor to the Marshall Mission* (Princeton University Press, 1965) 219-220.

⁴² Barrett 36, 90.

⁴³ Lost Chance 205-208.

was fighting the Japanese victoriously, so the CCP should be recognized and supplied with at least one-half of the total U.S. weapons and munitions for China under the Lend-Lease program; and the GMD military blockade against the communist base areas should be removed.⁴⁴

The CCP leaders saw some progress in this direction as a result of two trips behind enemy lines led by ranking Dixie Mission officers between September 1944 and January 1945. The first trip to north Shensi was led by the mission's chief medical officer, Major M.A. Casberg, and included three reporters from the New York Times, London Times and the Baltimore Sun. According to Casberg:

One of the most impressive facts gleaned from this trip was the complete solidarity of the soldiers and the civilians. This solidarity increases as one approaches the front. . . .The villagers are very generous in supplying the needs of the soldiers, all food being paid for in full.

One cannot travel very far near the front without meeting the People's Militia, who at intervals average two to three miles as guards ... Mine warfare has been converted into an effective weapon by the People's Militia, so much so that in many areas the Japanese are afraid to venture far from their blockhouses Besides gaining military intelligence, members of the People's Militia act as guides for the soldiers of the Eighth Route Army. Much of the fighting is done at night and the terrain is rough, so it is a great advantage for the soldiers to have as guides men who have been born and raised in the vicinity and know every inch of the ground.

The correspondents on Casberg's trip witnessed the capture of two Japanese blockhouses and 70 rifles. In the area they visited, the People's Militia participated in fighting and captured several blockhouses without the aid of the regulars. Forty Chinese puppet troops deserted and came over to the communist forces with their weapons. The correspondents also described a system of cooperative labor whereby peasants and soldiers harvested their crops as soon as possible in order to frustrate Japanese foraging raids.⁴⁵

From October 1944 to January 1945, Colonel W. J. Peterkin, Foreign Service officer Raymond Ludden and five other members of the Dixie Mission made a four-month trip behind enemy lines. They observed the military tactics employed by communist guerillas, including tunnel warfare. Peterkin's team inspected several tunnel systems, which extended a distance of two to four miles underground. These cave-like tunnels enabled the villagers and guerillas to escape from enemy raiding parties and to hide harvested crops from the Japanese. The team also received demonstrations of the manufacture of crude weapons in local machine shops, and observed how the guerillas worked in the fields together with local farmers. Reliable intelligence from these peasants enabled these readily identified Americans to travel within a mile of one blockhouse, and protected them from pursuing Japanese forces.

⁴⁴ Sheng 83.

⁴⁵ "American Officers and Foreign Correspondents Report Active Popular Support of the Eighth Route Army at Front," 9 October 1944, *Lost Chance*, 234-244.

Peterkin's team met up with the crew of a downed B-29 who had been rescued by communist guerillas, and sent them on their way to Yen-an. According to Service, as of early 1945, almost all of the important communist-held areas in north and central China had been visited by U.S. military observers or rescued air crews. This verified CCP claims of controlling the countryside of most of "Japanese-occupied China."⁴⁶

After his trip, Colonel Peterkin recommended to General Wedemeyer that demolition equipment be sent to Yen-an in order to assist the CCP's forces in sabotaging Japanese-held railways and communication systems in north China.⁴⁷ Even though Peterkin's proposal to provide limited amounts of military aid to the CCP would have strengthened the anti-Japanese resistance in north China, it met the same fate as Colonel Barrett's plan on the desks of military leaders and government officials in Washington D.C. and Chungking. Rejecting these plans, Ambassador Hurley wrote in February 1945, "I am of the firm opinion that such help would be identical to supplying arms to the Communist armed party, and would therefore be a dangerous precedent."⁴⁸

An important source of intelligence on Japanese forces came from prisoners. The policy of the CCP in Yen-an was to treat its Japanese POWs humanely. A Japanese-speaking Foreign Service officer, John Emmerson, spent hours questioning about 150 Japanese POWs, who willingly provided important intelligence on their units. The communists invited Emmerson to inspect their POW operation, which was an educational institution. In this "workers and peasants school," Japanese communists and Japanese-speaking CCP members consulted the POWs in the preparation of propaganda aimed at Japanese troops. They also raised the POWs' political consciousness and developed them into revolutionaries.⁴⁹

Service reported on the absence of banditry in the communist base areas, stating that this was due to improvement of the economic conditions of the peasants, and to the mobilization of the population into mass organizations in support of the anti-Japanese war. In contrast, Service gave the following reasons for the prevalence of banditry in Guomindang territory: "Opposition to harsh military conscription; impoverishment by heavy taxation and grain collections; the presence of large numbers of deserting and half-starved soldiers; discriminatory treatment of aboriginal or minority groups (such as the Miao tribes in Kweichow or the Mohammedans in Kansu); and popular resentment of oppressive and corrupt government."⁵⁰

⁴⁶ "Verification of Communist Territorial Claims by Direct American Observation," 17 March 1945, *Lost Chance*, 244-246.

⁴⁷ *Inside China: An Eyewitness Account of America's Mission to Yen-an* (Gateway Press, 1992) 36-49, 147-148.

⁴⁸ "The Military Situation in the Far East," cited in Tsou 178.

⁴⁹ John Davies, *China Hand: An Autobiography* (Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 2012) 223. Emmerson later wrote *The Japanese Thread: A Life in the U.S. Foreign Service* (Holt, 1978).

⁵⁰ *Lost Chance*, October 2, 1944, 188-190.

At the end of 1944, the CCP's top generals held a meeting to discuss the conditions in which CCP-U.S. military cooperation could take place: U.S. troops that landed in Shandong Province and other CCP-held areas must obey CCP policies and laws; GMD troops could not follow the Americans into CCP-held areas; and U.S. arms and munitions for twenty brigades of communist troops should be delivered to the CCP.⁵¹

In 1944 and early 1945, the CCP leadership held a series of discussions with U.S. officers about assisting American units if they landed in the Shandong Peninsula and other coastal areas in north China controlled by the CCP. The goal of Yen-an in these plans was the defeat of Japan and lifting the pressure of the Japanese Army on its base areas. At least until the recall of General Stilwell in October 1944, the CCP was willing to consider the appointment of an Allied Supreme Commander in order to coordinate all operations against Japan in China.⁵²

In December 1944, Maj. General Robert McClure presented Yen-an with a plan for an airborne unit of 4,000-5,000 who would lead CCP-U.S. sabotage teams behind Japanese lines. This plan was vetoed by the new Ambassador, Patrick Hurley, before the details were worked out.⁵³

At the same time that McClure visited Yen-an, Lt. Colonel Willis Bird, the Deputy Chief of the OSS in China, brought Eighth Route Army generals a plan to provide complete equipment for 25,000 guerillas and 100,000 one-shot pistols for the People's Militia.⁵⁴

However, the OSS was playing a double game with Yen-an. It failed to deliver this military equipment to the Eighth Route Army. When General Chu Teh requested \$20 million to be used to bribe Chinese puppet troops to defect and relinquish their weapons to CCP guerillas, the OSS stalled and did not act on Chu's request.⁵⁵

The OSS was also developing another plan for military aid to Yen-an that was aimed at collecting intelligence *on the CCP's forces*. The OSS proposed that the U.S. Army provide the CCP's Eighth Route Army with radio field units as part of an expanded military communication system throughout much of China. The CCP pulled out of this plan when it learned that the OSS would control the radio network, and that the OSS was running its own operations in areas of north China that were under the control of the CCP. Even before the Japanese surrender in August 1945, CCP forces captured several OSS teams that were operating in north China. While it

⁵¹ Sheng 85.

⁵² "Report by John Service on Conversation with Chou En-lai," July 28, 1944, Lost Chance 261.

⁵³ Hurley removed Barrett as leader of the Dixie Mission due to his involvement in these negotiations for U.S. military aid to the CCP. Reardon 61-64.

⁵⁴ Barrett 77-78; Sheng 91-92.

⁵⁵ Maochun Yu, *OSS in China: Prelude to Cold War* (Naval Institute Press, 1996) 195, 220.

negotiated with the CCP in Yen-an, the OSS was based in Xian, south of Yen-an, where it worked closely with Guomindang army intelligence units.⁵⁶

In May 1945, after communist guerillas captured four OSS officers and a member of the GMD secret police in Fuping, Shensi Province, it discovered that the goal of this mission was to establish contact with two Chinese puppet generals and to supply them with arms that would be used against CCP forces. The U.S. military issued a formal protest to the CCP, which Yen-an promptly rejected.

The CCP Central Committee then issued an inner-party directive that its forces arrest, disarm and hold all unauthorized Americans found in areas controlled by the CCP. It took a stronger position of refusing to cooperate with U.S. forces in the Japanese rear, denying American requests to build airfields in north China and, most important, opposing any American military landing in the communist-controlled areas of coastal Shandong.⁵⁷

The CCP's approach to possible U.S. landings in China depended on the time period in question. Throughout 1944 and the spring of 1945, officials in the State Department and even Roosevelt publicly discussed a landing in China. Admiral Nimitz repeatedly told the press that the American military was aiming at the China coast.⁵⁸ By its Seventh Congress in April 1945, the CCP had concluded that American military assistance would not be forthcoming, but would be sent to the Guomindang exclusively.

The CCP's approach to cooperation with the U.S. military during World War II was driven by the fact that the U.S. rather than the Soviet Union was dominant in China from 1941 to 1945. The CCP and the U.S. shared a common enemy, Japan.

The Soviet Union under Stalin's leadership provided all of its military aid to China during the war to the Guomindang rather than to the CCP. After the signing of the Sino-Soviet Nonaggression Treaty in 1937 aimed at Japan, Chiang's regime received several hundred million dollars in armaments from the Soviet Union, including 900 aircraft, 82 tanks and large numbers of weapons for its infantry. 43 per cent of China's strategic minerals trade went to the Soviet Union in exchange for these weapons, much of which was used against the CCP.⁵⁹

Beginning in June 1941, the Soviet leadership pressed the CCP to attack major Japanese troop concentrations to keep them away from the Soviet border in the name of "proletarian internationalism." Mao and the CCP instead pursued a strategy of conducting extensive guerilla warfare and campaigns of political

⁵⁶ Ibid. 167, 186-187, 224.

⁵⁷ "On Our Strategies Toward the Reactionary U.S. China Policy," 7 July 1945, in Chinese Communist Foreign Policy 24-25.

⁵⁸ According to one source with access to Nimitz's thinking on this subject, his statements to the press were made with the purpose of diverting Japanese attention from the real target, the Philippines. Reardon 27, 177. The CCP, of course, was not aware of Nimitz's strategy.

⁵⁹ Soviet military assistance to China ended in 1941 after the German attack on the Soviet Union, when it signed a Neutrality Pact with Japan so it wouldn't have to fight a war on two fronts in Europe and Asia. *The Dragon's War: Allied Operations and the Fate of China, 1937-1947* by Maochun Yu (Naval Institute Press, 2006) 12-13, 17, 21.

mobilizations among the peasantry that preserved the CCP's armed strength and allowed it to expand its base areas in north China. Stalin was not primarily concerned with supporting the CCP, but with keeping the GMD in the war to tie down as much of the Japanese occupation forces as possible and postpone the opening of a Soviet second front against Japan in the Far East.

At the same time, Mao sought to utilize Soviet pressure on the Guomindang to restrain Chiang from launching major offensives against the CCP during the war. Mao also sought to maintain fraternal relations with Stalin and the Soviet Union in the event that the Red Army entered the war against Japan.⁶⁰

The Hurley Mission and the CCP's Seventh Congress: Positions Harden

In the summer of 1944, Roosevelt and the Joint Chiefs of Staff decided to give General Stilwell command power over Chinese armies. Chiang responded with the claim that he could not work with Stilwell, objecting to Stilwell's proposal to take command of all Allied armies in China and control of Lend-Lease aid as a "new form of imperialism."

In September, President Roosevelt sent Patrick Hurley to China as a Presidential Envoy. Hurley had become wealthy in Mexican oil litigation, and was Hoover's Secretary of War, when he received the title of Major-General. In November 1944, Hurley replaced Ambassador Clarence Gauss, who had been close to Stilwell.

After he arrived in China, Hurley presented Chiang Kai-shek with a five-point agenda that had been generated in Washington D.C. This included "the unification of all military forces in China" and "to sustain Chiang Kai-shek as President of the Republic and Generalissimo of the Armies."⁶¹ This was consistent with what Chiang told Gauss in August: "The American government should tell the Communists to settle their differences with, and submit to, the National Government."⁶²

Hurley also backed up Chiang, telling Roosevelt that "if you sustain Stilwell in this controversy you will lose Chiang Kai-shek and possibly you will lose China with him."⁶³ In October 1944, President Roosevelt replaced Stilwell with Albert Wedemeyer as Army Chief of Staff in China. Wedemeyer had been a planner in the War Department. Even though General Wedemeyer had control over American Lend-Lease supplies to China, he did not use them as leverage to force Chiang to take the field against the Japanese military.

The strategy of CCP Chairman Mao Tse-tung and Chou En-lai was to drive a wedge between Chiang Kai-shek's one-party dictatorship and the U.S.'s stated goal of a "democratic China." At the Seventh Party Congress beginning in April 1945,

⁶⁰ John Garver, *Chinese-Soviet Relations, 1937-1945* (Oxford University Press, 1988) 137, 238-239; Reardon 12-13.

⁶¹ Russell Buhite, *Patrick Hurley and U.S. Foreign Policy* (Cornell University Press, 1973) 165-166; "General Hurley's Instructions," 18 August 1944, The White Paper 71.

⁶² FRUS 1944, 6: 547, cited in "Hurley's Mission to China" in *Sino-Soviet Relations* 86.

⁶³ *China Hand* 190-191, 204.

Mao stated that all Chinese military forces must engage with the Japanese; that the GMD must revoke all laws that suppressed the Chinese people's freedom of speech and assembly; and that agricultural rents and interest must be lowered. For the CCP, the only way forward was "the immediate abolition of the Kuomintang's one-party regime and the establishment of a coalition government enjoying nationwide support, including representatives of all the anti-Japanese parties and people without party affiliation."⁶⁴ While Mao and the CCP leadership knew that Chiang Kai-shek would reject the CCP's proposal for a democratic coalition government, they believed that it was essential to raise and stick to this demand in order to take the political high ground among the war-weary Chinese people.

At the Seventh Congress, Mao addressed the position of the democratic parties and why it was in their interest to ally themselves with the CCP:

These people [Chiang and his followers] said to the Communists: "If you give up your army, we shall give you freedom." If these words were sincere, then the parties which had no army should have enjoyed freedom long ago . . . The Democratic League and the democratic faction of the Kuomintang had no military force, yet neither of them enjoyed any freedom. . . Just because they had no army, they lost their freedom.

In May 1945, the Guomindang held its Sixth National Congress. Chiang stated that "our central problem today is how to destroy the CCP." He also announced that a National Assembly composed exclusively of GMD leaders would be held in 1946, thereby closing the door to a coalition government with the CCP and the small democratic parties.⁶⁵ The CCP responded by initiating the process of forming a Congress of People's Representatives of the Liberated Areas that would be convened at the same time as the GMD's National Assembly.⁶⁶

In late 1944, Hurley accepted the invitation of General Chu Teh and John Davies to visit Yanan. Mao and Hurley signed a five-point plan that stated, most importantly, that "the present National Government is to be reorganized into a Coalition National Government." Hurley knew little about Chinese politics. In addition he thought that both the Chinese Communist Party and the one-party, one-man Guomindang were "striving for democratic principles" similar to the U.S. Constitution.

When Hurley returned to Chungking, Chiang and Soong angrily refused to sign the agreement, and told Hurley that he had been "sold a bill of goods by the Communists." When Barrett told Hurley that Mao might show a signed copy of the

⁶⁴ On Coalition Government 236-238. In August 1944, Mao wrote that "given the feelings of the people, it is possible, through our own struggles, to localize the civil war or delay the outbreak of a country-wide civil war." *The KMT-CCP Conflict* by Suzanne Pepper 289.

⁶⁵ Chen Jian, *Mao's China and the Cold War* (University of North Carolina Press, 2001) 25; *Lost Chance* 366, 375.

⁶⁶ "CCP Central Committee to Zhou Enlai," 12 August 1946, Chinese Communist Foreign Policy 75.

five-point plan to the Chinese and foreign press, Hurley yelled, characteristically, "The motherfucker, he tricked me."⁶⁷

During his tenures as Presidential Envoy and Ambassador, Hurley worked with GMD officials to censor Western journalists who he considered to be close to the CCP, and prevented them from traveling to Yen-an.⁶⁸ He removed Davies from Yen-an and China in January 1945, and Service in April.

While he was in Washington in February 1945, Ambassador Hurley was furious when all of the political officers in the embassy in Chungking sent a telegram to the State Department stating that "military necessity requires that we supply and cooperate with the Communists and other suitable groups who can assist the war against Japan."⁶⁹

When Roosevelt learned about proposals for providing military aid to the CCP, he ordered Chief of Staff George Marshall and Wedemeyer to conduct an investigation. As a result Wedemeyer ordered his subordinates in China to sign a pledge: "We American officers, we American military people . . . support the Central Government and will not give any assistance to any other individual, any activity, or any organization within China theater."⁷⁰ In February 1945, Hurley assured the Generalissimo that "when the war with Japan is over, your well-equipped divisions will have a walkover in their fight with the Communists."⁷¹

Mao and the CCP leadership observed this shift in U.S. policy, first with the recall of Stilwell and then with the appointments of Hurley and Wedemeyer. In an attempt to circumvent them, in January 1945 Mao and Chou offered to send a delegation to Washington D.C., or if necessary they would go personally, to talk with President Roosevelt.⁷² Based on Roosevelt's record of consistent support for Chiang Kai-shek's regime, it is highly unlikely that the interest of the CCP leaders was reciprocated.

Since they were not successful in obtaining military aid from the U.S., the principal objective of the CCP leadership after 1944 was to convince the U.S. government and military to remain neutral in the conflict between the CCP and the Guomindang.⁷³ When that proved unattainable, the CCP's interest in a political accommodation with the U.S. came to an end in the spring of 1945. Stilwell, Service and Davies had been recalled, no American aid had been received, and Ambassador Hurley told reporters on April 2 that "there can be no political unification in China

⁶⁷ Michael Schaller, *The U.S. Crusade in China, 1938-1945* (Columbia University Press, 1979) 200.

⁶⁸ "Memorandum by the Deputy Director of the Office of Far Eastern Affairs," 28 April 1945, FRUS 1945 7: 348-350; Buhite 192; Carter 124-125.

⁶⁹ Lost Chance 358.

⁷⁰ FRUS 1945: 7 233, cited in "Chinese Policies Towards the United States, 1937-1945" in *Sino-American Relations* 89

⁷¹ Schaller 209.

⁷² Garver 257; Tuchman, "If Mao Had Come to Washington: An Essay in Alternatives," *Foreign Affairs*, October 1972.

⁷³ Garver 253.

as long as there are armed political parties and warlords who are still strong enough to defy the national government.”⁷⁴

Hurley’s terminology tracked Chiang Kai-shek’s ghost-written book, *China’s Destiny*. In 1943 Chiang wrote that “all adult citizens must join the Kuomintang and youthful citizens must join the Youth Corps.” Referring to the CCP, “If the anti-revolutionary forces based upon the partition of territories by force and feudal warlordism remain in existence for a single day, then for that day . . . the period of military rule cannot be ended.”⁷⁵

At the CCP’s Seventh Congress in April 1945, Mao warned of the danger of China becoming an “American semi-colony” along the lines of the Philippines. In the last stage of the Pacific War, Mao was increasingly concerned with U.S. military landings on behalf of the Guomindang, probably in south and central China. In Greece, British General Ronald Scobie landed in Athens in late 1944, suppressed Greece’s communist-led forces, with the Greek monarchist forces following behind the British army. Thus Mao warned that the CCP should watch out for the danger of an American military intervention of the “Scobie type.”⁷⁶ However, in 1945 the U.S. military decided to concentrate its forces on capturing Japan’s possessions in the Pacific, and then use atomic weapons, rather than prosecute a land war in China.

Mao was not aware that on March 27, Ambassador Hurley and General Wedemeyer discussed China with the Joint Chiefs of Staff in Washington. D.C. According to Army Chief of Staff William Leahy, “They were all of the opinion that the rebellion in China could be put down by comparatively small assistance to Chiang’s central government.”⁷⁷ For America’s top generals, the CCP was no longer an ally in the fight against Japan, but rather was an illegitimate “rebellion” against the Guomindang.

In June 1945. Mao issued an inner-party directive stating that while the CCP should continue to negotiate with the GMD and the U.S., it should prepare for a civil war launched by “Mei-Jiang” (the U.S.-GMD forces) in the near future. On August 10, Mao cabled his commanders: “A civil war is pending. Considering your circumstances, you cannot seize major cities; nonetheless, you should take advantage of the situation to expand your territory, to seize weapons, to strive for small cities.”⁷⁸ However, this offensive had to be called off a week later.

The Soviet Union, the GMD and the CCP, August 1945

In February 1945, Roosevelt, Churchill and Stalin met at Yalta and made secret plans for how Germany and Japan would be defeated. Stalin agreed to enter the war against Japan three months after the defeat of Germany. Roosevelt and General MacArthur believed that an offensive of the Red Army against Japanese

⁷⁴ FRUS 1945 7: 318, cited in Reardon 86.

⁷⁵ *China’s Destiny* (1943). Published in English in 1947 (Roy Publishers) 216, 225.

⁷⁶ On Coalition Government 225.

⁷⁷ Lost Chance 394.

⁷⁸ Sheng 96, 100-101.

armies in Northeast Asia, coming before a U.S. assault on Japan's main islands, would significantly reduce American casualties.⁷⁹

In early April 1945, the Soviet Union announced that it would not renew its 1941 neutrality pact with Japan. With the total defeat of the Japanese Imperial Army approaching, Mao and the Chinese leadership believed that the Red Army would move into Manchuria in a matter of months, and that might provide the CCP with an opportunity for rapid expansion. In his report to the Seventh Congress, Mao stated that "in the international arena the Soviet Union is our single and best friend."⁸⁰ However, the Soviet Union did not prove to be a reliable ally for the CCP from the middle of 1945 to the spring of 1946.

On August 14, 1945, the Guomindang and the Soviet Union signed a bilateral peace treaty, the day of Japan's surrender. This accord lost any rationale for supporting China's resistance to Japan. Under its terms, the Soviet Union recognized the GMD as the sole legitimate government of China, and stated that Soviet "military supplies and other material resources" would be provided only to the GMD, as they had from 1937-1941.

In the 1945 Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship and Mutual Assistance, Stalin placed Soviet national interests over its professed support for the Chinese revolution. Stalin obtained the "independence" of Outer Mongolia as a Soviet satellite, joint-Sino-Soviet control of the Manchurian railroads, and the formation of a Soviet-controlled military zone, excluding Dairen, on the Liaotung Peninsula in southern Manchuria. To Mao Tse-tung and the leaders of the CCP, this treaty was a "cruel betrayal" of the Chinese revolution.⁸¹

Mao later said that Stalin had attempted to tie the CCP's hands at this juncture. "They [the Soviet Union] did not permit China to make revolution; that we should not have a civil war and should cooperate with Chiang Kai-shek, otherwise the Chinese nation would perish. But we did not do what he said."⁸²

Besides Stalin's pursuit of Soviet economic and military interests in Manchuria, he had a low estimate of the CCP's chance of success in a civil war with the Guomindang. In 1944, Stalin told U.S. Ambassador Averell Harriman that the CCP were "not real communists, they are 'margarine' Communists," and that Chiang was "the best man under the circumstances to lead China, and must be supported."⁸³ In a discussion with Soviet and Yugoslav leaders in 1948, Stalin explained his thinking after the Japanese surrender:

79 China Hand 249-250.

80 Garver 260.

81 Tsou 272-283; Mao's China 27-28.

82 *Chairman Mao Talks to the People, Talks and Letters: 1956-1971*, edited by Stuart Schram (Pantheon Books, 1974) 191. Talk given on 24 September 1962 at the Tenth Plenum of the Eighth Central Committee of the CCP

83 Reardon 71.

We invited the Chinese comrades to come to Moscow and we discussed the situation in China. We told them bluntly that we considered the development of the uprising in China had no prospect, and that the Chinese comrades should join the Chiang Kai-shek government and dissolve their army. . . . Now in the case of China, we admit we were wrong. It proved that the Chinese comrades and not the Soviet comrades were right.⁸⁴

In 1945, Mao was aware that the Communist Parties in France and Italy had accepted posts in pro-U.S. governments after the defeat of German occupation forces in their countries. Under pressure from Moscow, the communist-led resistance movement in France surrendered its arms to De Gaulle; the Italian partisan forces handed over their arms to the U.S. army in early 1945.⁸⁵

On the eve of new negotiations in August 1945, Mao wrote that “Relying on the forces we ourselves organize, we can defeat all Chinese and foreign reactionaries. Chiang Kai-shek, on the contrary, relies on the aid of U.S. imperialism which he looks upon as his mainstay . . . U.S. imperialism wants to help Chiang Kai-shek turn China into a U.S. dependency, and this policy, too, was set long ago. But U.S. imperialism while outwardly strong is inwardly weak.”⁸⁶

Chiang Kai-shek, along with Hurley, Wedemeyer and their superiors in Washington D.C., believed that Soviet support for the Guomindang would force the CCP leadership to agree to the terms imposed by the U.S. and the GMD. Under pressure from Stalin to negotiate with the GMD, Mao agreed to restart peace talks with Chiang Kai-shek in Chungking in August 1945. With U.S. support, the Guomindang again demanded that the CCP merge its armed forces into the GMD’s armies and relinquish control over its growing base areas.

The CCP stated that it would only agree to a proportional reduction in the sizes of the GMD and CCP armies, and that it would not give up control of its base areas. The CCP proposed the organization of a transitional four-part Political Conference, and then the formation of a coalition government after the democratization of the GMD government had been completed.⁸⁷ The CCP also agreed to remove its military forces from eight base areas in central and southern China, which it sent to the battleground areas of north China and Manchuria.

Chou En-lai believed that Mao’s unwillingness to make substantial concessions on military and strategic issues had been the major CCP mistake during

⁸⁴ *Tito Speaks* by Vladimir Dedijer (1953) 331.

⁸⁵ Garver 252; Fernando Claudin, *The Communist Movement: From Comintern to Cominform, Volume II* (New York, 1975) 362.

⁸⁶ “The Situation and Our Policy After the Victory in the War of Resistance Against Japan,” 13 August 1945, *Selected Works, Volume IV*, 20.

⁸⁷ Tsou 296-298, 318-324.

⁸⁸ Westad 127; “On Peace Negotiations with the Kuomintang,” 26 August 1945, *Selected Works, Volume IV*, 49.

these negotiations. Mao replied that “there are limits to such concessions; the principle is that they must not damage the fundamental interests of the people.”⁸⁸ In his inner-party speeches, Mao never wavered from the position he first took in 1938 that “without a people’s army, the people have nothing.”

During the Chungking Negotiations, 800,000 GMD troops attacked CCP base areas in northern and central China, and drove through Shansi towards the Great Wall. This latter offensive could have cut off Yen’an from the main communist forces in north China. Mao ordered a counterattack. In a telegram to General Nie Rongzen in north China, Mao stated that “the more battles you win, the safer we are here, and the more initiative we have in the negotiations.”⁸⁹ From 1945 to the outbreak of nationwide civil war in the summer of 1946, both the Guomintang and the CCP “talked and fought”—talked to prepare to fight, and fought to improve their positions in negotiations.

After two months the Chungking negotiations stalemated, and both sides prepared for battle in the post-war period. In an indication of which side the U.S. would support, in August 1945 General Douglas MacArthur issued General Order No. 1, which directed Japanese commanders in China to surrender their troops and equipment only to the GMD. By the end of World War II, teams of American military advisers (“liaison groups”) were operating throughout the Guomintang armies.⁹⁰

In response to the actions of MacArthur and Wedemeyer, General Chu Teh, commander of the Eighth Route Army, issued an order to his troops to demand and accept the surrender of Japanese and Chinese troops with Japanese commanders (puppet troops). From mid-August to mid-October, 220,000 puppet and Japanese troops were captured and accepted the terms of the CCP. Three divisions of puppet troops joined the Eighth Route Army. In an action that boded ill for the GMD in the impending civil war, the commander of a Guomintang army group went over to the communist side, attributing his action to discrimination by the government against his troops in the distribution of supplies.⁹¹

Conditions in the Guomintang and Communist Areas in 1945-1946

The breakdown of economic, social and political order in the Guomintang areas after the end of World War II set the stage for its decisive defeat in the civil war that erupted in 1946. The first sign of this breakdown was the seizure of large amounts of Japanese property by GMD officials beginning in August 1945. Many of

⁸⁸ Westad 127; “On Peace Negotiations with the Kuomintang,” 26 August 1945, Selected Works. Volume IV, 49.

⁸⁹ Ibid. 104; Chinese Communist Foreign Policy, 28 October 1945, 43.

⁹⁰ Tsou 194.

⁹¹ Ibid. 314.

these officials sold factory machinery rather than operate it, with devastating effects on their workforces. Many officials who served the Japanese were entrusted with important posts by the returning GMD governments.⁹² A popular pun in north China in the fall of 1945 was to change the Chinese characters for “takeover” (*jieshou*) to the similarly sounding characters for “plunder.”⁹³

Hyper-inflation was a major factor in the loss of public confidence in the Guomindang. With military expenditures taking up to 90 per cent of the budget, the government printed large sums of paper money to pay its bills. Workers’ wages could not cover their living expenses. In 1946, there were 1, 716 strikes and labor disputes in Shanghai alone. The real income of college teachers in the southeastern city of Kunming dropped by 98 percent by 1946.⁹⁴

The GMD government set the exchange rate at the exorbitant rate of one GMD or gold dollar to 200 “puppet dollars,” which were widely held by the population. The people in the newly “liberated” areas suddenly found themselves pauperized. According to an editorial in a Guomindang newspaper: “Wealth which had taken generations to accumulate was transferred in a twinkling to those who held gold dollars and Nationalist dollars in their hands.” This process created food shortages and starvation in many areas.⁹⁵

In order to maintain “law and order” in areas where Japanese armies surrendered, the Guomindang relied on Japanese officers and Chinese puppet troops in 1945-1946, particularly to guard key railway lines that they had occupied during the war. On August 11, Chiang offered the puppet officers an opportunity to shift their allegiance from the Japanese to serve under GMD commanders.⁹⁶

In 1935, students in Beijing formed the December 9th Movement, which demanded that the Guomindang give up its suppression of the CCP and focus on resisting Japan’s aggression against China. This movement picked up steam in early 1945, when Chinese students in many cities protested repression by Tai Lai’s secret police; many arrested students simply “disappeared.” Anti-American demonstrations protested the reported rape of a Peking University student by a U.S. Marine. In Kunming in November 1945, large crowds of college and high school students were attacked by police and soldiers.⁹⁷ By 1946 and 1947, students were demanding an immediate end to the civil war; an end to U.S. backing of the Guomindang in the war; and a shift in public expenditures from military to civilian priorities.

These economic and political conditions helped the Chinese Communist Party win the battle for popular opinion in the GMD areas during the negotiations

⁹² The KMT-CCP Conflict 307-308.

⁹³ Westad 112.

⁹⁴ The KMT-CCP Conflict 309-313.

⁹⁵ Tsou 312-313.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.* 310.

⁹⁷ The KMT-CCP Conflict 314-316; Suzanne Pepper, *Civil War in China: The Political Struggle, 1945-1949* (University of California Press, 1978) 44-52.

in 1945-1946. They also created more favorable conditions for the growth of the CCP underground in many cities controlled by the Guomindang.

The U.S. government stepped up its military assistance to the GMD in late 1945. General Wedemeyer made a trip to consult with President Truman in November. They decided that the U.S. would arm and train 39 GMD divisions, 15 air squadrons, and establish a U.S. advisory group of up to 1,000 officers.⁹⁸ Wedemeyer had declared at a press conference in late August: "I do not believe that the Communists are strong either in number or effort anywhere in China. . . . I do not anticipate any difficulty with the Communists." ⁹⁹

In its eighteen large and small base areas in north, central and south China, the CCP made changes to the limited rent reduction policy that it had followed from 1937-1945 during the anti-Japanese war. In 1946, the CCP went beyond "reduction in rent and interest" to redistribution of land in order to strengthen its economic and political support among the poor and landless peasants in its base areas. ¹⁰⁰

900,000 of these peasants served in the CCP's regular armies and guerilla forces (renamed the People's Liberation Army in July 1946); 2.2 million joined the People's Militias, which garrisoned newly-occupied areas, kept communications lines open, prevented enemy infiltration, and participated in military operations; Local Self-Defense Corps transported supplies to the front and carried the wounded to the rear; and Women's Associations organized hospital work and handicraft production to support the war. ¹⁰¹

Another important organization of the CCP was the Armed Working Detachment. The most important duties of these small and highly mobile units were political work and mobilization, especially in areas occupied by the Japanese.¹⁰² All of these forces were volunteers. The CCP's political and military mobilization of millions of peasants in its base areas stood in sharp contrast to the GMD's reliance on the landlords and the press-ganging of soldiers in the areas it controlled that John Service observed in 1943.

98 The Generalissimo 324-325, 343. Reardon claims that General George Marshall, Wedemeyer's superior and the next Presidential Envoy to China, was "impartial." 137,192.

99 China Hand 309.

¹⁰⁰ In *Fanshen: A Documentary of Revolution in a Chinese Village* (Vintage Books, 1966), William Hinton describes the redistribution of land (the "Settling Accounts Movement") in Long Bow village in Shensi, north China. For settling accounts in Long Bow in late 1945 and in 1946, see 128-156 and 198-240 of Hinton's book.

¹⁰¹ The KMT-CCP Conflict 319, 322-323.

¹⁰² Lost Chance 204-205.

U.S. Marines Land in North China, September 1945

After the Japanese surrender in August 1945, there was a growing danger of direct U.S. military intervention in China. The landing of 58,000 Marines in north China in September-October 1945 was in addition to 60,000 American troops in the China theatre after V-J Day.¹⁰³

These U.S. forces were a source of growing friction between the CCP and the U.S. military. The Marines' stated mission was to repatriate Japanese soldiers and civilians. However, in mid-November 1945, General Wedemeyer estimated that of the 1,091,000 Japanese troops in China, excluding Manchuria, 67 per cent had been disarmed, but less than 1,000 had been repatriated.¹⁰⁴

The Marines' actual mission was described by a disillusioned marine in a letter to Washington D.C.: "We were told when en route to Tsingtao that we were to assist in the disarming of Japanese troops in the area. [We] have gone so far as to rearm some Japanese units for added protection against Chinese Communist forces. ... We are here to protect General Chiang's interests against possible Communist uprisings."¹⁰⁵ At a meeting of the Secretaries of State, War and Navy in November 1945, Secretary of War Robert Patterson boasted that the 60,000 Marines in north China "could walk from one end of China to the other."¹⁰⁶

In October 1945, Yen'an gave its commanders in north China instructions on how to deal with U.S. troops who landed in China. "If the American troops force their way into our areas, or if they help the GMD troops to construct transportation lines, our local military and administrative authorities should stop them immediately by formal notice, and should, in the meantime, prepare to use force to stop their advance if necessary. If the American troops pay no attention to our warning and force their way ahead . . . we should still not open fire first, but should maintain a stance of self-defense."¹⁰⁷

In late 1945, heavily armed Marines supplied guards for strategically important railways, bridges and coalmines for GMD forces in north China. General Wedemeyer sent Marine contingents to secure the airfields of Tientsin and Peking in order to airlift GMD armies to Manchuria. The Marines provided support for

¹⁰³ Feis 373 from General Wedemeyer's news conference on 22 October 1945.

¹⁰⁴ New York Times, 17 November 1945.

¹⁰⁵ Schaller 273-274.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid. 281.

¹⁰⁷ CCP Central Committee "Policies Toward American Troops in China and Some Points for Attention," 29 October 1945, Chinese Communist Foreign Policy 45; Sheng 116.

Japanese and Chinese puppet forces which were in the midst of battles with the CCP's Eighth Route Army. In addition, the U.S. military made direct use of "surrendered" Japanese troops against the CCP. As President Truman wrote in his memoirs: "This operation of using the Japanese to hold off the Communists was a joint decision of the State and Defense Departments, which I approved."¹⁰⁸

U.S. military intervention led to a number of armed incidents between U.S. and CCP units, including firefights in Tsingtao and Anting in north China that left three Marines dead and 12 wounded.¹⁰⁹ On December 13, Liberation Daily in Yenan issued its most bitter attack to date on the Marines in connection with their shelling of a village in Hopeh, south of the Great Wall.¹¹⁰

Based on Truman's directives, Wedemeyer ordered the Marines to perform their actual duties: To turn over the equipment of the surrendering forces to the Guomindang as soon as possible, and to undertake a massive U.S. sea and air lift of 80 per cent of the GMD armies to north China and Manchuria. The CCP was now convinced that General Wedemeyer was playing the role of General Scobie in China.

The CCP in Yenan called on the American people to "rise up and demand the complete withdrawal of American troops from China by Christmas."¹¹¹ As the CCP publicized the U.S. military transport system that supported the GMD's military offensives to the Chinese and international publics, General Marshall called this "distorted propaganda" against the U.S. government by the CCP.¹¹²

This hit a raw nerve, since the demand for rapid demobilization of the U.S. armed forces after V-J Day was spreading in the military and among the American public. By November 1945, nearly 4 million soldiers had been discharged from the armed forces, with an additional 2 million by June 1946.¹¹³ Chief-of-Staff George Marshall painted a dire picture: "The military establishment cannot hope to insure the safety of the United States very much longer at the present rate of demobilization unless some permanent peace-time program is established at an early date."¹¹⁴ Marshall's speech indicated that there would be limits on the extent of direct U.S. military intervention in the coming civil war in China.

The U.S. government's sharpening contention with the Soviet Union in Europe and the Mediterranean, which were thought to be more essential to the U.S., also placed limits on U.S. military intervention in China. The War Department thought that direct U.S. military intervention in China created the possibility of

¹⁰⁸ Harry Truman, *Years of Trial and Hope: 1946-1952* (Doubleday & Co., 1956) 62.

¹⁰⁹ *Marshall's Mission to China, Volume I* with an Introduction by Lyman Van Slyke, July 4, 1976 (University Publications of America, 1976).

¹¹⁰ Reardon 129.

¹¹¹ Schaller 274.

¹¹² Marshall Mission 380-389.

¹¹³ Tsou, Volume 2, 365.

¹¹⁴ Speech to the New York Herald-Tribune Forum on 29 October, 1945, cited in Feis 422.

counter-intervention by the Soviet military, which had shorter supply lines and a greater ability to bring military pressure in Manchuria and north China.

Thus, Truman's public statement on China on December 15, 1945 ruled out direct military intervention in China. This position was supported by his Republican critics in Congress. At the same time, Truman stated that the United States recognized "the present National Government of the Republic of China as the only legal government in China" and as "the proper instrument to achieve the objective of a unified China." The sentences in Truman's public statement concerning the decisions to continue to furnish military supplies to the Guomindang, to employ an American military advisory group for the GMD armies, and to assist the GMD to re-establish control over the CCP-controlled areas of Manchuria were omitted from the press release.¹¹⁵

The Marshall Mission and the Development of Civil War in 1946

Soon after Hurley's resignation in November 1945, Truman appointed General George Marshall as his Special Representative to China. In sending Marshall to China, Truman made a major commitment of American military supplies, economic aid and prestige in order to neutralize the growing strength of the CCP.

Marshall's position was inherently contradictory. While he offered to mediate as a neutral party, the U.S. recognized only one side, the Guomindang, as the legal government in China, and continued to supply hundred of millions of dollars in aid annually to the GMD. Truman's directive to Marshall stated bluntly that "the existence of autonomous armies such as that of the Communist army is incompatible with, and actually makes impossible political unity in China." Thus, "autonomous armies should be eliminated as such and all armed forces in China integrated effectively into the Chinese National Army."¹¹⁶

U.S. policy making for China in late 1945 and 1946 took place in the context of a developing U.S.-Soviet Cold War that spread from Europe to East Asia. The Truman administration shelved the wartime proposals of the Dixie Mission for political and military cooperation with the CCP, and accelerated the provision of U.S. military and economic aid to the anti-communist Guomindang.

When Marshall arrived in Chungking in December 1945, he called for the formation of a Political Consultative Conference (PCC) made up of the U.S., the GMD and the CCP. At all levels, Marshall headed up a "Committee of Three." The first action of the PCC was to organize a cease-fire on January 13, 1946. In the spring of 1946, Marshall proposed a reduction of GMD forces to 90 divisions, and a reduction of CCP forces to 18 divisions. The communist negotiators objected to the unequal 5:1 ratio of the GMD and CCP military forces.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁵ The White Paper 607-609.

¹¹⁶ Marshall Mission 4; Truman Memoirs 70.

¹¹⁷ Marshall Mission 19, 38.

The CCP maintained its position that a coalition government and the end of the GMD's one-party dictatorship had to take place before integration of the GMD and CCP armed forces. In early 1946, Mao stated that Marshall was very good at putting out a "long cord" with a hook at the end, trying to catch the "big fish," the CCP's armed forces.¹¹⁸

There was struggle in the CCP leadership over whether to retain the CCP's independent armed forces. In February 1946, the CCP Central Committee, reflecting the influence of the party's second-in-command, Liu Shao-chi, issued a directive which stated that "the GMD's one-party rule is going to be shaken, and the process of nationwide democratization will start. [This] will lead to the legalization of our Party, our army and the liberated areas. This is a great victory of China's democratic revolution. China will thus enter a new age of peace, democracy and reconstruction. ... Generally speaking, military struggle has ceased [and] we should be prepared to transfer our Party's work to nonmilitary struggles connected with mass work and parliamentary politics."¹¹⁹

Mao later stated that Liu was responsible for this embrace of parliamentary politics. In opposition to Liu's "rightist deviationism," Mao issued a directive from the Party Center six weeks later stating that "we shall be psychologically prepared for a split [with the GMD] and not be afraid of a civil war."¹²⁰

By continuing to negotiate in 1945-1946, the CCP responded to the desire of the Chinese people for peace, and it hoped to detach the U.S. government from the GMD as much as possible. The CCP also used the Marshall Mission to buy time to make military preparations, to head off military offensives by the Guomindang armies, and to place the responsibility solely on the GMD for the outbreak of civil war.¹²¹

Marshall's "impartiality" was belied in March 1946 when he left China to arrange a loan of \$500 million from the Export-Import Bank for the Guomindang.¹²² Meanwhile Chiang Kai-shek's armies broke the January cease-fire and attacked the communist base areas. When Marshall returned to China, he brokered a ceasefire between the GMD and CCP in Manchuria in June 1946. Chiang agreed to it because it locked into place the recent advances his armies had made, especially in Manchuria.

In a last-ditch attempt to bolster Marshall's claim to be impartial, and break the deadlock between the CCP and the GMD, President Truman ordered a partial embargo on arms shipments to China at the end of July 1946.¹²³ However, the GMD already possessed adequate stocks of U.S. weapons. Other forms of aid undermined

¹¹⁸ Sheng 127.

¹¹⁹ CCP Central Committee "On the Current Situation and Our Tasks," 1 February 1946, Chinese Communist Foreign Policy 58-61; on Liu's authorship, see Sheng 123.

¹²⁰ Ibid. 124, 133.

¹²¹ Mao's China 26.

¹²² Tsou 411.

¹²³ Marshall Mission 216; Van Slyke, Introduction xxvii. The China Lobby in the U.S. would claim that a shortage of munitions was a major factor in the defeat of the GMD's armies.

the effect of Truman's action, such as Surplus Property sales from various Pacific islands on August 30, 1946, which included the provision of gasoline for U.S.-supplied air planes. The CCP and even Marshall recognized that GMD officials were selling this surplus U.S. property, and were using U.S. loans, to purchase military equipment for their armies.¹²⁴

In July 1946, the Guomindang launched a general offensive aimed at seizing ten large and small communist base areas. Mao issued a directive on July 20 that called for "completely smashing Chiang's offensive in a war of self-defense." Mao stated that

We live plainly and work hard, we take care of the needs of both the army and the people; this is the very opposite of the situation in Chiang Kai-shek's areas, where those at the top are corrupt and degenerate, while the people under them are destitute. Under these circumstances, we shall surely be victorious.¹²⁵

The CCP leadership called this nationwide Guomindang military offensive the beginning of the "Third Revolutionary Civil War." In August 1946, the CCP broadcast a total mobilization order to defend its base areas from stronger GMD armies. The CCP called for a strategy of strategic withdrawal from the towns to the countryside that it had followed during the anti-Japanese war.

In an interview with the American correspondent A.T. Steele, Mao stated that "Judging by the large amount of aid the United States is giving Chiang Kai-shek to wage a civil war on an unprecedented scale, the policy of the U.S. government is to use the so-called mediation as a smoke-screen for strengthening Chiang Kai-shek in every way and suppressing the democratic forces in China."¹²⁶

On October 1, Mao summed up the results of three months of fighting since his July 20 directive. He stated that at the same time as nearly half of Chiang's 190 brigades had to perform garrison duty, making it possible for the communist forces to destroy 25 GMD brigades. He predicted that in the next three months, the CCP would be able to halt Chiang's offensives, recover much of the territory lost to the GMD earlier in 1946, and go over from the defensive to the offensive.¹²⁷

The Battle for Manchuria Between the GMD and the CCP in the Context of the Cold War

After it signed a bilateral peace treaty with the Guomindang on August

¹²⁴ The KMT-CCP Conflict 304.

¹²⁵ "Smash Chiang Kai-shek's Offensive by a War of Self-Defense," Selected Works, Volume IV, 89-90.

¹²⁶ "The Truth About U.S. "Mediation" and the Future of the Civil War in China," 29 September 1946, Selected Works, Volume IV, 109.

¹²⁷ "A Three Months' Summary," 1 October 1946, Selected Works, Volume IV, 113-118.

14, 1945, the strategic calculations of the Soviet Union concerning the GMD and the role of the U.S. in China shifted. The U.S. military denied the Soviet Union any role in the occupation of Japan; it sent tens of thousands of Marines to north China; and the U.S. Navy and Air Force transported Guomindang armies to Manchuria and north China. The U.S. government and military threw their weight completely behind Chiang's regime, and supported the GMD's renewed military offensives against the CCP's base areas.

In the fall of 1945, the growing contention between the CCP and the GMD became an integral part of the developing Cold War between the two dominant world powers. The CCP leadership followed developments in Greece, Iran, Indochina and Eastern Europe carefully. Churchill's "Iron Curtain" speech in Fulton, Missouri in March 1946 announced a global anti-Soviet alliance between the U.S. and Britain. As part of this new post-war Cold War, Soviet military commanders made secret arrangements with CCP leaders to prevent GMD and U.S. military forces from occupying Manchuria, which has a long border with the Soviet Union.

After the Seventh Congress that began in April 1945, the CCP began to transfer tens of thousands of troops and political cadre to Manchuria and other parts of the Northeast in anticipation of the arrival of Soviet troops in the war against Japan. Having secured major territorial concessions in its treaty with the Guomindang, the Soviet Union ignored its recognition of the GMD and threw its support behind the CCP in the Northeast. The Red Army drove into China's three northeastern provinces of Heilungkiang, Jehol and Chahar. Within weeks, it forced the surrender of the once-powerful Japanese Kwantung Army in Manchuria.

Some of the 100,000 CCP troops who marched into Manchuria after the Japanese surrender were Manchurians, led by Manchurian officers. Beginning in September, the Red Army provided large quantities of captured Japanese weapons to the CCP's forces, which it designated as the Northeast Defense United Army (NEDUA). These captured weapons outfitted 275,000 soldiers, including 925 planes, 370 tanks, 1,230 pieces of field artillery and other modern weapons. The CCP's arsenal was capable of arming an additional 350,000 troops as they were recruited in Manchuria.¹²⁸ With the addition of the sizable numbers of U.S. weapons that the CCP captured in the course of battles with GMD armies in Manchuria, the CCP now had the capacity to engage in large-scale mobile and eventually positional warfare for the first time.

In November 1945, Yen-an issued a "Directive on the Strategy of Struggle against Mei-Jiang." It read: "The central problem in the post-war world is the struggle between the United States and the Soviet Union. The reflection of this struggle in China is the struggle between Jiang and the CCP. [The U.S. China policy is]

¹²⁸ Sheng 110-111; Tsou 331.

to support Jiang, suppress the CCP, and confront the USSR.”¹²⁹ The CCP maintained this stand even though the Soviet Union had stripped Manchuria of its newest and most advanced industrial equipment as “war booty,” alienating many nationalist forces in China.¹³⁰

However, the Soviet Union reversed its policy towards the CCP once again. On November 27, Moscow and Chungking announced an agreement to provide for the smooth transfer of power to the Guomindang’s armies in Manchuria. The Red Army ordered the CCP to retreat from the cities it had seized in the fall, and removed its obstacles to the U.S. airlift and sealift of GMD armies into Manchuria. In December 1945 and January 1946, the Soviet Union cooperated fully with the GMD..¹³¹

Mao responded by directing the CCP’s forces to retreat to the Manchurian countryside and to small cities that were remote from centers of GMD occupation in order to build up its military and political base areas.¹³²

Stalin made another political zig-zag in the spring of 1946. Based on its increasingly tense standoff with the U.S. in Europe and the Middle East, the Soviet Union set a new objective of forcing the U.S. military to withdraw from China. By refusing to withdraw Soviet military forces from Manchuria until April 1946, Stalin believed that he could force the U.S. to arrange for a simultaneous withdrawal of American and Soviet forces from China. In January 1946, Secretary of State Byrnes rejected Foreign Minister Molotov’s proposal for such a withdrawal, claiming that U.S. troops in China were needed to disarm and repatriate the Japanese.¹³³

The U.S. Marines, Navy and Air Force instead accelerated their support for the Guomindang in early 1946. With the support of the withdrawing Red Army, the CCP controlled northern Manchuria in the spring of 1946, and was able to extend its control to much of the countryside of southern Manchuria by the summer.

The CCP’s Revolutionary Transformations in Manchuria

The military units and political cadre that the CCP deployed to Manchuria in the second half of 1945 confronted significant obstacles. During the 1930s, the Japanese Kwantung Army had uprooted CCP units from the cities of Manchuria, and had eliminated CCP guerilla forces through a combination of counter-insurgency campaigns and building an extensive system of “collective hamlets”

129 Sheng 114.

130 Reardon 139.

131 Ibid. 124-125.

132 Mao Tse-tung, “Build Stable Base Areas in the Northeast,” 28 December 1945, *Selected Works, Volume IV*, 81.

133 *Anvil of Victory: The Communist Revolution in Manchuria, 1945-1948* by Steven Levine (Columbia University Press, 1987) 54.

134 *Anvil of Victory* 201-207.

that isolated the guerillas from their rural bases of support. This meant that the CCP's party structures, mass organizations, army and people's militias in Manchuria had to be built from the bottom up, and quickly.

Beginning in late 1945, the CCP led a revolutionary process in Manchuria, particularly a land reform that benefitted millions of landless and land-poor peasants. This land revolution and the political mobilization that was essential to it nourished the communist armed forces with manpower and supplies; and these revolutionary armies brought the CCP to nationwide power within three years.

In the Manchurian countryside, there was greater inequality in the pattern of landholding than in north China, in part because 10-15 per cent of the land was owned by Japanese settlers or land companies. From the fall of 1945 to the spring of 1946, the main policy of the CCP in Manchuria was the reduction of rent and interest for the peasants. The CCP also pursued the complete redistribution of Japanese-owned land and that of Chinese landlords who had collaborated with the Japanese-Manchukuo regime. Both processes were conducted by newly organized peasant associations. Lin Biao, commander of the CCP's Northeast Defense United Army (NEDUA), urged that thousands of cadres, many of them from the army, be sent to the Manchurian countryside to carry out land reform with the guidance of "wear peasant clothes and eat sorghum."¹³⁴

Another key to the CCP's success in Manchuria was its ability to absorb large numbers of local Manchurians into its military forces. In the summer of 1946, the CCP emphasized the recruitment of local militia, many of whom "graduated" to the NEDUA. This process rapidly expanded the ranks of the regular army for the decisive military campaigns of 1947 for control of Manchuria. A well-known poem titled "The Seven Persuasions to Join the Army" included these verses:

If a father gets his son to enlist
The revolution will take this to heart.
If a son gets his father to enlist
He'll be forever revolutionized.
If a younger brother gets an elder brother to enlist
The Nationalist Army will be smashed to bits.
If an elder sister gets a younger brother to enlist
Victory will soon be ours.
If a wife persuades her husband to enlist
There'll be no worries in the family.¹³⁵

Another factor in the ability of the CCP to establish revolutionary base areas in rural Manchuria with strong popular support was the support of the Soviet Union. As the Cold War heated up in the spring of 1946, the Soviet Union moved to a policy of open and firm support for the CCP. The presence of the Red Army allowed the CCP to initiate land reform and recruit large numbers of Manchurians into its

135 Ibid. 152-153, 155.

armed forces without fear of attacks by Guomindang armies that had been transported to Manchuria by the U.S. military. Soviet assistance in restoring Manchuria's rail network facilitated the military campaigns of the NEDUA, and the anti-plague work of Soviet medical personnel helped contain what could have been a far more disastrous outbreak of the disease.¹³⁶

According to a writer in a Shanghai newspaper in March 1948 "The Chinese Communists had no soldiers in the North-east; now they have the soldiers not wanted by the central government. The Chinese Communists had no guns; now they have the guns the central government managed so poorly and sent over to them, and sometimes even secretly sold to them."¹³⁷ According to Niu Jun, a prominent Chinese historian of CCP foreign relations, the battle for Manchuria served as a key juncture in the CCP's "march from Yenan to the world."¹³⁸

Civil War Develops and U.S. Mediation Ends

From June to November 1946, the CCP demanded an immediate ceasefire in order to stop the Guomindang's nationwide offensives against ten CCP base areas. The unarmed political administrations in some of these base areas were vulnerable to reprisals by the GMD military and its secret police.

During the same period of time, the Guomindang raised new conditions before it would accept a ceasefire. Chiang Kai-shek was unwilling to give up the territory in the CCP base areas that his generals had captured since January 1946. Chiang also told Marshall that a ceasefire was unnecessary, since "it was necessary only for the Communists to stop fighting." In September 1946, Chou En-lai told Marshall that Chiang was placing new conditions on the CCP that he knew were not acceptable to the CCP in order to stall and continue his military offensives.¹³⁹ In addition, Chiang convened a National Assembly in Chungking on November 15. This body was dominated by the leaders of the Guomindang, and put an end to any prospect of a coalition government involving the CCP.

Before flying from Chungking to Yenan on November 19, Chou En-lai told Marshall that further negotiations would be fruitless unless Chiang agreed to restore the troop positions of both sides as of January 13, and to dissolve the National Assembly.¹⁴⁰ Two weeks later, Chiang Kai-shek told Marshall that "he felt it was necessary to destroy the Communist military forces, [and] he felt confident that the Communist forces could be exterminated in from 8 to 10 months."¹⁴¹

In January 1947 the People's Liberation Army went over to the offensive in the Northeast and north China below the Great Wall. The CCP's peasant armies were intact and had high morale even after the GMD's offensives in 1946. Captured U.S.

¹³⁶ Ibid. 240.

¹³⁷ The KMT-CCP Conflict 336.

¹³⁸ Sheng 106-108.

¹³⁹ Marshall Mission 406.

¹⁴⁰ "General Marshall's Views on the Situation in China," The White Paper 212.

¹⁴¹ Marshall Mission 407, 408.

munitions, when added to Japanese weapons, comprised the main source of arms and equipment for the PLA, while surrendered government troops were an important source of new recruits.¹⁴²

On January 7, 1947, Marshall left China. As the newly appointed Secretary of State, Marshall ended U.S. participation in the Political Consultative Conference, removed the last Marine contingent from Peking, and closed down the Dixie Mission in March 1947.

Upon his arrival in Washington, D.C., Marshall issued an official statement to the press on the situation in China. According to him, “sincere efforts to achieve settlement have been frustrated time and again by extremist elements on both sides.” While Marshall referred briefly to the “dominating influence of the [Kuomintang] military,” he attacked “dyed-in-the-wool communists” who “mislead the Chinese people and the world and arouse a bitter hatred of Americans.” He mentioned once again the fire-fight between American Marines and CCP troops at Anting in late 1945. Marshall concluded that “The salvation of the situation, as I see it, would be the assumption of leadership by the liberals in the Government and in the minority parties [which would] lead to unity through good government.”¹⁴³ Marshall did not see a role for the CCP in his good government, nor did he question whether there were any liberals in Chiang’s one-party dictatorship.

According to a leader of the “Third Party Group” of which Marshall spoke highly, “the Generalissimo was a dictator and had been one for twenty years, and he was accustomed to complete and unquestioned authority.”¹⁴⁴ The price of speaking out against Chiang Kai-shek was high. Two leaders of the Democratic League were assassinated in July 1946 in Kunming by Tai Lai’s secret police.¹⁴⁵ These repressive actions brought many members of the Democratic League and the other small democratic parties into an anti-Guomindang united front organized by the CCP.

On February 1, 1947 Mao stated that the CCP was entering a “new high tide of the Chinese revolution.” He explained that

Our Party and the Chinese people have every assurance of final victory. . . But that does not mean there are no difficulties before us. Chinese and foreign reactionaries will continue to oppose the Chinese people with all their strength. . . Some of the revolutionary forces may suffer temporary losses, and there will be losses of manpower and material resources in a long war. The comrades throughout the Party must take all this fully into account and be prepared to overcome all difficulties with an indomitable will and in a planned way. . . . Our difficulties can be overcome because we are new and rising forces, and have a bright future. ¹⁴⁶

¹⁴² The KMT-CCP Conflict 327, 342.

¹⁴³ The White Paper, Annex 113, 687-688.

¹⁴⁴ The KMT-CCP Conflict 313, 326, 345.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid. 182-183.

¹⁴⁶ “Greet New High Tide of the Chinese Revolution,” 1 February 1947, Selected Works, Volume V, 119- 124-125.

One month earlier, Lu Ting-yi, Chief of the Department of Information of the CCP, predicted that “the face of China and the world will be vastly different after three to five years.”¹⁴⁷ As it turned out, the lower figure was more accurate.

Hurley, the State Department and President Truman Silence Critics of U.S. Policy in China

In November 1945, Ambassador Hurley handed Secretary of State James Byrnes a lengthy letter of resignation. Hurley publicly attributed “America’s failure in China” far and wide, especially to four Foreign Service officers affiliated with the Dixie Mission. At a press conference in Washington, D.C., Hurley claimed that “a considerable section of our State Department is endeavoring to support Communism generally as well as specifically in China.”¹⁴⁸

Hurley received support from President Truman and the top officials in the State Department in silencing the voices of Foreign Service Officers who were based in Yenan and had questioned official American policy in China.¹⁴⁹ John Davies was one of the first officers to catch Hurley’s wrath. According to Davies, the Chinese Communist Party had “the first governments and armies in modern Chinese history to have positive and widespread popular support.”¹⁵⁰

Hurley accused Davies of “sneaking off to Yenan” to sabotage his negotiations with the Guomindang, and said that “he was going to have Davies kicked out of the State Department” as a “communist.”¹⁵¹ This charge was echoed by Senator Joseph McCarthy, who claimed that Davies had helped to “lose China.” From 1949 to 1954, Davies was brought before nine State Department Loyalty Security Boards. Even though Davies worked on the National Security Council and became an advocate of both the “containment” and “rollback of communism,” Secretary of State John Foster Dulles fired Davies in 1954 as a “security risk.”¹⁵²

In early 1945, John Service was charged in the press with leaking State Department documents on China to the leftist publication *Amerasia*. After being briefed on the *Amerasia* case, President Truman ordered that “These men should be vigorously prosecuted,” and gave the green light for the FBI to arrest Service and the

¹⁴⁷ The White Paper, Annex 118, 719, reprinting Yenan’s Emancipation Daily from January 4-5, 1947.

¹⁴⁸ Buhite 269.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid. 129. The four Foreign Service officers targeted by Hurley were John Service, John Davies, Raymond Ludden and John Emmerson.

¹⁵⁰ John Davies, “Memoranda by Foreign Service Officers,” 7 November 1944, in The China White Paper 567.

¹⁵¹ Buhite 190.

¹⁵² China Hand 333-337.

editors of *Amerasia*. Service was cleared of these charges by a federal grand jury due to illegal FBI wiretaps of his home.¹⁵³

Nevertheless, Hurley and the State Department transferred Service to a non-China post. In February 1950, McCarthy charged Service with being a “communist,” along with 204 unnamed members of the State Department. After bringing Service before its Loyalty Security Board, the State Department fired him. Service brought his case before the U.S. Supreme Court, which voted unanimously in his favor in 1957.¹⁵⁴ Charges of disloyalty followed Service up to 1970, when he was subpoenaed and charged 11 years after the fact with “losing China” by the Senate Internal Security Committee. At that time, this committee was chaired by James Eastland, a staunch anti-communist and segregationist politician from Mississippi.¹⁵⁵

Conclusion

By the time Secretary of State Dean Acheson forwarded *The China White Paper* to President Truman on July 30, 1949, the official U.S. position of support for the Guomindang’s government and military had not changed. Even as the CCP’s People’s Liberation Army crossed the Yangtze River in pursuit of Chiang’s crumbling armies, Acheson stated that the U.S. government should “preserve and even increase the influence of the National Government.”¹⁵⁶

The political objectives of the Dixie Mission and the Marshall Mission reflected the different necessities faced by the U.S. government and military in China in two distinct time periods: The first was from 1941-1945, and the second from 1945-1946. The efforts of Stilwell, members of the Dixie Mission and several Foreign Service officers to create a closer relationship with the CCP in 1944-1945, were attempts to maintain a united front between the U.S. and the CCP until Japan’s defeat in August 1945. From late 1945 to 1946, the three-way negotiations between

¹⁵³ *Honorable Survivor: Mao’s China, McCarthy’s America, and the Persecution of John S. Service* by Lynne Joiner (Naval Institute Press, 2009) 159-167.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.* 232, 313-315.

¹⁵⁵ In his reports from 1943 to early 1945, collected in *Lost Chance in China*, Service argued that even-handed U.S. political and military policies toward the CCP and the Guomindang could have averted civil war in China after the defeat of Japan. Service also wrote *The Amerasia Papers* (The Center for Chinese Studies, the University of California at Berkeley, 1971).

¹⁵⁶ Acheson’s “Letter of Transmittal to President Truman,” 30 July 1949 in *The China White Paper* 9. With the Guomindang vanquished, a new Political Consultative Conference was organized in Peking in September 1949. It was attended by 661 representatives from the CCP, the Democratic League, other democratic groups, and by organizations of peasants, workers, professionals and other sectors of Chinese society. *The KMT-CCP Conflict* 353.

the CCP, the GMD and the U.S. under the direction of Truman, Hurley and Marshall became a part of the U.S.-Soviet Cold War. These negotiations only served to postpone the outbreak of nationwide civil war until the summer of 1946.

In any case, no one, including the targeted Foreign Service officers, could have “lost” a nation of 450 million people that was headed into a civil war in which there would be one winner.

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