AMERICAN DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH CHINA

DURING THE CIVIL WAR,

1915-1919

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I. INTRODUCTION

This paper is a study of the diplomatic relations between the United States and China in the period from 1944 leading up to the Communist take-over of the mainland in 1949. As will be established, it has been well agreed upon that what America did do had no appreciable effect upon the Communist take-over, which leads to the obvious question - could something else have been done? This study is directed towards the search for an answer to that question.
II. CHINA

A. China has long been recognized as the keystone to Asia and as a country with enormous potential. Napoleon once said: "Let China sleep. When she wakes, the world will be sorry."¹ Over a hundred years later, Lenin was to remark: "He who controls China controls the world."²

For over a century preceding the renewed outbreak of civil war in 1945, China had been a country of accelerating tragedy. It was caught in the stress and strain of Asian forces moving against all forms of former domination and of surging nationalism. Again turning to Lenin: "Whatever may be the fate of the great Chinese revolution, against which various 'civilized' hyenas are now sharpening their teeth, no forces in the world will restore the old serfdom in Asia."³

China is also a land where revolution and war, while not everyday occurrences, are nothing unusual. Throughout its history, revolutions have occurred, but never successfully without the support of the peasants and the educated class.⁴ Totalitarian rule


is not counter to Chinese history either, as it is all the Chinese have ever known. The Communist hierarchy and the Confucian Mandarin serve, in effect, the same purpose. ⁵

b. In China, distance in 1945 was measured by the li. It was more li up a mountain road than down the very same road. This illustrates, in a very brief manner, that the Oriental mind works with concepts that do not altogether mesh with western ones. Another example is United States' acceptance of Chiang Kai-Shek's government as the "legal" government of China in a land that knew no such concept as "legal" or "recognized" government as the term is used in the west. ⁶ Neither does the fond American belief that if our intentions and principles are beyond reproach, the consequences of working with them will certainly work out to the best advantage of all concerned make sense to the Chinese.

c. A land of violence, confusion and a way of thinking set apart from the Western pattern; a civil war, and the United States constitute the components and supply the dynamics for this study.

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⁵Ibid., p.116.

The early 1900's were a time of chaos in China as the old order was crumbling under the influx of liberal Western thought. It was during this period that the first political force ever to exist in China, the Kuomintang Party, came into being under Dr. Sun Yat-sen.\footnote{Ibid, p.117.} Times of strife and confusion made the Kuomintang susceptible to Communist infiltration. This was further encouraged in 1921 when communists became openly eligible for Kuomintang membership by individually professing allegiance to Dr. Sun Yat-sen's Three Principles.\footnote{Ibid., p.119.} There was much strife within the Kuomintang concerning acceptance of the Communists. It broke out fiercely upon Dr. Sun Yat-sen's death in 1925. When Chiang Kai-shek emerged as the head of the Kuomintang, after defeating the Northern war lords in 1927, he began to purge the Communists on the basis of evidence that they were planning to take over the party.\footnote{Ibid., p.120.} Thus began a twenty-two year battle followed by fifteen more years, extending to the present date, of caged animosity on Formosa.

\begin{itemize}
  \item \footnote{Ibid, p.117.}{Ibid, p.117.}
  \item \footnote{Ibid., p.119.}{Ibid., p.119.}
  \item \footnote{Ibid., p.120.}{Ibid., p.120.}
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In the 1930's, the Communists were all but annihilated on more than one occasion. The September 18 invasion of Manchuria by Japan saved them once. The famous "Long March" of 1935 is another example. Chiang-Kai-shek had surrounded their South Central Kiang-Si province base and they broke out to embark upon an "impossible" 2,000 mile trek over mountains and desert to the inaccessible Northern Shen-si province. 10

By 1938, the people of China were clamoring for a united front against the Japanese menace to the North, instead of the civil war in process. Japan aain conveniently aided the Communists by invading China proper in 1937. Chiang could not ignore 'united front' cries as a result, and the Japanese could do little more than clear Chiang Kai-Shek's Nationalist Chinese forces out of the cities in North China as they rolled south. This enabled the Communists to filter into the countryside in the north, since Japan did not have the manpower to police the countryside and Chiang was being driven South. 11 This gave the Communists the chance to consolidate themselves in the rural north and build up the organization and communications with the peasants of North China, which were to prove so vital in the decade to come.

By 1938, an unassuming agrarian reformer named Mao Tse-tung had taken control of the Communists in China. The true Mr. Mao can be seen in a speech he made to Chu Teh's 8th Route Army at Yanan in the


11 Yuan Ber Vlugt, op. cit., p.122.
Of the Communist effort should be directed toward expansion, twenty percent to defeating the Kuomintang, and ten percent to fighting the Japanese. In the same speech, he listed the stages to be used in defeating the Kuomintang: 1) compromise to insure existence and growth, 2) achieve parity in strength, 3) penetrate, establish bases, and attack. 12

1937 saw the establishment of the United Front against the Japanese. Many foreigners were completely deluded into thinking that this meant the end of civil strife. However, closer scrutiny shows it to be advantageous to both sides. The Nationalists were reeling from the main assault of the Japanese and needed help, regardless of how little or from what corner it came. The United Front was championed by the Communists as part of their ever present readiness to champion whatever the people were for, even if by propaganda only. Also, the United Front fitted perfectly the steps Mao Tse-Tung had outlined for the eventual defeat of the Kuomintang. 13

In 1941, the Communist Chinese began to organize guerilla forces in southeastern China, which was normal nationalist territory. When the Communist New Fourth Route Army crossed the Yangtze River to work on this, it was attacked and battered by Nationalist forces. 14

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12Chow, op. cit., p. 2.
13Snow, op. cit., p. 415.
While this surprised and shocked foreign correspondents, it was not surprising to the Chinese people who knew that there had been no Nationalist-Communist cooperative effort against the Japanese, but rather a state of armed neutrality and, in reality, two separate governments carrying on operations while watching each other more closely than the Japanese. Americans in particular could not grasp this sort of operation, for American entries into war have traditionally been all-out affairs with the country's entire potential dedicated to the earliest possible defeat of the enemy. From the Chinese point of view, their way makes a great deal of sense. Their war with Japan was over as soon as Japan bombed Pearl Harbor, because both Chiang K'ai-shek and Mao Tse-tung could see that Japan had "bitten off more than she could chew."\(^{15}\)

Despite their preoccupation with each other, there was resistance to the Japanese. The Communists were never engaged in outright battle against the Japanese, but Japanese Army Archives do indicate that the Communist Chinese carried out some effective guerilla activities.\(^{16}\) As Mao Tse-tung and others contend, guerilla success is based upon close and sympathetic contact with the people. This indicated that the Yenan forces were becoming firmly entrenched with North China peasants. An excellent illustration of this is the following statement from Theodore White's Thunder Out of China:


early in the war I had spent several weeks behind Japanese lines with guerrilla forces of
the Nationalist Government, and one evening we entered a hill village in Shensi—myself, an officer
of the Nationalist guerrillas and two common soldiers. Our horses were saddle-galled from hard riding and we
had not fed them for a day. There, behind the
Japanese lines, we pleaded with the peasants to give
us fodder for the horses and beds for ourselves. And
the young Nationalist lieutenant said to the villagers:
"Wo-men shih pu-lu-chun" (We are of the Eighth Route
Army—which was the Communist guerrilla force). I
protested because I was an American trying to report
the Nationalist guerrillas; and the young officer
replied, "Better that we say we are Communists—
otherwise they won't feed our horses."

As 1944 arrived, the Civil War in China had been going on for
seventeen years and there still was no mention of it in the American
press. This was partially because the West was unable to realize
just what was going on. Isolated skirmishes in places no-one had
ever heard of with no tangible results were not the sort of thing to
attract attention during World War II and the period immediately
following. But there had been a war going on, and not just one of
swords, or even primarily of swords. And the Communists were making
swift strides forward. Such factors as ruin of the middle class by
war, inflation, corruption of the Kuomintang, discontent, disillu-
sionment with the party in power during a war taking a horrible toll
of lives, no government at all but Communists in vast rural areas,
a chance of land reform awakening the long suffering farmer, and
their excellence in organization were responsible for much of the
Communists' ever improving position. They made very good use of any
cause for dissatisfaction and confusion while the Kuomintang ever
receded.
IV. PRE-MARSHALL

When World War II began for the United States with the bombing of Pearl Harbor, Chiang Kai-shek and the Nationalist Chinese became our allies. Chiang was held in high esteem at the time, and the press lauded his heroic stand at Chungking. However, as the war continued, United States officials became more and more concerned with the conflict between the communist forces and Chiang's Nationalist armies. President Roosevelt took personal notice of this conflict in 1944, when he sent Vice-President Wallace on a special assignment to attempt a conciliation between the communists and the nationalists. 17

The beginning of public differences with Chiang came in the same year that Vice-President Wallace was sent to China. The rumblings began with General Joseph W. Stilwell, who was at this time U. S. Commander-in-China and Chief-of-Staff to Chiang Kai-shek. General Stilwell wanted to build up a powerful modern Chinese force, as he had done in Burma, because the Chinese front was rapidly disintegrating. He was given a purely military task, but he soon discovered that this task was multiplied many times by the confused political situation in which he was operating. He could not grasp the fact that Mao and Chiang were more interested in their relative

positions than in fighting the Japanese, who were destined to lose to American might sooner or later.\(^8\) He also had ample evidence of corruption and poor strategy in a military sense with regards to the defeat of the Japanese. He wanted to right these conditions, even to the extent of cooperating with the Communists, something done only on paper by Chiang. This was the root of the split between Chiang and Stilwell, as Chiang would not stand for any proposal that would result in any loss of the firm grasp he had on the Nationalist armies.\(^9\)

Reports of the situation between Chiang and General Stilwell and the deterioration of the Chinese economy prompted President Roosevelt to send General Patrick Hurley and the Director of the War Production Board, Donald Nelson, on a dual-purpose mission to China in August of 1944. Nelson was to work on economic matters, primarily war industries. Hurley was given three objectives to work towards: 1) make Stilwell Commander-in-Chief of all allied forces in China, 2) effect reorganization of the Chinese armies, 3) consolidate Communist Chinese and Nationalist Chinese war efforts under Stilwell.\(^{20}\)

\(^{18}\)White and Jacoby, op. cit., pp.214-216.


General Hurley's principle objective was to patch up differences between General Stilwell and Chiang. While Hurley was still at work, President Roosevelt sent Representative Mike Mansfield of Montana to China in October of 1944, to gather a report on the present situation. Mansfield became one of the first to report that supplies and other material deficiencies were not as important in the military troubles in China as the Communist-Nationalist differences. Representative Mansfield also indicated that the two Chinese factions were more interested in lasting out the war defensively, since they felt that the United States would bury Japan soon enough by herself.  

Meanwhile, the situation between Chiang and "Vinegar Joe" Stilwell had reached the breaking point. Chiang demanded flatly the removal of Stilwell, which put President Roosevelt in the position of having to choose between Chiang and Stilwell. October 16, 1944 saw Stilwell recalled and replaced by General A. C. Wedemeyer.  

General Hurley had sided with Chiang against Stilwell. Ambassador Maass was quite distressed by this and also quite disappointed that Hurley had reassured Chiang that United States aid would continue in any event, thus ruining any bargaining power he had in attempting to force reform and conciliation with the Communists. As a further consequence of the "Stilwell Crisis", the American

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22White and Jacoby. op. cit., pp. 222-224.
Ambassador to China resigned to become one of the first in a line of diplomats overcome by the intricacies of the muddled Chinese situation.²³

Following the Stilwell Crisis, Chiang made overtures to placate American critics by appointing T. V. Soong as president of the Executive Yuan, which was the number two slot in the Kuomintang-dominated government structure. T. V. Soong was well regarded by the liberals and was Harvard educated.²⁴ Although this seemed a liberal movement by the rightist Kuomintang leadership, in actuality it meant little, as Soong was in a position that approximated that of an American Vice-President presiding over a Senate dominated by the other party.

Adding to the lull in anti-Chiang sentiments was the improved situation in the relations between the American military mission and Chiang. General Wedemeyer was responsible for most of this as a result of his view of his job. He considered his assignment to be to train troops and create an efficient fighting machine, and felt that it was up to others to decide what this machine was to be used for. He locked up all the files on the Stilwell Crisis without looking at them. He wanted no part of the political manipulating Stilwell had gotten into and made it clear to American officers in

²³Stewart, op. cit., p. 489.
²⁴Ibid., pp. 263-265.
China that they were to execute policy, not form it. This, of course, was fine with Chiang. He did not mind Wedemeyer's creation of a modern fighting force composed entirely of Nationalist forces to fight the Japanese, because the same force could be used later to fight the Communists.

Further adding to Chiang's improved position with the United States was General Hurley's priority position following the resignation of Ambassador Jessup. Hurley had opposed Stilwell and kicked out much of his own staff who criticized Nationalist leadership. As 1944 wore on towards November, the Chiefs-of-Staff saw Japan's invasion from China in 1946 as the final stage of war. This required a China friendly to the United States and not one heading for the collapse which many foresaw at this time. Therefore, President Roosevelt instructed Ambassador Hurley to move on with plans for effecting an agreement between Chinese factions.

If an agreement, with American help, was ever to be reached, this was the time for it. The Communists were now speaking of Lincoln the Liberator, rather than Chiehning the Imperialist. Chiang was taking any advice as long as American aid kept flowing in, and he had said that some sort of political solution was necessary to solve China's problems. A problem of major proportions then present was General Hurley's belief that minor quibblings were all that separate the Chinese Communists and the Kuomintang, because both espoused the principles of Dr. Sun Yat-sen.

26 Elegant, op. cit. p. 221.
General Hurley's contact with the Chinese Communists began on
November 7, 1944, when he burst into a Checotaw war-whoop as he
alighted from a plane at the Communist cave capital of Yanan. He
got off to a bad start curing the first evening of negotiations,
as he tried to get the Communists to accept a seat on a proposed
Supreme National Defense Council, legal status, and a share of Lend-
Lease supplies in return for the submission of their armies to
Nationalist control. The Communists would not stand for anything
that would place their armies under Chiang's control and refused.
Their refusal brought on one of the flamboyant Hurley's frequent
tirades. The following day, Hurley got Communist approval of a
proposal for military cooperation against the Japanese, for a
coalition government based on Dr. Sun Yat-Sen's principles, and
consisting of Kuomintang, Communists, and all anti-Japanese
parties. It was no surprise at all that the Communists would
agree to this arrangement, as it put them into the central govern-
ment, made it possible for them to receive a portion of United
States aid to China, and left them in control of the North China
regions where their strength was steadily increasing.

Hurley then returned to Chungking with Communist representa-
tive Chou En-lai. When the November 8 proposal was laid before
Chiang, he treated it with scorn and worked out a new proposal
with Hurley which was substantially the same as that Hurley had

28 White and Jacoby, op. cit., p. 254.
29 Elegant, op. cit., p. 221.
taken to Yenan originally. This proposal included the incorporation of the Communists into the Nationalist Army on an equal basis in regard to pay and supplies, recognition of the Communists as a legal party, subscribing to the principles of Dr. Sun Yat-sen, and submitting armies of both the Communists and Nationalists to the jurisdiction of a National Military Affairs Committee. The catch here was again the submission of Communist forces to a central government body that would include far more Kuomintang members than Communists. As a result, Chou En-lai was quite disappointed.

Matters were made worse when Hurley made the grossly stupid suggestion to Chou En-lai that he accept the proposal in the hopes of getting more concessions later. To one acquainted with the Chinese situation, this was idiotic and Hurley lost face with the Chinese Communists, which is one of the worst things a diplomat can do anywhere, especially in the Orient.

A short time later, General Patrick J. Hurley was named as American Ambassador to China to fill the vacancy created by Ambassador Guass's resignation. One of Hurley's first actions as Ambassador was to sit in on the January, 1945 Chungking Conference which had three representatives of each side negotiating. It fizzed out in February while Hurley was saying that both sides were "striving for democratic principles" and that a patient United States could effect a reconciliation.

30 Elegant, op. cit., p.222.
31 White and Jacoby, op. cit., pp.254-255.
32 Bundy, op. cit., p.156.
33 Latourette, op. cit. p.184.
An example is a quote from one of General Stilwell's political advisers still in China in 1945:

The Chinese Communist Party, on the other hand, is the party of the peasant. Its program ... is designed to bring about a democratic solution of the peasant's problems. On this basis ... the Communist Party will be the means of bringing democracy and sound industrialization to China. These are the only possible guarantees of peace and stability.

It can not be stressed too much that the above statement is not an isolated one. It was quite within a mainstream of popular opinion and especially prevalent among the liberal Eastern press so widely discussed today.

The spirit of cooperation with the communists can be further established by looking out on the world scene at this period in early 1945. In particular, the February 11 Yalta Fact signed between the United States and the Russian Communists serves as an illustration. In regard to China, there were several pertinent points in the Yalta Fact:

1) Status quo in Mongolian People's Republic (Outer Mongolia) to be preserved with Russian influence acknowledged.
2) Restoration of Manchurian privileges lost during 1904-05 war with Japan to Russia.
3) The southern section of Sakhalin ceded to Russia.
4) Dairen to be internationalized with "pre-eminent interests" of Russia recognized. (Dairen was the one ice-free port Russia had long cherished).
5) Port Arthur to be leased to Russia.
6) The Chinese Eastern Railroad and South Manchurian Railroad to be run under joint U.S.A. and Chinese authority with "dominant interests" of Russia safeguarded.

35 Ibid., p. 70.
7) Kurile Islands to be ceded to the U.S.S.R.
8) Provisions regarding Outer Mongolia, Liaotung, Port Arthur, and the railroad to be subject to the concurrence of Chiang. 36

The Yalta Pact has been bitterly assailed from many fronts throughout the years because the Russians were not involved in any fighting in the Far East and yet received all of these concessions. The line of defense has been that no one foresaw the early end of the war, and it was felt that Russian help would be needed to invade Japan. Be that as it may, it was a bitter pill for Chiang to swallow, especially as he was not informed of what had transpired until later and, of course, he played no part in the decisions made. Earlier in the war, the Generalissimo had been promised, at a Big Four meeting in Cairo, Egypt, that he would be consulted on decisions involving China and that Chinese rights in Manchuria would be respected. 37 There was, of course, the provision which made some of the other provisions subject to Nationalist approval, but there was no room given for maneuvering on Chiang's behalf.

Soon after the Yalta conference, the whole China scene was relegated to a minor position in American diplomatic circles, as the American invasion plans no longer called for a China base. Hurley was then left to do as he wished, with only vague directions and the Nationalist-Communist quarrel was forgotten. 38

37 Spanier, op. cit., p. 76.
38 White and Jacoby, op. cit., p. 256.
During this lull in American relations with China, Harry Hopkins was sent to Moscow to see Stalin. One of his objectives was to get Stalin's opinions on China. He was reassured that Stalin recognized Chiang as the legitimate ruler in China and as the only ruler capable of bringing about unification. On June 4, 1945, President Truman relayed Hopkins' message to T. V. Soong. While China was receiving this morsel of good news, ambassador Hurley was informing Chiang of the Yalta provisions, almost two months after the fact had been signed. Chiang then sent T. V. Soong to Russia to work on the Sino-Soviet Treaty requested in the Yalta agreements. The treaty was finally signed on August 14, and consisted mainly of ways and means of implementing the Yalta agreements. The fact that Chiang did go ahead with the Treaty indicated that he was not betrayed at Yalta, but rather that he and the United States were both at the mercy of a Soviet position that was extremely strong.

The Russians may have been as muddled as the United States in their China dealings, despite their strong position and proximity. Both the United States and Russia had doubts about which side they were more or less backing. Mao had shown independence of Moscow directives earlier, had no real experience in all-out war, and, on the surface, had only a peasant agrarian movement.

39 Fitzgerald, op. cit., p. 83.
40 Latourette, op. cit., pp. 190-191.
41 Fitzgerald, op. cit., p. 96.
Russia was also preoccupied with Hitler during the war, and the Far Eastern theatre of war was as much a sideshow to them as to Churchill.

The fact does remain that when the war was over, the Russians gave Manchurian cities over to the Nationalists and recognized only Nationalists officially. They did strip Manchurian industry and allowed Chinese Communists to overrun the countryside, but then, even occupying Japanese forces were not able to keep the Chinese Communists from building up in the countryside. Just why the Russians stripped Manchuria is not quite clear. Had they handed over their Manchurian positions and left the industries intact for the Communist Chinese, the Civil War in China would undoubtedly have had an even earlier ending than it did.

It is possible that it was simply a case of Russian greed and/or wanting to keep the United States from eventually gaining control of those prizes, and/or a belief that the Communist Chinese peasants could not run the industries anyway. All of these reasons are plausible, as there is evidence to show that the Russians at many levels did not feel that the Chinese Communists were strong enough to beat Chiang, and even those who felt they were, did not envision a struggle as brief as was the case. It is just as possible that the Russians were using considerable foresight. By allowing the Chinese Communists to have large caches of ammunition and to have the countryside, they were gaining needed supplies and, by allowing Chiang to occupy the cities, he was being drawn into overextending himself.

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If Chiang was strong enough to hold the cities, he was strong enough to take them anyhow. As far as looting was concerned, it had two advantages also. If Chiang won out, he would be deprived of the industries and if Mao won out, he would be dependent upon Russia for industrial aid.

On the American side of the ledger, the rapid closing of the war brought about a stated position of encouraging the establishment of one China, united, strong, and democratic, which would be a factor in the stabilization of Asia. The united part of this policy was particularly important, as the State Department, with Under-Secretary Dean Acheson, Owen Lattimore, and Alger Hiss leading the way, let Chiang know that the Nationalists had to unite with the Communists or aid would be cut off. A real paradox is presented in the repeated directives to avoid entanglement in the internal affairs of China while supporting a strong central government and working for unification. The Chinese were not about to unite by themselves and America was going to be involved in their internal affairs if it tried to start a motion toward this goal.

Cries for a coalition government in China had been and would be heard for some time. It was forgotten that a grave national crisis was needed to unite opposing factions within a country. The Japanese threat had been fading and was no more. Even the ingredients for a coalition were missing. In China, might was right and always had been. Neither party had received voter support, as neither party

\[ \text{Van Ler Vlugt, op. cit., p.124.} \]
was really a party, but were rather armies. It is extremely difficult to compromise between hostile armies when each believes it is strong enough to defeat the other. If there was a hope for real compromise in China, it was the Christian Democratic League (C.D.C.), a party of educated liberals. The Christian Democratic League probably could have pulled millions of votes in a true election and was ideal by American standards, but there would be no true election with Christian Democratic candidates. 44

While the sudden ending of the war found no ready-made diplomatic policy for the China situation, it caught the Nationalist military leaders much shorter than American diplomats. Both the Kuomintang and the Communists had expected American landings in 1945 in southeastern China, followed by advances north. This would have led through the area where the Communists had little influence and would have given the Nationalists a wonderful opportunity to consolidate their hold on these areas and recuperate from the pounding which the Japanese had been dealing out to their armies. So the MacArthur push to Japan in 1946 was supposed to fix the Nationalists solidly in position along the Yangtze, rested, and well-equipped, while the Communist organization was being hurt by the onward surge of the Americans and the hard fought retreat of the Japanese. 45

This would have been a fortunate situation for the Nationalists, but the war ended so suddenly that their hard-hit, war-weary forces

44 Fitzgerald, op. cit., p. 91.
45 White and Jacoby, op. cit., p. 85.
The decision to air-lift Chiang’s troops into North China was a difficult one to make. In the final analysis, he overextended his lines, as American advisers had warned, and the garrisons he sent in were cut off, making a prophet of Mrs. Sun Yat-sen who saw, as many Chinese did, what would result and said, "It will be city against countryside, and the cities will starve." 49

The decision to send troops into North China was really disastrous in another aspect as Western and Oriental concepts of legality clashed. Americans saw Chiang as the legal head of China and papers signed by the Communists during the truce as recognizing Nationalists as the legal government. The people saw a corrupt and graft-infested government in Nationalist territory and large areas run by Communists for eight years, not papers in some bureaucratic office. In fact, the air-lift ruined the last chance for internal peace in China. If the Communists had been left supreme in North China, they would have been so well-established that Chiang might have had to settle for South and Central China, resulting in a two Chinas situation far different from what now exists. The educated class in China would have welcome this partition. 50 They were disgusted with Chiang, although still far from Communist sympathizers.


50 Fitzgerald, op. cit., pp. 87-88.
The Communists were quick to capitalize on the propaganda front by virtue of the American mistake - by Chinese standards - of air-lifting Nationalist troops into the cities. They exploited it as an example of American imperialistic tendencies. To the Chinese mind, nothing the United States muddled about legality could overcome the fact that they had provoked the Communists into war in North China, something which was to them an obvious result of the air-lift. Public opinion took another big jump, and not the last, in favor of the Communists. 51

The Nationalists made a bad situation even worse by arriving on the scene in North China cities more as conquerors than liberators and treated those who had remained under Japanese rule as traitors. As a result, when the Communists shut them off from the outside world, these garrisons were even more isolated than the Japanese had been from supplies. 52 The United States then made another move on which the Communists capitalized and which hurt the American position with the people. This was the sending of 50,000 marines to help Chiang hold railroads, seaports, and aid in disarming the Japanese armies. 53 Besides irritating the Communists and the Chinese people, this was not well received by the press and many of the American people who wanted their boys home and were not in the mood to get mixed up in any more fighting.

51 Ibid., p. 28.
52 Chu, op. cit., p. 13.
53 Same, op. cit., p. 160.
Like it or not though, America fell into the role of natural mediator in China. The war brought about a realignment in the Far East balance of power. Britain, France, and Japan were completely out of the picture, and Russia was not really a potent force except in fringe areas of the north. By taking over Japanese interests, the United States had further reason to be involved in China, even though American allies wanted the United States to stay away from Chinese entanglement, as it diverted military and economic aid from them. 51 Despite these pressures, America more or less fell into the role of backing Chiang at the expense of national unity, as it was impossible to do both, even though it was a long time before this was fully realized.

The end of August saw Chiang come out with more promises of reform:

1) Disbanding of Kuomintang special army branches.
2) Doing away with Kuomintang branches in schools.
3) People to choose local and provincial assemblies by popular assembly.
4) All parties would enter into elections.
5) All men could vote.
6) Government to stimulate eugenic breeding of children.
7) Sex education to be improved.
8) Eight hour work day and paid vacations for workers.
9) National unions to be established.

The Chinese people did not take these resolutions seriously, as they had heard such promises time and time again, but they were intended for American ears and succeeded in building up Chiang's image.

51 Fitzgerald, op. cit., p. 213.
55 White and Jaccob, op. cit., p. 268.
October of 1945 saw Ambassador Hurley finally reach the end of his stormy stay in China. He resigned, issuing a blistering condemnation of American Foreign Service personnel in China who were partial to Communists, and an equally blistering condemnation of the State Department for not making any statement of policy to follow in his work.\textsuperscript{56} This latter was a very valid complaint, as for months there was no policy and then the vague, illogical policy of working for unity was issued, including supporting the central government and staying out of internal affairs.

In Hurley's absence, General Wedemeyer issued a report on November 10, 1945. The central points in the report were:

1) The only key to the economic ailments of China was greater aid and reform in government.
2) It would be years until a North China settlement was reached unless agreement was made with the Communists, and even more years would be needed for an agreement in Manchuria.
3) The advocacy of a UN. trusteeship in Manchuria because of the poor position it was in.
4) Russian violation of the Sino-Soviet Treaty and to the Chinese Communists.
5) The very, very remote possibility of agreement between the Huomingtan and the Chinese Communists.\textsuperscript{57}

Wedemeyer felt that Chiang underestimated Communist strength and definitely opposed entering into Manchuria because of communist strength throughout the area. He also definitely felt that Chiang should stay out of Manchuria until North China was taken care of, but Chiang had good reasons for wanting to march into Manchuria.

\textsuperscript{56} Campbell, 1945-1947, \textit{op. cit.}, p.264.
\textsuperscript{57} Bundy, \textit{op. cit.}, pp.153-154.
Manchuria had four times the industrial capacity of China proper and three times the power capacity, it was the grainery of the Far East, and had railroad capacity greater than China proper. 58

Needless to say, Chiang went ahead with his plans.

The iron hand and will of Chiang was put to use in another sphere - the political arena. The Congress of the Kuomintang met in November and was to select 360 names from 700 on a ballot for the ruling Council. Chiang appeared before the group and demanded approval of a ballot with 460 names on it with 460 to be selected. His terms were accepted, somewhat reluctantly by some, which kept the Kuomintang in the grip of the same reactionary group that had ruled it for years. 59

Chiang's reform cabinet was full of good workers and liberal people who appeased Western observers somewhat, but in reality, they were in the same position as T. V. Soong. They could work all they desired to, but could never get results with Chiang over them and the Kuomintang regulars all around them. 60

This was the situation as 1945 drew to a close. American policy was non-existent, there was no ambassador, and Chiang was going through the motions of reform while trying to soft-pedal earlier requests for union with the Communists. The Kuomintang was receiving a great deal of criticism and the Communists were

58 McCarthy, op. cit., p. 96.
59 White and Jacoby, op. cit., pp. 269-270.
60 Ibid., pp. 272-273.
viewed by many as pleasant agrarian reformers. Positioning was the main aim of both the Nationalists and the Communists, as there was no open full-scale warfare in process, but the Communist guerilla action was starting to take its toll. If full-scale civil war was to be averted, something had to be done and done decisively. The stage was set for the entrance of a man whose name is probably more closely associated with the American diplomatic effort than any other, George C. Marshall.
General George C. Marshall, retiring Chairman of the Joint Chiefs-of-Staff, was asked by the President in December, 1945, to take an assignment as special ambassador to China. The old soldier could not refuse, and United States diplomatic relations with China shifted into a higher gear than in the stumbling, undirected Hurley era. Soon afterwards, on December 7, Secretary of State Byrnes issued a policy statement which Marshall and the United States were to follow. He stated that the American goal was "the development of a strong, united, and democratic China." Byrnes went on to clarify this by indicating that Chiang Kai-shek was the best person to form the base of a democratic government and that American marines were in China only to facilitate the surrender of Japanese troops. 62

While this was nothing really new, it was at least an officially announced policy to work with, and it was made public, even though it was quite general. Byrnes followed this up on December 16 with suggested methods for implementing the policy. The essence of this method was a military truce, a National Conference with all Chinese parties involved, and integration of the Communist and Nationalist armies. 63 This was all well and good, but there was still the idea...

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63 Ibid., p.286.
that the Chinese themselves would do this at American suggestion and that intervention in Chinese internal affairs could be and should be avoided. A realistic approach or an educated approach, one or the other, was lacking even though World War II was three months into history, and the United States had been taking an active interest in the Chinese situation for over a year. Unification, support of Chiang, and non-intervention simply could not be carried out together.

General Marshall, however, began his work with great zeal and the highest expectations. Chinese diplomats were surprised by his sincere and repeated calls for compromise. One was quoted as saying, "He does not know that the word (compromise) has never been used before in Chinese political discussions." The American emphasis on unity was becoming so strong that it blinded much of any objective reasoning, particularly as the Chinese were in favor of compromise and truces only when a breathing space was needed.

Upon his arrival in China, Marshall was told by the Christian Democratic League leaders that the Nationalist policy of sending troops to the Northeast provinces was doomed. Reasons given for this view were the frequently given ones - that it would mean Civil War, that the Chinese people in these areas resented the Nationalists, and that Russia loomed in the background in case the Communists got into trouble. Marshall was given a plan for local autonomy in the North-

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eastern provinces, but he turned it down. A year later, when he left China in despair, he indicated that this proposal was a sound one and that he wished that he had tried to work with it. The proposal certainly was a sound one, if avoidance of Civil War was an American objective.

With only a few weeks behind him, Marshall accomplished a major diplomatic feat. On January 10, 1946, he arranged for an armistice between the fighting powers. To implement the armistice, he arrived at a brilliant strategy of three-man truce teams. These truce teams were to be composed of one American, one Nationalist, and one Communist. They were to be based at Peiping. This worked out very well and, due to the confusing situation in a war without fronts or lines of command, was the only sort of implementation that could have worked.

During the truce, the Communists demanded a large enough share of the government to insure growth. Chiang was just as insistent that the Communists should not be allowed to grow in strength. The Communists resented the continued training, equipping, and organizing of Nationalist armies by Americans. On the other hand, the Kuomintang was upset by the disruption of communications and railroad travel by Communist guerillas. Despite the roadblocks to negotiations, Marshall commenced to work and soon achieved a second major agreement. This was the basis for military reorganization and for the integration of

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the Communist forces into the National Army. The impressive
sounding document was signed on February 25. It provided for a
reduction in the Nationalist army to ninety divisions after twelve
months, and fifty after another twelve months. The Communist army
was to be reduced to fourteen divisions after twelve months, and
the after eighteen months.\textsuperscript{67} At this time, Marshall was getting
along splendidly with Chou En-lai, who signed the military reduc-
tion pact. On the other side, Chiang Chih-chang, who signed for the
Nationalists, termed Marshall the "midwife of Chinese unification."\textsuperscript{68}
Marshall also was on relatively good terms with Chiang. He disliked
many things Chiang did but, unlike Stillwell, he respected Chiang as
a man and recognized his intelligence.

Following the two agreements, the armistice and the military
reduction pact, Chiang came out with more of his pledges of reform,
mostly reaffirmations of previous promises. There was one notable
breakthrough though. There was a call for a Political Consultation
Conference at Chungking. The Conference reached an agreement for the
establishment of a provisional government to be eventually replaced
by a constitutional body. Even unification of armies was included
in the work of the Political Consultation Conference.\textsuperscript{69}

Early in March of 1945, Marshall celebrated the outwardly tre-
mendous successes on a spectacular tour of China with Chou En-lai


\textsuperscript{68} "Prospects for Unity in China," \textit{The Nation}, March 9, 1946,
p. 274.

and General Chang Chih-chung. All China hoped that peace was a possibility. It was at this time that Marshall suddenly decided to take a leave of absence. He apparently felt, as did the American public, that with the agreements and Chiang's promises, the roughest part of his mission was over. On March 11, he was on his way to the United States.  

The picture, however, was not as rosy as it appeared on the surface. As well as plans were laid for implementing the armistice, sporadic fighting continued in many areas, and both forces were carrying out positioning exercises. The reduction of armies agreement was an even better example of something that looked good on paper but was not all that it seemed. The Communists had no concrete idea of how many soldiers they had, and most of their forces were guerilla forces which could not be set down on paper. The nationalist divisions were not uniform either. Unlike United States divisions which have uniform size, a Chinese division meant nothing with regards to specific size. Just what was to constitute fifty divisions in eighteen months had not been expressly determined and could not be. Chiang's promises also looked better in American newspapers than in Chinese practice. Agreements between opposing forces, neither of whom are acting in good faith and neither of whom can trust the other, are not conducive to lasting peace. General Marshall's absence came at a critical time when his presence might have been able to force compliance with the agreements and thus added to the inevitable outburst of renewed fighting.

Fighting did explode as soon as Marshall had gone. On April 15, the Communists conquered Changchun in Manchuria, in addition to heavy guerrilla warfare. By May 23, Chiang had retaken Changchun and was moving north. Marshall’s second-in-command, General Gillen, was upset by Communist actions and made none-too-private disparaging comments about them. This added to Communist dissatisfaction with Americans playing the role of mediator, while at the same time aiding the Nationalists.

Marshall returned to this chaotic scene and managed to effect a truce on June 7. Negotiations were not able to get off the ground, however, as each side felt their military position to be strong enough that they did not have to make any concessions. Chiang tore up the Political Consultation Conference resolutions. This infuriated Chou En-lai, who said it would mean ten years of war. In addition, Chiang set up five conditions which the Communists would have to meet before he would even consider halting military action. These conditions were as follows:

1) The Communists must withdraw from all positions south of the Lunghai railroad.
2) The Communists must withdraw from the entire length of the Tsengtiao-Tsinan Railroad.
3) The Communists must withdraw from Chengteh and the area south of it.
4) The Communists must withdraw from most of North China.
5) The Communists must withdraw from all areas taken since June 7 in Shantung and Shensi provinces.

71 McCarthy, op. cit., p. 111.
72 Payne, op. cit., p. 271.
73 Chow, op. cit., p. 12.
Communist demands were equally as ridiculous, and the truce was completely disregarded after only fifteen days. 75

In the United States, a storm of criticism began to arise over the handling of the China situation. The State Department continued to aid the Nationalists as the only "legal" government, which drew the criticism of liberals who disliked Chiang's methods and felt that Communists were best for China. State Department emphasis on unification measures drew criticism from people on the right who hated Communism and pointed out that America was demanding that the Italian Prime Minister, de Gasperi, remove Communists from the Italian Cabinet to receive aid, while at the same time, pressuring Chiang to accept them if he wanted to receive aid. 76

The anti-Communist people were given an excellent opportunity to scream in July, 1946, as a result of the Anping incident. Anping was a small city near Peking where a contingent of United States marines was ambushed and shot at by the Chinese Communists. It must be admitted that some of the marines, when queried, admitted that they had joined nationalist troops in the area on "red hunts." 77

Developments were beginning to frustrate Marshall and the newly appointed ambassador, Dr. John Leighton Stuart. Neither side would give up any of its territory or local authority, and each side demanded this as a beginning point for any negotiations. On August 8, Stuart and Marshall issued a joint statement condemning

75 Payne, op. cit., p. 274.
76 Garth, op. cit., p. 111.
both sides and expressed their conclusion that it was impossible for the Communists and nationalist to reach a satisfactory agree-
ment.\footnote{Campbell, World Affairs, 1945-1947, p.292.} This was rather a remarkable statement, inasmuch as Stuart
had been in office only a few weeks and, four months previously,
Marshall had been confident of a settlement. However, this sense
of frustration was well-founded and would mark all of the men
directly involved in attempts to bring about a settlement satis-
factory by American standards.

Marshall had not given up though. He was impressed with the
arguments of the Communists that the United States would not be a
fair mediator as long as it supplied one side, the Nationalists,
while a war was in progress. Consequently, Marshall called for the
heavily criticized embargo on military supplies to China that was
in effect from August, 1946, to May, 1947. It was this embargo that
led to Marshall's famous statement, "As Chief of Staff, I armed
thirty-nine anti-Communist divisions, now, with a stroke of the pen,
I disarm them."\footnote{McCarthy, op. cit., p.112.}

Autumn of 1946 saw Chiang reaching the peak of his military
position during the struggle. His armies were pushing towards
Kalgan, which commanded the most important pass through the mountains
between North China and Manchuria. Chou-En-lai was asking for a
truce to negotiate. Marshall supported this, since he was willing
at any time to negotiate in an attempt to force an amalgamation which.
General Douglas MacArthur likened to a mixing of oil and water. As October wore on, Marshall not only supported the cease-fire demands of Chou En-lai, but put extreme pressure on Chiang to agree to the proposed cease-fire. When Chiang resisted, Marshall issued an ultimatum in the form of a letter to President Truman. This caused the reluctant Chiang to agree to a cease-fire on October 16, with a call for a National Assembly. This was beneficial to the Communists who were able to keep Nanking from falling, thus allowing their reeling forces to escape into Manchuria. The respite also gave them added time for the training of Communist troops in their Manchurian sanctuary.

The December national Assembly was the final blow in a series of disappointments Marshall had been subjected to in attempting to arrive at some real conciliation. The Assembly was being held under Chiang’s direction, which alienated the Communists. They called for a dissolution of the Assembly and a return to the Political Consultation Congress which was more bi-laterally organized. However, the Assembly went on without Communist participation and was even boycotted by the Christian Democratic League, which was being persecuted by Chiang. Marshall and Ambassador Stuart were quite pleased with the Assembly, which drafted a list of proposals embodying much of the

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80 Ibid., p. 19
82 Chow, op. cit., p. 10.
Political Consultation Conference reform promises of Chiang. Marshall publicly expressed his disappointment with Communist non-participation and his approval of the work of the Assembly on December 29. As was to happen often in the future, the Communists were not satisfied at one date with what they demanded at another.

December also saw the holding of the national election so cherished by United States officials, even though 95% of the people were illiterate. This election was as much a farce as any rational reasoning person would have supposed. The people had no way of knowing who or what they were voting for. Elections were unknown in China, but have one they must—and they did. The fact that there was an election, however, was pleasing to Americans even though nothing was changed.

President Truman issued a statement reaffirming the United States policy of non-intervention, bringing about peace and recognition of the legal government. Once more, the same paradox was presented and the policy of sending no military aid to Chiang was upheld.

Marshall, meanwhile, was awaiting a reply to a request made of Chou En-lai to ask the Communist leaders whether they desired his continuance as a mediator or not. He was concerned over problems he had been encountering and the boycott of the National Assembly. When he received no answer after a month of waiting, he realized that this meant the Communists no longer approved of him, as silence is the traditional negative answer in China.

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84 Ib. cit., p. 273.
85 "First (and last?) election," Time, December 1, 1947, p. 37.
87 Wayne, op. cit., p. 282.
Rebuffed by the Communists, distasteful to Chiang, and utterly unsuccessful, Marshall terminated his mission in January of 1947. He issued a statement that well illustrated his frustrations. The statement was, in effect, a condemnation of both Chinese factions and a document of surrender. Parts of it are as follows:

The greatest obstacle to peace has been the complete, almost overwhelming suspicion with which the Chinese Communist Party and the Kuomintang regard each other... I think the most important factors involved in the recent breakdown of negotiations are these: On the side of the National Government, which is in effect, the Kuomintang, there is a dominant group of revolutionaries who have been opposed, in my opinion, to almost every effort I have made to influence the formation of a genuine coalition government. This has usually been under the cover of party or party action, but since the party was the Government, this action, though subtle or indirect, has been devastating in its effect. They were quite frank in publicly stating, that cooperation by the Chinese Communist Party in the government was inconceivable, and that only a policy of force could definitively settle the issue. This group includes military as well as political leaders.

On the side of the Chinese Communist Party, there are, I believe, liberals as well as radicals, though this view is rigorously opposed by many who believe that the Chinese Communist Party discipline is too rigidly enforced to admit of such differences of viewpoint... The dyed-in-the-wool Communists do not hesitate at the most drastic measures to gain their end as, for instance, the destruction of communications in order to wreck the economy of China and produce a situation that would facilitate the overthrow or collapse of the Government, without any regard for the immediate suffering of the people involved. They completely distrust the leaders of the Kuomintang and appear convinced that every government proposal is designed to crush the Chinese Communist Party... The salvation of the situation, as I see it, would be the assumption of leadership by the liberals in the Government and in the minority parties, a splendid group of men, but who as yet lack the political power to exercise a controlling
influence. Successful action on their part under the
leadership of Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek would, I
believe, lead to unity through good government. 83

His solution was undoubtedly a good one, in fact excellent, but
it was not in any way feasible. Chiang was not going to lead any
group that would have any of his power, no matter how good it looked
on paper.

In assessing the worth of the Marshall mission, there is no other
choice but to call it a failure. Militarily, it was as if he had
never come. In all other respects, it was damaging to American
interests. The real tragedy was the fact that the Chinese people,
America, and all other interested countries with the possible exception
of Russia, desired peace when his mission began, but peace was not to
be. Marshall, in addition, was "used". Chou En-lai and Chiang both
knew his passion for truces and armistices. Whenever one side needed
a respite, it would appeal to this passion. Returning in despair and
frustration, the disconsolate ex-ambassador was named Secretary of
State. 89 This was ample evidence that the United States did not feel
that Marshall was inadequate, but rather that he had fallen prey to
forces beyond his control.

Whether the forces operating in China were beyond control of the
United States was to become the basis of controversy for the next two
years with regard to United States policy in China. To some extent,
the controversy still exists to the present day.

83 ibid., pp. 285-287.
89 Frye, op. cit., p. 372.
VI. POST MARSHALL

When Marshall took the post of Secretary of State, the United States had poured over $1,000,000,000 into China. Due to diplomatic failures and the aim view which State Department officials took of Chiang's graft-infected Kuomintang, aid was being cut off. Plans for implementing the Naval Assistance Law of 1946 to make surplus naval equipment available at nominal costs proceeded, but other than that, the United States was backing out of China.\textsuperscript{90} One of Marshall's first important acts as Secretary of State was part of the de-emphasis. He dissolved the unsuccessful mediation efforts. A united China was still the American goal, but extensive efforts to bring it about were being abandoned.\textsuperscript{91}

The floor of Congress now began to take notice of the China situation, as Senator Vandenberg called for a "shift in emphasis" in support of the Generalissimo because the state department was pulling out.\textsuperscript{92} Before long, there would be many voices raised with Vandenberg's cut, just as he was too late, so they would be too late.

Back in China, Ambassador Stuart was raising the familiar cry for an armistice.\textsuperscript{93} Mr. Stuart failed to realize that the Civil War, now raging, full force, was the kind of war that knew no armistice.

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\textsuperscript{92} Strong, \textit{op. cit.}, p.246.
field commanders had no lines of command with a headquarters, there
were no neatly laid out fronts or concentration areas, and the
meaning of a truce was unknown.

The war found Chiang at his peak in late 1946 and in early 1947,
Against the advice of all of his American advisors, he decided to
advance into both Manchuria and North China. His lines were already
badly overextended, communications were poor, and many garrisons were
isolated. Chiang was elated when he captured Yenan, the cave city
that had been Communist headquarters for ten years, on March 19.
Hao Tse-tung, however, was not overly worried as he moved his base
of operations into the Shensi mountains. Yenan had served its purpose
and the nationalists were being drawn into overextending themselves.

The war turned into a battle for the railroads as 1947 went along.
The Communists kept hitting them in guerilla attacks, making it impos-
sible for the nationalists to derive any benefit from them. This
created a ridiculous situation because Chiang had no way of stopping
the guerilla raids and, therefore, could make no use of railroads,
but he still had large army units tied up trying to protect them and
holding towns along the lines.

American marines had been helping in guarding the railroads, but
after a strong Russian protest over the presence of American troops,
in March, 1949, Secretary of State Marshall assured Molotov that they

94 Fitzgerald, op. cit., p. 77.
95 Nathaniel Peffer, The Far East, A Modern History, University
96 "U.S. Reaches End of Line in China," Time, February 22, 1947,
p. 29.
would be removed. June 1 was to be the date for the removal of as many marines as transportation facilities could handle.\(^7\) Now, even the military advisors and support were being withdrawn. Chiang was being left completely on his own.

Hope for a reversal of this American trend came on March 12, 1947, when President Truman issued the Truman Doctrine, an expression of determination to combat communism around the world. It was under the terms of the Truman Doctrine that aid began flooding into Greece. When friends of Chiang in Congress began to press for funds for the Nationalists and mentioned the comparison between strife in Greece and China against Communists, Under-Secretary of State Dean Acheson had this to say: "The Chinese Government is not in the position at the present time that the Greek Government is in. It is not approaching collapse. It is not threatened by defeat by the Communists. The war with the Communists is going on much as it has for the past twenty years."\(^8\) Needless to say, this analysis was not a correct one. Much of the surface satisfactory results of Chiang's war were the result of the Communists' buffeting him into taking more territory than he could hold, so that garrisons could be isolated and guerrilla warfare could take its most exacting toll. Acheson also was asked to compare the position he took on aiding Tito in Yugoslavia and not aiding Chiang. He stated that Tito's government was less corrupt and, therefore, got better effects from less money than was the case with the Generalissimo.\(^9\)

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\(^8\) Quoted in McCarthy, *op. cit.*, p.116.

While Chiang was losing the battle for American financial aid, he was continuing his attacks without consolidating his already dangerous position. The renewed attacks had very slim chances of any kind of success. One could only suppose that he was attempting to draw Russia into the conflict, which would surely result in massive American aid. Even if Chiang's attacks served no useful military purpose, the resulting publicity and his misfortunes helped to stir political currents in favor of more aid to him. Consequently, President Truman named General Wedemeyer to issue a special report on conditions in China on July 11, 1947.

Wedemeyer's selection was viewed askance by many because he had gotten along so well with Chiang when he had headed the American military forces in China at the close of the war. With all reports from officials on the scene blasting the corruption of the decadent Nationalist machine, it seemed a strange coincidence that Truman would pick one of the very few Americans in China to have good relations with Chiang to prepare a special report. The General's stay in China was six weeks in the making. In this time he traveled throughout a great deal of China and discussed the situation with scores of Chinese and Americans on the scene. The report he issued on September 17 was a lengthy, comprehensive one and it was suppressed from public view. In fact, much of the report was not to see the

100 Fitzgerald, op. cit.
102 Ibid., p.192.
light of day until included in a special White Paper on China two
years later. 103

In the report, Wedemeyer included specific recommendations for
a United Nations settlement of the whole situation, a United Nations
trusteeship over Manchuria, economic and political reforms by Chiang,
increased numbers of American military and civilian advisors, increased
American aid—particularly in military aid and spare parts for main-
tenance. 104

The Manchurian situation was particularly deplored by Wedemeyer,
who reported Chiang's secret police activity and barbaric behavior
of "liberating" armies had turned the warm welcome of Manchurian
inhabitants in 1945 to fear and distrust. Quoting from the report:

"The situation in Manchuria has deteriorated to such
a degree that prompt action is necessary to prevent that
area becoming a Soviet satellite ... This would create
a difficult situation for China, the United States, and
the United Nations. Ultimately, it could lead to a Com-
munist dominated China." 105

This was at the same period when Secretary of State Acheson was
testifying that the war in China was going on much as it had for the
past twenty years. It is also interesting to note that General
Wedemeyer was not advocating that the United States should just let
Manchuria go over to the Communists. His position was still that we
should help Chiang beat the Communists, although he bitterly attacked
Chiang's political machine.

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103Chow, op. cit., p. 20.
104Ibid., op. cit., p. 152-153.
105Ibid., p. 151.
One major criticism was that in the government run business situation nepotism and corruption were rampant. In addition to the corruption, American aid went into the running of state enterprises. Many of these enterprises were taken over from the Japanese who had, in turn, taken them from Chinese businessmen. These businessmen were furious because they did not get their business back and other businessmen, who had formerly supported Chiang, were furious because they had to compete against state industries subsidized by American aid.106

The report made a strong plea for reform. One section of the report said flatly:

To regain and maintain the confidence of the people, the Central Government will have to put into effect immediately, drastic and far-reaching political and economic reforms. Promises will no longer suffice. Performance is absolutely necessary.107

Despite all of his criticisms, it must be stressed that General Wedemeyer was not echoing General Marshall. Wedemeyer at no time made any mention of compromise with the Communists. He had grasped the fact that compromise was a useless word and that the Communists were a threat to the American interests in Southeast Asia. He felt pity for the moderates caught in the middle of the China power struggle, but realized that they had no chance of getting anywhere. This left Chiang, corruption, graft and all, as the only American bulwark against the Communists. Because of this, Wedemeyer strongly urged support of Chiang to a much greater extent immediately, and efforts made to liberalize his government.

Chiang, however, made no attempt to comply with General Wedemeyer’s wishes for reform. He began to clamp down even more harshly on civil liberties, as criticism of the Kuomintang grew. He also began to develop the fine art of waving the “red flag.” By this is meant the practice of informing the United States government that if it wanted to stop Communism, it had better grant a large quantity of aid. Russian Communists by late 1947 were well recognized for what they were. The brief period of post-war attempts at cooperation on the part of the American government had ended.

Chiang did have a good reason for not wanting to push agrarian reform. After he had been pushed out of the cities by the Japanese and lost his major source of money and power, he was forced to turn to new sources. In China there was only one other source, the landlords. As a result, he grew dependent upon the income of the landlords and to bring about land reforms would have been cutting off his supply. On this basis, it is easier to understand his reluctance to begin land reform until after he had won the war and was secure in his position.

As 1947 moved into November, the question of aid to Chiang came up on the floor of Congress. All reports agreed that to help Chiang by this time would require great expenditures and probably even American military intervention in his behalf of one sort or another. The State Department position was that available money for aid should be used in Eastern Europe where it could do some good. Republican Senator Bridges and Republican Representative Dodd led a battle to appropriate funds on Chiang’s behalf anyway, but they fell far short.

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of their goal. The die had been cast. The American effort was to be made in Eastern Europe. China would have to find its own way. 10

Late 1947 found Chiang's position becoming very poor. The battles which were not battles, in places no-one had ever heard of, had taken their toll. Now battles were becoming battles in places people had heard of. Taking into consideration the doctrine of Lao - never to attack in force unless positive of victory, illustrates the position the Communists had assumed. Indeed, Lao and Chou en-lai were having disagreements on how quickly to end the war. The Chinese were not as sure that the United States would stay out of the conflict as their Russian advisors were, and they wanted to move ahead with all due speed. 11

American public opinion was still running in favor of stronger aid to Chiang, and the official policy on China was quite vague. Truman and Marshall would issue no clarification and the Wedemeyer report was being held under wraps. As a result, Thomas Dewey jumped into the scene, making China a campaign issue. Typical of his comments, and those of Chiang supporters in the year to come, was that the American government had ordered our wartime allies "under pain of losing support, to accept into their government the very Communists who seek to destroy it." 11

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107 Ibid., p.127-128.
110 Fitzgerald, op. cit., p.105.
Back in China, the same cycle was repeating itself. The worse Chiang’s position became, the more oppressive his policies became. The peasants and the educated classes had been driven into the arms of the communists, not so much because they agreed with Communist philosophy as because Chiang’s persecutions were so odious. The Te Wu (secret police) of Chiang approached the tactics of Hitler’s and Stalin’s counterparts. 112

National elections were once again held in November of 1947. This time, the “democracy” was to go into effect on December 25 according to the provisions of the National Assembly constitution enacted the year before. However, intra-party squabbling and bickering delayed this until March of 1948. The main reason was that some independent candidates had run for office and won. This upset the hand-picked ballot of Chiang and resulted in the Young China and Social Democratic parties receiving fewer seats in the National Assembly than they had been promised. The Kuomintang still had the overwhelming majority, but it took a little time to pacify the two "opposition" parties. 113 The independents who won seats were very indicative of the growing dissatisfaction with Chiang among the people. Plots were beginning to form and intrigue to run rampant. As a note of clarification, the opposition parties were nothing more than window dressing for the outside world. Chiang had decided who would run and who would be elected from these groups.

112 Fitzgerald, op. cit., p.103.

Chiang's friends in America were still fighting for him, however. General Marshall, while not a friend of Chiang, helped his supporters when he told the House Committee on Foreign Affairs on February 20, that the Chinese Communists were receiving Russian aid and admitted that American aid to Chiang had been limited to surplus materials in Pacific islands, much of which were in need of repair. 114

Representative Judd, General Wedemeyer, General Clair, the U.S. (or Flying Tigers fame and long a Chiang supporter), the New York Times, Senator Bridges, Senator, Vandenberg, the Luce publications, the Scripps Howard publications, and General MacArthur were all on the bandwagon for more aid to Chiang. They shared the belief that, bad as he was, Chiang was a symbol of the fight against Communism and stood for Chinese independence and friendship with the United States. With this influential backing, an aid bill was forced through Congress with the grudging consent of President Truman and the State Department. The final version called for 463 million dollars over a twelve month period, with 125 million dollars available for use as Chiang saw fit. The latter provision meant that the military aid embargo was lifted, since it was clear that Chiang would use the string-free 125 million dollars for military supplies. 115

114 See note 12.
115 See note 13.
At the same time that Chiang was receiving an aid boost from the United States, the Bulky National Assembly was finally assembling. March, 1943, saw the 2,000 members meet. The membership was so large that selecting a President and Vice-President and approving constitutional changes were its only real duties. The Kuomintang was clearly in control, although 700 independent candidates had been elected. These 700 members had all but 140 seats of the 500 promised to the Young China and Social Democratic Parties, which is what had caused the delay in the assembly.\textsuperscript{116} Chiang was "persuaded" to run for President and won. The criticism of Chiang among his own ranks was dramatically illustrated, however, in the selection of General Li Tsung-jen as Vice-President. The reason this was such a blow to Chiang's authority was that Li was the spearhead of his opposition. Li stood for new leadership and reorganization of the army, an end to corruption, a wider base for the central government, and a redistribution of land. These were the same things that the Communists preached in their propaganda blasts, but Li was not disloyal to the Kuomintang. He just happened to believe that military force alone was not enough to defeat the Communists.\textsuperscript{117}

Li's position was not important as such, but the fact that he became Vice-President over Chiang's objection made it important. He had been involved in negotiations with the Communists before, and began again to negotiate secretly with them following his election.


The negotiations did not get very far as the communists were adamant on Chiang's removal from power as the basis for any agreement, and so many people were learning of the secret negotiations that they had to be broken off.\textsuperscript{118}

On the battlefield, the nationalists were having continued serious difficulties. There had been some attempts at reorganization in the bulky, inefficient nationalist military machinery, but the middle of a war is a bad time for this type of change and against military precedent. In addition, ...A.I.A.C. (the American Military Advisory Group in China) was handicapped from the autumn of 1945 until late 1946 by the military aid embargo and American diplomacy.\textsuperscript{119} A splendid example of how poorly the nationalists were faring in the civil war is the situation that found the Chinese Communists wanting to push the war to a quick finish, while Russian advisors urged them to prolong guerilla warfare so as to continue sapping American strength in useless aid, correctly assuming that the United States was not about to go to war for China.\textsuperscript{120}

The American policy continued to be one of watchful waiting. The Hedemeyer idea of turning the problem over to the United Nations was gaining a lot of favor as more and more people began to realize

\textsuperscript{118} Fitzgerald, op. cit., p.103.


\textsuperscript{120} Fitzgerald, op. cit., p.104.
the awkward situation in which America was entangled.\textsuperscript{121}

As 1943 turned into the autumn season, William Bullett was sent to China to look into the situation. His report was truly prophetic and added to the long list of voices calling for immediate drastic action if anything was to be salvaged in China. One particular portion of his report pertinent to today's situation is:

> The dike which today prevents the communist flood from sweeping southward to the Indian Ocean is the line of the Yangtze river in China . . . If the dike of the Yangtze falls, we shall let in upon ourselves a sea of troubles in comparison with which our present problems in the Far East will seem a mere unpleasant puddle.\textsuperscript{122}

The Bullett report had no effect on the China policy that America had followed since the failure of the Marshall mission. Secretary of State Marshall made a statement outlining China policy which said that the United States had no intention of mediating in the China dispute and that the United States was not encouraging the Communists in any way.\textsuperscript{123} This was a polite way of saying the United States was going to keep its nose out of Chinese affairs.

Meanwhile, Chiang's troubles multiplied. Earlier in 1943, the Nationalists had attempted to put their currency on the gold standard to stabilize the frightening inflationary problems in the country. All of the country's gold in nationalist areas was called in and

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123Payne, \textit{op. cit.}, pp.310-311.
currency issued for it. In November this was given up as a failure and many people had, in effect, lost whatever material wealth they had to the government, since they had only worthless pieces of paper and the nationalists had the gold. Coupled with military disaster, to the people the "mandate of heaven" had been withdrawn from the KMT.

On the military front, matters were as bad as on the economic front. Late 1944 saw the utter collapse of nationalist forces in North China and Manchuria was long since gone. Commanders on the field were deserting and making the best deals that they could for themselves. Chiang was becoming desperate for and completely dependent upon United States aid. Even though he was losing badly, American military advisors said increased aid was not what was needed.

Major-General Barr, head of the American military mission in China was quite critical of the way Chiang ran his war. He deplored Chiang's "Wall Psychology." By this is meant the medieval practice of walling up forces in a town instead of attacking or doing anything else. Chiang had most of his Manchurian and North China forces disposed in this manner. Many had fallen in the senseless attacks, but the greater numbers were starved out behind the walls of captured cities. Barr was even more irritated by the complaints of Chiang's supporters that more aid was needed. In his classic statement of

124 KMT.


126 Kundu, op. cit., p. 167.
November, 1946, he expresses this irritation very well:

I am convinced that the military situation has deteriorated to the point where only active participation of United States troops could effect a remedy. No battle has been lost since my arrival due to lack of ammunition or equipment. Their military debacle, in my opinion, can all be attributed to the world’s worst leadership and many other morale-destroying factors that led to a complete loss of the will to fight. 127

Barr also felt that our aid did more to aid the Communists than it did the Nationalists. He estimated seventy-five percent of American military aid had been captured by the Communists and another five percent was lost. 128 This became the main argument against aiding Chiang in the months to come, as well as having been a part of the State Department’s reasoning for over a year. But Chiang’s supporters became more zealous as he sunk deeper and deeper into a quagmire that was much of his own making. As many Americans have believed and do believe, those who sought for more money for Chiang’s floundering Nationalist believed money was the answer — more guns, more ships, more of everything. Chiang, however, was engaged in a Civil War in a backward (technically speaking) country. In this sort of struggle, it is the people of the country themselves who count. A Civil War under such circumstances can not be won by shooting everyone in the country and, conversely, in Chiang’s position this was becoming his only possible way of success.

127 Ibid., p. 171.
128 Ibid., p. 171.
Congressional supporters of Chiang asked ex-Senator D. Worth Clark to determine just how much support would be needed to save him. Worth's report included recommendations for massive and immediate quantities of guns, planes, and ammunition, financial aid, and direct authority for the United States to direct military campaigns and financial matters. 127 Chinese reluctance to agree to the latter conditions and administrative reluctance over the expenditures caused this program to be discarded. Madame Chiang Kai-shek flew to Washington to make a final plea for aid after the Worth proposal was turned down, but Truman and Marshall remained adamant. 130

In December, the Kuomintang, long showing signs of strain, began to break up. Sun-Yo, one of Chiang's cabinet, formed his own cabinet and began working towards peace negotiations with the communists. The Communists, on December 25, announced that before any negotiations could be considered, war criminals such as Chiang, Madame Chiang, the Soongs, the Chens, Li Tsung-yen, Sun-yo, and many others, would have to be punished by death. 131 It is interesting to note how much sterner Communist terms became as their position improved. The fact that the rest of the world saw this kind of demand as barbaric did not concern the Communists. The Chinese people were long used to killings for little or no reason, and the killing of an enemy leader for no other reason than being an enemy leader was more than sufficient grounds for them.

130 Ibid., p. 281.
131 Ibid., pp. 281-282.
The January, 1949, Communist seizure of Peking was an excellent example of the methods which they used to endear themselves to the hearts of many Chinese and make themselves bearable, for the time being, to others such as the educated class. They had the city surrounded, but did not want to ruin the city by an all-out artillery attack. Nationalist leaders fled with the Te Wu (secret police), leaving as the only means of defense for the city, a few airplanes. (The, also sold the fuel on the black market.) This left the Communists in a position of extreme strength, and it was just a matter of time before the city would fall. The Nationalist leader, Fu Tso-yi, and the Communist leader, Lin Piao, were not communicating with each other because each thought the other had betrayed him in one of the several plots to overthrow Chiang. This meant an assault would have to be made instead of the normal happy surrender the Communists had been receiving. When Lin Piao had picked the most advantageous spot militarily to breach the city wall, he called upon one of China's leading architects to ask if there were any aesthetic or historical objections to an attack there. When the architect said there were objections on these grounds, Lin Piao had him pick some spots that were not objectionable on either historical, archeological, or aesthetic grounds. He was then preparing to attack at the best one of these positions when the Communists came up with another strategic move, brilliant in its simplicity. Fu Tso-yi had not surrendered because he and Lin Piao had a personal dislike of each other, so the Communists simply removed Lin Piao and Fu Tso-yi surrendered.\footnote{Fitzgerald, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 118.}
Here the Communists both received tremendous publicity and got the city without firing a shot or losing a man. It was this type of thing that turned the flood of Communist success into a tidal wave.

Early in 1949, Liao made public eight points which would be mandatory before he would entertain any talk of peace:

1) Punishment of war criminals.
2) Recall of the constitution passed by the National Assembly.
3) Abolition of all Kuomintang legal establishments.
4) Reform of all Nationalist armies.
5) Agrarian reform.
6) Repeal of Nationalist treaties.
7) Calling of a new political consultation conference without Kuomintang reactionaries (to Liao this meant almost all of the Kuomintang).
8) Confiscation of "imperialistic" capital.133

These demands were made of Li Tsun-ho, who assumed the Nationalist presidency on January 21, upon the resignation of Chiang, who left under extreme pressure. Li did well in his efforts to pull together dissident generals and Kuomintang liberals to negotiate with Liao, but even they could not accept Liao's terms, which were the same as surrender terms.134

This utter demolition of the Nationalist fortunes gave rise to political action in Washington once again, as the clear and undoubted danger to the rest of the Far East with its terning millions and abundant resources became a popular subject of discussion. Senator Kefauver, Senator Knowland, Senator Bridges, and Representative Judd led the way in an action that saw fifty senators propose a one and

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134 Ibid., pp. 283-284.
one-half billion dollar aid program. American control of military action and a pledge of tax returns from Chinese ports to the United States were included in the program.\textsuperscript{135} Dean Acheson, now Secretary of State, once more gave State Department and presidential disapproval of any more aid to the Nationalist regime. When speaking for President Truman, he said such aid would "embark this country on an undertaking, the eventual cost of which would be unpredictable but of great magnitude, and the outcome of which would almost surely be catastrophic."\textsuperscript{136} He then used the same argument he had used two years previously when comparing Chiang and Tito. This was that aid was useless without an efficient government to make use of it.\textsuperscript{137}

The State Department declared that it would not favor any more aid than the fifty-four million dollars remaining from the Economic Recovery Act, which would expire on April 19, 1949. This was what was finally decided upon, much to the disappointment of Chiang's supporters, who promised a full-scale investigation of the whole situation.\textsuperscript{138} The two main considerations were, of course, the argument that aid to the Nationalists was wasted and that European recovery was much more important.

\textsuperscript{135}Richard P. Stebbins, \textit{The United States in World Affairs, 1942}, Harper and Brothers, 1950, p. 57.

\textsuperscript{136}Quoted in Bundy, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 179.


Actual State Department figures totaled over two billion dollars in aid to China from 1945 to 1949.\textsuperscript{139} Much of this was tied up in air-lift expenditures and Lend-Lease material arranged during the world war. In addition, millions of dollars in equipment lay rusting for want of repairs. It was easier to order a new jeep than to order a nut or bolt needed to repair it, and there were instances of heavy duty equipment run by electrical power collecting dust because there was no electricity in the area to which it was sent. There were many more instances of aid misuse than unwise aid. The economically trying years of 1946 to 1948 saw thousands of small businesses go bankrupt while the families of the Kuomintang leaders grew fabulously rich on American aid and United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration funds that the United States made sure were given to the Nationalists as the "legal" government of China.\textsuperscript{140}

On either side of this particular issue, a multitude of illustrations could be pointed to, but the point should be clear without that sort of detail. Much of the American aid was wasted because of American mistakes concerning its use, and the two billion dollar figure does not represent the figure of material aid only, and certainly is no measure of military aid. It is an all-inclusive amount, but the fact remains that a staggering sum of money was poured into China without any tangible beneficial results, except to a favored few of the corrupt Kuomintang. Suffice it to say, American "pouring" of aid may have

\textsuperscript{139}"Aid to China: Is It Wasted?" \textit{United States News and World Report}, May 21, 1948, p.28.

been much of the problem. If it had been more closely directed rather than literally "poured", better use might have been made of it.

In the middle of 1947, American policy no longer even contained the blander meaningless objections of the past two years. It became a policy of complete withdrawal. The military mission, naval units, and the remaining marines at Tsingtao were all called home to the United States. American policy in the Far East was now to rest with the island strongholds of the Philippines, Okinawa, and Japan.

The final touch was the issuance on August 5 of a one thousand and fifty-four page White Paper by the State Department. This paper covered the full realm of Chinese-American relations, including the long suppressed Wedemeyer report. The preface by Secretary of State Acheson set the tone of the document:

"The unfortunate but inescapable fact is that the ominous result of the civil war in China was beyond the control of the government of the United States. Nothing this country did or could have done within the reasonable limits of its capabilities could have changed that result; nothing that was left undone by this country was contributed to it. It was the product of internal Chinese forces, forces which this country tried to influence but could not. A decision was arrived at within China, if only a decision by default."1

The White Paper was a condemnation of the Chiang regime and an official total withdrawal economically, militarily, and even politically from the disaster. As nothing short of the Seventh Fleet, an atom bomb, and millions of ground forces could have stopped the Chinese

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2 Quoted in Stebbins, *op. cit.*, pp.57-58.
Communists at this date, the white Paper had no other effect than keeping the way open for the recognition of Communist China.

September 21, 1949, was the date of the official declaration of the People’s Republic of China. The following day, T. I. Tsian, the nationalist Chinese delegate to the United Nations, rose to deliver a speech which carried a lot of meaning in a well chosen metaphor:

Today, from Iran on the Persian Gulf, through Turkey, Greece, and Italy to France and the Scandinavian north, the dyke against the communist flood has been built and is now in good strong condition. But we know from experience that floods can not be contained by building a dyke on one side only... Building the dyke on one bank of the river has forced the waters to overflow the lands on the other bank. The Marshall Plan and the North Atlantic Pact, while strengthening the forces of freedom in one part of the world, have really, though unintentionally, increased the dangers to the peoples living in the other part of the world.\(^4\)

It was readily admitted by all involved that America’s China policy had been a miserable failure. America had become identified with a corrupt, graft-ridden government increasingly hated by the people it ruled. The Communists were angered because America gave Chiang aid; Chiang was angered because he did not get enough aid. Communist propaganda had been turned on heavily whenever the United States made one of its frequent blunders which offended Chinese ways of seeing things. Even the build-up of Japan was offensive to the Chinese, as they had been natural rivals for so long. The Communist portrayal of the nationalists as “running-dogs” of American imperialism \(^\text{144}\) had a telling effect on the people of China also. Continued American support of Chiang, even after his

\(^{143}\) Tid., p. 46.

excesses were widely publicized in the United States, made it difficult for thinking Chinese to understand the American viewpoint. The Communist interpretation seemed to fit the facts very well, which was damaging to the United States' image.

Even worse was the outstanding, obvious fact that the United States had backed the losing faction. The morale lifting significance for the Communist movement was tremendous, just as the American pride and powerful image that had emerged from World War II was shaken.

But, could anything different have happened? Was the United States confronted, as Secretary of State Acheson stated, by forces beyond its control? Was there any different course that could have brought America to a less painful ending?
VII. WHAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN

When World War II drew to a close, the United States was faced with three courses to follow in China. One was to withdraw completely; one was to intervene militarily and to spend tremendous sums in aid on Chiang's behalf; and the third course was to pursue a middle path, hoping for a settlement of the China conflict along democratic lines through United States mediation.

In retrospect, by complete withdrawal and abandonment of the country to the communists, the United States would have been much better off than was the result of the action it did take. America would have saved two billion dollars, would not have alienated millions of people, and would not have suffered a prestige-shaking defeat. In addition, Chiang's few successful drives would not have been hurt by truces and armistices forced upon him by American diplomats foolishly attempting to hammer together a coalition that would never be. Chiang also could have been hurt by American aid, in that he became dependent upon it. He had come to power on a wave of nationalism but, as time passed, he became more and more removed from it. If he had had to remain dependent upon the people for support, he might have been more tolerant in his treatment of them. This would have stalled the communists. Complete withdrawal would also have meant no air-lift to the cities of North China. Tens of thousands of troops could not have been placed in what amounted to
prisoners and millions of Chinese would not have been alienated by the
actions of these troops.

As a result of the above reasons, it is a logical conclusion that
complete withdrawal could have been more advantageous to many American
interests, might have been advantageous to Chiang, could not have hurt
Chiang since his collapse could not have come much faster than it did,
and would have hurt America in only one respect. This one intangible
thing, however, has an importance which almost balances everything
stacked against it. If the United States had completely withdrawn,
the American conscience would have suffered. The nation which prides
itself on being the protector of freedom everywhere in the world could
not turn her back upon a situation such as the Chinese one.

Military intervention was not the answer either. The loss of
life and tremendous expenditure could not be tolerated by an American
public sick of war. For a country without the American "conscience",
a preventive war in 1945 could have been a distinct possibility, but
even when reports were sent to Congress saying flatly that United
States military action was the only way to save Chiang, this was not
seriously considered by anyone.

It is possible though that Chiang could have been helped by
other means than direct American military intervention. The middle
road taken by the United States could have been tremendously improved
upon. First of all, the unification or compromise between Chiang and
the communists should never have occupied so great a portion of
American diplomats' efforts. Direct control of Chinese nationalist
forces by American military advisors, economic reform, and political reform should have been the areas in which the United States demanded compliance or loss of aid. These were the only possible ways in which Chiang could have won his war. If he did not subject himself to these demands, he would be doomed anyway, and the United States would have been much better off not entangled in his muck and slime, as has been pointed out earlier. China was, without a doubt, in the grips of "Forces beyond American control", but the United States could have attempted to work within these forces as the communists did.

From a strictly practical point of view, the United States would have bettered her interests by complete withdrawal. Four years of failure could have been improved upon from a military standpoint as well if the United States had wanted to pursue such a course, but a Viet nam situation would have been the result, which is hardly an improvement on the total situation.

That Chiang would have adopted reforms is doubtful, but this was the only way of salvaging anything from the deteriorating China picture even as early as 1945. Here is where American efforts should have been directed, and would have been directed with the threat of a total withdrawal behind them - a withdrawal which could have saved the United States a great deal of the previously described debacles and waste.
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