

THE BACKGROUND AND PROGRESS OF SINO-AMERICAN
RELATIONS IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR

by

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A THESIS

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PREFACE

The usefulness of public opinion studies in historical analysis has been amply demonstrated by many recent and contemporary historians. My purpose in this thesis is not to defend the concept but to contribute in a small way to the growing store of literature dealing with public attitudes towards historical events.

I have chosen to deal with the specific subject of American attitudes towards China in the Second World War because of a particular interest in China during that period. It was during the war that the American people began to accept the blame for China's plight. The United States had not observed its promise to uphold Chinese territorial and administrative integrity; it was not sending enough military supplies to Chinese soldiers; and, near the end of the Second World War, Americans began to feel responsible for their failure to solve the civil dispute between the Nationalists and the Communists.

This sense of exaggerated responsibility has persisted, retarding a Sino-American settlement that would recognize the fact of Chinese Communism, while seeking to prevent further violation of Nationalist territorial boundaries.

I wish to acknowledge the kind assistance of interested faculty members who have given generously of

their time and information to make this thesis possible.

I owe a particular debt of gratitude to Mr. Paul Holbo who has supervised this project from its inception to its completion. I, of course, assume full responsibility for the weaknesses and errors that remain.

Finally, I wish to express appreciation to my wife for her cheerful acceptance of the disadvantages that result from the meager economic resources of the graduate student.

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CHAPTER I

THE HISTORICAL BASIS AND DEVELOPMENT OF AMERICAN ATTITUDES TOWARDS CHINA TO 1935

Traders and Missionaries: Sino-American Relations in the Nineteenth Century

American connections with China rest historically upon a twofold basis: the traders and the missionaries. In the last quarter of the eighteenth century, intrepid New England sailors plied their sailing ships to the Orient, exchanging furs, ginseng, tar, and turpentine for tea, silk, Chinaware, and rhubarb. As a result of the growth of American trade with China, the United States sought to conclude a commercial treaty with her new trading partner. In 1844, under the protection of British gunboats, America obtained China's signature to the Treaty of Wanghia. This treaty granted the United States the right of extra-territoriality, and most-favored-nation privileges.

The missionaries followed the traders, seeking to bring the gospel to the Chinese heathen. The Chinese did not respond to the apostles of God, and the missionaries found it very difficult even to obtain buildings in which to worship. But they presented their case with enough vigor

to sympathetic listeners in the West to obtain important concessions in the treaty negotiated by Great Britain, France, and the United States at Tientsin in 1858. These concessions included the right to travel in the interior, the opening of new cities to foreign residence, the opening of the Yangtze River to foreign ships, and a guarantee of religious toleration. Thus, the Treaty of Tientsin provided a firm basis for missionary expansion in China.

The efforts of the missionaries to convert the Chinese did not go unheeded in the United States. Mission boards and local congregations became interested in the exotic land of China.¹ By the twentieth century, officials of the Department of State and Presidents were also showing signs of interest in the missionaries. Presidents Theodore Roosevelt, William Howard Taft, and Woodrow Wilson warmly praised the missionaries' enterprises in China and consulted with clergymen on American policy towards China.²

From the very start, then, American interests in China were largely determined by the traders, who desired to obtain equal rights with other nations, and by the missionaries, who were convinced that China needed western culture and religion. Although Sino-American trade gradually diminished in the late nineteenth century, the myth of the

¹Paul Varg, Missionaries, Chinese, and Diplomats (Princeton, 1958), 52-68.

²Ibid., 132-146.

great market continued and the United States negotiated further trade agreements with China. The government feared that European nations would close the door of commercial opportunity in China, and the missionaries worried that they would be driven from their precarious position in the Far East if American traders were denied entrance into China.

The attitudes of the United States Government and the missionaries towards China in the nineteenth century, and the alliance brought about by their mutual interests were incorporated in two important official pronouncements regarding China near the turn of the century.

The Open Door and Chinese Integrity: The Evolution of American Attitudes Towards China, 1899-1931

On September 6, 1899, Secretary of State John Hay sent a series of notes to England, Russia, and Germany. Later, he sent similar messages to Japan, Italy, and France. In these first "Open Door" notes, Hay attempted to insure for all nations equal trading rights and opportunities in China. He called upon each nation to affirm its intention to (1) not ^{to} interfere with any treaty ports in China, (2) to respect the existing treaty tariff and allow the Chinese Government to collect its rightful duties within the treaty ports, and (3) ^{to} charge the same rates to all nations who used

ports or railroads within its "sphere of interest".³

On July 3, 1900, the United States sent a telegram to each of the major powers. This communication reaffirmed the principles of the Open Door pronouncement of 1899, and went on to state that: "The policy of the Government of the United States is to seek a solution which may bring about safety and peace to China, preserve Chinese territorial and administrative entity,⁴ and protect all rights guaranteed to friendly powers by treaty and international law."⁵

These two statements contain certain assumptions that played a large part in the subsequent dealings of the United States with the Far East. First, the American Government assumed that China would accept foreign control of treaty ports if each nation could regulate its "sphere of influence". Although China had urged Caleb Cushing to provide a system of equal commercial opportunity in 1844, the Chinese realized by 1899 that "spheres of interest" were not beneficial to them. Thus, China became resentful

³Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1899 (Washington, 1900), 129-130. Hereafter this series will be referred to as Foreign Relations Papers.

⁴The term "territorial entity" is strikingly like that of territorial integrity, advanced by Anson Burlingame, a nineteenth century American diplomat to China who evinced his concern for that country by urging that China's integrity be preserved in the community of nations.

⁵Foreign Relations Papers, 1900, Appendix, 12.

of foreign intrusion, while the United States remained convinced that she had done great service to China by continuing the foreign "spheres of interest" under more stringent regulations.⁶

Second, the American proposal to preserve the Open Door and the territorial and administrative integrity of China apparently rested on the assumption that no nation would violate this principle, for there was no provision for joint coercive action against potential violators of the agreement. This failure to provide for an effective means of upholding the agreement made the Open Door Policy unrealistic in a time when many of the signatories were carving out commercial empires in China.

These two nineteenth century assumptions became the source of confusion and frustration in the twentieth century. The United States felt obligated to China but found it difficult to fulfill this obligation by repelling the threat to Chinese integrity, now primarily from Japan.

In addition to these inherent difficulties in the Open Door policy, American officials compounded the problem through multiple interpretations of the doctrine. Secretary of State Hay, who sent the Open Door notes, indicated that he was not interested in elimination of foreign intrusion

⁶See Chiang Kai-shek, China's Destiny (Shanghai, 1943), for a sample of Chinese reflection upon foreign interference in China.

in China when he declared that the United States did not object to domination in Manchuria by any one power as long as our commercial interests were protected.⁷ But President Theodore Roosevelt displayed a more belligerent attitude concerning the "Open Door" in Manchuria. He declared to Hay in 1903 that he did not "intend to give way" to Russia in Manchuria.⁸

In November, 1908, America's Chinese policy was subjected to a reevaluation in the Root-Takahira Agreement between the United States and Japan. Both nations reiterated their firm intention to preserve the Open Door and the territorial and administrative integrity of China.⁹ The agreement also declared the intention of both nations to respect the status quo in the area of the Pacific. This accord represented an early attempt of the United States to reach an agreement with Japan that would be mutually satisfactory while still preserving the territorial and administrative integrity of China.

During the second decade of the twentieth century, the Japanese began showing renewed interest in China. Early in 1915, Japan presented twenty-one demands to China which violated previous Japanese agreements with the United States. In two notes, Secretary of State Bryan commented on Japan's

⁷Henry F. Pringle, Theodore Roosevelt (New York, 1956), 263.

⁸Ibid.

⁹Foreign Relations Papers, 1908, 510-511.

demands:

The United States frankly recognizes that territorial contiguity creates special relations between Japan and these districts [Shantung, South Manchuria, and Eastern Mongolia]. The United States however, could not regard with indifference the assumption of political, military or economic domination over China by a foreign power, and hopes that your excellency's Government will find it consonant with their interests to refrain from pressing upon China an acceptance of proposals which would, if accepted, exclude Americans from equal participation in the economic and industrial development of China and would limit the political independence of that country.¹⁰

In 1917, Secretary of State Lansing engaged in diplomatic conversations with Viscount Kikujiro Ishii, attempting to reach a temporary settlement over China until the end of the First World War. The resulting agreement stated once again the principles of the "Open Door" notes, and America continued to recognize the "special interests" that Japan had in China.¹¹

It seems evident that Bryan and Lansing were willing to grant certain concessions to Japan in China, but neither was willing to forego the familiar cliches of former American policy. Hence, their efforts to arrive at a realistic settlement with Japan failed because the two nations had entirely different concepts of "equal rights and integrity" in China. Later events proved that Japan was able to define

¹⁰Ibid., 1916, 264.

¹¹Foreign Relations Papers, 1917, 264.

equal rights and integrity in such a way as to allow her to overrun Chinese soil on the pretext of provocation, while America was committed to retaining the administrative sovereignty of China.

The next significant declaration by the United States on Far Eastern policy was in the Nine Power Treaty of 1922, arising out of the Washington Conference. The agreement was significant because it clothed America's policy of the Open Door and Chinese territorial and administrative integrity with the dignity of a treaty, to which Japan added its signature.

Soon after the Nine Power Treaty, a group appeared in America that was devoted to abolishing war as an instrument of national policy. The dream that war could be abolished by legislating it out of existence readily took root and flourished in the soil of American idealism. The movement to outlaw war was motivated by the same type of diplomatic idealism that had prompted the United States to uphold Chinese national integrity and to attempt to abolish military imperialism by international agreements. The pressure for renunciation of war as an instrument of national policy came to a climax at Paris on July 27, 1928, when the Kellogg-Briand Pact was signed. Under the terms of this pact, the signatories agreed to: "condemn recourse to war . . . renounce it as an instrument of national policy . . . and to settle all disputes

by pacific means."¹² The promise of twenty-eight nations to outlaw war and to settle all disputes by pacific means appeared to be another safeguard for America's Far Eastern policy because these promises apparently insured China against precipitate violation of her territorial integrity.

Thus, during the first three decades of the twentieth century, America rather persistently pursued a policy of paternalistic idealism in its relations with China. The United States optimistically hoped that it could surround China with promises of non-interference, non-violence, and respect for her territorial integrity. The Kellogg-Briand Pact was the capstone to a series of agreements that were designed to allow China to become a true nation unhindered by fears of foreign aggression. But in less than four years, Japan embarked on a new program of imperialism in the Far East. The American policy of obtaining international morality by multilateral and bilateral agreement was destined to fail to halt this aggression, and war became once more the means of settling international disputes.

"Peoples Principles" and a Manifesto: American Attitudes Towards the Chinese Government, 1899-1935

Another factor that hindered American diplomacy towards China was the fluid political situation which existed there.

¹²The General Pact for the Renunciation of War (Washington, 1928), 1-3.

The early years of the twentieth century witnessed the decline and downfall of the Manchu dynasty, and the rise of revolutionary nationalism under the leadership of Sun Yat-sen. American newspapers showed a number of reactions to the fall of the Manchu. Some dwelt on past glories of the Manchu dynasty, while others looked ahead with prophecies ranging from mildly pessimistic to wildly optimistic. The San Francisco Post declared: "The Chinese have awakened and the last sound to be heard from the strongest line of rulers in history is the wail of a baby." The New York Tribune was unimpressed with the new regime, stating that "territorial disintegration" was an imminent danger confronting the proposed republic. But the Minneapolis Journal enthusiastically endorsed the Nationalist Government: "The reorganization of the Chinese empire as a federal republic is one of the most remarkable events that has occurred in all history."¹³

The leader of the Revolution in China was Sun Yat-sen. Although educated as a medical doctor, Sun maintained a lively interest in politics, abandoning his medical practice in 1890 to devote his time to advocating the overthrow of the corrupt Manchu dynasty. He was forced to flee the country in 1895 but after ten years in exile, Sun returned

¹³"The Fall of the Manchus and Sun as President of the Republic," The Literary Digest, 44 (January 13, 1912), 13.

to participate in the victorious revolution in 1912.¹⁴

Sun Yat-sen based his government upon the now-famous "Three Principles": nationalism, political democracy, and people's livelihood. These three principles were to succeed each other in the order given. Thus, Sun believed that the Revolution ushered in the first stage of "People's Government", which was still largely controlled by the military faction. When order was restored, Sun envisioned a political democracy. Finally, when the people were prepared for it, Sun proposed to establish a government which he vaguely interpreted as state ownership of principal industries and enterprises to provide a basic means of livelihood for everyone.¹⁵

Sun Yat-sen retained nominal control of the Kuomintang, as the new Nationalist Government was called, until his death in 1925. After the death of Sun, Chiang Kai-shek obtained leadership of the Kuomintang in 1925. Chiang was a military man, trained in the Whampoa Military Academy and tested in the internal strife following the Revolution of 1912. He accepted the "Three Principles" of Sun Yat-sen, but Chiang faced serious difficulties before he could proceed with the proposed evolution of Government.

¹⁴Sun Yat-sen, The Three Principles of the People, trans. Frank W. Pierce (Shanghai, 1927), Preface, XIV-XVII.

¹⁵Sun Yat-sen, op. cit., see also Chien Tuan-sheng, The Government and Politics of China (Cambridge, Mass., 1950), 113-115, and Paul M. A. Linebarger, The Political Doctrines of Sun Yat-sen (Baltimore, 1937).

Although the Kuomintang had become the strongest government in China by the early 1930's, there were serious rivals to its power. A great many war lords retained a jealously guarded independence, and the Chinese Communist movement, formerly part of the Kuomintang, was becoming increasingly vigorous. The Communists appeared especially dangerous to the Nationalist leaders, and in 1927, the two groups severed the uneasy relationship that they had maintained. Following that event, the New York Times commented that the breach between the Nationalists and the Communists could not be healed.¹⁶

In view of the paternalistic and idealistic policy that the United States had towards China, Americans were surprisingly indifferent to political events in China from 1912 until 1935. Then the importance of Chinese internal strife began to have important overtones because it reduced China's fighting power against the Japanese aggressor. Thus, the United States became more interested in the political fortunes of the Kuomintang and Chiang Kai-shek.

Japan's Drive to China: American
Attitudes Towards Japanese Aggression
in Manchuria and China, 1932-1935

The civil dispute in China, and the desire of Japan to enlarge her Asian borders were the ingredients that combined

¹⁶The New York Times, April 19, 1927, 14.

to produce an incident that was fraught with consequences for China, Japan, and the United States.

On September 18, 1931, newspaper headlines announced that Chinese soldiers had blown up a section of track on the South Manchuria Railway north of Mukden. The Japanese army immediately moved in, claiming self-defense, and eventually occupied all of Manchuria. In this incident, as in many subsequent events involving the Chinese and Japanese, it was difficult to place the guilt firmly in the confusion of conflicting claims. But the Lytton Commission, sent by the League of Nations to investigate the incident in 1932, and the Tokyo war crime trials of 1946 provided evidence that several young Japanese officers had engineered the explosion to create an incident that would allow the Japanese to extend their occupation of Manchuria.¹⁷

In view of the original conflicting reports, American opinion, official and unofficial, was surprisingly united in fixing the blame on the Japanese. Secretary of State Henry Stimson dispatched a note to the Japanese ambassador, Katsugi Debuchi, in which he stated: "It would seem that the responsibility for determining the course of events with regard to the liquidating of this situation rests largely

¹⁷ Robert H. Ferrell, "The Mukden Incident," The Journal of Modern History, XXVII (March-December, 1955).

upon Japan, for the simple reason that Japanese armed forces have seized and are exercising de facto control in south Manchuria."¹⁸

Notwithstanding the evident disapproval of the United States, Japan continued to consolidate her gains in south Manchuria. The League of Nations then bestirred itself and began conducting hearings on the controversy. In response to a League invitation, America sent Prentiss B. Gilbert to participate in discussions only insofar as they related to American obligations under the Kellogg-Briand Pact.¹⁹ In a memorandum to the League Council, Stimson declared: "On its part the American Government acting independently through its diplomatic representatives will endeavor to reinforce what the League does."²⁰

The American press reflected the immediate rise of popular opinion against the Japanese. Newspapers were divided, however, on the American policy of cooperation with the League of Nations. The Brooklyn Eagle, the Baltimore Sun, and the New York Herald Tribune all denounced Japanese aggression and praised America's decision to cooperate with

¹⁸U. S. Congress, Senate Documents, No. 55, 72nd Congress, 1st Session (Washington, 1931), 5. For a full account of Stimson's role in the Manchurian crisis see Robert H. Ferrell, American Diplomacy in the Great Depression (New Haven, 1957).

¹⁹Henry L. Stimson, The Far Eastern Crisis (New York, 1936), 64-66.

²⁰Senate Documents, op. cit., 14.

the League of Nations in dealing with the Sino-Japanese situation.

The New York Evening Post and the Chicago Tribune, veteran opponents of League membership, disapproved of American cooperation with the League of Nations. The Philadelphia Record and the Ohio State Journal both stated that American cooperation with the League regarding the Sino-Japanese dispute was desirable. Both wondered, however, if such an action would not mean that America would then have to intervene with the League of Nations in all disputes.²¹

The divided reactions in the press towards American cooperation with the League, together with the general absence of pro-Japanese sentiment in the United States, indicate that the people wished to uphold the principles of international morality without taking positive steps to insure that those principles were observed. Moreover, the issue of joining the League of Nations still kindled American emotions, and our reluctance towards positive action was due at least in part to a slight revival of anti-League feeling.

Despite the protests against cooperation with the League, Secretary of State Stimson continued to show great concern over the Manchurian crisis. He maintained a policy of positive action with the League of Nations, vainly hoping

²¹"Peace Efforts Rekindle our League War," The Literary Digest, 111 (October 31, 1931), 3.

that the League could settle the dispute between China and Japan. Although the League of Nations was preparing to send a commission under Lord Lytton to discover the facts of the Manchurian affair, continued Japanese belligerence prompted Stimson on January 7, 1932 to send identical notes to China and Japan containing a pronouncement that was essentially the same as Bryan's reply to the twenty-one demands made by Japan to China. In these notes, which contained what later became known as the non-recognition doctrine,²² Stimson stated:

The American Government deems it to be its duty to notify both the Governments of the Chinese Republic and the Imperial Japanese Government that it cannot admit the legality of any situation de facto nor does it intend to recognize any treaty or agreement entered into between those governments, or agents thereof, which may impair the treaty rights of the United States or its citizens in China, including those which relate to the sovereignty, the independence, or the territorial and administrative integrity of the Republic of China; ²³ . . . commonly known as the Open Door policy.

Although Secretary of State Stimson in his doctrine of non-recognition appealed to the familiar agreements to

²²Richard N. Current, in "The Stimson Doctrine and the Hoover Doctrine," The American Historical Review, LIX (April, 1954), 310, comments upon the authorship of this doctrine. He declares that, while President Hoover originally suggested the idea of non-recognition, he and Stimson disagreed on the ultimate implications of non-recognition. Current suggests that since Stimson's analysis of the situation in the Far East prevailed, his name rather than Hoover's was applied to the doctrine of non-recognition.

²³U. S. Congress, Senate Documents, No. 55, 72nd Congress, 2nd Session (Washington, 1932), 53-54.

uphold the Open Door and territorial and administrative integrity in China, he indicated that he would be in favor of taking stern measures should Japan fail to heed his warning.²⁴ Stimson thus appealed to familiar principles of American diplomacy, but he realistically appraised the Sino-Japanese crisis of 1931 and concluded that more than mere appeals to existing international agreements would be needed to deter Japanese aggression.

Unfortunately for Stimson's policy, the United States was not in a good position to indulge in a strong foreign policy. The country was in a serious economic depression, and proposals to engage in economic reprisals against Japan filled the business community with dread.²⁵

The United States trade with Japan was eleven times greater in volume than with China and businessmen were not anxious to sacrifice their profits to an ideal. After March 1932, the movement for an anti-Japanese boycott rapidly deteriorated. Stimson's economic methods of curbing Japanese imperialism began to recede into the background while urgent domestic problems occupied an increasingly central position in the national scene.

²⁴Current, op. cit.

²⁵"The Collapse of the Movement to Boycott Japan," The Literary Digest, 112 (March 5, 1932), 7.

Meanwhile, Japan showed a disconcerting lack of regard for American pronouncements. On January 29, 1932, Japanese soldiers reached Shanghai. Then, on May fifth, the Japanese and Chinese signed the Shanghai Peace Pact. This pact produced a wave of optimism in American newspapers.²⁶ Perhaps now Japan would be satisfied and allow us to retire with the Open Door and our international treaties nearly intact.

Japan quickly dashed this hope when she formally recognized the puppet state of Manchukuo on September 15, 1932. The American press condemned the Japanese but seemed inclined to let well enough alone. The New York World Telegram cried: "Another Peace Treaty has been Scrapped," but the Boston Daily Globe declared that although the Japanese were in the wrong, America should keep out of the fight.²⁷

On October 4, 1932, the commission headed by Lord Lytton that had been delegated by the League of Nations to investigate the situation in Manchuria made its report to the League Council. The Lytton report recommended: (1) Non-recognition of Manchukuo, (2) a Manchurian government compatible with Chinese sovereignty, and (3) direct negotiations between China and Japan under the offices of

²⁶"The Shanghai Peace Pact," The Literary Digest, 113 (May 14, 1932), 6.

²⁷"Manchukuo, the World's New Fever Spot," Ibid., 13.

a League commission.²⁸

American newspaper and magazine reactions to the Lytton Report varied from unqualified support to marked disapproval. The New Republic declared that it was a "fine report" while the New York Daily News feared that the United States would have to use positive measures to support the recommendations of the Lytton Commission.²⁹

In November, 1932, American voters elected Franklin Delano Roosevelt as the new President of the United States. After a series of conferences between Roosevelt and Stimson, the new Secretary of State, Cordell Hull, issued a statement on May 17, 1933 regarding the Lytton Report. This statement indicated an immediate shift of policy away from Stimson's attempts to inhibit Japanese aggression in China:

An embargo on arms and munitions of war would not be an effective means of restoring peace. . . . Our paramount interest is to remain free from any entanglements which would involve this country in a foreign war. . . . It is not our policy to have this government posing before the world as a leader in all the efforts to prevent or put an end to wars but on the other hand it is not our policy to lag behind the other nations of the world in their efforts to promote peace.³⁰

American newspaper reaction to this ambivalent

²⁸League of Nations, Official Journal, XIV (1933), 435-438.

²⁹"After the Lytton Report What?", The Literary Digest, 114 (October 22, 1932), 7.

³⁰Peace and War; United States Foreign Policy, 1931-1941 (Washington, 1943), 183-186. Hereafter cited as Peace and War.

pronouncement closely paralleled the opinion of the new Secretary of State. Both appeared to support the validity of the findings of the Lytton Report, but neither was willing to commit America to any possible future action against Japan should that nation continue to disregard her international obligations with reference to China.

Meanwhile, the Japanese had consolidated their gains. On January 19, 1933, they moved into the province of Jehol and established control over that area by March 4th. The tension between China and Japan appeared temporarily to be eased on May 31 when they signed an agreement at Tangku. Under the terms of the agreement, the Japanese were to retire to the Great Wall if China would retreat to a line twenty-five to thirty miles east of the Tientsin-Peiping railway.³¹

Evidence that the United States still showed an interest in China and disapproved of Japanese imperialism appeared in June, 1933, when we advanced fifty million dollars to China through the Reconstruction Finance Corporation. The money was to be used to purchase surplus wheat and cotton for China. Although America was unwilling to accept the eventual use of force to insure Japanese respect for Chinese territory and the "Open Door", the United States was happy to show its interest in China by the potentially less dangerous and more idealistic method of loaning money to the Chinese people.

³¹Foreign Relations, 1933, III (Washington, 1949), 349.

This emphasis on monetary aid indicates that the "New Deal" was applicable as an instrument of foreign as well as domestic policy.

With few exceptions the press supported the loan. The Raleigh News and Observer declared that it would benefit both China and the United States. The New York Daily Investment News stated that China needed the money desperately and suggested that the United States might well consider sending an additional loan when possible.³²

On July 29, 1933, Secretary of State Hull optimistically declared that America also was improving its relations with Japan. Hull intimated that Japanese-American relations had deteriorated partially because of the Stimson doctrine of non-recognition. The new Secretary of State proposed to bring about a friendlier feeling between Japan and the United States, thereby strengthening the cause of peace.³³

During 1934, America continued to pursue a policy of conciliation towards Japan and of benevolent interest in China. Since Japan had reduced her activity in China, the United States was able to occupy herself at home with the problems of domestic recovery.

But in June, 1935, the Japanese commenced a drive to

³²The Literary Digest, 115 (June 17, 1933), 8.

³³"The Possibilities of a Japanese American Agreement," The Literary Digest, 116 (July 29, 1933), 14.

capture and control Peiping and Tientsin, claiming that Chinese bandits were harassing the Japanese soldiers. Continued Japanese aggression caused considerable uneasiness in America. In December, 1935, Secretary Hull declared that Japanese aggression was a threat to world peace.³⁴ Americans discovered that international law was not sufficient force to inhibit Japanese imperial tendencies. From this first faint awareness grew the movement towards our entrance into a world war.

³⁴"Friendly Enemies in North China," The Literary Digest, 120 (December 14, 1935), 11.

CHAPTER II

FROM NONINTERVENTION TO ACTIVE WARFARE AMERICAN ATTITUDES TOWARDS CHINA, 1935-1941

America Seeks Neutrality: American Attitudes Towards China, 1935-1936

The increased awareness that Americans felt over events in Asia and Europe in the late thirties is indicated in the neutrality legislation which they enacted to keep the United States out of war. The first Neutrality Act, passed on August 31, 1935, prohibited the export of arms to belligerent nations and declared that American citizens would travel on belligerent ships at their own risk.¹ On February 29, 1936, the second Neutrality Act, an extension of the first neutrality legislation, made it illegal to loan money to belligerent nations.²

While Japanese pressure continued to mount, particularly in the Peiping-Tientsin area, the United States continued its efforts to forestall involvement in international warfare. Congress passed the third Neutrality Act on May 1,

¹Peace and War, 266-271.

²Ibid., 313-314.

1937, confirming the two existing pieces of neutrality legislation and providing for the establishment of a National Munitions Control Board to carry out the provisions of the neutrality acts.³

This legislation by the American Congress reflected a determination to avoid involvement in another world war-- a determination that transcended even the former widespread acceptance of the policy of respect for Chinese territorial and administrative integrity.

Secretary of State Hull reflected the national mood when he stated what he declared were the "Fundamental Principles of International Policy: We advocate national and international self restraint . . . We advocate faithful observance of international agreements . . . We stand for revitalizing and strengthening of international law."⁴

The Saturday Evening Post expressed a similar sentiment, cautiously noting that:

There is in this country a great deal of sincere sympathy for China and the Chinese people. It is not hard to understand that. But we hope that this sympathy will not inspire any action that will attempt to embroil us in an undeclared war between China and Japan.⁵

Time did not mention such a pronounced non-interventionist stand, but it reflected a certain ambivalence towards

³Ibid., 355-365.

⁴S. Shephard Jones and Denys P. Myers, eds., Documents on American Foreign Relations (Boston, 1939), 3.

⁵The Saturday Evening Post, September 11, 1937, 24.

China that was common among Americans in the mid-thirties. Generally pro-Chinese, Time occasionally spoke of Chiang Kai-shek's "Goose stepping choir boys" who were not doing their best against the Japanese.⁶

Neutrality legislation and editorial caution indicated that Americans were unwilling to fight in 1935-1936. The martial spirit still lay dormant, ready to be activated by a series of incidents that eventually convinced Americans that they had to fight to preserve their own territorial integrity as well as that of their allies.

First Steps on the Road to Intervention:
American Attitudes Towards Continued
Japanese Aggression in China, 1937-1939

Although Cordell Hull, along with large numbers of his fellow Americans, disapproved of vigorous action against the Japanese, thoughtful people were asking searching questions about the policy of non-intervention. Brooks Atkinson of the New York Times noted that the Chinese had invoked the Nine Power Pact against Japanese aggressions in the Peiping-Tientsin area. After wondering how the United States would react to this appeal, the writer concluded: "It may be taken for granted that as long as the participation of the United States in the situation is limited to exhortations of peace, Tokyo will not alter its intentions

⁶Time, February 15, 1937, 28.

because of that."⁷

Another writer examined our neutrality legislation in the light of the existing international situation and concluded: "It has become all too obvious that the enactment of neutrality legislation contains no guarantee of insulation."⁸

Such thoughts troubled a nation that wanted to be clear of entanglements leading to war. Furthermore, we had moral obligations in the Far East. Declarations of neutrality could not obliterate the fact that America had pledged to uphold principles of territorial and administrative integrity and equal trade opportunity for all nations in China. Our commitment to these principles, although very weak in the mid-1930's, began to expand as the chain of events involved the United States more directly with events in the Far East.

On October 5, 1937, in a speech at Chicago, Illinois, Franklin Delano Roosevelt declared:

When an epidemic of physical disease starts to spread, the community approves and joins in a quarantine of the patients in order to protect the health of the community against the spread of the disease. . . . There must be positive endeavors to preserve peace.⁹

⁷The New York Times, July 18, 1937, 8.

⁸The New York Times, August 24, 1937, 8.

⁹Jones, op. cit., 577-580.

In this "Quarantine Speech" Roosevelt was approaching the spirit evinced by Secretary of State Stimson in 1932. American leaders were once more accepting the responsibility of the United States to insure observance of international law and order. But the public reacted strongly against President Roosevelt's drastic formula.

However, Roosevelt received support from the League of Nations Far East Advisory Committee which investigated the situation in China and concluded:

It is clear that the two countries [China and Japan] take very different views as to the underlying grounds of the dispute and as to the incident which led to the first outbreak of hostilities. . . . It cannot however be challenged that powerful Japanese armies have invaded Chinese territory and are in military control of large areas, including Peiping itself; that the Japanese Government has taken naval measures to close the coast to Chinese shipping; and that Japanese aircraft are carrying out bombardments over widely separated regions of the country.¹⁰

The report went on to declare that such actions were "out of all proportion to the incident that occasioned the conflict," and that such action "is in contravention of Japan's obligations under the Washington Treaty of February 6, 1922 and of the Pact of Paris of April 27, 1928." While the report was not jingoistic, it pointed an accusing finger at Japan. Such an accusation was not one to be lightly undertaken, for it carried with it a covert threat against

¹⁰Jones, op. cit., 159.

Japan should that nation continue to disregard international law and morality.

In response to the League of Nations' report, Secretary of State Hull issued a statement of concurrence, thereby moving away from his "Fundamental principles" in foreign policy.¹¹ The United States was once more becoming aware of her responsibilities as a member of the world community of nations.

Two months after Roosevelt's "Quarantine speech", an incident occurred which further aroused the United States to an awareness of involvement in the Sino-Japanese struggle. Japanese aviators repeatedly bombed a clearly identified United States gunboat, the "Panay".¹² The vessel sank with two killed and thirty wounded. America immediately demanded apologies, reparation, and adequate precautions against the repetition of such incidents. The Japanese responded with alacrity by proffering the required apologies and assurances.

Despite the prompt official protest, American press reactions to the Panay incident were definitely peaceful. The Portland Oregonian maintained that the State Department could have avoided the incident by exercising more caution, adding: "The State Department's sharpest note of protest

¹¹ Ibid., 171-172.

¹² Life, January 10, 1938, 11ff., contains pictures taken by Norman Alley, a Universal Films cameraman, which prove that the "Panay" was prominently displaying three American flags.

should be addressed to itself."¹³ A later comment of the Oregonian on the Panay affair amplified its attitude:

It would be paradoxical in the extreme to bear up under Japan's slaughter of Chinese and Japan's rape of the ancient empire, and then make an occasion for war out of the protection of a few million dollars worth of property.¹⁴

The Christian Science Monitor refrained from commenting on the possibility or advisability of American intervention but declared: "Apologies from Tokyo might well be extended not merely to the governments of Britain and America but to the moral sense of mankind."¹⁵

However, an editorial writer for the New York Times expressed the concern of many when he raised the question of Japanese sincerity in their assurances that the "Panay" incident would not be repeated:

The only really valid guarantee that Japan can give in this matter would be the withdrawal of its invading army from the soil of China and the liquidation of this imperialist adventure.¹⁶

This problem continued to trouble thoughtful people. If Japan did not withdraw from China, would the United States

¹³Portland Oregonian, November 14, 1937, 8.

¹⁴Portland Oregonian, November 15, 1937, 8.

¹⁵The Christian Science Monitor, December 14, 1937, 14.

¹⁶The New York Times, December 14, 1937, 14.

eventually be drawn into war in spite of its efforts to remain aloof? The American Government and public realized that Japanese imperialism was, after all, a problem which required immediate and careful attention.

The Japanese continued to advance into Chinese territory, and by October 25, 1938 they had captured Canton and Hankow. The Portland Oregonian expressed the general reaction to the renewed Japanese advance by noting with approval that President Roosevelt had stated: "If there is not general disarmament, we ourselves must continue to arm."¹⁷

Although Americans were becoming concerned once more about the Sino-Japanese situation, many were beginning to feel that perhaps the solution lay in giving material aid to China. This idea rested upon the assumption that China would be able to fight its own battles if it only had the proper equipment. In a discussion of the Canton-Hankow incidents, one editor commented:

China gives up cities but preserves her army. She has only to increase her military power and she will be able to turn tables on Japan. . . . China is only in the process of becoming a nation and a military power; when that process is completed the decisive struggle will begin.¹⁸

This attitude obtained a measure of official

¹⁷Portland Oregonian, October 28, 1938, 12.

¹⁸The New York Times, October 26, 1938, 15.

recognition on December 15, 1938 when the United States Government authorized the Export Import Bank to extend twenty-five million dollars credit to the Universal Trading Corporation of New York under guaranty of the Bank of China. This loan was to be used to facilitate the movement of American industrial and agricultural goods to China.

Along with the movement towards economic involvement in China, there was increasing pressure to change our policy of neutrality because of the uncertain conditions in Europe. On November 4, 1939, Congress passed the fourth Neutrality Act which lifted the arms embargo that had been a feature of the previous neutrality legislation.¹⁹ The new neutrality act was popular with the press. Even the cautious Christian Science Monitor declared: "This newspaper welcomes the amendment of American neutrality legislation."²⁰

As the United States began to move towards more active support of China through friendly legislation, the American public indicated a corresponding increase of sympathy for China. In September, 1937 a poll showed that 43 per cent of the persons questioned supported China. This percentage increased to 59 in September, 1938 and reached 74 in June, 1939. There was also a distinct increase in the number of

¹⁹Peace and War, 494-506.

²⁰The Christian Science Monitor, November 4, 1939,

people who favored shipment of arms to China, from 36 per cent in February, 1938 to 60 per cent in June, 1939.²¹

Thus, as the 1930's drew to a close, American officials, the American press, and the American people became more aware of the importance of Japanese actions in the Far East. With awareness came a new concern, evidenced by loans and relaxed neutrality legislation. These changes in American policy led in turn to more direct involvement with China.

Towards Total War: The Shift of American
Attitudes to Support of Active
Assistance to China, 1940-1941

Notwithstanding the American shift towards more positive support of China, Japan continued to advance into Chinese territory. By March 30, 1940, the Japanese were established in Nanking, the gateway to the mighty Yangtze River upon which supplies ordinarily went to the Nationalist capital, Chungking. As public opinion in the United States shifted to an increasingly anti-Japanese position, Americans began to react against Japanese advances more than they had in the 1930's. The Japanese march to Nanking, in addition to the long list of Japan's former violations of her international obligations, caused Americans to reexamine their policy in the Far East.

On June 15, 1940, Rear Admiral Joseph K. Taussig, commandant of the Naval base in Norfolk, Virginia, expressed

²¹The New York Times, December 31, 1939, 7, based on Gallup and Fortune polls.

his dissatisfaction over continued American inaction:

The Open Door in China has been practically closed, and the Nine Power Pact involving the integrity of China has been violated without anything being done about it other than protest.²²

Although Taussig, a minor naval official, did not qualify as an expert on foreign affairs, his views were echoed in a pamphlet written by Philip E. Mosely under the auspices of the influential Council on Foreign Relations. In this pamphlet, entitled "A Reappraisal of the Stimson Doctrine", Mosely carefully developed his subject in its historical setting and concluded:

The bargaining power which the United States may have accumulated through upholding the principle of nonrecognition of title acquired by conquest should not be regarded as carrying much weight in dealing with governments which consider conquest their main ambition and glory.²³

Americans realized that protests were not satisfactory deterrents of Japanese imperialism. This realization found concrete expression in the passage of the Selective Service Training Act on September 16, 1940. The United States had extended aid to China; it had lifted its arms embargo; and now it was embarking on a program of military training calculated to prepare large numbers of American youth for the war which was becoming an all too immediate possibility.

²²The New York Times, June 15, 1940, 13.

²³Philip E. Mosely, "A Reappraisal of the Stimson Doctrine," Council on American Foreign Relations, Studies of American Interests in the War and Peace (New York, 1940), 4.

With the arms embargo lifted, there arose the embarrassing problem of steel shipments to Japan. President Roosevelt drew America a step closer to intervention in China on September 26, 1940 when he placed an embargo on all scrap iron and steel to Japan. The Portland Oregonian responded favorably to the embargo, noting with alarm that: "America is without a single powerful friend except Britain. The situation requires us to take the limit off our efforts to help Britain and off our own program of armament."²⁴

The Christian Science Monitor enthusiastically commended the embargo, declaring that continued shipments of war materials to Japan would raise the cost of American defense and render it more difficult.²⁵

Although newspapers and magazines generally responded in favor of increased participation in the Sino-Japanese struggle, an important minority continued to favor isolationism. In July, 1940, the Saturday Evening Post delivered a scathing attack on President Roosevelt for sending arms to belligerents.²⁶ However, although periodicals such as the Post continued to fight valiantly against the rising pressure for active intervention, they were unable to stem the tide

²⁴The Portland Oregonian, September 28, 1940, 8.

²⁵The Christian Science Monitor, September 27, 1940, 35.

²⁶The Saturday Evening Post, July 13, 1940, 24.

of public opinion that demanded redress for China's grievances.²⁷

Japan meanwhile took advantage of events in Europe to enter French Indo-China. In addition to their military successes, the Japanese scored a diplomatic triumph on September 27 when they signed a pact with the Axis powers. Under the terms of the Tripartite Pact, Japan recognized the leadership of Germany and Italy in the establishment of a new order in Europe while the Axis powers recognized the leadership of Japan in establishing a new order in Asia. Furthermore, they agreed to assist each other if a power not then involved were to enter the war against one of them.²⁸

American reaction to the Tripartite Pact was immediate and somewhat belligerent. One newspaper commented:

The method chosen [in the pact] is to frighten us by the threat of simultaneous war in the Atlantic and the Pacific if we carry our help to Great Britain and China much farther. . . . Increased help for Britain and for China should be the anchors of our policy for the self defense of the western world.²⁹

But such belligerency evaporated upon more thoughtful consideration of the implications of the pact. A study of

²⁷See pp. 9-10.

²⁸Shephard Jones and Denys P. Myers, eds., Documents on American Foreign Relations, III (Boston, 1941), 304-305.

²⁹The New York Times, September 30, 1940, 15.

newspaper reactions in 1940 and 1941 reveals that the press was greatly subdued for a time after its initial reaction to the signing of the Tripartite Pact.³⁰ Notwithstanding the moderate tone of the newspapers, a survey of public opinion in July and October, 1940 indicates that Americans were shifting rapidly to a more definite anti-Japanese position. In July, 1940, 47 per cent of the people who were polled would allow Japan to control China. In October, 1940, only 30 per cent would allow Japanese control of China. The number of people who would "risk war if necessary" rose from 12 per cent in July to 29 per cent in October.³¹

On October 18, Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek took advantage of this revived American concern for the Far East by encouraging his brother-in-law, T. V. Soong, who was then in the United States, to request arms and aid for China.³² The United States assured Soong that it would extend all the aid legally possible. Once committed, both by legislation lifting the arms embargo to belligerents and by promises to China, America set to work in earnest to fulfill her obligations. In November, the United States provided money to China for the purchase of one hundred "P-40" aircraft.

³⁰James S. Twohey, "An Analysis of Newspaper Opinion on War Issues," Public Opinion Quarterly, V, 1941, 449.

³¹Hadley Cantril et. al., "America Faces the War; Shifts in Opinion," Public Opinion Quarterly, IV, 1940, 655.

³²See Chapter III, pp. 48-50, for a discussion of Soong in the U. S.

This was followed by one hundred million dollars in credit to China, 25 per cent of which was to be spent for arms. Then, on January 6, 1941, President Roosevelt presented to Congress a request for a "lend lease" bill. This bill was to provide defense materials for any country whose defense was necessary to the safety of the United States.

Americans evinced various reactions to the monetary and lend lease policies of the United States. The Portland Oregonian, commenting on the hundred million dollar loan of December, 1940, stated:

Mr. Roosevelt has acted dangerously in advancing such a sum to unhappy China that Japan seeks to beat to its knees. But it has always been the logical act if we really wanted to help.³³

This ambivalent editorial reflected an apparent widespread feeling of uncertainty in the United States. Americans did not welcome war, but the desire to help China inspired the United States to grant active aid in spite of the risks of war. The Christian Science Monitor declared that aid to China was "highly commendable."³⁴

The introduction of the lend lease bill drew a violently adverse reaction from the isolationist periodicals. An editorial in the Saturday Evening Post bewailed the cost of the proposed lend lease and concluded on the gloomy note

³³The Portland Oregonian, December 2, 1940, 6.

³⁴The Christian Science Monitor, December 4, 1940,

that lend lease was another landmark on the road to dictatorship.³⁵ However, in its objections to lend lease, the Post was probably exhibiting its anti-Roosevelt bias.

The Chinese were quick to state their needs under the terms of the Lend Lease Act. On March 31, T. V. Soong presented a list of China's needs, including one thousand aircraft with American trained pilots and technical help, army equipment to outfit thirty divisions, and assurance of an efficient line of communications between China and the friendly powers.

On April 15, 1941, Herbert Pawley, an American businessman, concluded a private agreement with the Chinese government to equip, supply, and operate an unofficial group of American airmen to be known as the American Volunteer Group. This group was to have no official support from American armed forces, or from lend lease. The Volunteer Group boosted the morale of the Chinese Government and people. Later, under the direction of Claire Chennault, it played an important part in the China-Burma-India Theater of the war.³⁶

Because of the difficulties in selecting and distributing equipment that would be of maximum use to the

³⁵The Saturday Evening Post, January 11, 1941, 25.

³⁶Charles F. Romanus and Riley Sunderland, Stilwell's Mission to China (Washington, 1952), 12-36. Hereafter this will be cited as Mission to China.

Chinese, the United States Department of War created on July 3, 1941 the American Military Mission to China. This mission, under the leadership of Brigadier General John Magruder, was to coordinate the lend lease program in China. In addition to its lend lease duties, the American Military Mission to China was a potential liaison for strategic planning against the Japanese, because the War Department felt that war with Japan was imminent.

Secretary of State Hull indicated the shift towards active interventionism in a speech of October 26, 1940:

The appalling tragedy of the present world situation lies in the fact that peacefully disposed nations failed to recognize in time the true nature of the aims and ambitions which have actuated the rulers of heavily arming nations. . . . The peoples of the peaceful nations permitted themselves to be lulled into a false sense of security by the assurances made by these rulers that their aims were limited. . . . The people of this country want peace. To have peace, we must have security. To have security, we must be strong.³⁷

Franklin D. Roosevelt vigorously joined the fight for military preparedness:

Some people like to believe that wars in Europe and Asia are of no concern to us. But it is a matter of most vital concern to us that European and Asiatic war-makers should not gain control of the oceans which lead to this hemisphere.³⁸

The creation of the Volunteer Group and the Military Mission, and the statements of Roosevelt and Hull were

³⁷Jones, op. cit., III, 10-15.

³⁸Ibid., 19.

evidence that the United States was moving towards positive involvement on the side of China. America could no longer engage in round table discussions encouraging everyone to respect China's rights. An aggressor had appeared and had disregarded international morality. The United States, although slow to act because of the depression and popular sentiment against involvement in war, began to see the true significance of Japanese imperialism and its latent dangers even to our isolated shores.

Roosevelt and Hull continued to urge Americans to prepare for war. In the early months of 1941, however, they added to their recommendations for preparedness an appeal to Americans for renewed dedication to democracy. President Roosevelt declared:

Every realist knows that the democratic way of life is at this moment being directly assailed in every part of the world. . . . Our national policy in foreign affairs has been based on a decent respect for the rights and dignity of all nations, large and small. And the justice of morality must and will win in the end.³⁹

In March, 1941, Secretary Hull challenged the American people with the proposition that: "We need today a resurgence of spiritual purpose and of moral stamina."⁴⁰

The press generally approved the declarations of American leaders. The Christian Science Monitor stated:

³⁹Jones, op. cit., III, 29.

⁴⁰Ibid., 31.

"American isolationism's most perilous mistake has been to forget that America is much more than a body of land on the North American continent . . . America cannot retreat."⁴¹

The Monitor reflected the lengths to which the desire for dedicated preparedness had gone by the summer of 1941:

"Military history deeply underlines the need of enlistments for the period of the emergency. This can best be made fair by every citizen's resolving that in this crisis, whatever his capacity, he too, is enlisted for the duration."⁴²

The declarations of Hull and Roosevelt and the newspaper editorials offer striking proof that America was once more entering into hostilities with a high degree of fervor. Americans were convinced that their position was inherently right and that they had a mission to protect the democratic way of life.

In 1941, the Council on Foreign Relations obtained additional evidence of the widespread desire for intervention. The Council conducted discussions of foreign affairs in representative cities. Prominent citizens presented their views, and the results were compiled by the Council. A majority of the cities reporting were in favor of American entrance into the war. Only Minneapolis and

⁴¹The Christian Science Monitor, April 16, 1941, 14.

⁴²The Christian Science Monitor, July 23, 1941, 12.

Providence were against war. The Minneapolis group felt that we should avoid war because we could make "every point we need to make in the Far East by measures short of war." Providence stated that it would be unwise for America to go to war with Japan at the present time. But Cleveland was "inclined to favor sterner measures against Japan and the extension of aid to China", and Detroit, Houston, Nashville, and Louisville added to the chorus of voices calling for decisive action against the Japanese.⁴³

Thus, the essential idealism of the Open Door and other subsequent policies came once more to the fore as Americans from east and west, north and south, set out to protect China and to ensure the continued safe progress of democracy.

Sensing the popular support, President Roosevelt froze all Japanese assets in the United States on July 26, 1941. This action caused the Japanese to attempt to negotiate an agreement for the repeal of America's action against them. Japan and the United States exchanged a list of proposals designed to bring the two countries to commercial amity once more. The proposals were mutually unsatisfactory, and effective diplomacy between the two nations ceased. "We are prepared," the Portland Oregonian commented when Japan and the United States failed to reach an agreement:

⁴³Francis P. Miller, ed., Some Regional Views on Our Foreign Policy, 1941 (New York, 1941).

We now face possible eventualities with calmness and consciousness of superiority. We have had time for this, because in China the courage and fortitude of men and women and even children in the presence of aggression absorbed the resources of a rapacious invader who bore us no good will.⁴⁴

Thus, the United States moved towards acceptance of active intervention against the Japanese.

The Nationalists and the Communists:
American Attitudes Towards the Communist
Challenge to the Nationalist Government,
1935-1941

The invasion by the Japanese armies greatly intensified the internal political problems of China. Each of the rival factions kept a wary eye on the others, entirely aware of the fact that the arms of a rival group would as likely be used in civil strife as against the Japanese. In June, 1936, there was a serious threat of civil war between Chiang Kai-shek and a few powerful war lords in northern China. This crisis passed temporarily, but in December Chiang was kidnapped by Chang Hseuh-liang, a Chinese Communist. The Nationalist leader immediately won his release, but the incident served to heighten the tension that already gripped the nation, threatened by imperialism from without and by political strife from within.

In January, 1937, the Nationalist Party and the Communist group established an uneasy coalition so that both

⁴⁴The Portland Oregonian, November 23, 1941, 24.

could fight against the Japanese invader. Although theoretically at peace, the two rival parties continued to be suspicious of each other. Chiang's fear of Chinese Communists continued to increase and was to play an important part in the prosecution of the Second World War. Chiang Kai-shek always felt that there were dangers within China far greater than the Japanese invader. Hence, the Kuomintang leader was unwilling to engage in all-out mobilization against the Japanese, before or during the war.

American attitudes towards political events in China in general and the Chinese Communists in particular changed a great deal between the early 1930's and the outbreak of war in 1941. On May 21, 1932, the Literary Digest contained an article that displayed an anti-Chinese Communist bias. It described the brutalities of the Communists as they attempted to assert their hegemony over the Chinese.⁴⁵ Two months later, the same magazine reported that Communism was spreading rapidly in China. Both articles indicated an awareness that the Chinese Communists were inspired and supported by Russia.⁴⁶ †

By 1937, however, Americans had begun to view the Chinese Communists as agrarian reformers having no connection

⁴⁵"Soviets Claiming Gains in China," The Literary Digest, 113 (May 21, 1932), 14.

⁴⁶"The Red Peril's Spread in China," The Literary Digest, 114 (August 27, 1932), 12.

with Moscow. An article in the Literary Digest declared that the peasants greatly preferred the Chinese Communists to the haughty and often cruel war lords.⁴⁷ Newsweek stated: "Since last December the Reds have given up all idea of collectivizing the land, changed their name from "Soviet" to "Workers" Peoples Party, and sent out feelers for peace."⁴⁸

This changed attitude among Americans was due to two major factors. The first factor was the continued importance of the missionaries who remained a vital source of information about China during the 1930's.⁴⁹ During the invasion of 1931, American missionaries reacted with a chorus of anti-Japanese sentiment.⁵⁰ In their enthusiasm for the Chinese cause, the missionaries soon came to endorse even the Chinese Communists. One wrote of the Communists: "They are now Chinese first and foremost; their aim now is to institute a movement for socialized reform compatible with the aspirations of all progressive people."⁵¹

⁴⁷The Literary Digest, 123 (April 3, 1937), 12.

⁴⁸Newsweek, April 17, 1937, 23.

⁴⁹John W. Masland, "Missionary Influence on American Far Eastern Policy," Pacific Historical Review, X (September, 1941), 279-296.

⁵⁰Varg, op. cit., 255.

⁵¹"What About Communists?", Missionary Review of the World (July, 1939), 378.

Such letters and articles had an effect in creating in the United States, suffering from economic depression, an image of peaceful Chinese agrarian reformers. This conception remained to be a disrupting factor in Sino-American relations during the Second World War.⁵²

The other factor in the change of American attitudes towards the Chinese Communists was the American desire that China show a united front against Japan. As early as 1932, T. V. Soong optimistically estimated that China could defend herself if she were able to obtain credit for military supplies and food.⁵³ This declaration naturally pleased Americans who favored China but did not particularly want to fight for their good friend. Although China was repeatedly pushed back by the Japanese, the United States looked reluctantly upon intervention. Consequently, Americans began to view askance the Chinese political division. Surely if unity could be achieved, the Japanese would be routed.

This line of thought was evident in an editorial in the New York Times on February 6, 1941 which made melancholy note of the fact that the Nationalists and Communists were expending their energy fighting each other when they could unite and drive out the common enemy.⁵⁴ Owen Lattimore, a

⁵²See Chapter V, p. 104.

⁵³"China is Now a Fighting Nation," The Literary Guide, 113 (May 14, 1932), 6.

⁵⁴The New York Times, February 6, 1941, 13.

Far Eastern expert who was then acting as special political adviser to Chiang Kai-shek, revealed the same thought when he declared: "It is vital to the American interest that Chinese resistance be strong enough to prevent the Japanese from releasing large forces for a drive south. Therefore it is vital that there be no civil war in China."⁵⁵

It is evident, then, that American attitudes towards the internal situation in China during the late 1930's were prompted by a dual motivation. The strong pro-Chinese sentiment and the support of the Chinese Communists by the missionaries, capped by the optimistic belief that China could drive out the Japanese invader by herself, made Americans impatient with China's waste of energy and manpower in internal warfare.

This failure of the United States to assess correctly the wide separation and deep distrust between the two factions played a vital role in diplomacy between Chiang Kai-shek and the American Government during the war. Internal division, as well as aggression, conspired to confound Americans as they sought to protect China without leaving the shores of North America.

⁵⁵Owen Lattimore, "The Chinese Communists, the Comintern, and the Russo-Japanese Neutrality Agreement," American Interest in the War and the Peace, op. cit., 5.

CHAPTER III

THE FIRST YEAR OF WAR: AMERICAN ATTITUDES TOWARDS CHINA, DECEMBER, 1941 TO DECEMBER, 1942

A Japanese Attack and a China Lobby: The United States Declares War on Japan and Extends Financial Aid to China

On a peaceful Sunday morning, December 7, 1941, the Japanese bombed the American naval base at Pearl Harbor in Hawaii. Although the attack came as a surprise, the Japanese did not completely annihilate the United States fleet in Pearl Harbor. Of the eight battleships in the harbor, only the "Arizona", the "California", and the "West Virginia" were sunk. The others were damaged but, fortunately, the Japanese failed to bomb the dry dock and repair facilities making it possible for the Navy to begin repair work immediately. The speed with which the ships were repaired enabled the Allies to take the offensive against the Axis powers before they could deal the Allied cause an irreparable blow.

The United States Congress officially declared war upon Japan on December eighth. The press responded to the attack and declaration of war by calling for dedicated and sustained efforts to completely annihilate Japan.

"Japan is our immediate concern," declared the Portland Oregonian. "Her record is one justifying her complete and

final disposal."¹ On the following day the Oregonian added: "We have the right on our side. The fate of humanity and human liberty rests with our arms."²

On the day following the attack, the New York Times carried a series of newspaper reactions. Among the most interesting comments was that made by the Chicago Tribune, an isolationist and anti-war newspaper: "We must strike with all our might to protect and preserve the American freedom that we all hold dear."³

The Christian Science Monitor stated: "America's great advantage is moral. Like the Nazis, the Japanese militarists have no footing in Principle and can never win the fundamental struggle."⁴ Not only were we morally right, according to the Monitor, but we were also obligated to crush the evil represented in the enemy: "The outbreak of Japan brings into the open evils which had to be dealt with. It enables the Allies----and particularly America----to see what must be done to preserve freedom, justice, and order."⁵

China soon occupied a place in the discussion of war by American newspapers. In an editorial on December ninth,

¹The Portland Oregonian, December 8, 1941, 8.

²The Portland Oregonian, December 9, 1941, 22.

³The New York Times, December 8, 1941, 5.

⁴The Christian Science Monitor, December 10, 1941, 18.

⁵The Christian Science Monitor, December 9, 1941, 24.

the New York Times turned its attention towards our ally in the fight against the Japanese:

We are partners in a larger unity which finds strong allies at our side precisely when we need them most. . . . We have as our ally China, with its inexhaustible manpower--China, from whose patient and untiring and infinitely resourceful people there will now return to us tenfold payment upon such aid as we have given.⁶

The Times' estimate of "tenfold returns" from China was rather optimistic because the Chinese were much more interested in getting aid than in helping the United States.

Until late in 1940, China's pleas for help had been unorganized, but effective enough to promote the belief in the United States that China could defeat the Japanese with arms and money.⁷ Late in 1940, T. V. Soong and Ludwig Radchman, a former League of Nations health expert, arrived together in the United States. They organized an effective "pipeline" into the White House and began to press for help in every way they could devise. Soong and Radchman promoted the argument that China was a world power--an assumption that became an important part of American strategy during the war. In March, 1941, Soong inaugurated China Defense Supplies Incorporated, a company devoted to representing China on lend lease matters. Members of this company included such White House favorites as William S. Youngman, former

⁶The New York Times, December 9, 1941, 30.

⁷See Chapter II, pp. 29-30.

general counsel for the Federal Power Commission, and Thomas G. Corcoran, a former member of President Roosevelt's famous "brain trust". Soong and Radchman carefully cultivated the friendship of Secretary of the Treasury Henry Morgenthau and Federal Emergency Relief administrator Harry Hopkins, both confidantes of the President.⁸

Thus, China's needs were well represented in Washington when America became actively involved in war. During the first three months of 1942 the "China lobby" did its very best to obtain a loan for China. Chiang Kai-shek instructed his representatives in the United States to ask for a billion dollars, giving Soong and company a concrete goal for which to work.

Responsible American officials generally agreed that a loan to China was necessary. On December 30, 1941, Ambassador Clarence Gauss wrote Secretary of State Hull that: "A loan to China would do much toward strengthening morale."⁹ On January 3, 1942, Manuel Fox, an American member of the Chinese Stabilization Board which advised the Nationalist Government on monetary matters, wrote Secretary of the Treasury Morgenthau that: "A substantial loan would be invaluable."¹⁰

⁸The Reporter, April 15, 1952, is largely devoted to a discussion of the early activities of the Soong-Radchman group. The term "China lobby" originated in the Reporter.

⁹United States Relations with China, 1944-1949, U. S. Department of State (Washington, 1949), 471.

¹⁰Ibid., 472-473.

Americans did not agree, however, that China should be given a billion dollars. Ambassador Gauss stated:

I am convinced that credits of the magnitude requested by General Chiang are out of all proportion to the needs of the situation. . . . In present circumstances there is no practicable way in which such large credits could be effectively and legitimately utilized. . . . The Chinese Government has not formulated plans for coping with the serious internal situation and is therefore hardly in a position to indicate with any exactness the use it expects to make of desired foreign credits.¹¹

Despite sustained pressure from China on the White House, Hull followed the advice of Gauss and recommended to Henry Morgenthau that the United States loan China \$300,000,000 with the "greatest possible expedition."¹²

But Chiang Kai-shek applied personal pressure to Morgenthau on January 14, 1942. He wrote: "If China's finances and economics fail to be improved and strengthened, our power of resistance against Japanese aggression will be so adversely affected that the entire war front of the Allied Powers will inevitably suffer."¹³

On January 30, 1942, the Department of State recommended that \$500,000,000 be loaned to China. This amount became the basis for discussion in Congress. On February third, Henry Stimson, who had been named as Secretary of War by

¹¹Ibid., 473-476.

¹²Ibid., 477.

¹³Ibid., 477.

President Roosevelt in 1940, testified before the House Foreign Affairs Committee. Stimson's biographer, McGeorge Bundy, later wrote concerning this testimony: "It was a time for advocacy, and the advocacy came easily to Stimson, for the Chinese cause was one in which he deeply believed."¹⁴ Stimson strongly emphasized in his testimony that China deserved the loan.

Although Roosevelt had shown his friendship to China in previous statements, he specifically indicated his support of financial aid to the Chinese in a letter to Chiang Kai-shek after the loan had passed Congress:

The unusual speed and unanimity with which this measure was acted upon by the Congress and the enthusiastic support which it received throughout the United States testify to the wholehearted respect and admiration which the Government and people of this country have for China. They testify also to our earnest desire and determination to be concretely helpful to our partners in the great battle for freedom.¹⁵

Although the United States was enthusiastic over the loan, the Chinese expressed dissatisfaction because America maintained partial control of the allocation of the funds. Ambassador Gauss informed Hull of this complaint on March first, adding: "It is my opinion that the best interests of China and our own best interests as well would be served by

¹⁴Henry L. Stimson and McGeorge Bundy, On Active Service in Peace and War (New York, 1948), 531.

¹⁵Samuel L. Rosenman, ed., The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt, 1942, Vol. II (New York, 1950), 89.

controls and allocations of parts of the loan for specific purposes.¹⁶

The insistent urging of Seong and the "China lobby" proved to be stronger than the warnings of Gauss, however, for the United States ultimately yielded almost all practical control over the distribution of the loan.¹⁷

Thus, the United States in the first few months of the war loaned \$500,000,000 to China because she "deserved it" with no effective assurance that China would use the money to benefit the Allied cause. America assumed that China would use the loan to strengthen her position against the Japanese, leaving the other allies free to devote their attention to the war in Europe. China, however, looked upon the loan as a mere prelude to a massive Allied offensive against the Japanese from China. The United States did not anchor its Chinese aid to the rock of strategic reality, but to the shifting sands of friendship. Hence, America was cast in the anomalous position during the war of asking the Allies for more action in China while the course of battle made such strategy always debatable and often completely unrealistic.

¹⁶U. S. Relations with China, op. cit., 481-482.

¹⁷See U. S. Relations with China, op. cit., 482-483, for notes from Seong to Under Secretary of the Treasury Bell and to Under Secretary of State Sumner Welles.

From Task Force to Theater: Uncertainty in America's
Far Eastern Strategy, December, 1941 to June, 1942

With the outbreak of war, the United States began to formulate strategy and plans for the command structure in China. Brigadier General Magruder and his staff, constituting the American Military Mission, were already in China. But Magruder was not empowered to engage in talks on the staff level with Chiang Kai-shek, so his effectiveness was severely limited when America actively entered the war.

On December 19, 1941, Chiang Kai-shek outlined a plan for Allied unity and offered his Chinese Fifth and Sixth Armies for the defense of Burma.¹⁸ Magruder could not negotiate directly on this plan, nor could he act independently in the Chungking Conferences that Chiang held in late December to formulate Allied strategy for the China area of the war. The Chungking Conferences accomplished little strategically, but they aroused animosity between the British and the Chinese partly because the British clearly indicated that they did not have a primary interest in the war in China.

America's limited supervision over the allocation of lend-lease and the inadequacies of the command system were revealed in mid-December during the so called "Tulsa incident". The British in Burma were badly in need of supplies. A large quantity of lend-lease goods were

¹⁸Romanus and Sunderland, Mission to China, 51.

stockpiled in Rangoon, so Lieutenant Colonel Joseph Twitty, the American officer in charge, allowed the British to impound some of the supplies, most of which were taken from the "Tulsa". This action was illegal because the Chinese were to be consulted about any transfer of lend lease after the material left the United States. The Chinese became infuriated at the British, and the whole transfer had to be properly authorized by the Chinese before the affair was dropped.

The inefficiency arising out of Magruder's status and the unsatisfactory distribution of lend lease prompted the United States War Department to attempt a solution to the problems of command and strategy in China. On January 2, 1942, Lieutenant General Hugh C. Drum was summoned to Washington from his post as Commander General of the First Army Headquarters in New York. Drum anticipated a European command and the news that he was being considered for a Far Eastern post disturbed him. He believed that the Far East was not of major importance in the total war. If not of major importance, China would only require a Task Force to perform tactical maneuvers indicated by Allied strategy. Drum felt that a Task Force Command was beneath his dignity.

Secretary of War Stimson and Chief of Staff George C. Marshall disagreed with Drum over the importance of the Far East in the war. They believed that the China-Burma area warranted Theater status. This called for a commander who appreciated the importance of China and who could act as a

liaison between the United States and Chiang Kai-shek in the formulation of Theater strategy.

Stimson and Marshall discarded Drum as a possibility for the Far Eastern post after their disagreement with him. In his place they selected Major General Joseph W. Stilwell, Commander of the Third Army Corps in Monterey, California. Stilwell had lived in China. He knew the language and was known to have great respect for the Chinese people.

After conferring with Marshall and Stimson for several days, Stilwell wrote in his diary that he was to "coordinate and smooth out and run the Burma road, and get the various factions together and grab command and in general give 'em the works."¹⁹ Stilwell's interpretation of his directive reflected his rather inaccurate conception of the role he was to fill in the Far East.

The Department of War formally directed Stilwell to "Increase the effectiveness of United States assistance to the Chinese Government for the prosecution of the war and to assist in improving the combat efficiency of the Chinese Army."²⁰ No mention was made of getting "the various factions together" although Stilwell thought of that as part of his task. Americans had been concerned over the factions in

¹⁹Theodore H. White, ed., The Stilwell Papers (New York, 1948), 26.

²⁰Romanus and Sunderland, Mission to China, 74.

China,²¹ and Stilwell significantly believed that China would have to be unified before Chinese soldiers could effectively fight the Japanese.

On January 21, 1942, Chiang Kai-shek agreed that Stilwell was to be his chief of staff with executive authority over British, Chinese, and American units in Burma. The General was to improve and maintain the Burma road in China, and to control the distribution of lend lease.²²

Although Stilwell's mission was first designated as a Task Force, the China-Burma-India area of the war became a Theater by June twenty-second. As a task force, China was merely a part of the Pacific Theater. Tactical maneuvers could be launched in and from China but its position was militarily subordinate to the other Allies. But as a theater, China assumed importance in strategic planning along with Europe and the Pacific. The problem of whether China should merit just Task Force or attain Theater status was not merely academic. Many considerations were involved in the complex question. America was committed by ties of friendship to relieve China by striking at Japan from the Chinese mainland. This fact, together with its immense size and population, would demand Theater status for China.

However, since the Burma road was closed, Allied armies

²¹See Chapter II, p. 44.

²²Romanus and Sunderland, Mission to China, 73.

in China could not be supplied properly. In addition, the European situation clamored for attention. Finally, the British were interested in their own possessions in the Far East. The problem of getting supplies to the Chinese, and British interests elsewhere seriously hampered China's potential as a Theater of operations. Thus, America's success in obtaining Theater status for China gave an apparent importance to that area of the war that was belied by Allied strategy calling for top priority in Europe and the Southwest Pacific.

The discussion over which area of the war should have top priority became a veritable battle in the United States during the early months of 1942. One of the most ardent advocates of a strong Pacific front was Senator Albert B. ("Happy") Chandler of Kentucky. Senator Chandler declared: "If we do not push the war against Japan, and if we push in and finish the war with Germany very quickly, I hate to think how little influence the President of the United States will have when Russia and Great Britain begin to develop their sphere of influence on the continent of Europe."²³ Chandler was committed to a strong Asian front because he believed the Japanese to be a greater menace to the United States than Germany. Moreover, Chandler feared that England would take advantage of the United States unless we took a dominant

²³Roland Young, Congressional Politics in the Second World War (New York, 1956), taken from the Congressional Record, May 17, 1943, 4509.

position in the Far East.

There was vigorous opposition to this viewpoint, however. Several of Chandler's colleagues demanded priority for Europe. Senator Harold H. Burton of Ohio declared: "[We] must premise any demand to direct greater attention to Japan upon the conclusion that we can hold our own without putting any additional weight in Europe because we must not lose there, whatever happens."²⁴ Even General George Marshall, who was a staunch friend of China, favored placing our major military strength against Hitler.²⁵

Cordell Hull later reflected the dilemma in the minds of American wartime statesmen caused by the demands of friendship for China, the fears of Japanese attack, and global strategical considerations. "Toward China," he said, "we had two objectives. The first was an effective joint prosecution of the war. The second was the recognition and building up of China as a major power."²⁶ These were splendid objectives but they proved to be unattainable in the midst of the demands of a world war.

American newspapers and magazines showed little knowledge of the discussions over strategy. Military strategy, along with military action, was enshrouded in a cloak of

²⁴Congressional Record, May 17, 1943 (Washington, 1943), 4517.

²⁵Romanus and Sunderland, Mission to China, 74.

²⁶Cordell Hull, Memoirs, II (New York, 1948), 1583.

strict censorship during the war. Hence, newspaper and magazine treatment of such discussions came long after the events, if at all.

Although the press and periodicals operated on meager factual information, they continued to indicate a great interest in the war. Several publications expressed opinions concerning Theater priority during the early months of 1942. The United States News strongly urged that America devote its attention to the Atlantic war.²⁷

Other newspapers and periodicals disagreed and supported China as the candidate for top priority. Henry Luce, formerly a resident in China and owner of Time and Fortune, argued that the way to defeat the Japanese was through China. Time declared that the total war would be seriously hindered if "the foe could pile up enough reserves to erase Chiang."²⁸ The Christian Science Monitor showed its support for China by stating: "The time certainly must be approaching when the common sense of strategy will support humanitarian sympathy and political wisdom in the demand for more emphasis on the Burma-China line of attack."²⁹

The liberal periodicals joined the conservative group in their support of the China front. The Nation argued that

²⁷ The United States News, February 13, 1942, 12.

²⁸ Time, May 13, 1942, 21-22.

²⁹ The Christian Science Monitor, October 31, 1942,

the United States should place its emphasis in the China-Burma-India Theater:

The tragedy of China has already happened; it has not been furnished the materials of war it asked for and in spite of the brave defense it is putting up its main armies are being pushed back . . . and its people driven to death and starvation.

The Pacific is America's job and China is its ally just as Russia is Great Britain's ally in Europe.³⁰

Despite the support that China received in the United States, British and American formulators of strategy determined that Europe should receive the major concentration of Allied power. Secretary of War Stimson later observed: "In Anglo-American grand strategy, the war against Germany came first. Second came the great triphibious movement across the Pacific toward the Japanese island empire. The China-Burma-India Theater was a poor third."³¹

Thus, Americans indulged the Chinese by allowing them to have Theater status in name, while our main effort went elsewhere. This fact caused a great deal of trouble in Allied wartime relations with China, particularly in the relations of American military personnel with Chiang Kai-shek.

An Optimistic Note and an Ignominious Retreat:
American Attitudes Towards China, January
to April, 1942

On February 24, 1942, Major General Joseph Stilwell

³⁰The Nation, June 27, 1942, 734.

³¹Stimson and Bundy, op. cit., 528.

landed at Karachi, India. President Roosevelt had instructed Stilwell to assure Chiang Kai-shek that the United States was behind China "all the way".³² This cheerful greeting was scarcely enough to dispel the gloom dispersed by Anglo-Chinese difficulties, inadequate supplies due to the capture by the Japanese of the Burma Road, and the disorganized condition of the Chinese Army.

Stilwell established headquarters in Chungking and conveyed President Roosevelt's message to Chiang. Then Stilwell conferred with Lieutenant General Chennault on March 4, 1942. They agreed to abolish the American Volunteer Group and to merge the planes and personnel into the Army Air Force. Chennault was to continue to command the group under the direction of Stilwell, who was his superior. Thus, Stilwell secured the valuable services of Chennault's hardy "Flying Tigers".

Stilwell attempted to bring some order into the supply system by placing Major General Raymond A. Wheeler in charge of Services of Supply. In late March, Stilwell activated the Assam-Burma-China ferry to increase the amount of supplies to China.

With the administrative details temporarily in hand, General Stilwell acted as Field Commander of the Chinese Fifth and Sixth Armies to drive back the Japanese in Burma. This was the work that Stilwell loved. He loathed the

³²White, op. cit., 36.

conference tables and desks piled high with paper. He was in his element when he was in the field with an army.

Stilwell was denied the exhilaration of victory in his first Burma campaign, however. The Japanese hurled themselves forward in a mighty offensive that trapped Stilwell and his Chinese troops deep in the jungle behind enemy lines. General Stilwell led a small contingent of Burmese nurses and civilians into India on April 30, 1942. A large part of the Chinese force escaped by devious ways, but the affair was a complete failure militarily.

During the difficult early months of 1942, the American people voiced united and enthusiastic support for China. The Christian Century, the "non-denominational Journal of Religion," became eloquent over Chinese military prowess: "So far, by any test of comparative results, the Chinese have given a better account of themselves than either the British or Americans."³³ A week later the Century added: "Given heavy artillery and a strong air force it looks as though China could take the offensive with every prospect of a great success."³⁴ Time rejoiced that China was "flexing its muscles" in preparation for a victory drive,³⁵ while the New York Times proclaimed in bold headlines: "Chinese

³³The Christian Century, January 14, 1942, 35.

³⁴Ibid., January 21, 1942, 67.

³⁵Time, January 19, 19-20.

Take Lead in Struggle for Asia."³⁶ These optimistic forecasts reflected the persistence of the hopeful belief that China only needed to have a good supply of ammunition to defeat the Japanese.

The Saturday Evening Post voiced its support for China, but, still reluctant to see the United States involved in world affairs, advised that the United States use caution in its dealings with the undemocratic Nationalist Government:

As realists, we Americans should begin now to consider how we can do business with various alien conceptions of government after the war is won. For if we ever come down with the delusion that we are fighting to impose American democracy upon an unwilling world, there is no imaginable end to the wars we shall have to wage.³⁷

If the Post held no illusions about democracy in Nationalist China, the United States News was not deceived as to China's military strength. The News maintained that China had little chance of ever becoming a vital force against the Japanese. Although the News had scant faith in the Chinese Army, it urged the United States to support the Chinese people.³⁸ The questions raised by the Saturday Evening Post and the United States News did not represent a major trend in the United States, but they were significant because they were realistic analyses of the Sino-American

³⁶The New York Times, February 23, 1942, 20.

³⁷The Saturday Evening Post, March 7, 1942, 26.

³⁸The United States News, April 23, 1942, 14-15.

situation in the light of existing circumstances.

President Roosevelt made several declarations in early 1942 which revealed his continued faith in the moral strength of the Allied position and his desire to aid the Chinese people. In his annual message the President declared:

The militarists in Berlin and Tokyo started this war. But the massed angered forces of common humanity will finish it. . . . We are fighting as our fathers have fought, to uphold the doctrine that all men are equal in the sight of God. Those on the other side are striving to destroy this deep belief and to create a world in their own image--a world of tyranny and cruelty and serfdom. . . . No compromise can end the conflict. . . . Only total victory can reward the champions of tolerance and decency and freedom and faith.³⁹

In a "fireside chat" in February, Roosevelt urged the claims of China upon the American people: "It is essential that we help China in her magnificent defense and in her inevitable counteroffensive for that is one important element in the ultimate defeat of Japan."⁴⁰

The image of the suffering Chinese still enjoyed a wide popularity in the United States during early 1942. While the Allied strategists decided that China would have to wait until Europe was defeated, President Roosevelt made assurances of friendship and the press issued appeals for aid to China.

³⁹Senate Document No. 188, 77th Congress, 2nd Series (Washington, 1943), 136.

⁴⁰Rosenman, op. cit., II, 107.

Three Demands and a Training Program: American Attitudes Towards China, June to December, 1942

After the withdrawal of Chinese troops from Burma, Stilwell was consumed with one thought: to train Chinese soldiers and return to defeat the Japanese in Burma. Stilwell's uncompromising rigidity was matched by Chiang Kai-shek's determination to exercise extreme caution in allowing his troops to come into combat with the Japanese. The Generalissimo was disappointed in the small amount of supplies and help coming from the United States which had promised such great things to its friend China. Chiang Kai-shek's hopes were further reduced on June 23, 1942, when General Louis Brereton left with the Tenth Air Force for the Middle East. Six days later Chiang submitted his three demands essential to keep China in the war: three United States divisions, a 500-plane air force in China, and 500 tons of supplies monthly.

These demands were impossible for the United States to fulfill at the time, so President Roosevelt waited until October to answer Chiang Kai-shek. Meanwhile, Stilwell and the American force in China were advancing by whatever means they could. On July sixth, Chennault and Stilwell activated the China Air Task Force, composed chiefly of Chennault's "Flying Tigers", to carry on the work of harassing the Japanese. On July fifteenth, the India-Burma-China transport ferry, utilizing "DC-3 flying boxcars", was activated to allow freer movement of goods to China.

General Stilwell devised a plan for retaking Burma and submitted it to Chiang Kai-shek on June nineteenth. This plan indicated that continued American supplies would be contingent upon Chinese cooperation in retaking Burma. General Stilwell, who had great faith in the infantry, proposed to use trained Chinese foot soldiers to drive the Japanese out of Burma. This plan ran counter to the Generalissimo's reluctance to engage Chinese soldiers against the Japanese in Burma.⁴¹ Hence, Chiang turned increasingly to General Chennault on matters of strategy and tactics. Chennault maintained that he could defeat the Japanese by bombing the home islands with airplanes based in East China.

This difference in tactical viewpoints eventually caused Stilwell and Chennault to become involved in a bitter feud. In 1942, however, the differences were submerged by a response from the War Department to Chiang's three demands. The United States agreed to augment the amount of supplies and to increase the air force in China to five hundred planes. Thus, two demands were satisfied, but the United States was unable to spare the three divisions that Chiang requested.

Although the Generalissimo had not fully obtained his three demands, he was temporarily satisfied with the American response. On November third, Chiang agreed to send fifteen divisions of his forces in Yunnan province across the

⁴¹Chiang Kai-shek wanted to keep as many Chinese soldiers as possible in China to fight the Chinese Communists.

Salween River into Burma in the spring of 1943. However, Chiang Kai-shek made his promise contingent upon an increase of the Allied air force in China and the commencement of naval operations in the Bay of Bengal. On December twenty-eighth, Chiang repeated this proposal and assured President Roosevelt that the fifteen Chinese divisions would be in Burma in the spring of 1943 if the Allies would send the desired air and naval reinforcements. Chiang's assurances created a strong likelihood of an Allied movement in Burma if only enough equipment could be spared from other fronts to support the Chinese Army.

Meanwhile, Americans continued to show evidence of friendliness towards the Chinese. Time criticized the Allied governments for the small amount of support that they had given to China: "It is convenient for Washington and London to believe that because Chiang had held off the Japanese since 1937, he could do it indefinitely."⁴² Although the United States News still recognized the deficiencies in the Chinese Army it emphasized the heroic qualities of the Chinese Government: "The Nationalist Government of China is prepared to continue resistance in every possible way."⁴³ On October 20, 1942, the Portland Oregonian, mixing its old humanitarianism towards China with new military factors, carried a feature article on the famine in Hunan province. The Oregonian

⁴²Time, June 1, 1942, 18.

⁴³The United States News, July 17, 1942, 15.

vividly described the stark realities of the famine, bringing to the attention of its readers the fact that China urgently needed help.⁴⁴

The liberal New Republic also accentuated the necessity for United States' support to China: "It seems clear that we have been shortsighted in deciding that no help, or almost no help, could be spared for China at the present time. . . . It's high time to stop considering China as the stepsister of the United Nations and recognize her as one of the most important of our allies."⁴⁵ And Fortune, the magazine of business executives, echoed this sentiment, declaring: "It is possible that we might eventually defeat both Hitler and Japan without the help of a fighting China. But it would be by no means certain. . . . Subsistence aid to China should be sent now."⁴⁶

One American who knew a good deal about the Chinese, and who was articulate enough to disclose his knowledge was General Stilwell. Unfortunately, Stilwell could not capitalize upon his knowledge of the Chinese to coordinate American and Chinese strategy because of personal difficulties with Chiang Kai-shek.

Stilwell found it difficult to work with Chiang for many reasons. The General was primarily a man of action,

⁴⁴The Portland Oregonian, October 20, 1942, 2.

⁴⁵The New Republic, July 20, 1942, 71.

⁴⁶Fortune, August, 1942, 116.

while the Generalissimo wished to let time handle his problems. Stilwell was imbued with an overwhelming desire to rout the Japanese from Burma, while Chiang had to consider the Chinese Communists in addition to the Japanese. Stilwell was forced to bring news of broken Allied promises to Chiang Kai-shek many times during the war, and in his blunt fashion, he did not attempt to soften the effect of bad news by tact and diplomacy.

Thus, General Stilwell and the Generalissimo failed to reach a real understanding. In addition, Stilwell expressed his personal dislike for Chiang as early as June, 1942:

The Chinese Government is a structure based on fear and favor, in the hands of an ignorant, arbitrary, stubborn man. It is interlaced with family and financial ties and influences, which could easily tear it to pieces if pulled out. Faced with emergency, it has no alternative but to go on, and none of these interlocking interests predominate to the extent that any of them could take over and clean house, even if the necessary patriotism were present, which it isn't.⁴⁷

But while he bitterly denounced the Chinese Government, Stilwell had a high regard for the Chinese soldiers with whom he spent so much time: "To me the Chinese soldier best exemplifies the greatness of the Chinese people. Their indomitable spirit, their uncomplaining loyalty, their honesty of purpose, their steadfast perseverance."⁴⁸

Thus, in 1942 the United States moved steadily towards placing the greatest concentration of force in Europe, while

⁴⁷White, op. cit., 115.

⁴⁸Ibid., 124.

repeatedly reassuring China that we favored increased aid to help the Chinese repel the Japanese. The United States did not have enough supplies to fulfill all the demands on all fronts, so American aid was directed to the most urgent needs. At the same time, American newspapers and magazines continued to support China, largely relying upon emotional appeal to win sympathy for China and emotional arguments to obtain help for the Chinese.

CHAPTER IV

MOBILIZATION FOR VICTORY: AMERICAN ATTITUDES TOWARDS CHINA IN 1943

A Conference at Casablanca, Abolition of Extraterritoriality, and a Visit to the United States by Madame Chiang Kai-shek: American Relationships with China, January to May, 1943

The hopes of the Americans for a spring offensive in Burma received a blow on January 8, 1943, when Chiang Kai-shek made it apparent that he definitely intended to withhold the Chinese forces that he had promised unless a concurrent amphibious landing could be made from the Bay of Bengal. The Allies, and particularly the United States, had hoped that the Generalissimo could be persuaded to yield his Army for the Burma campaign even if British and American ships were unable to lend support.

Faced with Chiang's truculence and the enemy's persistence, the Combined Chiefs of Staff for the Allied Armies met for a conference in Casablanca, Morocco on January fourteenth. The American delegation, keenly aware of Chiang's requests, went to Casablanca prepared to insist on a combined land and sea operation against the Japanese in Burma in 1943. This operation did not interest the British, particularly

Winston Churchill, who felt that it would detract from the projected cross channel operations in Europe.¹ The United States and Great Britain reached a compromise when Admiral Ernest King of the United States Navy offered to release United States landing craft from the South Pacific for operations in the Bay of Bengal. The target date for the proposed attack was November 15, 1943.

Because Chiang Kai-shek had not been represented at the Casablanca Conference, the Combined Chiefs of Staff delegated Generals Henry ("Hap") Arnold and Brehon Somervell of the United States and Field Marshall Sir John Dill of Great Britain to confer with Chiang and obtain his support for the decisions reached at Casablanca. The delegation encountered difficulty trying to persuade the Generalissimo. He wanted more aircraft and more supplies. Although Chiang remained adamant on these points, the representatives of the Combined Chiefs of Staff were able to convince him that more aircraft and supplies would arrive as soon as the Allies could spare them. Under these terms, Chiang Kai-shek approved the Burma operation on February sixth.

The decisions reached at Casablanca and the subsequent negotiations with Chiang Kai-shek revealed again the lack of reality in America's attitudes and policy towards China. We stoutly maintained that China was a full member of the Allied fighting team. Yet, China was not represented at

¹Winston S. Churchill, The Hinge of Fate (Cambridge, Mass., 1950).

Stilwell
bargaining

Casablanca. Had Chiang been represented at the conference, China could have been placed on a quid pro quo basis with the other Allies. As it was, our aid to China was always an outright gift--granted with a somewhat guilty conscience because commitments elsewhere prohibited our giving more help to China.) Hence, the United States never felt free to put any pressure on Chiang to commit himself in return for what help he did receive. General Stilwell bluntly advocated bargaining with China: "For everything we do [for Chiang Kai-shek] we should exact a commitment from him."² But President Roosevelt, faced with the problem of keeping Chiang satisfied with meager resources, declared: "Stilwell has exactly the wrong approach in dealing with the Generalissimo."³ Roosevelt's policy prevailed, and the United States was unable to exact any action from Chiang in return for the aid that we extended to him.

Meanwhile, Stilwell attempted to carry out his directives. In early February, he was able to establish a military training center for Chinese Army officers at Kunming. General Stilwell immediately set about to prove his thesis that Chinese soldiers were as good as any in the world if properly fed and equipped.

But the Allied armies in the Far East faced many

²Romanus and Sunderland, Mission to China, 278.

³Ibid., 279.

problems. The problem of obtaining supplies in China was becoming acute, and the flying transports of the India-Burma-China ferry could not keep up with the demand. On the twenty-eighth of February, British and native workers crossed the border into Burma, attempting to repair the stretches of road and pipeline that lay within enemy territory. They were not destined to move very far, however, because Japanese troops pushed back the soldiers supporting the road work, bringing construction work to a standstill.

Meanwhile, the controversy had grown between General Stilwell and General Chennault, who had recently been placed in command of the Fourteenth Air Force in China. Chennault proposed to protect China and to conduct bombing raids against Japan with only a modest increase in planes. This idea was attractive to Chiang Kai-shek because it involved very few Chinese soldiers, and to President Roosevelt because it would not constitute a heavy drain on American supplies. Stilwell insisted, however, that large scale bombing raids without adequate ground support would only invite drastic reprisals from the Japanese.

President Roosevelt invited the two men to come to Washington to present their views to the Joint Chiefs of Staff. After both had stated their cause, President Roosevelt decided that General Chennault should have a chance to prove the merit of his position. Stilwell recalled later that Roosevelt had answered his warning of Japanese counter-measures against an air attack by saying: "In a political

fight it's not good tactics to refrain from doing something because of something your opponent may do in return."⁴ The Joint Chiefs of Staff and President Roosevelt gave Chennault priority in China to put into effect his projected bombing raids against Japan.

The events that occurred in China during the early months of 1943 did not produce much in the way of direct or immediate repercussions in the United States press or in statements by government officials. The wartime censors withheld much of the news, and only a very few people were aware of top level strategy. Nevertheless, the United States retained an interest in China and a concern over China's ability to continue resistance against the Japanese.

"Something is very wrong about our relations with China," declared the Christian Century. The editor advanced three reasons for this breakdown: (1) The Chinese had no confidence in Allied Pacific strategy that proposed to reach via utilizing the "island hopping" technique through the Southwest Pacific, (2) The Chinese had no voice in Allied strategical planning, and (3) The Chinese were suspicious that Americans and the British were maneuvering China once more into colonial status. The editor concluded by saying: "It may be that none of these things is responsible for the trouble between this nation and China. The important fact is that something is wrong. And the American people do not

⁴Romanus and Sunderland, Mission to China, 324.

want such a state of affairs to continue."⁵

Although the editor's speculation concerning American-Chinese difficulties merely represented intelligent guessing, the significance of the passage lay in the Christian Century's desire that the United States and China maintain a friendly relationship.

Other periodicals explored the merits of ground versus air tactics against Japan, reflecting the Stilwell-Chennault controversy and, indirectly, one of the primary factors in strained Sino-American relationships.

The New York Times strongly and consistently supported the use of air power against Japan. On January ninth, the Times happily observed that the United States appeared to be "banking heavily on aerial warfare."⁶ On the twenty-fifth of the same month, the Times quoted General Douglas MacArthur who called for "swift massive strokes" making large use of air power against the Japanese.⁷ But the New York Times did not forget the Chinese, for on February eighth, it rejoiced that the Allies would be able to "strike into Burma and to China's relief" because the Allied Armies had been successful in the Solomon Islands. Planes and boats would bring relief to China just as they had brought relief

⁵The Christian Century, January 13, 1943, 36.

⁶The New York Times, January 9, 1943, 12.

⁷The New York Times, May 4, 1943, 22.

to many islands held by the Japanese in the South Pacific.⁸

Other periodicals were not so confident about the use of air power to help the Chinese. Commenting on rumors of China's desperate circumstances, Newsweek declared that the Chinese needed supplies and that these supplies would have to come through Burma. Air transport could not meet the requirements.⁹ Time printed an article on March fifteenth which was the result of an interview with General Henry Arnold of the United States Air Force. Arnold stated that: "Real aid to China, real use by the Allies of China's bases for war against Japan, await the clearing of a land supply route through Burma."¹⁰ This statement by Arnold indicates the beginning of a shift in top level thinking that resulted in Roosevelt's repudiation of Chennault's contentions during 1944. General Arnold perceived that Chennault had not been realistic enough in his appraisal of supply potential to China. Moreover, General Chennault had been unable to mount an air attack against the Japanese mainland as he had promised in 1943. In addition, Japanese ground attacks on

⁸The New York Times, February 8, 1943, 23. It should be noted that the Times represented the view that the Allies should conquer the Pacific islands, stopping only to liberate China and Burma on their way to Japan. This view was in contradiction to the firm belief held by Marshall and Stimson that action against Japan should proceed primarily from China and Burma.

⁹Newsweek, January 25, 1943, 20-21.

¹⁰Time, March 15, 1943, 13.

Chinese air bases indicated that Chennault had underestimated their ability to counterattack.

The Christian Science Monitor also commented on Far Eastern strategy: "The assumptions [of the Joint Chiefs of Staff] all begin with the basic conclusion of most military authorities on the Far East that the first essential to defeating Japan is to revive the almost exhausted fighting resources of China and to bring both the manpower and the geographic opportunities of China to bear on Japan."¹¹

Thus, whether they supported aerial warfare to defeat Japan as did the New York Times, land operations to relieve China as did Newsweek, or indulged in strategical generalities as did the Christian Science Monitor, American periodicals found a common cause in their concern for China. The New Republic expressed the general concern, declaring: "More aid to China is essential."¹² Although certain elements of the press favored reaching Japan via the island approach, the majority of newspapers and magazines still supported China based operations against Japan.

On January eleventh, the United States made an important advance in its relations with China by abolishing American rights of extraterritoriality in China. This was the partial fulfillment of a policy stated by Secretary of State Hull in a letter to Quo Tai-ohi, the Chinese Minister

¹¹The Christian Science Monitor, May 14, 1943, 1.

¹²The New Republic, March 1, 1943, 270.

of Foreign Affairs, in May, 1941: "The Government of the United States . . . expects when conditions of peace again prevail to move rapidly toward relinquishment . . . of agreements providing for extraterritorial jurisdiction and related practices."¹³

After the passage of this treaty abolishing extra-territoriality, the Christian Century urged that the United States complete its work in an editorial entitled "Drop the Asiatic Color Bar."

We are fighting, so we have declared, to uphold justice and to thwart tyranny. . . . Yet on our American statute books we perpetuate a great wrong against all Asiatic peoples. . . . As an act of justice too long delayed Congress should be asked to repeal the provisions of existing statutes which write a color bar into our immigration and naturalization laws.¹⁴

The press and Government officials also devoted considerable attention to the visit of Madame Chiang Kai-shek to the United States early in 1943. The Christian Science Monitor applauded Madame Chiang and declared that she was a "great woman".¹⁵ Time, impressed by her delicacy and charm as well as her political wisdom, printed the speech that Madame Chiang gave before the United States Senate: "I feel that it is necessary for us not only to have ideals and to proclaim that we have them, it is necessary that we

¹³U. S. Relations with China, op. cit., 513-514.

¹⁴The Christian Century, February 17, 1943, 191-192.

¹⁵The Christian Science Monitor, April 5, 1943, 1.

act to implement them. . . . From five and a half years of experience we in China are convinced that it is the better part of wisdom not to accept failure ignominiously, but to risk it gloriously."¹⁶

Although most of the newspapers and magazines responded in a favorable manner to Madame Chiang Kai-shek, the crucial test was whether she could persuade President Roosevelt to increase American aid to China. On February nineteenth, President Roosevelt and Madame Chiang held a joint press conference in Washington. On that occasion, Roosevelt stated: "Everybody in Washington, I might say, is pledged . . . to make China a large and an important base--probably in the long run the most important base of operations against our common enemy."¹⁷

The vague words "probably in the long run" no doubt gave Madame Chiang cause for reflection because she knew that China was in need of immediate military and economic assistance. But on May thirteenth, Roosevelt wrote to Chiang Kai-shek, attempting to place Allied aid to China on a more definite and prompt basis: "We hope in the near future to take, together with your gallant army, the initiative in Asia and bring to an end the war which you have for many years carried on

¹⁶Time, March 1, 1943, 23.

¹⁷Samuel Rosenman, ed., The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt, Vol. 12 (New York, 1950), 101.

successfully in spite of all difficulties."¹⁸

There seems to be little doubt that Roosevelt was sincere in his desire to help China, but overwhelming obligations in Europe prevented him from lending aid to China immediately.

On May tenth, an article in support of aid to China appeared in Life. It was written by Pearl S. Buck, the well-known author who had spent extensive time in China.¹⁹ Miss Buck underscored the pleas of Generalissimo and Madame Chiang Kai-shek and indicated the melancholy consequences of further delay in sending aid to China:

It is not enough for China that we acknowledge Madame Chiang's personal charm. . . . The soil of China must be the base for our final attack upon Japan. . . . We are in the process of throwing away a nation of people who could and would save democracy with us but who if we do not help them will be compelled to lose it because they are being lost themselves.²⁰

¹⁸Ibid., 208.

¹⁹Miss Buck is a prolific writer whose novels of China have enjoyed wide popularity. Her first novel, East Wind West Wind, written in 1930 gave a sentimental picture of idealized Chinese people confronted with rude western ways. Other novels followed and created a picture of China to millions of Americans. In 1942, Miss Buck wrote Dragon Seed, which portrayed the Chinese people responding bravely to the Japanese attack. Because of the popularity of her novels, Miss Buck has had an important influence upon the American public and its attachment to the Chinese people.

²⁰Life, May 10, 1943, 53-56.

The first months of 1943 brought disappointment to the Chinese and frustration to the United States. The Chinese were not obtaining the military support that they had asked of the Allies. The United States was made vividly aware of China's desperate situation by military reports and through the visit of Madame Chiang Kai-shek. But because of the prevalence of the strategical concept which called for priority in Europe, the United States was reduced to long term promises and protestations of friendship. Caught on the horns of a dilemma, President Roosevelt eagerly accepted General Chennault's tactical plan which promised large-scale results with a modest expenditure of arms and men. The American press and periodicals still urged support of China but their attention was directed largely towards Europe and towards North Africa where Allied Armies were making headway against the enemy.

Amidst these international and strategical conflicts, the Combined Chiefs of Staff met in Washington, D. C. for a top level conference to which the militarists gave the code name "Trident".

A Conference at Washington and a Commitment to
Chennault's Air Plan Against Japan:
American Attitudes Towards China,
May to August, 1943

On May 8, 1943, the Combined Chiefs of Staff met in Washington to coordinate British and American strategy. The Joint Chiefs of Staff of the United States War Department declared that "Anakim" (the plan to retake Burma and to open

up communications with China through the port of Rangoon scheduled to begin on November 15, 1943), was the most satisfactory strategy for the Far East. The British desired to bypass Burma completely to concentrate on Sumatra as a base against the Japanese. Churchill, concerned about India, argued that his plan would not involve the possibility of supply shortage that any operation based in China had to face. However, President Roosevelt insisted on immediate action in China, urging that General Chennault's airplanes be allowed to bear the brunt of defending the Chinese.²¹

Out of the welter of opinions emerged what was essentially a British-American compromise regarding the fate of China. The airlift to China was to be increased to provide for increased activity on the part of Chennault. Stilwell was to advance into Burma with the Yunnan force of Chinese soldiers. Finally, there was to be a reduced amphibious operation attempting the capture of Akyab, Burma, a port just below the Bay of Bengal.

The United States had obtained a sanction for positive military action to relieve the Japanese blockade of China. This was actually a rather hollow victory, however, for the air supply line over the Himalaya Mountains, called the "hump" could not furnish enough provisions and equipment to

²¹Romanus and Sunderland, Mission to China, 327-333.

support both Chennault and Stilwell.²²

Thus, the United States was again stymied in its effort to bring aid to China. The overwhelming urge to help China undoubtedly had an effect in President Roosevelt's decision to back General Chennault, who claimed that he could save China while allowing the United States to fulfill its commitments to the European war. But because Chennault was taking most of the supplies brought over the "hump", Stilwell could not open up land communications to allow a greater flow of supplies into China.

Stilwell presented the conclusions of the Washington conference to the Generalissimo on June seventeenth. Chiang's answer on July twelfth indicated his agreement with the proposals. Indeed, China had been an increased factor in strategical considerations at the recent conference, and Chiang Kai-shek's requests had at least been partially granted. But Chiang pointed out that more air support would insure a better chance of defeating the Japanese in China.²³

During July and August, General Chennault carried forward his task of increasing the efficiency and strength of air power in China. To his dismay, he discovered that the

²²Ibid., Hump tonnage was less than 6,000 tons monthly in May, 1943. Requirements of the Washington conference called for 10,000 tons. Because Chennault had priority, Stilwell was left with less than 500 tons per month to supply the Chinese Fifth and Sixth Armies and a miscellaneous assortment of American and British troops.

²³Romanus and Sunderland, Mission to China, 340.

supplies were inadequate. General Chennault hastily began work on construction of new airfields to allow for more "hump" tonnage.

Meanwhile, General Stilwell attempted to expedite the movement of the Yunnan force into Burma. Stilwell was hindered by the lack of supplies and by the obstinacy of General Chen, projected commander of the Yunnan force, who would not take command until the force was reorganized and trained. Despite these setbacks, General Stilwell was encouraged because Chiang Kai-shek was "committed in writing to the attack on Burma."²⁴

During the summer of 1943, American attitudes towards China corresponded to Stilwell's faith in the Chinese people. The Christian Century paid "Tribute to China": "There has been something about the heroism of the Chinese, standing almost with bare hands to defy a completely armed invader which compels a praise that is beyond words."²⁵

This indignation at "armed invader/s" was matched by President Roosevelt when he expressed his disapproval of international gangsters in a speech in Ottawa, Canada: "We have been forced to call out what we in the United States would call a sheriff's posse . . . in order that gangsterism may be eliminated from the community of nations. We are making sure . . . that this time the lesson is

²⁴White, op. cit., 212.

²⁵The Christian Century, July 7, 1943, 790.

driven home to them once and for all. Yes, we are going to be rid of outlaws this time."²⁶

The United States was still evincing the essential elements of its romantic prewar attitudes towards China. Americans still expressed a strong interest in the Chinese people and their sufferings, and showed a high degree of indignation against the lawbreakers who had broken international agreements to violate Chinese integrity.

A Conference at Quebec and a Question About
Communists: American Strategy and Attitudes
Towards China, August to November, 1943

Strategically, the Conference at Quebec in August, 1943, reaffirmed the decisions reached at Washington in May. Stilwell was still to mount an offensive against Burma and the Allies continued to support the supply route over the Himalayas. "Quadrant", the code name of the Quebec Conference, made an important change in the command situation, however, by creating a Southeast Asia Command under the direction of Vice Admiral Lord Louis Mountbatten. General Stilwell was to be second in command under Mountbatten who was directed by the Combined Chiefs of Staff to coordinate the various elements of the China-Burma-India Theater into an effective military force.

General Stilwell, who remembered Chiang's commitment to a Burma offensive, began bombarding the Generalissimo

²⁶Rosenman, op. cit., 12, 368.

with proposals for action immediately after the Quebec Conference. On September sixth, Stilwell asked that the Chinese Communists be issued arms as an incentive to cooperate with the Nationalists in positive action against the Japanese. This was the first formal request by an American for Chinese Communist support against the Japanese, although it reflected previous American concern for an amicable agreement between the two Chinese forces to allow a united front against the Japanese. The Nationalists and Communists had not engaged in extensive warfare since 1940, but they had continued to evince hostile feelings towards each other. As a result, valuable soldiers were prevented from fighting the Japanese because the Chinese awaited active civil war.

General Stilwell had little talent for the fine art of diplomacy, but this proposal was singularly unfortunate because the Chinese Communists were an object of special concern to the Generalissimo. Stilwell followed this note with another to Chiang on September twenty-ninth suggesting that sixty Chinese divisions be equipped for the Burma campaign, instead of the thirty they had originally pledged. This suggestion further antagonized the Generalissimo.

Stilwell's position was temporarily strengthened, however, by the arrival of Mountbatten who assured Chiang Kai-shek that Stilwell was urgently needed in the Theater to continue training the Chinese Army.

Although United States officials did not yet urge Chiang Kai-shek to make an alliance with the Chinese Communists

in the fight against the Japanese, certain Americans evinced a renewed interest in the Nationalist-Communist question in mid-1943. On June twenty-fourth, Joseph Davies, a political service adviser to General Stilwell, commented on the fact that Chinese Communists appeared to have lost a great deal of their Russian Marxist ideology: "The new line, so far as it applied to Asia, was in all probability prompted by the Kremlin's realistic appraisal of the Soviet Union's position in the Far East." Davies added, however: "It is suspected that the political leaders of the [Chinese Communist] Party retain their pro-Russian orientation and that they are likely to be susceptible to Moscow direction."²⁷

The Nation revived a pre-war trend of thought towards the Chinese Communists when it declared: "It is misleading to think of the Chinese Communists as Marxian proletarians. They are essentially agrarian radicals whose domestic policies are characterized chiefly by attempts to introduce democratic practices and a program of land reform."²⁸

The New Republic feared that the Chinese Communists would be overwhelmed by the Japanese and by the Kuomintang unless the United States intervened to perpetuate the only real "democratic resistance" in China.²⁹ Newsweek was

²⁷U. S. Relations with China, op. cit., 566.

²⁸The Nation, August 21, 1943, 200.

²⁹The New Republic, January 4, 1943, 9.

somewhat less enthusiastic than the New Republic over the democratic tendencies of the Chinese Communists, but it regretted that the Chinese were engaged in fighting a civil war while a common enemy stood ready to overrun the country.³⁰ These reflections on the Communist problem in China were significant because they represented the initial stages of a trend that grew to much larger proportions in 1944 and which played an important role in Sino-American relations during the last year of the war.

Chiang Kai-shek issued a statement in late September that was calculated to discourage efforts of Americans to solve the problem of Chinese Communism. Chiang concluded his statement by warning that the Chinese Communists were not a subject for discussion by the military personnel: "I am of the opinion that . . . we should clearly recognize that the Chinese Communist problem is a purely political problem and should be solved by political means."³¹

Meanwhile, the China Theater began to adjust itself to the new command situation created by the Quebec Conference. On November seventh, the Southeast Asia Command accepted a modified version of the "Quadrant" directive. The Chinese Army was to make a drive to Myitkyina, a strategically located airfield in northern Burma, supported by amphibious operations against the Andaman Islands. Chiang Kai-shek

³⁰Newsweek, August 16, 1943, 56.

³¹U. S. Relations with China, op. cit., 530-531.

gave his approval, but he reserved the right to withhold his troops until he felt they were ready to fight. Although this was a serious reservation, the members of the Southeast Asia Command accepted Chiang's proposal. Lord Mountbatten officially took charge of his command on November sixteenth, bringing with him the expectations of the Combined Chiefs of Staff, Franklin Roosevelt, and Winston Churchill.

Meanwhile, the American press offered the familiar eulogies of China, but a few penetrating questions concerning the continuation of one-man government accompanied the praise for China.

The New York Times carried an article by Edward C. Carter, Secretary-general of the Institute of Pacific Relations, who recently had returned from a trip to China. Carter observed that political conditions in China were in a deplorable condition. However, he did offer hope for postwar China, declaring: "Historically there has always been decentralization of authority in China. After the war I expect there will be a considerable return to private initiative in industrial enterprises and local public affairs."³²

On September thirteenth, Time carried an article by Brooks Atkinson, veteran correspondent in China. Atkinson described China's acute economic distress with sympathetic tones, but he was less charitable to the Chinese visionaries

³²The New York Times, September 7, 1943, 8.

who planned an attractive future financed by foreign capital. These people were eager to get foreign money in China but they had few concrete plans for its utilization.³³ The United States News was skeptical concerning China's pretensions to future power but it contained warm praise for the Chinese people.³⁴

As the war marched grimly on, the American people became impatient with the Nationalist Government for its failure to support democracy. Americans retained their faith in the Chinese people, however, and this faith remained alive in the face of continued reactionary policies by the Nationalist Government.

Conferences at Cairo and Teheran, and a
Disappointment for Chiang: American Attitudes
Towards China, November and December, 1943

On November 22, 1943, the United States, Great Britain, and China convened at Cairo to discuss top level strategy. Chiang Kai-shek headed the Chinese delegation, accompanied by Madame Chiang and several of his Chinese military leaders.

The Conference officially decided to pursue an amphibious operation against the Andamans, and to mount an offensive in Northern Burma in the spring of 1944. The Conference was significant because it included the Chinese delegation and because the Burma offensive was placed on a definite time schedule.

³³Time, September 13, 1943, 38.

³⁴The United States News, September 24, 1943, 20-21.

From Cairo, the American and British delegations moved on to Teheran on the twenty-eighth of November. Joseph Stalin, strong man of Russia, met them there for a conference. Stalin indicated that he was interested in joining the fight against Japan only when Germany was defeated. Stalin's proposals caused the British to lose interest in the China problem for a time, while Roosevelt reluctantly abandoned the amphibious assault on the Andamans that he had promised Chiang Kai-shek. On December twentieth, Roosevelt notified the Generalissimo that the Allies would be unable to carry out their promised amphibious campaign in the Andaman Islands. Chiang replied that the Yunnan force would move into Burma only if the amphibious assault were carried out against the Andamans. This unfortunate occurrence caused the United States and China to end the year unable to agree on a North Burma campaign already delayed more than six months.

Nevertheless, the Conference at Cairo caused the American press to see new hope for China. The Christian Science Monitor became enthusiastic over China's emergence as a great power: "China [is] to be not only restored but lifted into the position of Asia's greatest power, one of the world's big four. . . . China will be the chief Asiatic guard over Japan."³⁵ The Monitor later declared: "Now China can be strong enough internally for the first time in modern history to develop that huge country for the benefit of

³⁵The Christian Science Monitor, December 3, 1943, 10.

its people."³⁶

The New York Times became eloquent over the results of the conferences at Cairo and Teheran: "These conferences have given us a glimpse of a post-war world in which old wrongs will have been righted, as in the case of China."³⁷ These responses were apparently evoked by Chiang's presence at the Cairo Conference and indicate how little the American press actually knew of the contemporary course of Sino-American diplomacy.

Thus, 1943 ended with prospects for a spring offensive in Burma bleak. The United States valiantly attempted to present the needs of China to the Conferences of the Combined Chiefs of Staff, only to have its efforts fail as Great Britain and Russia sensed victory in Europe. The attitudes of the officials and the press continued to be universally friendly to the Chinese people and optimistic about a more important role for China. There were faint glimmerings of doubt about the government, however, and the Chinese Communist issue emerged to occupy an increasingly central position in the relationship between the United States and China during 1944.

³⁶The Christian Science Monitor, December 4, 1943, 1.

³⁷The New York Times, December 10, 1943, 26.

CHAPTER V

OUR TROUBLESOME ALLY: DIFFICULTIES IN SINO-AMERICAN RELATIONSHIPS AND THE RECALL OF GENERAL STILWELL FROM THE CHINA-BURMA-INDIA THEATER IN 1944

An American Tactical Shift and the Beginning of a
Chinese Offensive in Burma: Events in China and
American Attitudes Towards China,
January to April, 1944

The new year brought significant changes in American policy and attitudes towards China. Up to and including the conference at Cairo, President Roosevelt and the Joint Chiefs of Staff insisted upon increased aid to China and vigorously argued for China as the base for a massive air attack upon Japan. The British disagreed with the American strategy, and, because of the menace that German armies posed to Great Britain, the United States was persuaded to make its greatest effort in the European Theater.¹

Until the end of 1943, however, the United States continued to advocate a strong front in China. Then, at Teheran, President Roosevelt encountered Joseph Stalin, whose military aid the United States and Great Britain particularly

¹See Chapter IV.

wanted to obtain. Stalin immediately indicated that his primary interest was to fight on the European front. Stalin's position gave an overwhelming advantage to the advocates of a strong European strategy, so America turned its great attention from China towards Europe.

Events in the China-Burma Theater soon reflected the new American policy. On January second, Major General Daniel Sultan arrived to free General Stilwell from administrative duties, allowing Stilwell to direct the proposed Chinese offensive in Burma. This new arrangement for Stilwell was an optimistic move by the United States because Chiang Kai-shek still refused to allow Chinese troops in Burma without concurrent Allied amphibious operations in the Bay of Bengal. A note from President Roosevelt to Chiang on January fourteenth dispelled all doubts as to America's real reason for dispatching Sultan to China. Roosevelt clearly stated that unless Chiang allowed his troops to mount the Burma offensive, the United States would be unable to continue sending the same amount of lend lease to China.² This was the first time that Roosevelt had used a quid pro quo approach when dealing with Chiang Kai-shek. President Roosevelt evidently expected his new tactics to succeed since he had already provided for Stilwell to be ready to make use of the Chinese troops.

Roosevelt's ultimatum was significant for another

²Mary H. Williams, Chronology, 1945-1945 (Washington, 1960), 162.

reason than the fact that he was at last using the bargaining method. The message revealed indirectly the President's changed attitudes towards the relative importance of ground and air action in China. Chennault's position became less important than Stilwell's because Roosevelt had dropped the idea of an air offensive from China against the Japanese.³ Hence, the President now favored giving Stilwell a chance to prove the merits of the Chinese soldiers.

Chiang Kai-shek was fully aware of the implications in Roosevelt's note and he answered immediately by declaring that unless the United States advanced China a financial loan, China would be unable to continue supplying food and housing for American troops in China after March first.⁴ This note resulted in a fruitless discussion over exchange rates of currency between the two countries until Chiang was temporarily persuaded to continue his support of United States troops in China.

On February second, Chiang notified Washington that his troops would move into Burma when the Allies mounted an amphibious assault on the Bay of Bengal. Despite the Generalissimo's continued truculence, Lieutenant General Frank Merrill and his soldiers, a group called the "Marauders," prepared to capture Myitkyna, an important

³Charles Romanus and Riley Sunderland, Stilwell's Command Problems (Washington, 1956), 111-112. Hereafter this will be cited as Command Problems.

⁴U. S. Relations with China, op. cit., 284.

Japanese-held air base in North Burma.

On March fourth, General Stilwell and Lord Mountbatten, who had experienced mutual difficulties in personality adjustments, succeeded in reaching an amicable understanding. On March fifth, Stilwell was preparing to mount the offensive into Burma when he was temporarily detained by an order from Chiang Kai-shek to halt operations. Chiang still resented the fact that the Allies had reneged on their Cairo agreement, and he was loath to allow his soldiers out of China. Stilwell then dispatched a message to General Marshall requesting him to urge Chiang to allow the Chinese troops to cross the Salween River into Burma. The American Joint Chiefs of Staff persuaded Chiang to consent to the Chinese offensive in Burma on April fourteenth. With the Chinese troops firmly committed, General Stilwell combined them with Merrill's American forces and began a concentrated drive on Myitkyina on April 21, 1944.

Meanwhile, United States newspapers and magazines showed a miscellaneous variety of attitudes towards China. The preponderant theme in early 1944, however, was the Chinese Communist problem. As news of the Sino-American crisis slowly reached the United States, American newspapers and periodicals became convinced that the real solution to China's problems lay in a final settlement of its civil dispute. Time expressed strong disapproval of Chiang Kai-shek for his refusal to allow American newsmen into

Communist-controlled North China.⁵ The New York Times featured an editorial which recognized the fortitude and bravery of the Communist soldiers in North China.⁶ The Times, which features "only the news that's fit to print," significantly omitted any mention of the Nationalist soldiers who had been heroes only a short time before but now were withheld from fighting by Chiang Kai-shek.

One of the most enthusiastic supporters of the Chinese Communists was the New Republic. The liberal publication regretted the fact that the Kuomintang had been brought under the control of reactionary elements. With the Nationalist Government in the hands of reactionaries, the New Republic saw the Chinese Communists as the new hope for a liberal government in China:

It is well to remember that the Chinese Communists are such only in a very loose sense. They could more appropriately call themselves Chinese democrats. Their main political objectives are putting an end to landlordism, and aiding education and industrialization. . . . If in China Chiang Kai-shek is using our help to enthrone reaction at the expense of the war, our pressure should be the other way.⁷

Aside from the Communist issue, newspapers and magazines evinced no new trends of interest in China. Indeed, the general scarcity of comment upon China in early 1944 indicates

⁵Time, March 6, 1944, 29.

⁶The New York Times, April 16, 1944, 3E.

⁷The New Republic, March 13, 1944, 334.

that the American public was shifting its previous interest in China to the European Theater.

The New York Times and the Christian Science Monitor continued to comment upon China, however, even if less regularly and more generally than previously. The Times described the "hump run" in glowing terms, adding: "No air route can supply a full dress war in China, but the Chinese must be sure . . . that we are in earnest in doing our level best to get them what they need."⁸ The Monitor rejoiced that China was proceeding towards a democratic government:

"China's progress toward democratic government is of great interest to the United States."⁹ The New York Times also

registered its approval of China's democratic movement:

"The accusations frequently heard against China, that it is steadily drifting toward fascism, we do not believe for a moment to be justified. We believe that China is irreversibly committed . . . to the principles of democracy."¹⁰

Thus, the early months of 1944 marked a change in the attitudes and policy of the United States towards China. The United States fully accepted the greater importance of the European Theater. This caused renewed pressure on Chiang Kai-shek to rely upon General Stilwell to utilize

⁸The New York Times, January 7, 1944, 16.

⁹The Christian Science Monitor, April 17, 1944, 1.

¹⁰The New York Times, April 5, 1944, 18.

Chinese troops to defeat the Japanese in North Burma and China. The American press also turned its attention to Europe, although the delicate Communist-Nationalist situation began to occupy an increasingly important position in any consideration of China. Some papers such as the New York Times retained their belief in ultimate Nationalist democracy. Others, like the New Republic stressed the corruption of the Kuomintang and concluded that the hope for democracy in China lay with the Chinese Communists.

An Advance in Burma and a Vice-Presidential
Mission to China; American Attitudes Towards
China, May to June, 1944.

The Chinese troops began to cross the Salween River into Burma on May 11, 1944. With this help from the Chinese Army, Merrill's "Marauders" reached the Myitkyina airstrip on May seventeenth. The "Marauders" were too far in advance of the Chinese troops, however, and a furious Japanese counterattack dislodged the intrepid "Marauders" from their precarious position in Myitkyina.

A slow and difficult battle for Myitkyina began that was not to be successfully completed until late in the summer, when the Chinese soldiers finally vindicated Stilwell's faith in their effectiveness as fighters by defeating the Japanese. General Stilwell, as commander-in-chief of the Northern Combat Area Command in North Burma, coordinated the American and Chinese troops and commenced the tactical maneuvers that slowly but inexorably gained the desired objective.

On June twentieth, Vice President Henry Wallace arrived in China as President Roosevelt's personal representative. Mr. Wallace received his instructions verbally from the War Department and President Roosevelt, but General Ferris of Stilwell's staff received a notice of Wallace's directive stating that Wallace was to attempt a settlement between the Communists and the Nationalists. He was to stress the need for better Sino-Soviet understanding. Finally the United States wanted Wallace to make it perfectly clear that "China must depend upon herself at the moment rather than to look for major assistance from the outside."¹¹

Wallace's instructions made successful negotiation nearly impossible. He did persuade Chiang Kai-shek to promise to allow a United States observation group to enter North China. Although he did not find time to arrange a meeting with Stilwell, Wallace acted on Chiang Kai-shek's suggestion and recommended to Washington that Stilwell be recalled from the China-Burma-India Theater. This was the first of a series of incidents that culminated in Stilwell's dismissal from the Theater. At the time, however, Wallace's advice was disregarded by Washington because Roosevelt refused to view the rift between Chiang and "Vinegar Joe" as a serious matter. Stilwell was left free to close in on Myitkyina.

American attitudes towards China echoed the same themes

¹¹Romanus and Sunderland, Command Problems, 374-375.

in May and June as earlier in the year. Hearing of Roosevelt's threat to reduce lend lease to China unless the Chinese Army mounted a Burma offensive, the Nation declared: "The American government can hardly be blamed for not sending more supplies to Chungking as long as a strong possibility exists that such supplies would be used not against the Japanese, but to encourage a disastrous Civil War."¹²

John Service, adviser to General Stilwell, made this interesting comment in a dispatch concerning the Nationalist-Communist problem:

We must seek to contribute toward the reversal of the present movement toward collapse and to the rousing of China from its military inactivity. This can be brought about only by an accelerated movement toward democratic political reform in China.

This democratic reform does not necessarily mean the overthrow of the Generalissimo or the Kuomintang. . . . The democratic forces already existing in China will be modified, and a multi-party United Front Government will probably emerge. It is almost certain that the Generalissimo and the Kuomintang would continue to play a dominant part in such a government.¹³

On June seventeenth, the Nation again displayed its concern over the lamentable civil war in China: "China can and must so act that its two heroic armies shall no longer be played one against the other but be used fully against the Japanese."¹⁴ The New York Times showed a concern for

¹²The Nation, May 27, 1944, 113.

¹³U. S. Relations with China, op. cit., 573.

¹⁴The Nation, June 17, 1944, 707.

the larger problem of defeating the Japanese in China: "We cannot win until the Japanese in China have been driven out or have surrendered. It is our concern as much as China's to speed the day."¹⁵

On May first, Life carried a feature story on China by Theodore H. White, a well-known correspondent who had travelled extensively in China. White declared: "The overall picture in China today is compounded of three interwoven problems; blockade, inflation, political deadlock." After discussing these problems, particularly the last one, White concluded:

The real power of the Orient resides in China. . . . We have a real obligation, as allies in arms, to assist the Chinese with force at the present moment on a scale far greater than we have done for the past two years. And if this obligation is not too long denied we shall find on reaching China vital forces Communists eager to join us in pursuing the ends we consider the true ideals of America.¹⁶

May and June brought encouragement in the form of Chinese troop commitments in Burma. But these months also brought added problems. Henry Wallace personified the new tougher attitude of the American Government towards China. Aware that it could not truthfully promise any substantial aid, the United States began to concentrate with increasing intensity upon effecting a reconciliation between the

¹⁵The New York Times, May 18, 1944, 18.

¹⁶Life, May 1, 1944, 99-110.

Communists and the Nationalists. With a united China, effective resistance could be made against the Japanese without seriously hampering the European war.

The American press and periodical reactions reflected the concern of the American government for a united China. Articles such as White's showed that American interest in lending aid to China was not completely dormant, but the majority of the statements concerning China indicate that the major emphasis had shifted from appeals for help to China to concern that China help herself by uniting.

A Sino-American Stalemate and a Victory at
Myitkyina: American Attitudes Towards China,
July to August, 1944

Realizing that Stilwell's talents lay in his ability to organize, train, and lead troops, President Roosevelt requested Chiang Kai-shek to appoint Stilwell as Field Commander of all forces in China. Chiang immediately replied that he agreed in principle but asked for time to effect the fundamental changes that this alteration in command structure would entail. He also requested that President Roosevelt send a competent political adviser to act as a liaison between Stilwell and himself.¹⁷

Roosevelt promised to send Chiang an authorized political adviser, hoping that Chiang would then allow Stilwell to begin as Field Commander in China. On July

¹⁷Romanus and Sunderland, Command Problems, 385-386.

twenty-third, President Roosevelt's hopes were reduced by a message from Chiang Kai-shek stating that he could accept Stilwell as Field Commander only if three conditions were met including: (1) Chinese Communists could not be under Stilwell's control unless they agreed to obey the administrative and military orders of the Chinese Government, (2) Stilwell's functions were to be clearly defined, and (3) Lend lease was to be placed under the control of the Chinese.¹⁸

The stalemate in the command situation did not deter Stilwell and his forces from advancing in Burma. On July twenty-seventh, Chinese forces made substantial gains; and on July thirtieth the Japanese withdrew from Myitkyina, leaving the troops of the Northern Combat Area Command free to reenter the position that Merrill's "Marauders" had briefly held some months previously.

On August tenth, a Texas oilman, Patrick J. Hurley, left for China to serve as political adviser to Chiang Kai-shek. Hurley had served as Secretary of War in Hoover's administration. More recently, he had represented Roosevelt in the Middle East and in Russia. Despite Chiang's evident reluctance to compromise with the Communists or Stilwell, President Roosevelt hoped that Hurley could use his talent for diplomacy to induce the Generalissimo to achieve a

¹⁸Romanus and Sunderland, Command Problems, 414.

coalition with the Communists and a working agreement with Stilwell as Field Commander of the Chinese forces.

During the summer of 1944, United States newspaper and magazine reactions to China showed a slight renewal of American interest and concern in the Chinese people and their fight against the Japanese. As the success of Stilwell was reported in the United States, China and North Burma occupied a more central position in American periodicals. The Christian Science Monitor stated: "The American stake in China's survival is as great as ever. . . . Nothing less than our best must be done for China, and we must do that best soon."¹⁹ The New York Times added: "China needs only arms to become an overwhelming foe against Japan."²⁰ The Christian Century praised the "naked courage" of the Chinese people,²¹ while the Christian Science Monitor repeated its earlier statements upholding the importance of China: "Beyond the Philippines there is the 600 mile link that must be built to the coast of China. That is the most vital of all fronts."²²

Although the press did not exploit the Communist problem during July and August, Ambassador Gauss showed that

¹⁹The Christian Science Monitor, July 9, 1944, 12.

²⁰The New York Times, July 23, 1944, 10.

²¹The Christian Century, August 2, 1944, 891.

²²The Christian Science Monitor, August 12, 1944, 12.

the Chinese internal political situation was in the minds of American officials when he wrote to Secretary of State Hull suggesting that the United States change their tactics and work on the Communists to line up with Chiang Kai-shek, rather than attempting to make Chiang yield to Communists as American officials had been trying to do.²³

Thus, July and August saw a stalemate between America and China over the command question, final victory at Myitkyina, and a mission to China in the person of Patrick Hurley to resolve Chiang Kai-shek's differences with the Communists and Stilwell. American newspapers and periodicals evinced a revived interest in the vicissitudes of the Chinese soldiers and people, while American officials attempted to discover a solution to the Kuomintang-Communist feud.

A Sharp Note by President Roosevelt and a Demand for Stilwell's Recall by Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek: Sino-American Relations, September to November, 1944

On September sixth, Patrick Hurley arrived in Chungking, China with Donald Nelson, a Sears Roebuck executive sent to ascertain possible causes for the weakness of the Chinese financial system. Hurley commenced at once to discuss strategy and the command problem with Chiang Kai-shek. It became immediately apparent that the Generalissimo would under no circumstances allow Stilwell to command the Chinese Communists unless they acknowledged the Chinese Military

²³U. S. Relations with China, op. cit., 561-563.

Council as their military master. After Stilwell personally assured Chiang that he wanted the Communist soldiers for purely military reasons, Chiang Kai-shek agreed to allow Stilwell to be Commander in Chief of the Chinese Army, responsible only to the Generalissimo.

Meanwhile, events had gone badly for the Chinese Army in East China where they were defending the airfields used by General Chennault's force. Stilwell submitted a plan to Chiang Kai-shek on September eighteenth which called for offensive tactical maneuvers by the Chinese Army to save East China.²⁴ Chiang Kai-shek not only repudiated Stilwell's plan but threatened to withdraw his troops that were in the Myitkyina area of Burma. This convinced Stilwell that Chiang had not really delegated the power to him that the Generalissimo had promised.

News of Chiang's hesitancy reached Quebec where the Combined Chiefs of Staff were gathered for the "Octagon" Conference. The British, impressed by the Chinese-American victory in Burma, suggested incorporating into Far Eastern strategy a plan to retake all of Burma. This proposition was notable because it voiced support of the policy that the United States had urged throughout the war. Although Roosevelt and the Joint Chiefs of Staff had turned their attention towards Europe, particularly in early 1944, they welcomed this change of strategy. With British and American

²⁴Romanus and Sunderland, Command Problems, 438-439.

planners at last agreed upon positive action in Burma and China, Chiang's threats to withdraw his soldiers from Japanese contact appeared not only embarrassing to the Combined Chiefs of Staff but dangerous to the Allied cause in Asia. The United States had consistently advocated more supplies to China to keep her in the war against Japan. Purely from a military standpoint, the "island hopping" strategy was more economical in terms of lives and time than a slow and costly jungle campaign in Burma. But the American Government had worked to preserve the Chinese fighting spirit against the odds of British apathy and difficulties in flying in supplies, and now it appeared that Chiang Kai-shek was also going to object to military action against the Japanese in China and Burma.

This series of events resulted in a note from President Roosevelt to Chiang Kai-shek on September 16, 1944. The crux of Roosevelt's fateful remarks is contained in this part of his statement:

The Prime Minister and I have just decided at Quebec to press vigorously the operations to open the land line to China on the assumption that you would continue an unremitting attack from the Salween side. I am certain that the only thing that you can now do in an attempt to prevent the Jap from achieving his objectives in China is to reinforce your Salween armies immediately and press the offensive, while at once placing General Stilwell in unrestricted command of all your forces. The action I am asking you to take will fortify us in our decision and in the continued efforts the United States proposes to take to maintain and increase our aid to you.²⁵

²⁵Romanus and Sunderland, Command Problems, 446.

Stilwell received the note and delivered it to Chiang Kai-shek as ordered by Roosevelt. The Generalissimo showed no immediate visible sign of anger after perusing its contents, but Hurley's negotiations with Chiang were immediately deadlocked. The Generalissimo now not only refused to consider Stilwell as Chinese Army Commander, he also began to urge Hurley and the President to recall Stilwell from the Theater.

Instead of prodding the Generalissimo to action, Roosevelt's note merely confirmed Chiang in his inaction. Nevertheless, Chiang Kai-shek did not base his objections on the contents of Roosevelt's note. He rather concentrated his anger on Stilwell because the American General was a convenient scapegoat on which Chiang could give vent to his frustration over undesirable American policy. On October thirteenth, Patrick Hurley concluded that Stilwell would have to be removed before Sino-American relations could assume a normal condition. The War Department acted upon his recommendation and on October eighteenth, General Stilwell was recalled from the China-Burma Theater. General Albert Wedemeyer was shifted from Washington to be Chiang Kai-shek's new Chief of Staff with no mention of his commanding the Chinese Army.

As the embodiment of American pressure for military action and for conciliation with the Communists, Stilwell had become a symbol to Chiang Kai-shek--a symbol of precipitate action when the Generalissimo wanted defensive

and delaying tactics, of tight-fisted lend lease when Chiang felt that these gifts should be his to distribute, and of conciliation towards the Communists when Chiang Kai-shek desired above all that the Communist menace should be obliterated from the face of China. Thus, Stilwell was the victim of circumstances which compelled him to carry out American policies which were disliked by the Generalissimo.

Until news of Stilwell's recall reached the United States press, American attention focused increasingly on the Kuomintang-Communist feud in September and early October. Americans apparently still gave credence to the myth that China was capable of vigorous action if she could obtain arms. The United States had sent supplies but they had been wasted in a senseless civil war. If this dispute could be settled, China could use American aid to good advantage against the Japanese. The Christian Century declared that the Chinese Communists were connected to Moscow: "While the Chinese communists claim to have no connections with Russia, it can hardly be doubted that the maintenance of a Communist state in northwest China serves the interests of Russia against Japan, against whatever group controls the remainder of China and against the domination of the Pacific by any one power."²⁶

The New Republic manifested the disillusionment that

²⁶The Christian Century, September 6, 1944, 1012.

liberals felt towards the Nationalist Government. Only a year previously, reporting on the annual meeting of the Chinese People's Political Council, the same journal had rejoiced that Chiang had promised a democratic constitutional government for China after the war: "It is clear that another major triumph over fascism has been won, under the personal leadership of Chiang Kai-shek."²⁷ Now the New Republic no longer believed the same promises made a year later:

Another session of the Chinese People's Political Council has just been concluded in Chungking. Once more, as in preceding years, council members heard government officials make promises of democracy and constitutional government . . . but nobody believes these promises.

The plain truth is that Chiang does not understand democracy or welcome it for China. . . . As long as the Kuomintang is undemocratic, the existence of the Communist Party and its strong military forces is the chief, if not the sole, guarantee against fascism in China.²⁸

This enthusiasm for the Chinese Communism reflected a growing distaste, especially among liberal elements in America, for the continued reactionary policies of Chiang's Government and a strong hope that the Communists would bring true democracy to China. The liberal's support of Chinese Communists was matched by their enthusiasm for Soviet Russia which they praised as the hope of the Russian people.

John Service, former adviser to Stilwell, observed in an October dispatch that the Communists were gaining support

²⁷The New Republic, September 27, 1943, 1054.

²⁸The New Republic, October 9, 1944, 453.

among the peasants: "The common people, for the first time, have been given something to fight for . . . the people will continue to fight any government which limits or deprives them of these newly won gains."²⁹

Secretary of State Hull, in a letter to Ambassador Gauss, expressed concern over the discontent of the Chinese people in non-Communist areas: "We are concerned not alone with reference to non-settlement with the Chinese Communists but also with regard to reports of dissidence and dissatisfaction among non-Communist Chinese in other areas of the country."³⁰

In the midst of this interest in the Chinese civil dispute came the sudden startling news of the recall of General Stilwell. The first reaction was to question the reason for the sudden recall. Then more informed comments appeared and finally attempts were made to relate the recall to the remaining problems in the China Theater.

The Portland Oregonian wondered whether the recall was a reprimand or a routine command change.³¹ The New York Times tentatively observed that Stilwell's recall was reported to have been caused by tensions with Chiang Kai-shek.³²

²⁹U. S. Relations with China, op. cit., 566.

³⁰Ibid., 563-564.

³¹The Portland Oregonian, October 29, 1944, 1.

³²The New York Times, October 29, 1944, 1.

These initial uncertainties soon evolved into a definite trend of sympathy for General Stilwell and ultimately of ill feeling for Chiang Kai-shek, who had dealt unfairly with the salty but popular "Vinegar Joe". The Christian Century remarked: "Chiang dismissed the man whose misfortune it was to transmit demands acceptance of which would immediately have brought the independence of China into question from one direction and would ultimately have resulted in civil ^{war} from another."³³ Newsweek declared: "Stilwell fought a losing battle against inertia, corruption, inefficiency and questionable motives."³⁴

Time printed Republican Congressman Walter Judd's reaction to Stilwell's recall. Judd, a former missionary to China, was one of the very few who injected politics into his discussion of the affair: "It was a diplomatic mistake by the United States. Stilwell did not make the mistake. He was merely the goat of personal government in Washington."³⁵ The Nation sadly noted: "The recall of General Joseph Stilwell represents a severe setback in the United Nations War against Japan."³⁶ The New Republic added: "The recall

³³The Christian Century, November 15, 1944, 1307.

³⁴Newsweek, November 13, 1944, 44.

³⁵Time, November 13, 1944, 40.

³⁶The Nation, November 4, 1944, 546.

of General Stilwell can only be considered a defeat for democratic hopes and aspirations with regard to China."³⁷

Finally, the Christian Science Monitor thoughtfully observed that perhaps the recall had placed the United States in a better bargaining position with China: "The American government would seem to be in an improved position to seek something in return from Chungking. Possibly a healing of the breach between the Generalissimo's forces and the Chinese Communists, or an effective battle against political corruption within the government."³⁸

The events leading to and including General Stilwell's recall, and the newspaper and magazine reactions to those events followed a series of events in and reactions towards China that differed fundamentally from previous American treatment of China. The year 1944 marked the end of American indulgence towards Chinese passivity and the inauguration of a tougher bargaining approach that pleased General Stilwell, but which only deepened Chiang Kai-shek's fear of action against the Japanese and his distrust of American motives with respect to China.

American attitudes towards China showed a corresponding change. Newspapers and magazines began to concentrate more on specific problems and personalities and less on the

³⁷The New Republic, November 6, 1944, 581.

³⁸The Christian Science Monitor, October 31, 1944, 1.

valiant but nameless "Chinese people". Some merely deplored the continued civil war in China. More liberal organs wondered whether the agrarian reformation of the Chinese Communists were not the real solution to the attainment of a democratic China.

Thus, although the Allied war was progressing elsewhere, General Wedemeyer faced tremendous obstacles in China. America's treatment of these obstacles was destined to have important consequences as the war drew to a close and old problems assumed an unbelievable new magnitude in the on-going crusade to preserve democracy.

CHAPTER VI

THE END OF THE WAR: AMERICAN ATTITUDES TOWARDS CHINA FROM OCTOBER, 1944 TO SEPTEMBER, 1945

A New Chief of Staff for Chiang, A Change in Theater Organization, and Reforms in the Kuomintang: Events in China and American Reactions, October, 1944 to December, 1945

The hasty departure of General Stilwell from the China-Burma-India Theater gave rise to the immediate problem of finding a successor. George Marshall chose Albert C. Wedemeyer who was on the War Plans Division of the General Staff to be Chiang Kai-shek's Chief of Staff. The Joint Chiefs of Staff instructed Wedemeyer to (1) advise and assist the Generalissimo in the conduct of military operations against the Japanese, (2) carry out United States air operations in China and assist Chinese air and ground forces, and (3) refrain from employing United States resources for the suppression of civil strife except where it was necessary to protect American lives and property.¹

Wedemeyer's directive significantly omitted any mention

¹Charles Romanus and Riley Sunderland, Time Runs Out in CBI (Washington, 1959), 15. Hereafter this will be cited as Time Runs Out.

of his commanding Chinese troops. American attempts to place Stilwell in command of Chinese troops had caused strained relations between the two countries, so the idea was dropped.

In addition to the Sino-American diplomatic relationships, several events occurred in other areas of the war during early October that directed Anglo-American attention away from the problems involved in preparing and maintaining an offensive in China. The United States Navy had decisively defeated the Japanese Imperial Navy in Leyte Gulf, General Douglas MacArthur had established supremacy in the Philippines, and Joseph Stalin promised Winston Churchill that Russia would have sixty divisions available to fight the Japanese thirty days after the defeat of the Germans.²

The victory at sea and the supremacy in the Philippines created a splendid opportunity for the Allies to defeat Japan by strangling her with a tight blockade. Then, when the Germans were defeated, Russian, American, and British soldiers could deal the death blow to Japan, if she still held out.

Allied strategists recognized, however, that China still contained some strategical importance. The Japanese were still capable of defeating China or persuading Chiang to conclude a separate peace. In either event, the Japanese would be left free to devote their full energy against the

²Romanus and Sunderland, Time Runs Out, 4.

Allies. Thus, General Wedemeyer went to China to maintain enough resistance to keep the Japanese Army from victory and the Nationalist Government from despair.

On October twenty-fourth, the China-Burma-India Theater was divided. The Combined Chiefs of Staff recognized that the Theater was geographically too large to be efficiently administered so they divided the area to insure a more effective employment of the men and materials available to China and Burma. General Wedemeyer assumed command of the China Theater, and Lieutenant General Daniel I. Sultan, Stilwell's Deputy Theater Commander, took up his duties as Commander in the India-Burma Theater.

In late October, the Japanese began a drive on the East China air bases. General Chennault immediately formed the East China Air Task Force to hold the vital air bases. No sooner was this done than the Japanese shifted their tactics and began to march towards Kunming and Chungking. General Wedemeyer obtained the Generalissimo's consent to place all available Chinese troops in a position to defend the Kunming area. Chiang moved the Chinese Twenty-second and Fourteenth Divisions from North Burma to Kunming.

This concentration of troops eased the military situation in China. Chiang also took steps to create a more responsible and competent Government when he made some shifts in his cabinet. General Chen Cheng relieved Ho Ying-chin as War Minister, and O. K. Yui replaced H. H. Kung as Finance Minister. Thus, with Chinese soldiers guarding Chungking

from without and more able Chinese Government officials working within the capital, the Kuomintang seemed safe from immediate disaster.

American attitudes towards China during the last three months of 1944 followed a variety of themes. Newspapers and periodicals generally marvelled at continued Chinese resistance but they made gloomy predictions concerning China's future. General Albert Wedemeyer, the new Commander in the Chinese Theater, later declared: "I began to understand that the Nationalist Government of China, far from being reluctant to fight, had shown amazing tenacity and endurance in resisting Japan."³ On the other hand, the United States News commented on Chinese political, economic, and political organization and concluded that there was "little likelihood that China will emerge from the war as the fourth major world power."⁴ Of the two reactions concerning China, the melancholy view was more prevalent in American newspapers and magazines than Wedemeyer's attitude of surprised admiration.

Holding a pessimistic view of China's future, commentators examined Sino-American relations and the possible results of the civil war in China. The New York Times observed that Sino-American relations were at a crisis, but

³Albert C. Wedemeyer, Wedemeyer Reports (New York, 1958), 281.

⁴United States News, November 10, 1944, 22.

that they had not yet been terminated. The Times expressed the hope that Chiang Kai-shek would be able to "unify China".⁵ But the Portland Oregonian declared: "The Kuomintang party regime, headed by Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek has been and is more concerned with the inevitable civil war against the 80,000,000 Chinese Communists than in the struggle against Japan. . . . Democracy does not exist in China."⁶

The Nation still believed that Chinese forces could defeat the Japanese invader and unify the country: "The United States can make a great contribution to China by giving all possible aid to Chinese forces which would hasten the emergence of that strong, united, and independent China that all friends of the Chinese people so earnestly desire."⁷ But the New Republic disagreed: "Inevitably the decline of Chinese resistance to the Japanese, and the fading hopes that China might become a great base for the Armed forces of other United Nations, concentrate attention upon the second approach to Japan; that which lies across the seas and through the islands."⁸ In its disappointment over China's war effort, the New Republic failed to note that the Allies might profitably use both the Pacific Islands and China as approaches to Japan.

⁵The New York Times, November 4, 1944, 14.

⁶The Portland Oregonian, November 1, 1944, 2.

⁷The Nation, December 9, 1944, 710.

⁸The New Republic, November 6, 1944, 581.

Americans generally reacted favorably to the change in Chiang Kai-shek's cabinet. Time rejoiced that Chiang had taken "the step that all friends of China had hoped for,"⁹ while the Christian Science Monitor noted with satisfaction that Chiang was "liberalizing his cabinet."¹⁰

Because Allied successes in the Pacific made it less imperative to obtain maximum use of Chinese soldiers, the United States became less insistent that the Chinese Communists be utilized against the Japanese. In the last months of 1944 American newspapers and periodicals seemed to become disillusioned concerning the Chinese "Reds". Time criticized Americans who emphasized the democracy of the Chinese Communists. It noted the Yen-an Government's rigid press censorship, iron party discipline, concentration camps, secret police, and other totalitarian features.¹¹ General Wedemeyer later recalled that: "Although it took me some time to acquire confirmation of the ruthless objectives of the Chinese Communists, I had no illusions concerning them from the outset."¹²

Thus, during the last three months of 1944 China's global strategical importance diminished, but the Allies sent

⁹Time, November 27, 1944, 30.

¹⁰The Christian Science Monitor, November 22, 1944, 14.

¹¹Time, November 13, 1944, 45.

¹²Wedemeyer, op. cit., 284.

General Wedemeyer to prevent China from completely yielding to the Japanese. American attitudes towards China ranged from praise for China's sustained resistance to melancholy predictions concerning China's future. In general, Chinese affairs received less notice by the American press in late 1944 than previously because more exciting events were taking place in Europe and because the controversial Stilwell was gone from the scene.

A Conference at Yalta, the Opening of the Ledo Road,
And the Death of President Roosevelt: American
Attitudes Towards China From January to April, 1945

The growing number of Allied victories and the increasing importance of the Russian war effort were the circumstances that made it advisable to hold another strategic conference. The conference was held at Yalta on the fourth through the eleventh of January. Top level representatives from Russia, Great Britain, and the United States were present to discuss strategy. Because the United States and Great Britain were particularly desirous of obtaining Russian military assistance against Japan, President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill promised Marshall Stalin that they would recognize Russia's claims on Manchuria if he would reiterate his promise to fight Japan after the defeat of Germany.¹³

This was not a repudiation of the American policy of

¹³Romanus and Sunderland, Time Runs Out, 330.

safeguarding Chinese territorial and administrative integrity because Chiang had never extended his control to Manchuria. Moreover, his constant struggles with Communists and recalcitrant war lords made it unlikely that the Generalissimo would be able to occupy that territory.

While Roosevelt, Churchill, and Stalin were conferring at Yalta, events moved swiftly forward in China. On January twenty-seventh, the Ledo Road was reopened, connecting China with the outside world once more. Assured of supplies that could be brought over this road, General Wedemeyer began to lay plans for an assault on the coastal area around Canton and Hong-Kong. The Joint Chiefs of Staff were investigating the possibilities of such an operation when suddenly, on April 12, 1945, the world was stunned by the news of the death of President Roosevelt. "The American people have just received one of the greatest challenges in their history," declared the Christian Science Monitor. "We trust and believe that in this sobering hour they will close ranks to carry through the larger national purposes on which President Roosevelt has led them to wide agreement."¹⁴ The war continued with no change in strategy, but the man who had given so much of himself to its successful conclusion was gone.

American attitudes towards China showed little change during the first three months of 1945. Representative "Mike"

¹⁴The Christian Science Monitor, April 13, 1945, 12.

Mansfield from Montana, who had recently returned from a visit to China, reported in Time that the biggest problem in China was not lack of supplies but the civil strife. Mansfield asserted, however, that Chiang's reorganization of the Government might serve to unify the country under the Kuomintang.¹⁵

The liberal New Republic presented a novel scheme for eliminating Chinese civil conflict: "The best way of avoiding civil war in China before the victorious conclusion of the war against Japan would be the appointment of a Supreme Allied Commander in the Chinese Theater with sufficient authority to deploy all Allied forces--American, British, Chungking, Yenan--as he saw fit."¹⁶ General Wedemeyer saw the issue more clearly than the New Republic. He realized that there was now more at stake than patching up the quarrel long enough to defeat the Japanese. There were basic ideological differences that made it impossible to propound an easy solution to the problem. Wedemeyer concluded: "It is of vital importance that the Communists, who are even greater enemies of liberty than the Nazis, should not win out in China."¹⁷

Although newspapers and periodicals stressed the civil

¹⁵Time, January 22, 1945, 21.

¹⁶The New Republic, March 26, 1945, 408.

¹⁷Wedemeyer, op. cit., 285.

war in China, there were a few optimistic statements. The Portland Oregonian confidently asserted that "China is the key to stability in the Far East,"¹⁸ while Time rejoiced that China was taking "momentous steps toward democracy."¹⁹

Thus, by mid-April, the Allies had bargained away Manchuria to Russia in return for a shortened war, Wedemeyer had begun to plan a coastal campaign in China, and President Roosevelt had yielded his place on the American and world scene to Harry S. Truman. Americans continued to express hopefulness concerning the Chinese, but the growing divergence of views over the role and significance of the Chinese Communists was an ominous foreshadowing of the future conflict between the United States and Communism.

A Conference at Potsdam, and the End of the War:
American Attitudes Towards China From May
to September, 1945

General Wedemeyer's plan to take the coastal cities of Hong Kong and Canton received official approval on April twenty-first. But this was a rather hollow victory because supplies were urgently needed in other areas of the war, leaving insufficient material for General Wedemeyer to mount his campaign. Finally, Chinese Armies began to clear out the designated area on June seventh, meeting very little

¹⁸The Portland Oregonian, March 13, 1945, 2.

¹⁹Time, March 12, 1945, 43.

resistance from the Japanese.

With Japanese resistance crumbling, leaders of the United States, Great Britain, and Russia met on July twenty-sixth at Potsdam to formulate an ultimatum to the island empire. The Allies demanded that Japan surrender unconditionally or be destroyed. Japan refused the ultimatum, and the United States prepared to inflict upon the island empire the most terrible instrument of destruction yet devised by man. On August sixth and ninth, United States airmen dropped Atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. This virtually ended Japanese resistance, and on August 15, 1945, offensive action against the Japanese ceased.

During May, June, and July American newspapers and periodicals continued to play upon the themes of Chinese civil war and the need for United States economic and military assistance to Chiang Kai-shek. The United States News declared: "For victories now and for power in the future, China must look to the continued backing of the United States."²⁰

The influential former missionary, Congressman Walter Judd of Minnesota, made a plea for cooperation and understanding of China which had been neglected during the war: "We and our Western Allies made a decision which gave brilliant results in Europe. If we can take the credit for good results in Europe, there is no way we can escape some of the responsibility for bad results in Asia. . . . We have got

²⁰The United States News, June 15, 1945, 21.

to stop trying to force the Chinese to do what we think is best. They are an eminently reasonable people but they cannot be browbeaten or coerced."²¹

On July seventh, China observed the eighth anniversary of war against Japan. This occasion prompted the New York Times to pay an eloquent tribute to China. The Times concluded: "Victory is now inevitable. When it comes we will all owe a great debt to the Chinese who fought while Britain and the United States were still trying to placate the Japanese."²² The Christian Science Monitor also commented upon "China's heroic years" and ended by declaring: "that these brave people shall have the freedom and the opportunity to restore their war torn country and to resolve their own differences in their own way remains the hope and earnest wish of China's friends and allies everywhere."²³

The end of the war did not elicit much response regarding China from American newspapers and periodicals. The emphasis was upon victory parades and the promise of a brave new America. Time devoted a short space to a tribute to Chiang and reprinted his short victory message where he declared: "Our faith in justice through eight long years of

²¹Time, June 18, 1945, 23.

²²The New York Times, July 7, 1945, 12.

²³The Christian Science Monitor, July 7, 1945, 10.

struggle has today been rewarded."²⁴

But before peace was a month old, Americans began to speculate again on the Nationalist-Communist problem which had been transformed from a side issue into the central problem in China. The Portland Oregonian noted that the two factions were apparently getting ready to renew their hostilities.²⁵ The New York Times came to the alarming realization that "the Chinese Communists rise up to threaten a new Chinese civil war which could easily blow up whatever Asiatic peace settlement is now in prospect."²⁶

The Christian Science Monitor was hopeful that China would submit to a "Big Three" compromise "with democracy in China the chief beneficiary."²⁷ But the New Republic did not believe that compromise would settle the Chinese situation. It called for American aid in establishing the Chinese Communists in China to insure "the future peace and prosperity of the Pacific."²⁸

After the war ended, American newspapers and periodicals were more apprehensive than ever concerning China's future.

²⁴Time, August 27, 1945, 43.

²⁵The Portland Oregonian, August 14, 1945, 2.

²⁶The New York Times, August 17, 1945, 16.

²⁷The Christian Science Monitor, July 28, 1945, 12.

²⁸The New Republic, August 27, 1945, 250.

Americans were not anxious to embark on a new war to insure Chiang's supremacy, but the civil dispute showed every sign of increasing in intensity with the Chinese left to themselves. The liberal New Republic reflected its disillusionment with the Nationalist Government, but its endorsement of the Chinese Communists should be interpreted in the light of 1945 when some Americans still believed that Chinese Communism contained the real hope for China's future.

Thus, the United States was faced with bewildering problems regarding postwar Asia when the smoke of the battles of the Second World War had scarcely cleared away. Despite American attempts to bolster the Nationalist forces, Chiang was pushed off the mainland by 1949. By then, Americans realized more clearly the nature of Chinese Communism, but we were no longer dealing with a small group of radical agrarian reformers. The Communists controlled China.

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