On Chiang Kai-shek's Position on Resisting Japan: An Analysis of "Domestic Stability Takes Precedence Over Resisting Foreign Invasion" Policy, 1928-1936

by

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ABSTRACT

To the Republic of China, the decade between 1928 and 1937 was the best and the worst of times. Best because warlordism that had disrupted the nation came to an end in 1928 as a result of the Northern Expedition. With the Republic unified under the National Government in Nanjing, the country embarked on reconstruction. Worst because China in the mean time had to deal with internal strifes, stirred up by the regionalist militarists and the Communists, and Japanese aggression.

Caught between two evils which were domestic and external enemies, Chiang Kai-shek turned to China's past for guidance. In Chinese history and ancient writings, Chiang found precedents which convinced him that before Republican China could resist the Japanese invasion, the country had to achieve internal stability in order to strengthen itself. Hence Chiang's famous catchphrase "domestic stability takes precedence over resisting foreign invasion" (*rangwai bixian annei*). Influences from China's past taught Chiang that before China was militarily and socially strengthened, it had to appease the invaders to avoid war. Last but not least, past influences prompted Chiang to go after the regional militarists and the Communists who he considered were disrupting the nation and distracting his war effort.

In addition to past influences, contemporary affairs of state weighed heavily on Chiang Kai-shek as well. According to a 1934 confidential Kuomintang document, national defense was greatly compromised by financial straits, poor transportation

network, gasoline shortage, and low morale among others. The inadequacy in national defense reinforced Chiang's determination to avoid war.

The fact that Chiang Kai-shek tried to annihilate the Communists while making concessions to Japan gave rise to the conventional wisdom which holds that the Chinese Communist Party was Nanjing's foremost enemy, not Japan. In fact, this thesis shows that the opposite was true.

Historians have yet to reach a unanimous verdict of the wisdom of "rangwai bixian annei." From the historical perspective, however, the policy of putting the house in order before resisting foreign invasion is a long-established Chinese practice. In pursuing this policy, Chiang Kai-shek was going with the historical tide.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

On September 18, 1931, Japan attacked China by invading the latter's Northeastern provinces. The Republic was in agreement on resistance, but it was bitterly divided on the opportune moment. Many, the Communists and college students in particular, demanded an outright declaration of war on Japan. Others, including Chiang Kai-shek and independent intellectuals such as Hu Shi and Jiang Tingfu (Tsiang T'ing-fu), cautioned against reckless courage and stressed that a hasty declaration of war would devastate the country whose national defense had yet to be strengthened. With both parties claiming to be in the right, when to resist the Japanese invasion became a major issue in contemporary China.

Domestic Stability Precedes Resisting Foreign Invasion

Long before the September Eighteenth Incident, Chiang knew a full scale Sino-Japanese conflict was only a matter of time. After conferring in Tokyo with Japanese Prime Minister Tanaka Giichi on the prospect of Sino-Japanese relations in November 1927, Chiang wrote in his diary the following:

> Japan has in the past negotiated with the Beiyang warlords. After the Jiawu War (1894-1895), all those who negotiated with the Japanese were rotten and selfish people. As a result, the Japanese look upon us as easy prey. My trip to Tokyo will show them that their taking China for granted will not work on me. Although Tanaka still regards me as an old-fashioned warlord and bureaucrat, and tries willfully to win me over by hook or crook, he is nonetheless insincere. I am not able to alter Japan's long standing policy of

> aggression against China, but I have nothing to lose as I did catch a glimpse of such policy by meeting with Tanaka.[1]

In response to the mounting Japanese threat, Chiang adopted a policy known as "rangwai bixian annei" a few months before the September Eighteenth Incident occurred. Meaning "before resisting foreign invasion domestic stability must first be achieved," it was one of the most controversial decisions Chiang made during his tenure of power on the Mainland.

Taiwan historians hold a high opinion of the wisdom of putting the house in order before resisting foreign invasion, and praise Chiang's efforts in dealing with the volatile Sino-Japanese relations. Mainland historians claim that Chiang's true archenemy was not Japan but the Chinese Communist Party, and "rangwai bixian annei" was his excuse for eliminating the Communists. In the name of "achieving domestic stability," Nanjing ceded the four Northeastern provinces--Heilongjiang, Liaoning, Jilin, and Rehe--to Tokyo on a silver platter. Not unexpectedly, Chiang has been condemned both in speech and writing by the Communists to this day. To Western historians such as Parks Coble, "rangwai bixian annei" was appeasement.

Given the existing cognition gap among historians on the wisdom of "rangwai bixian annei," I hope to shed new light on Chiang Kai-shek's leadership by examining the policy's historical background and by looking at how influences from China's past affected his judgment. This dissertation has nine chapters, including introduction and conclusion. A detailed discussion on Nationalist, Communist, and Western positions on "rangwai bixian annei" is featured in Chapter One. Chapter Two

explores the history of Chinese appeasement and the relationship between "rangwai bixian annei" and historical parallels. Chapters Three and Four provide a first-hand look at how Chinese war preparation fell short of Nanjing's expectation; it is based on a confidential Kuomintang document dating from 1934. To correct the claim that the Communists were Nanjing's foremost enemy in the 1930s, the case studies in Chapters Six, Seven, and Eight will establish the fact that Japan was after all enemy number one of Nationalist China, followed by the regional militarists. The Communists were, in effect, the least threatening enemy that Chiang had to deal with prior to the 1937 Resistance War.

The Past & the Present

The assumption that Chiang let the Japanese walk into China and that he perceived communism to be a greater threat than Japan is long-established. It is nevertheless an incomplete observation based on a limited understanding of both Chiang's character and the domestic state of affairs in contemporary China. In order to make sense out of "rangwai bixian annei," the theme of this dissertation, Chiang and his policy must be assessed on their own terms. Recently, Alexander Woodside has raised the question of whether Western standards are appropriate for Chinese experiences.[2] Long before that, Lloyd Eastman cautioned against judging Chiang and the Republican period by Western standards.[3] As each culture is unique in its own right and every person's turns in life are different, the interest of

Chinese history may be best served if it is evaluated in a Chinese light.

Woodside and Eastman's caution is not unfounded. The term "modern China" has blurred our perception of the real China. Although the Opium War is generally considered the threshold of modern China in terms of periodization, the country in the late Qing and early Republican periods was far from being modern in terms of institutions and culture. While it is true that some characteristics of a modern society such as a free press, movie theaters, night clubs, and western-style financial institutions had made their way into coastal cities like Shanghai and Tianjin, China as a whole remained more Chinese than Western.

The term "modern China" as used here should denote strictly China in a particular period of time conveniently known as the modern period. It should not be used to imply the existence of a modernized China that could be subjected to Western standards or to suggest that contemporary Chinese who adhered to the tradition, such as Chiang Kai-shek, were out of place in the society. In an age when China was more Chinese than Western, an era when a new order was yet to be established while the old ways remained omnipresent and deeply imbedded in the society, Chiang chose to stay in a groove that he knew best: Chineseness. To him, the old China was the real China.

One Chinese idiom has it that "it takes more than one cold day for the ice to become three feet deep" (*bingdong sanchi fei yiri zhihan*). By the same token, tradition does not disappear overnight. In fact, as Immanuel Hsu points out, it dies hard.

> The success of the revolution in 1911 was followed by the establishment of a Western-style republic the next year, and the imperial dynasty was abolished for the last time in 4,000 years. Although a break was made with the outdated political system, the hand of the past continued to weigh heavily in social habits and intellectual life. The government had had a face-lifting, but its spirit remained the same.[4]

Confucius once said: "How can we understand death when we do not even comprehend life?" (*wei zhi sheng, yan zhi si?*)[5] To paraphrase Confucius, it may be said that one can not comprehend modern China without first knowing its past. Important as it is, the influence from China's past has not received as much academic attention as it might. Perhaps this has something to do with the common practice of designating the Opium War as the beginning of modern China. From the perspective of teaching and writing history, it is necessary that history be divided into shorter, manageable periods. The drawback of periodizing history is that it may give rise to a false impression that one can work on the history of a given period, say, post-1842 China, without familiarizing oneself with the preceding periods. Immanuel Hsu puts it best by saying that:

> Even accrediting the Opium War as a viable point of departure, one still needs to be familiar with the traditional Chinese state and society, which conditioned China's reaction to the foreign challenge of the 19th century. The intrusion of the West can be constructed as a kind of catalyst, precipitating traditional China into its modern counterpart. Hence, one can hardly understand the result of the transformation without a fair knowledge of the mother institutions.[6]

As conventional thinking and traditional ways of doing things die hard, an understanding of influences from China's past can be rewarding in assessing Chiang Kai-shek. Influences from the

past are expressed in various forms, two of which are *chengyu* and historical analogy.

Chengyu: Admonitions from the Past

Meaning literally "prepared words," *chengyu* are the Chinese equivalent of the English terms adage, aphorism, maxim, and motto. *Chengyu* are an integral part of the Chinese language and are indispensable to the understanding of traits in the Chinese character including political culture. As Michael Schoenhals points out, choice of words is an essential part of politics everywhere.[7] Using Communist China as an example, Schoenhals asserts that political language is "a form of power and manipulated by the state, thus has a bearing upon all aspects of Chinese politics."[8] Acknowledging that the study of political language is crucial to a better understanding of politics in the People's Republic, Schoenhals nonetheless regrets that "Western scholars with so few exceptions have tended to relegate the role of language to the periphery, rather than to the center, of Chinese politics."[9] He attributes the phenomenon to the rusty Chinese levels on the part of many Western scholars.

> It is an undeniable fact that Western scholars writing about contemporary China only seldom--unless they are students of literature or art--read or speak Chinese with anything even remotely resembling fluency. It is an open secret--ever so evident from the titles appearing in our footnotes and bibliographies--that most of us are totally dependent in our work on the translated discourse generated by the U.S. consulate in Hong Kong, the British Broadcasting Corporation, and the Foreign Language Press in Beijing. Under the circumstances, our failure to deal with the relationship between language and politics in China is perhaps not that surprising. It is, on the other hand, more than a little embarrassing.[10]

Using the year 1949 as a demarcation line, the Chinese language as a political tool can be analyzed as two distinct entities. Schoenhals focuses on the proscription and prescription of terminology in communist propaganda in the post-1949 Mainland. For the pre-1949 period, *chengyu* can help us better understand the political life of Nanjing.

Chengyu are classical allusions or literary quotations from ancient writings. Some of them date from as early as the Spring-Autumn and Warring States period, 770-221 BC. They are part of the essence of Chinese culture. They sum up past experience and convey ancient wisdom. They are popular among the Chinese for being inherently brief and to the point. They provide the Chinese with readily available advice from great thinkers and writers of the past. Their popularity is best seen in the way they have become an integral part of the Chinese vocabulary. One needs not look far for *chengyu* because those of everyday use can be found in just about every Chinese dictionary. Moreover, there are many specialty dictionaries that deal exclusively with Chinese phrases including *chengyu*.[11] It would be an understatement to say that *chengyu* exert on the Chinese people a great deal of influence.

Most *chengyu* are coined in classical instead of colloquial Chinese, allowing them to convey deep meaning through fewer words. An overwhelming majority of *chengyu* consist of four characters. Occasionally one would run into *chengyu* that have as many as eight, ten or even fourteen characters. *Chengyu* not only allow people to express themselves with felicity, they also provide a channel through which Confucian values and teachings

can be disseminated to the masses. In a country like imperial China where education was a privilege, not a right, being able to use in daily conversation quotations from the classics must have meant a lot to those who had little or no education. This may help explain why there is even a *chengyu* that describes the practice of using *chengyu* (*yinjing judian*, meaning to cite the classics and to quote the authoritative works).

Like many modern leaders of China, Chiang Kai-shek often used *chengyu* in his speeches. An analysis of these *chengyu* can broaden the scope of the research on Chiang's character. His conception of the past and the traditional Chinese way of thinking and doing things is revealed by his choice of *chengyu*. Equally significant, many of Chiang's decisions and actions can be explained by *chengyu* that are not included in his speeches. Chapter Two features more discussion on *chengyu* and their implication.

Historical Analogy: Lessons from the Past

Past events weighed heavily on Chiang Kai-shek. So far as he and Republican China were concerned, two historical analogies stand out like beacons: the downfall of Ming China in 1644 as a result of Manchu invasion from without and roving bandit rebellions from within; and Qing China's defeat by Japan as a result of military unpreparedness in the Jiawu War, 1894-1895. Compared with the Ming and Qing, Nanjing's situation in the 1930s was twice as bad because it had to deal with both of its predecessors' problems: domestic strife and foreign encroachment

on the one hand and military unpreparedness on the other.

Prior to the 1937 Resistance War, Chiang Kai-shek had on several occasions asserted that Republican China must not follow the same disastrous road that led to the ruin of the Ming and Qing. Chiang vowed that he would not commit the same error by engaging in war with Japan before the Chinese military could be strengthened and domestic strife settled. Hence, domestic stability took precedence over resisting foreign invasion. In Chapter Two, I will demonstrate that as the Republican leader, Chiang Kai-shek was nonetheless very conscious of events that took place hundreds, even thousands of years ago. I will also discuss to what extent past events influenced Chiang's decision to pursue domestic stability and military buildup in the face of Japanese aggression.

In terms of making concessions to foreign enemies, Chiang Kai-shek was not the first Chinese leader to practise appeasement. As a matter of fact, appeasement has been a long-established Chinese tradition. On several occasions in imperial times, China made concessions to foreign invaders in light of its military weakness. Chapter Two features an extensive coverage of historical Chinese appeasement. It examines the Song scholar-official Fan Zhongyan's writings on appeasement as the most sensible foreign policy that China could pursue when it was militarily weaker than its enemies.

The systematic use of *chengyu* and historical analogy in analyzing Chiang Kai-shek's character and leadership has not been tried before. By bringing in aphorisms and historical events from the past, I hope to establish the fact that Chiang

was following in his forefathers' footsteps when he pursued the policy of "rangwai bixian annei."

Chiang Kai-shek in Three Different Lights

What kind of leader was Chiang Kai-shek? The answer varies depending mostly on one's political inclination. Chiang passed away in 1975 at the age of 89. According to the Chinese practice of making final judgment on a person only after the lid is laid on his coffin (*gaiguan lunding*), an impartial appraisal of Chiang should have become available years ago. But the political and territorial disruption of the Chinese nation has made such an objective assessment next to impossible.

So far as the Chinese are concerned, currently there are two verdicts on Chiang as a national leader, one being hagiography and the other vilification. To the Nationalists, Chiang fell a victim to circumstances beyond his control. His followers consider him a man of foresight who made vigorous efforts to turn the tide in a desperate time; a man whose career and vision for a new China was cut short by the Japanese invasion and communist rebellions. To the Communists, an evil, incompetent Chiang dug his own grave by alienating Nanjing from the people. His enemies portray him as a traitor to Chinese nationalism for having appeased the Japanese and an autocrat who had turned a hopeful situation into a hopeless one.

Since the Chinese on either side of the Taiwan Strait are too involved in partisan brawls to reconsider their judgment of Chiang, assessment from a foreign commentator such as the late

Lloyd Eastman affords food for thought. Eastman was of the opinion that the Kuomintang's failure on the Mainland reflected the bankruptcy of traditional Chinese political culture in a modern age. As such, Nanjing fell a victim of its own political culture heritage.

> Symptoms of the revolutionary failure--ineffectual administration, corruption, factionalism, and political repression--were not unique to the Nationalist movement[12].....It would surely be a mistake to search for the sources of Nationalist weaknesses only within the Kuomintang itself, for both the Ch'ing and warlord governments were characterized by essentially the same administrative pathology. Thus the Nationalists' failure to create an effective and stable system of rule resulted not from, say, some unique ideological or moral fallibilities but was the fruit rather of long historical and cultural development.[13]

Eastman also acknowledged the fact that civil strife, foreign invasion, and economic downturn had indeed dogged Chiang Kai-shek's rule. Although Eastman was fairly sympathetic to Chiang, his overall verdict was still damning. He said that Chiang himself must shoulder much of the responsibility for the downfall of his government. For example, short temper and obstinacy made Chiang a difficult person to work with. Consequently, observed Eastman, Chiang became "isolated from the best informed opinions and from the realities of the national situation" when men of talent shunned him.[14] Moreover, Chiang's inability to delegate responsibility to subordinates led to one-man rule. "He ignored channels of authority; he might, depending on his mood and interests, intervene in any governmental matter, large or small.....As a consequence, institutions withered; organizational and individual initiative died."[15]

In conclusion, Eastman considered Chiang a remarkable man; that "he even survived the challenges and intrigues of the Nanking period was testimony to the strength of his character and abilities; that he emerged from those trials with his powers enhanced was a mark of his extraordinary talents."[16] But Eastman believed Chiang's political finesse in handling contenders was out of place in a modern China. "His talents, however, were best suited to the old China. In the game of warlord politics, he was a master. But China was in the process of change, and the rules of the game of politics were changing accordingly. Chiang displayed little talent for the new game."[17]

Neo-Authoritarianism & Traditional Chinese Leadership

Lloyd Eastman followed many Western commentators in assuming that the old China was gone forever, an opinion that more recent commentators would not support. Commenting on current economic development in the People's Republic, Willy Wo-Lap Lam, a Hong Kong based Mainland observer, shows that many Chinese Communist leaders attribute economic growth to the East Asiatic model, a business strategy that has been implemented with success in countries such as Japan, South Korea, Singapore, Nationalist China, and Malaysia. The East Asiatic model is an approach that combines "Western high technology and business norms on the one hand, and Confucianist, authoritarian political culture on the other."[18] As a living proof that some aspects of the old China are alive and well, the East Asiatic model also epitomizes the political atmosphere on the Mainland. Lam writes:

> By the mid-1990s, the mainstream factions of the CCP were edging closer to the "East Asiatic model" or its variants. Top cadres including Jiang Zemin and Li Peng empathised with the philosophy and statecraft of Singapore and Malaysian leaders. These "neo-authoritarian" figures believed in the co-existence of one-party dictatorship with "international" norms of doing business.[19]

In essence, one-party dictatorship that was carried out by the Nationalists until recently and is still being practised by the Communists is not much different from a traditional Chinese concept of one-family dictatorship known as "jia tianxia." Meaning literally "treating land under Heaven as the ruling family's private property," "jia tianxia" sums up Chinese autocratic monarchy nicely. Inspired by some of the fundamental tenets of Confucianism, "jia tianxia" is deeply rooted in Chinese culture. Confucianism dictates that before one can administer the country, he must first demonstrate competence in regulating his own family. The analogy of regulating a family and running a country suggests that it is a Chinese belief that the state is an expansion of the family and the family an epitome of the state. When emperors governed land under Heaven, they did it as if they were presiding over a big family.

In light of Lam's comment that one-party dictatorship in modern times defines neo-authoritarianism, I think that paleo-authoritarianism, a term of my own, best describes one-family dictatorship in imperial days. The difference between paleo and neo-authoritarianism is that dynastic rule is dropped in favor of party rule. The days of having a succession of rulers from one family have been replaced by those of having a string of rulers from one political party. What has not changed

is the tight government control. To give neo-authoritarianism a Chinese spin, it can be called "dang tianxia:" land under Heaven as the private property of one political party.

From the Chinese point of view, dictatorship by one family or one party is seemingly justified by the *chengyu* which says: "No one but myself can do it" (*shewo qishei*). As Sons of Heaven, Chinese emperors believed they were born rulers, a conviction later shared by the Nationalists and the Communists alike. Perhaps only with the exception of Taiwan's democratic reform in recent years, authoritarianism has been the cornerstone of Chinese politics since antiquity.

In terms of political style, Chiang exemplified Chinese authoritarianism, both old and new. While the advent of Communist one-party rule depended on the use of force as Mao Zedong's remark "gun barrels produce political power" depicts, Chiang at least tried to preserve the facade of a major aspect of paleo-authoritarianism when carrying out one-party rule: the ruler as a moral example. Ideally, according to Confucianism, rulers should win their subjects over with moral integrity. Therefore, rulers are expected to be moral examples who can provide guidance to the masses. Chiang's speeches provide ample evidence of his effort in this regard. Eastman wrote that Chiang believed "the fundamental solution to China's problems lay in remolding the values and attitudes of the people.....He believed that moral preachments would suffice to change social behavior.....Thus he sermonized and he harangued."[20] The New Life Movement launched in 1934 was Chiang's most ambitious endeavor to revitalize China's moral fiber through the

resurrection of Confucian morals.

Chiang's attaching great importance to Confucianism did not mean that he would abstain from the use of force. "When moral preachments failed," Eastman wrote, "he instinctively turned to the use of force."[21] "Instinctively" is a proper word because it suggests that Chiang was influenced by past experiences to a point that he did it out of natural tendency. The champion of benevolent government Confucius did not object to extreme punishment. He maintained that if the people are educated to distinguish between right and wrong, capital punishment must not be considered cruelty or tyranny on the part of the state.[22] Wu Tien-wei points out that although Han Wudi (141-87 B.C.) banned all other schools of thoughts in favor of Confucianism, many Legalist ideas remained imbedded in Chinese culture.[23] To better appreciate the Confucian-Legalist dualistic line, one only has to look at the multifarious extreme penalty in imperial China. It has been a Chinese tradition to keep the people in line by applying the carrot and the stick. If the carrot does not get the people going, perhaps the stick will.

Chiang Kai-shek as a Culturalist

Eastman's comments that Chiang was best suited to the old China unintentionally indicate that Chiang was a culturalist in essence. Superficially, Chiang might appear "modern" in embracing nationalism as the driving force of the National Revolution, receiving military education in Japan or converting to Christianity, but it did not mean that he had escaped from

the weight of tradition.

For example, seeing to everything personally may have been a particular characteristic of Chiang as Eastman claimed, but such conduct is not unique to Chiang and is deeply-rooted in Chinese culture. This is best seen in the term "parent-official" (*fumu guan*) that has been used to describe local magistrates of imperial times who were responsible for everything in areas under their jurisdiction. Donald Sutton calls this Confucian civilian generalism; traditional scholar-officials were supposedly men of general competence. In the Republican period civilian generalism was challenged by the militarists who assumed civil power and became generalists as well, and who saw themselves not as soldiers usurping civil power but as men of the hour, as rightful leaders when civilian generalism was losing effectiveness.[24]

There are two *chengyu* that specifically describe seeing to everything personally, or micro-managing: "shibi gongqin" and "nengche duolao." The former means "taking care of every single thing personally," and the latter means "able people should do more work." These proverbs show unequivocally that it is a widely held Chinese belief that men of talent or in higher positions are expected to do more. On January 18, 1936, Chiang addressed high-ranking officers at the Army University, saying that "those in charge should work in accordance with the spirit of '*shibi gongqin,*' conducting affairs big and small."[25]

Proverbs such as "shibi gongqin" and "nengche duolao" may have convinced Chiang that it was his moral obligation to oversee all governmental matters and to arrogate all authority

to himself. That said, the kind of one-man rule that Eastman referred to may not have been the result of Chiang's hungering for power for the sake of power alone. It can be interpreted as trying to live up to the aforementioned proverbs.

Chiang Kai-shek as a Well-Informed Leader

Eastman's comment that Chiang was isolated from the best advice as a result of his self-willed, opinionated personality indicates that the latter was ill-informed about contemporary domestic situation. In fact, the opposite is true. Chiang was keenly aware of the state of affairs around him. An original Kuomintang document included in Chapter Four and Five should shed new light on the matter.

The document, the National Defense Design Council Lushan Conference proceedings, dates from 1934. The National Defense Design Council was created in 1931 by Nanjing as an advisory body. It was put under the directorship of Chiang who was the head of the council. Prior to the Resistance War, the National Defense Design Council was arguably one the most important and confidential government agencies. Its members included leading experts and scholars with the mission to gather and evaluate information related to Nanjing's war effort and to come up with proposals that would help the government better prepare for war. The Lushan Conference proceedings cover an extensive range of subjects, including reports on mining industry, gasoline production, automobile production, education, finance, transportation, and diplomacy among others. The depth of this

particular document shows that Chiang was a well-informed leader who was showered with expert opinions and advice.

For those who think the National Defense Design Council sounds awkward, it does. I could have used a better translation such as the National Defense Planning Council. Because the original Chinese name sounds awkward, I decide to preserve the original flavor by making the English translation awkward-souding as well.

The *chengyu* that can be translated literally as "newborn calves are not afraid of tigers" (*chusheng zhidu buweihu*) says metaphorically that sometimes people are fearless because they do not comprehend the gravity of the situation that they are involved in. For Chiang, the opposite was true. The Lushan Conference proceedings demonstrate that "rangwai bixian annei" was not the result of Chiang's lack of understanding of the contemporary state of the nation. Rather, it was a cautious calculation of a man who understood only too well.

Eastman considered Chiang's holding unswervingly to his own views a character weakness. While obstinacy is the unwillingness to accept advice, the Chinese try to rationalize it. A *chengyu* says that "obstinacy is about choosing good advice and sticking to it" (*zeshan guzhi*). Opinion varies as to what constitutes good advice; it takes wisdom to choose the good. Confucius once said: "Only those who are brilliantly intelligent and hopelessly stupid will be steadfast to their opinions" (*wei shangzhi yu xiayu buyi*).[26] This dissertation will suggest answers as to which of the two categories Chiang belonged to.

Biographical Sketches of Chiang Kai-shek[27]

Born into a modest merchant family in Xikou, Fenghua county, Zhejiang province, on October 31, 1887, Chiang Kai-shek started traditional schooling at the age of six. According to Chiang's mentor Mao Sicheng, he was quite a promising student. In 1906, Chiang attended Jianjin Academy in Ningbo, where he studied Sun Zi's *Art of War* and Neo-Confucianism. The academy encouraged him to study overseas in order to broaden his outlook. Later he was admitted to the National Military Academy in Baoding, Hebei. In 1908, Chiang sailed for Japan for military education. While in Japan, he joined the Tongmenghui. When the revolution broke out, Chiang, then an artillery officer candidate, immediately returned to China, making himself known in the successful seizure of the Zhejiang Governor's Office in Hangzhou.

Chiang caught Sun Yat-sen's attention during the 1913 Second Revolution against Yuan Shikai, in which he showed daring and bravery in the raid on the Shanghai arsenal. Later in the 1917 Constitution Protection Movement against Duan Qirui, Chiang became Sun's staff officer. Their relations made a substantial headway during the June crisis of 1922 when Guangdong militarist Chen Jiongming rebelled against Sun, shelling his official residence at Mount Guanyin outside Guangzhou and forcing him to take shelter aboard a warship. Chiang stood by Sun throughout the whole ordeal that lasted forty-two days.

The years between 1916 and 1922 are a mysterious period in Chiang's life, because, as the story goes, he led a double life as a revolutionary and a prodigal. He was alleged, through Chen

Qimei's recommendation, to have joined the Shanghai secret society Green Gang and befriended its leaders like Huang Jinyong and Du Yuesheng.[28] During this period, Chiang was also alleged to have been actively involved in the Shanghai stock market, teaming up with Chen Guofu, Zhang Jingjiang, and Dai Jitao, and raking in a substantial amount of return for himself.[29] Chiang's alleged connection with the underground gang and involvement in the stock market is nowhere to be found in his official biography by Dong Xianguang (Hollington K. Tong).[30] In his memoirs, Chen Lifu, nephew of Chen Qimei and younger brother of Chen Guofu, makes no reference to this particular period.[31]

After the Chen Jiongming incident, Chiang was appointed Sun Yat-sen's chief of staff and sent to the Soviet Union as Sun's representative for three months on a tour of investigation. In a 1995 interview, Colonel-General Chiang Wei-kuo, Chiang Kai-shek's second son, maintained that the trip to Russia turned out to be a turning point in his father's career for it made him realize that Communism, if left unchecked, would ruin China.[32] In 1924, Sun instructed Chiang to set up in Guangzhou the Whampoa Military Academy with Chiang as the commandant. The academy enabled Chiang to fortify the Nationalist base in Guangdong, paving the way for the Northern Expedition. Sun died too soon to witness the unification of Republican China as a result of the Expedition.

What came after the unification was a strenuous decade. The ten years between the completion of the Expedition in 1928 and the start of the Resistance War in 1937 were the best of times and the worst of times for Republican China. It was a period of

nation-building as well as domestic strife and foreign invasion. One of the major issues Chiang had to deal with was the chronic Japanese aggression. He also had to face both the Communists and regional militarists who routinely refused his authority. Chiang thus found himself in a precarious situation. He wanted to resist the Japanese; but he believed he could not do so before domestic strife was settled and the Chinese military strengthened. So he turned to China's past for advice and got it: it was "rangwai bixian annei." Commenting on Sichuanese militarists, Sutton says that "military education did not involve a conscious break with tradition."[33] This was also true in Chiang's case.

Appeasement & Chinese Nationalism

As it turned out, "rangwai bixian annei" was a tough sell mainly because it seemed to compromise Chinese nationalism. Nanjing's refusal in declaring war on Tokyo after the 1931 September Eighteenth Incident gave rise to the impression that it was unable to defend the country. Nanjing, observes Diana Lary, "failed in the most crucial task of nationalism, that of defending the nation from external aggression.....By failing to mobilise the nation against the invader, by failing to relate nationalism to specific programmes of internal rebirth, the Kuomintang forfeited the leadership of nationalism."[34]

To determine if the policy of "rangwai bixian annei" had indeed undermined Chinese nationalism, a question needs to be asked: what exactly did nationalism stand for in contemporary

China? According to Arthur Waldron, the period between the late Qing and the early Republican years was one of "nationalism-laden historiography."[35] In Waldron's *From War to Nationalism: China's Turning Point, 1924-1925,* Paul Cohen, Ernest Young, Immanuel Hsu, Mary Wright, Maurice Meisner, Chalmers Johnson, John Fairbank, and James Thomson are cited because they concur in the notion that nationalism has been a driving force of contemporary Chinese social, political, and intellectual changes.[36] In spite of a concurrence of opinions on nationalism as a catalyst, the term is vague in meaning. Waldron maintains that nationalism "is now recognized as an elusive concept: It cannot be taken for granted as a self-sufficient explanatory tool but, rather, must itself be better understood."[37] Lary also cautions that nationalism in China in the late 1920s and 1930s was not a well defined idea, it only represented a longing for a prosperous and powerful China.[38]

While nationalism in contemporary China remains to be defined, its Europeans counterpart has been clearly delineated. Writes Waldron, nationalism "does not mean simply strong patriotic emotions, pride in country, willingness to die for it--although it is sometimes used in that way. Nationalism means specifically an intention, if necessary, to redraw the political map."[39] That said, Waldron admits that the nationalism of European definition is not applicable to Republican China because "there was no need to carve a 'China' out of some larger polity or to assemble it.....out of a lot of small pieces. The map as already drawn would do: a republican regime could succeed an imperial house relatively easily, in the same capital, and

rule the same provinces, through many of the same people."[40]

Prior to the Resistance War, Chinese nationalism was what Lary and Waldron describe: strong patriotic feelings and visions of a powerful China. So far as Chiang Kai-shek was concerned, giving consideration to both ends of Chinese nationalism was not easy. Chiang believed that he could not make China powerful overnight; long-term planning was needed. Before China could become powerful, it had to avoid war with Japan in order to strengthen itself.

Diana Lary, Chalmers Johnson, and John Israel's works on Chinese nationalism make the distinction between nationalism of the masses and that of the Kuomintang. These versions of Chinese nationalism shared a belief that China had to resist Japan. But that was where the similarity ends.

Hatred of the Japanese as a manifestation of patriotic feelings was not good enough for Chiang Kai-shek, who attached greater importance to popular willingness to make whatever sacrifices the Resistance War might call for. To Chiang, the Chinese people might have possessed hatred for Japan, but this did not mean that they were mentally or psychologically prepared for war. Their indignation and hatred were at best spontaneous nationalism and at worst emotional outbursts which might not last long enough to assure China's final victory. Chiang thought that the Chinese people would not be ready for war until they realized the gravity of declaring war on Japan. So he cited historical examples in his speeches to make them aware of his belief that impulsive emotions or reckless courage alone may not be enough to repel the enemy.

Chiang's views on nationalism may help explain why there was a belief in Nanjing that a genuine nationalism could only be fostered through government sponsored education programs. The upcoming chapters will establish the fact that in pursuing "rangwai bixian annei," Chiang believed that the interest of Chinese nationalism would be best served if resisting Japanese invasion could be put off until such time that domestic stability was achieved and the military strengthened. Discussion about Nanjing and Chiang's efforts to foster nationalism is featured in Chapters Three and Four.

In Search of a New Criterion of Assessing Chinese Leaders

Although Chiang Kai-shek was not the first leader at the helm of the Republic, he was undisputedly the first man to achieve national unification, regardless of how nominal it may have been. For the first time in republican history, the flag of the central government--in this case, the blue-sky, white-sun, and red background flag--was unfurled throughout the land as a result of the Northern Expedition.[41] Chiang's presence at the 1943 Cairo Conference made him the first Chinese leader to sit as an equal at the same table with Western leaders. As one of the Allied leaders, he took part in the defeat of Japan, thus wiping out the 1895 humiliation and reclaiming Taiwan and Penghu (Pescadores). Last but not least, of all political figures in the Republican period, Chiang ruled China for the most consecutive years.

But his record of being the first in those aspects may not

be a blessing. Earlier Republican leaders such as Yuan Shikai and Sun Yat-sen set no precedents for Chiang to go by, leaving him sailing in uncharted waters. Yuan Shikai had never wanted to be the president of a republic; his short-lived restoration movement revealed that turning back the clock was hazardous to one's political career in contemporary China. As for Sun Yat-sen, he never took on any meaningful government position with real power. The three-month provisional presidency of the Republic of China, from January to April 1912, was the highest position that Sun attained. But the position was ceremonial and Sun was only keeping the seat warm for Yuan Shikai until the latter took office as the formal president. Later in May 1921 Sun became the Extraordinary President of the Republic, but his government in Guangzhou did not claim jurisdiction over the entire country and could only exercise sovereignty over Guangdong and Guangxi.

Chiang was fond of the saying "the trend of the times produce their heroes" (*shishi zao yingxiong*). With Nationalist China becoming a full democracy after Chiang's death, the rule of personality has given way to the rule of law in Taiwan. In its Communist counterpart, collective leadership has begun to take root on the Mainland following the death of Deng Xiaoping. Each era calls for different criteria of assessing Chinese leaders. That said, assessing Chinese leaders has not been easy.

The Chinese term for assessment is "pingjia," which is usually substituted by "baobian," meaning "praise and condemnation." "Baobian" has a strong ideological or moral overtone. It indicates that when it comes to judging a public

figure, Chiang Kai-shek or Mao Zedong, the prevailing ideological orthodoxy is usually the foremost criterion, not historical objectivity. It gives the impression that Chinese assessment is about either eulogizing virtues and achievements or engaging in character assassination. Hopefully with this dissertation, a more impartial judgement of Chiang Kai-shek can be achieved through the study of "rangwai bixian annei."

Notes

1. Zhang Qun, *Wo yu Riben qishi nian* (Taipei, 1980), p. 25.

2. Alexander Woodside, 'Reconciling the Chinese and Western theory worlds in an era of Western development fatigue: a comment,' *Modern China*, 24, 2 (April, 1998), 121.

3. Lloyd Eastman, *The Abortive Revolution: China under Nationalist Rule, 1927-1937* (Cambridge, Mass., 1974), p. 271.

4. Immanuel C.Y. Hsu, *The Rise of Modern China* (New York, 1995), p. 11.

5. Cai Zhizhong, *Renzhe de dingning: Kongzi shuo* (Taipei, 1987), p. 8.

6. Hsu, p. 6.

7. Michael Schoenhals, *Doing Things with Words in Chinese Politics* (Berkeley, 1992), p. 1.

8. Ibid., p. 3.

9. Ibid., p. 5.

10. Ibid., p. 6.

11. The following is a sample of *chengyu* and *chengyu* related dictionaries published in Taiwan, Hong Kong, and the Mainland.

    Shiyong chengyu cidian (Practical *chengyu* dictionary). Beijing: Zhishi Press, 1984. 3,800 entries.

    Hanyu chengyu cidian (Chinese language *chengyu* dictionary). Chengdu: Sichuan Dictionary Press, 1988. 10,158 entries.

    Zhonghua diangu quanshu (Comprehensive dictionary of Chinese literary quotations). Beijing, Chinese International Broadcasting Press, 1994. 22,000 entries.

    Gushu diangu cidian (Dictionary of literary quotations from classical writings). Nanchang: Jiangxi Education Press, 1988. 5,400 entries.

    Changyong diangu cidian (Dictionary of everyday literary quotations). Shanghai: Shanghai Dictionary Press, 1985. 642 entries.

    Zhongxue wenyanwen cidian (Classical Chinese dictionary for high school). Fuzhou: Fujian People's Press, 1985. 5,000 entries.

Zhongguo gudian xiaoshuo yongyu cidian (Dictionary of phrases and terms used in classical Chinese novels). Taipei: Lianjing Publications, 1985.

Hanying yulin (Chinese-English dictionary). Shanghai: Communications University Press, 1991. 34,643 entries.

Chengyu dian (*Chengyu* dictionary). Taipei: Fuxing Books, 1971. 11,000 entries.

Guowen chengyu cidian (National language *chengyu* dictionary). Shanghai: China Books, 1916.

Zhanggu da cidian (Great dictionary of literary anecdotes). Beijing: Unity Press, 1990.

Songyuan yuyan cidian (Dictionary of the Chinese language during the Song and Yuan times). Shanghai: Dictionary Press, 1985. 10,000 entries.

Changyong suyu shouce (A handbook of everyday folk adage). Beijing: Language Academy Press, 1985. 1,150 entries.

Zhongwen liuyong chengyu da cidian (Comprehensive six-usage dictionary of Chinese *chengyu*). Hong Kong: Wei Tung Books, 1974.

Chengyu gushi (Stories behind *chengyu*). Tainan, Taiwan: Zhengyan Press, 1988.

Zhonghua chengyu cidian (Chinese *chengyu* dictionary). Taipei: China Books of Taiwan, 1956.

Wenxue diangu cidian (Literary quotation dictionary). Jinan: Hebei-Shandong Books, 1987. 4,000 entries.

Shiyong chengyu cidian (Practical *chengyu* dictionary). Kowloon: Hong Kong Books, 1982.

Zhongguo keyan da cidian (Great dictionary of Chinese maxims). Taipei: The Far East Press, 1997. 5,000 entries.

12. Eastman, p. 283.

13. Ibid., p. 310.

14. Ibid., p. 279.

15. Ibid., p. 280.

16. Ibid., p. 281.

17. Ibid., p. 281.

18. Willy Wo-Lap Lam, *The Era of Jiang Zemin* (Singapore, 1999),

p. 374.

19. Ibid., p. 319.

20. Eastman, p. 279.

21. Ibid., p. 279.

22. Wu Tien-wei, *Lin Biao and the Gang of Four: Contra-Confucianism in Historical and Intellectual Perspective* (Carbondale, Il, 1983), p. 85.

23. Ibid., pp. 121-122.

24. Donald Sutton, *Provincial Militarism and the Chinese Republic: The Yunnan Army, 1905-25* (Ann Arbor, 1980), p. 25.

25. *Xian zongtong Jianggong sixiang yanlun zongji* (Taipei, 1984), vol. 14, p. 20.

26. Cai, p. 172.

27. Unless otherwise noted, my source on Chiang Kai-shek's biographical sketches is *Zhongguo xiandai shi cidian: renwu bufen* (Taipei, 1985), pp. 523-526.

28. Ji Dingzhou, *Jiangjia fuzi* (Zhengzhou, 1989), p. 18.

29. Ji, pp. 19-22. Wang Fumin, *Jiang Jieshi zhuan* (1989), pp. 30-32.

30. Dong Xianguang (Hollington K. Tong), *Jiang zongtong zhuan* (Taipei, 1952).

31. Chen Lifu, *Chengbai zhi jian* (Taipei, 1994).

32. Interview with Colonel-General Chiang Wei-kuo, May 25, 1995. Taipei.

33. Sutton, p. 25.

34. Diana Lary, *Region and Nation: The Kwangsi Clique in Chinese Politics 1925-1937* (London, 1974), p. 18.

34. Ibid., p. 18.

35. Arthur Waldron, *From War to Nationalism: China's Turning Point, 1924-1925* (New York, 1995), p. 268.

36. Ibid., pp. 267-268.

37. Ibid., p. 8.

38. Lary, pp. 17-20.

39. Waldron, p. 269.

40. Ibid., p. 271.

41. In 1895, Lu Haodong, a Guangdong revolutionary and a close friend of Sun Yat-sen, came up with the blue-sky and white-sun flag as the symbol of the Xingzhonghui. After the Xingzhonghui was expanded into the Tongmenghui in 1905, the blue-sky and white-sun flag was modified to include a red background. According to Sun, blue, white, and red symbolize liberty, equality, and philanthropy. He decided that the old blue-sky and white-sun flag would be the ensign of the revolutionary army, while the new blue-sky, white-sun, and red background flag would be the flag of the Republic of China yet to be established.

    After the founding of the Republic, the senate, acting against Sun's wish, chose the five-color (red, yellow, blue, white, and black) flag as the national flag on the ground that the colors represented the five major ethnic groups--Han, Manchus, Mongols, Moslem, and Tibetans--in China. As for the blue-sky, white-sun, and red background flag, the senate designated it as the navy colors. In his replies to the senate, Sun said that the five-color flag was originally the ensign of high-ranking naval officers of the Qing Dynasty. He considered it inappropriate to use an outdated imperial flag as the national flag of the Republic.

    In 1921, Sun set up a Revolutionary Government in Guangzhou and adopted the blue-sky, white-sun, and red background flag as the flag of his government. The dissolution of the Beijing Government in 1928 did away with the five-color flag.

CHAPTER II

"RANGWAI BIXIAN ANNEI:" THREE VIEWS FROM TAIWAN, THE MAINLAND, AND THE WEST

Our perception of history is shaped by various interpretations of it. One example of how one episode in Chinese history has been subjected to different interpretations is the study of "rangwai bixian annei," a touchy issue in the history of modern China given the country's existing political and territorial disruption. Historians in the two Chinas have not arrived at a consensus on the wisdom of "rangwai bixian annei."

Before moving on, a few words on the translation of "rangwai bixian annei" are in order. Parks Coble's translation reads "first internal pacification, then external resistance."[1] Coble's rendition of "annei" as "internal pacification" is limited in its meaning and does not reflect the original wording in its full implication. "An" can be used in this context as an infinitive or a gerund, meaning to stabilize or stabilizing. "Nei" means within an object such as a country; hence, domestic. Together, "annei" means domestic stability or bringing about domestic stability. "Annei" has a broad range of connotations. It includes everything related to Nanjing's effort to achieve domestic stability; from economic development to military buildup to subduing regional militarism to wiping out communism.

Coble's translation refers only to chastising those who--the regional militarists and the Communists in particular--defied Nanjing, which was only one aspect of its "annei" endeavor. Mark Selden and John Israel translate "rangwai bixian annei" as

"crushing the communists and then resisting Japan" and "first pacify within, then resist without" repsectively.[2] Their rendition is just as narrow as Coble's for they merely perceive "annei" as rooting out those who refused Nanjing's authority.

War or Peace?

Before the Resistance War broke out in 1937, both the National Government and the Chinese people agonized over the same difficult question: should the country go to war with Japan for the second time in forty years? There was no easy answer. The previous one, the Jiawu War (1894-1895), ended with Chinese defeat, resulting in the cession of Taiwan province and Penghu to Japan, and the imposition on China of a crippling indemnity. Nationalist China's predicament was best depicted by Jiang Tingfu: "Intellectually, the Chinese people knew their country was not combat ready; yet emotionally, most of them demanded repelling Japanese invasion as early as possible."[3]

Jiang Tingfu, a Columbia University Ph.D. degree holder, was a leading scholar and statesman. He became chairman of the History Department at Qinghua University in the late 1920s. In 1935 Jiang went in for a political career by working for the Executive *Yuan*. He was appointed ambassador to the Soviet Union in 1936, a position he held until 1938. When Jiang retired as the Republic of China's ambassador to the United States in May 1965, he was invited by his *alma mater* for interviews as a part of Columbia's Chinese Oral History Project. Before the project was completed, Jiang died of cancer in October 1965.

Jiang spoke with fervor of the tough decision between war and peace the country had to make. Commenting on contemporary Sino-Japanese relations, he lamented that "in Japan, as each day went by, the liberals were losing ground and influence, and those who had blind faith in military action were gaining the ascendancy. In China, anti-government figures were taking advantage of the people's innocent nationalistic upsurge, calling for war. And the government did not know what to do to quiet down popular sentiment."[4] Jiang conceded that he was disheartened to see that after the 1931 September Eighteenth Incident college students across the country asked for an immediate war, rejecting the idea of gaining time in order to strengthen national defense,[5] a fact well established in John Israel's book on Chinese student nationalism.[6] While Jiang believed that the great majority of Chinese really cared about their country, he doubted very much the sincerity of some anti-Nanjing politicians and militarists who called upon the central government to declare war. "Patriotic slogans were being shouted out with unpatriotic motives. Although most students and common people were genuinely patriotic, I knew only too well that some of them had been manipulated by the politicians.....Under the circumstances, I had to try harder to prevent a full-scale war."[7]

Jiang was never a member of the Kuomintang. He remained independent throughout his career. He, along with Hu Shi and Ding Wenjiang, co-founded the popular *Duli pinglun* (Independent Critic) in 1932. The periodical was intended not as a mouthpiece of Nanjing or any political party, but as a way to provide the

country with forthright advice on current affairs. William Kirby writes that *Duli pinglun* "maintained in an independent fashion aspects of the traditional elite's concern for national affairs and a belief that nonpartisan intellectuals could serve as a central force in formulating--and criticizing--national policy."[8] That said, Jiang's comment on war and peace must not be considered a pro-Nanjing announcement. It was a statement that he thought would meet the exigency of the times. Jiang's assertion is insightful in that it cogently presents the central issue for Republican China: war with Japan in the 1930s was not a simple matter of right or wrong, but a complicated one of reason *versus* emotion.

Nationalist Standpoint

The Kuomintang's position on "rangwai bixian annei" is a familiar one. Aside from Japan's consistent hostility toward China, the latter's weakness and internal disunity made it more susceptible to Japanese aggression. By the early 1930s China's strength had been reduced by foreign encroachment and internal upheavals to such an alarming degree that its survival seemed doubtful should another Sino-Japanese war break out. China was too disunited and too vulnerable to engage in a full scale war. There were two things that China had to do in order to avoid being destroyed in a war that was looming large. First, national defense had to be strengthened in the shortest possible time. Second, it had to restore itself by achieving domestic stability and unification. Before these goals could be accomplished, China

should act with extreme caution in order to avoid giving Japan any excuses to pick a fight. "Rangwai bixian annei" was not defeatism in light of Japanese aggression. It was a tough policy made out of consideration for the greatest good of the country.

The above was the substance of Chiang Kai-shek's many pre-war speeches. Currently, Chiang's views on "rangwai bixian annei" remain the orthodox interpretation of both the Kuomintang and the Republic of China. Recently they have been incorporated into a five-volume collection *Zhongguo Guomindang shishu* (A Historical Account of the Chinese Nationalist Party),[9] published by the Kuomintang Historical Commission in commemoration of the party's centennial anniversary in 1994. In a more recent book, *Guonan qijian yingbian tucun wenti zhi yanjiu: cong jiuyiba dao qiqi* (Issue of expediency for national survival: from Mukden to Marco Polo Bridge in China),[10] published in 1995 by the Academia Historica (*Guoshiguan*, the official historiographical institution of the Republic of China), its author defends staunchly the wisdom of "rangwai bixian annei."

These two publications speak for the Kuomintang's position and reflect more or less that of other historians in Taiwan. There is no indication that Kuomintang or Taiwan historians have had a change of heart on the wisdom of "rangwai bixian annei." It is safe to predict that the Nationalists will continue sticking to their guns on this issue.

The Kuomintang interpretation leaves one obvious question unanswered. Historians in the Republic of China have not been forthcoming in terms of to what extent the Chinese war effort fell short of Nanjing's expectation. Do source materials

revealing the specific concerns of the Chinese leadership over war preparation exist? The answer is yes. They are currently locked away, collecting dust in the archives of the Ministry of National Defense of the Republic of China. Through connections in the military, I gained access to some of the first-hand materials which will be discussed in Chapters Four and Five.

Communist Standpoint

The Chinese Communists remain to this day the most vociferous critics of "rangwai bixian annei." They object to being singled out as the source of China's domestic unrest and being accused of sabotaging Nanjing's war effort. Victory in the civil war provided them with an opportunity to challenge and reverse Chiang Kai-shek's condemnation of them. For decades the Communists have been engaged in a vendetta against Chiang and everything he stood for. Their bitterness is reflected in mainland historiography. For example, in *Jiangjia fuzi* (The Chiang Family: Father and Sons), mainland historian Ji Dingzhou makes the following statement.

> In order to carry out his political ambition [of dominating the entire country], Chiang Kai-shek disregarded the Japanese imperialists' aggressive invasion and determined upon launching a full-scale elimination campaign of the Chinese Communists' revolutionary base. He repeatedly emphasized "rangwai bixian annei" and neglected the whole country and Kuomintang patriots' opposition, desperately carrying out the reactionary policy of handing over Chinese territory to the Japanese while he would not allow the Communists a foothold in this country.....Within the Kuomintang there was no lack of patriots among civil and military officials and its armed forces were discontented with the status quo and would rather die on the battlefield fighting the Japanese than fighting a civil war. But Chiang Kai-shek said no to resisting Japan.....At the time when the

> Chinese nation was facing the danger of being subjugated, Chiang Kai-shek's government had no intention of changing its course and continued the policy of offering no resistance to Japanese imperialist invasion. At the same time, it launched anti-revolutionary civil war against the people, carried out fascist dictatorship, and massacred patriotic democrats and students, thus stirring up the whole nation's opposition.[11]

Ji Dingzhou argues that the Communists were just as patriotic as any other Chinese; they could not stand by and watch Japan invade China. He depicts the Communists as knights in shining armor who came to the rescue of a beleaguered nation.

In another book *Jiang Jieshi zhuan* (Biography of Chiang Kai-shek), mainland historian Yang Shubiao also criticizes the policy of "rangwai bixian annei."

> After establishing his regime in Nanjing, domestically Chiang Kai-shek launched civil war against the warlords and our revolutionary base; externally he adopted a non-resistance policy to deal with the invading Japanese bandits. His general guiding principle was "rangwai bixian annei." But the consequence was inviting a wolf into the house, prompting the Japanese bandits to mount a large-scale offensive in the Northeast.....Chiang's non-resistance policy met with the entire country's opposition.[12]

In yet another book *Mao Zedong yu Jiang Jieshi: bange shiji de jiaoliang* (Mao Zedong and Chiang Kai-shek: A Rivalry of Half A Century), mainland historians continue their assault.

> In terms of Chiang Kai-shek's "rangwai bixian annei," "rangwai" actually meant seeking compromise with the Japanese invaders; "annei" essentially meant destroying the Chinese Communist Party and its Red Army. Chiang Kai-shek's adopting "rangwai bixian annei" policy brought shame and suffering to the Chinese people. It allowed the Japanese bandits to occupy large chunks of Chinese territory, thus abetting their ambition of entirely destroying China.....Chiang Kai-shek's "rangwai bixian annei" policy met with strong opposition from people throughout the country and even from within Chiang's regime; on the other hand, the Communist Party's policy of the anti-Japanese national united front enjoyed popular support.[13]

The Communists' views, like those of the Nationalists, are dogmatic. Despite their opposing standpoints, they do have one thing in common: taking "rangwai bixian annei" for granted, thus overlooking several important questions. How did Chiang come up with "rangwai bixian annei"? Was this policy his own brainchild? If not, from whom did he borrow it? Why would Chiang run the risk of earning himself the name of being a coward, jeopardizing his career, and undermining Nanjing's credibility by insisting on going after the regional militarists and Communists while making concessions to Japan? This dissertation will provide some definite answers to all these questions.

Western Standpoint

Although Akira Iriye's *After Imperialism: The Search for a New Order in the Far East, 1921-1931* deals with Sino-Japanese relations, he does not mention "rangwai bixian annei." However, William Kirby's book on Sino-German relations has much to say on Chiang's position on resisting Japan.

> Chiang wanted both an "emergency" short-term plan and a "fundamental" long-term plan for national defense against Japanese attack.....On the matter of "emergency" plans for the event of a Japanese attack, Chiang made clear to Seeckt his intention to sacrifice North China and to devote nearly all his resources to the defense of the Yangtze region. Even that, however, would have to await the end of the Kiangsi wars against the Communists.[14]

As for the "fundamental" plans, Kirby says they included military reorganization and military industrialization aiming at raising a new wartime army of eighteen divisions (three hundred thousand men) and a steady production of arms and ammunitions.[15]

Kirby writes that there was a strong desire among the Chinese Nationalists to learn from the German experience, and von Bismarck's unification of Germany convinced Chiang of the importance of military and political unity.

> To Chiang Kai-shek, the lessons of the Bismarckian period were more sobering, and more in line with his own policies. The forceful policies of a Bismarck could indeed unite a nation, but one had to build a strong foundation. The economic unity of the *Zollverein*, the growth of Prussian military and economic strength, and the political unity attained in the Northern German Confederation had all been prerequisites for victory over France.[16]

John Israel also offers his observation of the divergence of opinions on how China should respond to Japanese invasion.

> After September 18, 1931, impatient students found themselves at cross-purposes with the wisdom (or folly) of older men. To some officials, immediate resistance seemed suicidal; China's only hope was to gain time to arm. Others, who wishfully entertained a chimera of accommodation with the enemy, argued that Japan's territorial lust would soon be sated. They envisioned a unified China under strong KMT rule, free of Communists and warlords, as a worthy partner for the progressive islanders. A third group felt that books, not guns, were China's salvation-a modern educational system must be created; and since this would be impossible under wartime conditions, a military confrontation had to be avoided at all costs. Young patriots regarded these arguments as apologies for treason.[17]

Coble's *Facing Japan: Chinese Politics and Japanese Imperialism, 1931-1937* is a welcome addition to the expanding academic literature on modern China because it is the most up-to-date work on "rangwai bixian annei." According to Coble, there were no Western academic works that deals comprehensively with "rangwai bixian annei" until his book comes along. With this book, Coble hopes to shed new light on "the Japanese issue in Chinese domestic politics during the 1930s, a discussion essential for understanding the era."[18]

Coble suggests several reasons that he considers most essential to Chiang Kai-shek's reluctance to confront Japan. First, Chiang wanted to maintain a harmonious relationship with Japan as he "sought to gain Japanese acceptance for the Kuomintang revolution" which he considered to be crucial to the prospects of his cause.[19] Furthermore, Chiang considered the Chinese military inferior to that of Japan and a premature war might doom the nation. Last but not least, the contemporary Chinese political environment was not in Chiang's favor as the Communists and the regional militarists constantly challenged his authority, threatening his position as national leader. Coble appreciates the kind of leadership problem Chiang had in the 1930s.

> When Japan first struck in 1931, China was not a united nation-state but only a collection of regional entities nominally pledged to the Kuomintang. The politics of the early Nanjing era, 1928-1931, had borne a striking resemblance to that of the warlord era, with Chiang merely the first among equals[20].....Chiang therefore sought to avoid or delay war with Japan, adopting a policy of appeasement and conciliation with Tokyo. He proclaimed a formula of "first internal pacification, then external resistance." Domestic enemies, most notably the Communists, had to be eliminated, he argued, before China would be sufficiently united to resist the Japanese.[21]

Coble's views are an amalgamation of Nationalist and Communist standpoints. Like his counterparts in Taiwan, Coble understands Chiang's predicament.

> Leader of a nationalist movement, in need of nationalism as a tool for integration, he (Chiang) could not utilize this device unless he was willing to challenge China's powerful neighbor. That nation, unfortunately for China, was superior in military might and was aggressive. In avoiding confrontation with Japan, he created popular support for the one force he hated above all, the Chinese Communists.[22]

Coble comes to the conclusion that had Japan exercised more self control and been more accommodating, Chiang might have fared better than he did. Coble realizes the decision of war and peace was a difficult one and he feels sympathy for Chiang. On the other hand, Coble underscores the fact that "rangwai bixian annei" had backfired, bringing about an unexpected, ironic result by making the Communists the beneficiary of a policy that was designed to eliminate them in the first place. Eventually, Chiang and his government became the unintended casualties.[23] Coble does not quite consider "rangwai bixian annei" a failure and even has some kind words for it.

> By delaying confrontation with the Japanese, Chiang was able to continue his pursuit of the Communists. Under that pretext he moved central forces into Szechwan, establishing Nanking's presence for the first time in China's most populous province. The Nanking government also used these months to gain control of China's banking resources in order to launch a currency reform in autumn 1935. Chiang promoted his New Life Movement, designed in part to invigorate the Kuomintang. Nanking thus gained advantages in delaying conflict with Japan.[24]

Coble equates "rangwai bixian annei" with appeasement, a policy that John Israel maintains can be traced back to Qing China.

> [A]fter September 18, 1931, while youth clamored for the immediate expulsion of the invaders, Chiang undertook a long-term program of building a modern army to fight the foe after his enemies at home had been eliminated. Young China's inheritance of ninety years of appeasement and two decades of uninterrupted civil war made Chiang's sense of urgency seem inexcusably misdirected.[25]

It is an established fact that Chiang made concessions to a potential enemy, hoping to forestall the latter from picking a fight. But what is not known to many is the historical background of Chiang's appeasement. Israel's remarks quoted

above touch on the fact that appeasement was not new in modern Chinese history. But to suggest, as Israel does, that Chinese appeasement can only be traced back to the late Qing period is to miss the bigger picture when in fact the Chinese were already appeasing foreign enemies as early as the reign of Liu Bang, 206-195 B.C. A discussion on Chinese appeasement is featured in Chapter Three.

Coble is vague about the exact occasion on which "rangwai bixian annei" was first proclaimed. He talks about the Japanese attack on Shanghai in 1932, the creation of Manzhouguo and Japan's withdrawal from the League of Nation before saying that "caught between Japanese pressure and Chinese public opinion, Chiang busied himself with the anti-Communist campaigns. He proclaimed a policy of 'first internal pacification, then external resistance.'"[26] The sequence of events in Coble's statement gives the impression that "rangwai bixian annei" came into being primarily as a Chinese response to Japanese invasion of the Northeast and the subsequent attack on Shanghai.

In fact, Chiang first promulgated the policy of "rangwai bixian annei" on July 23, 1931, in a proclamation to the Chinese public released from the anti-Communist campaign field headquarters at Nanchang, Jiangxi. In it, Chiang said that in order to fight Japan, the country must restore its vitality, and it could only achieve this by pacifying the Communists and the restless regional militarists.[27]

It should be recalled that in the midst of the third anti-Communist campaign (July-September, 1931), Chen Jitang teamed up with Zhang Fakui, Wang Jingwei, and Eugene Chen (Chen

Youren), setting up a "National Government" in Guangzhou and joining his forces with those of Li Zongren for a campaign against Jiangxi and Hunan. Chen Jitang also incited Shi Yousan to mutiny in Hebei. The fact that Chiang proclaimed the policy almost two months before the Mukden Incident shows that "rangwai bixian annei" was not put forward to cope specifically with either Japan's occupation of the Northeast or its subsequent attack on Shanghai as Coble suggests.

Chiang Wei-kuo's Standpoint

Before the Resistance War, whenever possible, Chiang Kai-shek would personally defend his position of "domestic stability takes precedence over resisting foreign invasion" to the best of his capability. From the end of war in 1945 to his death in 1975, however, he never openly did so in spite of the bad reputation that the controversial policy had earned him. Chiang Wei-kuo, the second son of Chiang Kai-shek, maintained in a 1995 interview that his father had a clear conscience and believed history would clear his name.

The Chiang family do not talk about the wisdom of "rangwai bixian annei." As of now there is only one member in the family who has personally lived through those years as an adult and is in a position to give eye-witness accounts. Madame Chiang Soong Mei-ling, the widow of Chiang Kai-shek, who lives in New York, would be the most authoritative source of modern Chinese history. It has been said that she and Zhang Xueliang are the only two surviving persons who hold the truth to the Xian

Incident. But she is not talking and rarely gives interview.

Chiang Kai-shek had two sons, Ching-kuo and Wei-kuo, who passed away in 1988 and 1998 respectively. As for Chiang Kai-shek's seven grandchildren, four of them are now deceased. The remaining three are Chiang Hsiao-chang, daughter of Chiang Ching-kuo; Chang Hsiao-yen, son of Chiang Ching-kuo; and Chiang Hsiao-kang, the only son of Chiang Wei-kuo. They are not in a position to tell; Chiang Hsiao-chang was in her infancy, and Chang Hsiao-yen and Chiang Hsiao-kang were not born when war broke out in 1937.[28]

Between May 29 and July 4, 1995, I conducted a series of interviews with the retired Colonel-General Chiang Wei-kuo. A German trained soldier during the 1930s, he reminisced about the days when the National Government was struggling to hold the country together in the face of what the Chinese describe as "neiyou waihuan" (domestic turmoil and foreign invasion).

All the interviews, six in total, were made in Chiang Wei-kuo's well-appointed office at Yuanshan, Taipei, except that once when he was late for a doctor's appointment and suggested the interview be continued in his Mercedes sedan on his way to the hospital in a nearby town. Throughout the interviews General Chiang always maintained his sense of humor and the atmosphere was pleasant and casual. During the period of the interviews, he was recovering from a serious recent illness. His health conditions, coupled with busy schedule, put a strict time limit on the interviews.

In spite of his age and health problems, General Chiang was alert and his thoughts well organized. During the interviews, he

spoke from memory. He never used notes or requested assistance from his secretaries. His clear-witted mental condition made him look younger than his actual age. Throughout the interviews, Chiang Wei-kuo's tone was calm. Although he was defending his father, he did it elegantly and eloquently without lashing out at the Japanese, the Communists or anyone who bid defiance to Nanjing. This made me feel that he genuinely wanted the world to know his side of the story and he cared about whether justice has been served in the research of "rangwai bixian annei."

According to Chiang Wei-kuo, this was the first time that he has been interviewed on "rangwai bixian annei." The strength of Chiang Wei-kuo's views lies in his putting "rangwai bixian annei" in military context. He called attention to the fact that his father thought and behaved like a soldier only because he began his career as a professional soldier. Therefore, General Chiang believed that he could do his father and the policy some service by discussing it from the military perspective.[29]

Chiang Wei-kuo maintained that "rangwai bixian annei" must not be regarded strictly as a political maneuver because it was a sensible military strategy as well. To carry out successful warfare, he said, the military sometimes has to split the forces into two portions, with one being the major task force and the other the supplementary task force. In the case of "rangwai bixian annei," the major task force was deployed to achieve domestic stability, and the supplementary force was directed towards external resistance. According to Chiang Wei-kuo, anti-Communist campaigns and resisting Japan did not contradict each other, they complemented one another. He averred that his

father believed this was the most effective and efficient use of China's limited military resources for a single purpose: preparing for external resistance through domestic stability.[30]

Chiang Wei-kuo regretted that the term "rangwai" has been taken out of context. He said "to resist a foreign enemy" does not necessarily mean that Nanjing had to engage in an actual, physical war with Japan. Contrary to what most people think, he cautioned, the duty of a soldier is not to wage war but to prevent it from happening in the first place. He pointed to "wu," the Chinese equivalent of the English word "military," as proof. "Wu" is made of two characters "zhi" (to stop or to prevent) and "ge" (dagger-axe, a traditional Chinese weapon), hence the saying "the prevention of war is the quintessence of the military" (*zhige weiwu*). This, General Chiang averred, was the rationale of his father's policy.[31]

"Zhige weiwu" is a derivation of Sun Zi's remarks: "The best war is the one in which enemy troops are repelled without a fight" (*buzhan er qu ren zhi bing, zhan zhi shan zhe ye*). Sun's idea of resisting the enemy without resorting to arms was shared by Chiang Kai-shek who had made clear his determination to follow the advice in a speech delivered to the cadets of the Army University in Beiping, July 9, 1929.

> Sun Zi once said that the best war is the one in which enemy troops are repelled without a fight. This remark is most valuable to Chinese military thinking as winning is not the purpose of a soldier, nor the best achievement of any soldier. Even if a war is won, the cost in human life and property is beyond estimation. With this in mind, it is not as easy as it seems to judge what is truly a victory and what is a defeat. As a result, brilliant military strategists without exception look up to Sun Zi's remark as standard.[32]

Chiang Wei-kuo maintained that although war is a devastating event and should be avoided at all costs, sometimes it is difficult for one side to prevent it when the other side is constantly pushing for war. The next best thing that Nanjing could do was to delay it. But the question was how. He said his father always reminded himself with a *chengyu* that "a weak country has no foreign relations" (*ruoguo wu waijiao*), and took pains to see this would not happen to Nationalist China. Because military setbacks could strip China of any say at the bargaining table, General Chiang said that his father was concerned about a premature war. To avoid war with Japan before China could stand on its feet, Nanjing had to keep the avenues of diplomatic negotiations open so Tokyo would not resort to military actions to solve the problems between the two countries. This, Chiang Wei-kuo emphasized, was one way to achieve "rangwai" and a practical application of Sun Zi's idea as well.[33]

To keep diplomatic channels open, Chiang Wei-kuo said the Great Wall Campaign of early 1933 was contained by Nanjing as a local friction. He asserted that China had to make it clear to Japan that it was only assuming a defensive role in the border incidents and had never intended to go beyond that. "We had to make necessary retreat before war broke out so we could keep our diplomatic options open. The Shanghai Incident of 1932 was a confrontational conflict. Although our troops fought ferociously we still had to be very cautious to send in our units one at a time instead of throwing them all in. We did not want Japan to get the wrong idea that we were provoking a full scale war."[34]

"Rangwai Bixian Annei" as Civil War?

Mainland historiography in particular condemns "rangwai bixian annei" as the waging of civil war, an accusation Chiang Wei-kuo found unsupportable. He maintained that his father did not see "annei" as civil war because he no longer considered the Chinese Communists Chinese. He maintained that his father was convinced that the Communists were the tools of a foreign enemy--Soviet Russia--which was manipulating them in order to advance its cause in China. "When Father fought the Chinese Communists, he was actually fighting indirectly against a foreign enemy, Soviet Russia. In Father's mind, 'annei' was not a civil war *per se* but an integral part of his external resistance plan."[35]

Chiang Kai-shek used a historical analogy to set forth his view that anti-Communist campaigns were no civil war. Addressing party, government, and military officials in Changsha, Hunan, October 1932, Chiang said that Zeng Guofan's effort to eliminate the Taipings was not fratricide. Hunan was Zeng's home province.

> Currently and frequently there are some people criticizing Zeng Guofan, Zuo Zongtang, Peng Yulin, and Hu Linyi for being running dogs of the Qing Dynasty. The same people also accuse them of pitching Chinese against Chinese and ingratiating themselves with the Manchus by slaughtering their fellow countrymen. But we must understand that Zeng Guofan and Zuo Zongtang fought against Hong Xiuquan and Yang Xiuqing not for the sake of the Qing Dynasty, but for the Chinese civilization. What do I mean by this? We only have to take a look at Zeng Guofan's written grievance against Hong and Yang in which he made no mention of fighting the Taipings in order to restore the Qing Dynasty. The reason that Zeng fought against Hong and Yang was to save the Chinese civilization which has been handed down from generation to generation for thousands of years.[36]

Civil war or not, the fact is "rangwai bixian annei" sullied Nanjing's reputation. Writes Israel, "the KMT heard itself called 'vacillator,' 'appeaser,' and 'reactionary.' The distinction between ruler and rebel was thus blurred until the government became the suspected traitor and the Communist the vanguard of national salvation."[37] A bad name notwithstanding, Chiang Wei-kuo said this has much to do with Communist triumph in the civil war.

> A saying has it that "winners of civil wars in China automatically become kings and nobility while losers become enemies of the new regime" (*shengzhe wanghou baizhe zei*). Their (the Communist) ascent to power on the Mainland allows them to write history in a light that is favorable to them and unfavorable to us. "Hitting someone when he is down" (*luojing xiashi*) is seen by many as human nature and is quite understandable. So long as we have a clear conscience in what we did (*wenxin wukui*), why take to heart calumny.[38]

In conclusion, Chiang Wei-kuo disagreed with the conventional wisdom which holds "rangwai bixian annei" contains two separate plans: "rangwai" and "annei." He asserted that this misconception gave rise to the allegation that Nanjing had two options: to fight Japan or communism, and that it made the wrong choice by pursuing the Communists.

> As a matter of fact, China in the 1930s had only one choice, that is, to fight Japan; and the elimination of the Communists was one of the necessary measures in the preparation for war. People must not see "rangwai" and "annei" as two separate things because they are actually the two sides of a same coin. "Annei" served the interest of "rangwai." "Annei" was the means by which "rangwai" would be accomplished.[39]

Notes

1. Parks Coble, *Facing Japan: Chinese Politics and Japanese Imperialism, 1931-1937* (Cambridge, Mass., 1991), p.1.

2. Mark Selden, *The Yenan Way in Revolutionary China* (Cambridge, Mass., 1971), p. 95. John Israel, *Student Nationalism in China, 1927-1937* (Stanford, 1966), p. 189.

3. Jiang Tingfu (Tsiang T'ing-fu), *Jiang Tingfu huiyilu* (Taipei, 1984), p. 143.

4. Idid., p. 144.

5. Idid., p. 137.

6. John Israel, *Student Nationalism in China, 1927-1937* (Stanford, 1966).

7. Jiang, p. 138.

8. William Kirby, *Germany and Republican China* (Stanford, 1984), p. 86.

9. Li Yunhan, *Zhongguo Guomindang shishu* (Taipei, 1994).

10. Liu Weikai, *Guonan qijian yingbian tucun wenti zhi yanjiu: cong jiuyiba dao qiqi* (Taipei, 1995).

11. Ji Dingzhou, *Jiangjia fuzi* (Zhengzhou, 1989), pp. 114, 121, 125.

12. Yang Shubiao, *Jiang Jieshi zhuan* (Beijing, 1989), pp. 261, 265.

13. He Zhongshan, *Mao Zedong yu Jiang Jieshi: bange shiji de jiaoliang* (Beijing, 1996), pp. 73-74.

14. Kirby, p. 123.

15. Ibid., p. 123.

16. Ibid., p. 149.

17. Israel, p. 185.

18. Coble, p. 9.

19. Ibid., p. 18.

20. Ibid., p. 377.

21. Ibid., p. 1.

22. Ibid., p. 380.

23. Ibid., p.

24. Ibid., p. 225.

25. Israel, p. 190.

26. Coble, pp. 56-57.

27. *Xian zongtong Jianggong sixiang yanlun zongji* vol. 30, pp. 149-151.

28. Those who think I might have misspelled Chang Hsiao-yen's surname are in for some gossip. Chang Hsiao-yen, along with his twin and now deceased brother Chang Hsiao-tz'u, is the son of Chiang Ching-kuo and Chang Juo-ya, who were never legally married to one another. As a result, the two brothers adopted their mother's maiden name.

29. First interview with Chiang Wei-kuo, May 29, 1995, Taipei.

30. Second interview with General Chiang, June 4, 1995, Taipei.

31. Third interview with General Chiang, June 16, Taipei.

32. *Xian zongtong Jianggong sixiang yanlun zongji* vol. 10, p. 417.

33. Fourth interview with General Chiang, June 20, 1995, Taipei.

34. Ibid.

35. Fifth interview with General Chiang, June 28, 1995, Taipei.

36. *Xian zongtong Jianggong sixiang yanlun zongji*, vol. 10, p. 657.

37. Israel, p. 193.

38. Sixth interview with General Chiang, July 4, 1995, Taipei.

39. Sixth interview with General Chiang, July 4, 1995, Taipei.

CHAPTER III

CHINESE APPEASEMENT & "RANGWAI BIXIAN ANNEI:" INFLUENCES FROM THE PAST

Conducting a thorough analysis of Chiang Kai-shek is fraught with the chronic problem of lacking first-hand materials. Although the government of the Republic of China has recently opened some of the well-kept Chiang papers, the *Daxi Archives*, it is unlikely that major secrets will be revealed as a result. Instead of looking forward to the possibility of having meaningful archival materials released by the Chinese authorities on both sides of the Taiwan Strait in the foreseeable future, one can still gain new insights into Chiang's character and leadership through reexamining old materials. So far as this chapter is concerned, the old materials are Chiang's published speeches. Important as they may be, they have yet to receive serious academic attention. This is seen in the lack of a systematic analysis of the speeches.

Chiang Kai-shek as a Prolific Speaker

Chiang Kai-shek was fond of giving speeches. He was almost certainly the first Chinese leader who gave speeches on a regular basis. This is no small achievement given the fact that addressing the public was not a traditional Chinese way of governing. Chinese political figures' reluctance to speak in public is imbedded in the culture. Confucius once cautioned that being smooth in speech is not a true gentleman's quality; having

a dull tongue is.[1] This alone says a lot about traditional Chinese attitudes towards public speaking. Not unexpectedly, the Chinese disdainfully refer to the gift of the gab as "having an oily and slick tongue" (*youqiang huadiao*) or "showing off one's glib tongue" (*shua zuipi*). Anyone with such a gift runs the risk of being considered insincere or unctuous.

In imperial China government officials normally did not appear in public for fear of losing prestige. To make things worse, the law of avoidance that required no one be appointed to high positions in his native province made it difficult for officials at the provincial level to speak directly to the masses, due to the different dialects on both sides. Even if the speaker and the audience could both speak the same tongue, it did not guarantee a successful speech as the speaker's accent could easily confuse the audience. In Republican China, it became a common practice that whenever high ranking officials speak in public the audience would get a written copy so they could follow the speaker regardless of the accent.

Chiang appreciated the importance of propaganda and the power of mass media. He believed in bringing his case to the people by appealing to them through speeches, which were in turn reprinted in party and government organs. Chiang started making speeches at the Whampoa Military Academy in early 1924. Speaking to the people was part of his political style because he understood that communicating with the masses was crucial to government operations and to his own career. He often dedicated his speeches to explaining, or defending, government policies, and commenting on current affairs, domestic and international.

As leader of the party, the military, and the government, Chiang Kai-shek's main audiences were military officers and cadets. Government officials and party cadres constituted a generous portion of the audience as well. He occasionally addressed the general public, including high school and college students, though usually in written proclamations rather than live speeches.

The occasions for Chiang Kai-shek's speeches were many; statutory holidays, commencement and graduation ceremonies of military academies, and various anniversaries were some of his favorite ones. It does seem that any time was a good time for a speech. The contents of his speeches covered a wide range of topics, ranging from how to fulfill Sun Yat-sen's last will, to how to become productive modern citizens, to why the Chinese Communists must be exterminated, to preserving the country's cultural heritage.

Chiang Kai-shek did not actually write the speeches. Many of those were done by his chief secretary Chen Bulei (Chen Xunen). Immersed in Chinese history and classical literature, Chen Bulei began his career as a newspaper reporter who later became famous for his criticism of the warlords and Japanese aggression in China. This political stand found favor in Chiang's eyes, earning Chen several positions in the Zhejiang provincial government and the National Government. He became Chiang's chief secretary in 1934 and held that job until his untimely demise in late 1948 from sleeping pill overdose.

Historical Roots of "Rangwai Bixian Annei"

In order to support his argument and to better present his case, Chiang Kai-shek in many of his speeches cited *chengyu* and historical parallels, two unmistakable signs of influences from China's past. Generally speaking, the Chinese treat history with reverence. Their respect for history is best summed up by the Tang scholar-official Wei Zheng's celebrated remarks: "Using polished bronze as a mirror, we can adjust our attire. Using people as a mirror, we can know our merits and shortcomings. Using history as a mirror, we can know the rise and fall of things."[2] Veneration of this magnitude has much to do with the Chinese perception of history.

In China, history has become more than a record of the past. It is a collection of inspirational examples and moral teachings left behind by the ancestors. Confucian teachings and the Chinese tradition of honoring one's ancestors have helped elevate history to such an exalted position that the Chinese turn to it for guidance, enlightenment, and wisdom. Hence come such *chengyu* as "explicit admonitions from the past (*guyou mingxun*), "make the past serve the present (*guwei jinyong*), and "past experiences, if not forgotten, are guides for the future" (*qianshi buwang houshi zhishi*). Of all *chengyu*, Chiang was fond of a particular one: "one has to insult himself before he can be insulted by others, a country has to attack itself before it can be attacked by others" (*ren bi ziwu erhou ren wu zhi, guo bi zifa erhou ren fa zhi*).

> At a time (July 1931) when the entire country is resisting imperialist invasion, the warlords have the nerve to rebel, willing to play the jackal to the tiger.....I have read that "one has to insult himself before he can be insulted by others, a country has to attack itself before it can be attacked by others".....In order to wipe out the hundred-year-old galling shame [imposed on us by the imperialists], we must achieve domestic stability before repelling foreign invasion, and we must rid the country of rottenness to prevent further decay of China.[3]

July 1931 was eventful. While Nanjing was carrying out the third anti-Communist campaign in Jiangxi, Shi Yousan mutinied in Hebei. The Guangdong and Guangxi clique became restless, challenging Nanjing by sending its army into Hunan and Jiangxi. Far away in Korea, scores of Chinese were killed in anti-Chinese rioting. The rapidly deteriorating situation prompted Chiang to issue the open letter, cited above, to the nation.

"One has to insult himself before he can be insulted by others, a country has to attack itself before it can be attacked by others" are the words of Mencius (372-289 B.C.). Mencius' remarks show the Chinese belief that weakness from within makes one susceptible to affront from without. Mencius' position was seconded by his contemporary, the great thinker Xun Kuang, who coined the phrase "worms develop when objects decay" (*wufu chongsheng*). The passage from Chiang's open letter which says "we must rid the country of rottenness to prevent further decay of China" is clearly inspired by Xun Kuang's "wufu chongsheng" remarks. *Chengyu* often have extended or hidden implications and should not be taken at their face value. "Wufu chongsheng" is no exception. What it actually means is that corruption or decay within an object, a person or a nation, gives rise to external or foreign encroachment.

Chiang's use of *chengyu* dating back to the Warring States period demonstrates the power history had over him. A leader in the twentieth century still felt inspired by the oracular words of the ancient sages whose sayings have been accepted by later generations as infallible laws. In fact, Chiang appreciated Mencius' admonitions so much that he used them in many speeches. For example, in one speech made on December 14, 1932, in Nanjing to civil officials, Chiang reiterated what he said over a year before in the open letter.

> "Domestic stability taking precedence over resisting foreign invasion" has been the tenet for the country to conduct itself since antiquity.....We must understand that "one has to insult himself before he can be insulted by others, a country has to attack itself before it can be attacked by others." This is to say that if we do not insult ourselves, no foreign country can bully us no matter who it is. Therefore, we must achieve domestic stability if we want to repel foreign invasion.[4]

The moral in Mencius and Xun Kuang's words is this: strengthening oneself is the best defense against insult. This is the rationale behind "rangwai bixian annei," one shared by many including the great Qing scholar Wei Yuan, for example. Wei's *Haiguo tuzhi* (An Illustrated Gazetteer of the Maritime Countries), completed in 1844, was the first major Chinese work on the West. In Part Four of the book, which discusses how China should cope with Western encroachment, Wei began the chapter entitled "Yizhan" (On War) with the following remarks: "After the internal defense is secured, then [we can] resist foreign attack" (*neishou jigu, naiyu waigong*).[5] Wei's use of "ji," meaning "already," and "nai," meaning "then," is crucial to the understanding of "rangwai bixian annei." These two words suggest

unequivocally the order of doing things. A domestic environment free from disturbances and a strengthened national defense are seen as preconditions for resisting foreign invasion.

In pursuing "rangwai bixian annei," Chiang was trying to live up to the words of Mencius and Xun Kuang. In terms of how a weak state like Republican China should act in order to cope with foreign invasion, Song scholar-official Fan Zhongyan's advice is most illuminating. When it comes to coping with foreign aggression, Song China and Republican China are two of a kind. The Song Dynasty had been plagued with repeated invasions from the Western Xia and Liao since its founding in 960 A.D.

Fan Zhongyan on Resisting Foreign Invasion

Fan Zhongyan, like Chiang Kai-shek, was born in a difficult time when China was besieged by foreign enemies. The Song Chinese, like their Republican counterparts, were facing a tough decision over war or peace. The court was at first in favor of military retaliation against the invaders; defeats soon befell the poorly trained and equipped Chinese army. Then the court turned to Fan, one of the leading moderates in the government. Having been in charge of border affairs for years, Fan was experienced in dealing with the Western Xia and Liao. He averred that China's weakness encouraged foreign aggression. So long as China remained weak foreign invasion would continue, and the best way to repel the enemy was to make the country powerful. But until national defense could be strengthened, Fan insisted that China must not provoke the enemy. In 1044, Fan put forward

his policy in a concise package: "fostering cordial relations with the enemy as an expedient while preparing for war as a real possibility" (*yi menghao wei quanyi, yi zhanshou wei shishi*).[6]

To Fan, compromising with the enemy was not a choice, but a necessary evil in light of Chinese weakness. He believed that the top priority of Chinese foreign policy was to prevent the Western Xia and Liao from joining together in an alliance which would spell an even greater threat. In a memorial submitted to the court in 1041, he advised the emperor to endure the reality of submissiveness to the enemy by citing a historical parallel.

> I learn that in the heyday of the Han Emperor Gaodi's reign, the emperor [Liu Bang] had able ministers like Xiao He and Han Xin to assist him in scoring victory on the battlefield with an experienced, veteran army. When he led four hundred thousand men [to fight the Xiongnu], he was surrounded at Pingcheng. So he sued for peace using "heqin" (peace through intermarriage). "Heqin" was continued by Empress Lu (Liu Bang's widow) as well as Emperors Wen and Jing for generations. But the Xiongnu were unpredictable and still intruded into China quite often, killing Chinese officials and civilians. Local people could not bear their cruelty. The barbarians were arrogant and treated China like dirt. Yet the Han Emperors were not swayed by the behavior of the Xiongxu and put up with the insults for they were more concerned about the well-being of the entire nation.[7]

Previous military setbacks had made it clear to Fan that, when facing two foreign menaces at once, a weak China had no choice but to try to maintain a fragile peace even if this meant continuing to send tribute to the "barbarians" and disregarding the recovery of lost territory.[8] Fan got the opportunity to put his ideas to work when the court appointed him chief minister in 1043. In the same year he announced his Ten Project Reform, which was well received by the emperor and put into action immediately. The ten projects included: careful selection of

government officials; toughening the civil service examination system; introducing strict promotion and demotion rules; strict law enforcement; equal distribution of public lands; revamping agricultural production; reaffirming the state's authority; rooting out favoritism in official appointments; tax reduction; and reinforcement of border defense.[9]

Realizing that the reforms needed time to prove themselves, Fan stressed the importance of a non-provocative foreign policy, and opposed the idea of attacking either the Western Xia or Liao. Seven years before he became chief minister, Fan had already cautioned the emperor, saying that "if our enemies ask for more of our land, we should steadfastly refuse; if they ask for war, we must admonish our generals to exercise self-control and not engage in fighting."[10] Fan's policy was not without its critics. Officials who stood for war said the policy was a sure sign of China's weakness. However, those who stood for peace asserted that further military action would only cause more suffering among the people and hasten the arrival of disaster.[11]

With the fear of war on two fronts looming large, Fan emphasized the importance of keeping cordial relations with both external enemies until the reforms were completed. In a 1043 memorial, he advised the emperor to be patient and show self-restraint, again citing historical example.

> In my humble opinion, throughout history previous emperors fostered cordial relations with the barbarians not because they did not possess enough courage, but because the country's weakness compelled them to do so. They were concerned that ongoing border confrontations might exhaust the people. Protracted military operations would definitely spell trouble and disturb the nation. This is exactly why the Han Emperor Gaodi and the Tang Emperor Taizong [Li Shimin], after having been through hundreds of battles,

> dared not pursue military ventures and had to yield to the barbarians' pressure [by marrying Chinese princesses to their chiefs.] They waited until the day came when the country was powerful enough and capable generals were available, then they delivered crushing blows to the barbarians and sought revenge.....Our goal is to enrich the country and to empower the people. We can achieve this by avoiding military confrontations, concentrating our resources on improving the people's livelihood, developing agriculture, and selecting generals as well as training soldiers.....If we want to square accounts with the enemy and to settle our differences on the battlefield, this would exhaust the people and jeopardize the nation. I realize this is easier said than done.[12]

Chiang Kai-shek and Fan Zhongyan: A Comparison

The similarities between Fan's and Chiang's thinking are striking. Both men formulated their foreign policy based on many episodes of foreign invasion. It is apparent that Fan was willing to sacrifice some Chinese interests in order to preserve the fragile peace between China and her hostile neighbors. So he advised the emperor to endure the reality and temporarily disregard recovering lost territory. Fan's position seems to parallel Chiang's refraining from military confrontation with Japan when the latter occupied the Northeast. Commenting on the loss of the four Northeastern provinces, Chiang in 1934 said: "It is not unusual that a country's frontier region is either under enemy occupation or encroachment. This is particularly so when the great powers take advantage of a country that is undergoing a revolution by occupying its territory."[13]

Fan Zhongyan and Chiang Kai-shek shared a view that the sacrifices China had to undergo were worth the price if it could become strong enough to get its revenge. Sacrifices on the part of China were the lesser of two evils. When facing a greater

evil, a war in which China's survival seemed doubtful, both men accepted the lesser one.

Fan did not use the term "rangwai bixian annei" in his writing. Likewise, any direct reference to Fan is nowhere to be found in Chiang's speeches. Although I am only able to prove a contextual connection between the two, given the fact that Fan is a household name in China, it would be inconceivable that Chiang, or Chen Bulei for that matter, did not know of Fan's thinking. The similarities between the two men, therefore, cannot be dismissed as purely coincidental. Whether or not Chiang in his speeches mentioned Fan is not the point. The point is that by bringing in Fan, we can put "rangwai bixian annei" in a broader historical context by establishing a link, direct or contextual, between Chiang and earlier figures. This shows that the idea of putting the house in order before resisting foreign invaders was shared by some of the most brilliant minds of China and was certainly not an idea developed by Chiang alone.

"Heqin:" Chinese Style Appeasement

The exact Chinese equivalent of the English word "appeasement" does not exist. Usually, appeasement is translated into Chinese as "guxi," a poor rendition in my opinion. "Guxi" means "turning one's blind eye to evil," hence the *chengyu*: "To tolerate evil is to abet it" (*guxi yangjian*). There is a difference between turning a blind eye to evil and making concessions to a potential enemy. The lack of a Chinese equivalent for the English word "appeasement" did not prevent

the Chinese from making concessions to foreign enemies.

The use of the term "heqin," which means attempting to cement cordial relations with rulers of non-Han peoples along China's border regions by marrying daughters of the Chinese imperial family to their chiefs, or peace through intermarriage for short, was a convincing evidence of Chinese appeasement. Fostering and maintaining a so-called cordial relationship with foreign enemies did not come cheaply. It required concessions on the part of China. In addition to giving away territory, women, jewels, silks, and other luxuries, it cost the country its dignity. "Heqin" carried a hefty price tag. But if China was willing to pay, a temporary, albeit uneasy, peace might be worked out as a result.

"Heqin" was first put to use in 201 B.C. during the early Han Dynasty to appease the Xiongnu who lived along China's northern border. The great scholar Qian Mu pointed out that "heqin" was not just about marrying Chinese princesses to Xiongnu chiefs, it went beyond that. It was actually a foreign policy in disguise. According to Qian Mu, as a nomadic people the Xiongnu had no political or territorial ambitions in China. They only coveted China's economic wealth. "Heqin" allowed Xiongnu commoners to trade with the Chinese, and Xiongnu noblemen to receive lavish gifts from the Chinese court, thus satisfying the material needs of the invaders and temporarily cooling off their desire for invading and looting China.[14]

I would assert that "heqin" was a domestic policy as well. It enabled China to trade women, jewels or land for time, which was used to build up its national defense. As such, "heqin"

epitomizes "rangwai bixian annei."

"Heqin" came into being as a compromise out of the Han Empire's military inadequacy. Although "heqin" did calm the tensions between the Han and Xiongnu, it did not altogether prevent the latter from intruding into China. After Liu Bang passed away in 195 B.C., top ranking officials such as Jia Yi considered "heqin" too demeaning, and recommended discarding it and resuming military action. It was not until 133 B.C. that the Chinese scrapped "heqin" and launched nine major expeditions against the Xiongnu in the next fifteen years.[15] Judging by the Han experience, appeasement had served its purpose well. It gave China a breathing space of sixty-eight years, and the Xiongnu were reduced from a border menace to simply a nuisance for decades to come.

For a nation that values historical precedents, the Han experience was not lost on later generations. Yang Jian, the founding emperor of the Sui Dynasty (581-617 A.D.), married two Chinese princesses to the chief of the Eastern Tujue (the Turks), living along China's northern frontier.[16] Later in the Tang Dynasty, the Chinese emperors married one princess to a Tibetan chief in the seventh century and another one to the chief of the Muslim Huihe in the eighth century.[17] During the Song Dynasty, although no Chinese princess was ever betrothed to enemies, China did pay tribute to the Western Xia and Liao. Later, in the Ming Dynasty, the Chinese contained foreign enemies such as the Tibetans and Mongols by allowing them to trade with China in order to meet their material needs. The Qing Dynasty, in addition to granting foreigners the right to trade

with China, ceded Hong Kong, Kowloon, Taiwan, and the Penghu islands to them.

Throughout history, "heqin" was pursued in times of military weakness. The Han, Sui, Tang, Song, Ming, and Qing examples demonstrate how far the Chinese government was willing to go in making concessions to invaders when it was in no position to take the military initiative. They also show that when it comes to survival the Chinese have been flexible since antiquity in their dealings with foreign enemies.

"Heqin:" Where Heroes Swallowed Insults

The fact that both of the Han and Tang Dynasties resorted to "heqin" is no small matter. The Han Dynasty, which lasted for more than four hundred years, is considered by Chinese to be one of the greatest Chinese empires of all time. Ethnic Chinese are so proud of the Han Dynasty that they call themselves Han Chinese. Chinese regard the Tang Dynasty, which lasted for almost three hundred years, as equally magnificent. It is no surprise that overseas Chinese communities are referred to as "Tangrenjie," meaning streets of the Chinese people. Both Han and Tang are now synonymous with China.

Han Emperor Liu Bang and Tang Emperor Li Shimin both earned the reputation of being men of great talent and bold vision. The twenty-three-year rule of Li Shimin, 627 to 649 A.D., is universally praised by Chinese historians as one of the most prosperous periods in China's history. Both Liu and Li had to appease foreign enemies at one time or another. But appeasement

did not detract from their merit. In fact, they were remembered as brilliant rulers, not as appeasers who had bowed to invading enemies and betrothed Chinese princesses to them.

Yang Jian was crowned with glory as the great ruler who united China after two hundred and sixty years of disruption and laid the foundation on which the Tang Dynasty would thrive. Fan Zhongyan went down in history as an upright official and a distinguished scholar. He is also fondly remembered for his inspirational words: "A ruler should plan and worry ahead of the people, and enjoy the fruits after the people" (*xian tianxia zhi you er you, hou tianxia zhi le er le*). Liu Bang, Li Shimin, Yang Jian, and Fan Zhongyan have not been criticized for appeasing foreign enemies. But centuries later Chiang Kai-shek was attacked in tongue and pen for trying to follow in their footsteps.

The word appeasement nowadays carries a negative connotation. This has much to do with the shame of Munich. Chinese appeasement differs from Chamberlain-Daladier appeasement in a couple of aspects. While England and France sacrificed the interests of a third party, China sacrificed its own. The Han example and Fan Zhongyan's writings show that the Chinese do not believe appeasement would bring about a lasting peace. They do not think that "peace in our time" was achieved as a result of marrying Chinese princesses to the "barbarians." There was no cheering for "heqin" or "rangwai bixian annei." Instead, China swallowed the humiliation, waiting patiently for the tables to be turned.

Appeasement: A Time-Honored Policy

Appeasement was not a permanent solution to China's problem, only a stop-gap arrangement. Demeaning nonetheless, it was a strategy of retreat in order to advance, a plan of making concessions to gain advantage in the long run (*yitui weijin*). To Liu Bang, Fan Zhongyan, and Chiang Kai-shek, appeasement was about walking away from a fight. It is not cowardice that made them choose to walk away from a fight. As a *chengyu* cautions, "a wise man does not fight when the odds are against him" (*haohan buchi yanqiankui*). If Fan Zhongyan's writings are any indication, appeasement was about not being carried away by reckless courage, emotional impulse, and irresponsible rhetoric. As Confucius admonished: "Impatience with little things spoils great plans" (*xiao buren ze luan damou*).[18] Extraordinary patience is the key to successful appeasement.

When Chiang Kai-shek emerged in the mid-1920s as a national leader in the face of Japanese aggression, a historical pattern of appeasing foreign enemies was long since cast. If this is what Chinese history has taught later generations, then Chiang surely learned his lesson well because he believed that he was pursuing a time-honored policy.

In the name of "heqin" and "rangwai bixian annei," China gave away territory and national dignity. Appeasement may have hurt the feelings of the Chinese, but it was not meant to erode Chinese sovereignty in spite of the loss of princesses, face, and territory. Unequal treaties were a different matter. Some articles in unequal treaties such as extraterritoriality and

fixed tariffs prohibited the Chinese government from exercising its full sovereignty. Hu Hanmin, the Kuomintang elder, asserted that unequal treaties had relegated China to the shameful state of "a semi-sovereign country and sub-colony."[19] Hu's position may explain why Chiang had no problem making concessions to Japan but could not tolerate the straitjacket that was the unequal treaties and sought to abolish them altogether.

Limitations to Chiang Kai-shek's Appeasement

Because appeasement was only a stop-gap arrangement and was not an established policy written in stone, each Chinese government improvised in appeasing and did what it saw fit. So far as Nanjing was concerned, the limit of appeasement was best described by a resolution on Sino-Japanese relations passed by the Fifth Kuomintang National Congress in 1935: "As long as our effort to preserve peace does not reach the stage of total hopelessness, we will not give up on peace."[20]

Nanjing's limit of accommodation to Tokyo was flexible; the resolution did not spell out what constituted "the stage of total hopelessness." This so-called stage of hopelessness is such a loose term that its definition may vary from one person to the next. This helps explain why Nanjing, the Communists, and some of the regional militarists all had different ideas with regard to determining when enough was enough. Parks Coble notes, "we cannot really be certain that Chiang himself knew [what was the stage of total hopelessness.]"[21]

There was no preset limit to Chiang's appeasement, but he

stopped making concessions to Japan as soon as he decided on a full-scale resistance in July 1937. Appeasement was about making concessions to the enemy in order to delay hostilities. Once the all-out fighting started, appeasement would come to an end because the very incentive for concession-making no longer existed. If we use July 1937 as a demarcation, then the distinction between appeasement and treason becomes clear. Appeasement was an effort to delay the inevitable. Chiang did not go overboard to the opposite side. He remained firmly on the Chinese side. Wang Jingwei, in contrast, allowed himself and others like Chen Gongbo and Zhou Fohai to be used by the enemy as puppets during war. Concession-making before the start of hostilities is appeasement; during war it is treason.

Chiang Kai-shek & Historical Parallels

In addition to *chengyu* and "heqin," historical parallels cited in Chiang Kai-shek's speeches provide more insights into the rationale behind "rangwai bixian annei." The kind of historical parallels Chiang cited are so well known to the Chinese that one does not even have to be literate to know about them. Through storytellers and folk operas, the deeds of historical figures and morals of historical lessons are handed down from generation to generation. The power of history as a guide is enormous for Chinese intellectuals or politicians.

While Chiang capitalized on parallels in Chinese history, he used very few foreign ones. It is not difficult to see why he stayed away from foreign analogies. The kind of Chinese

historical figures and parallels cited in Chiang's speeches are something that all Chinese can relate to and identity with. They need no introduction even for the uneducated. Choosing historical parallels that the average Chinese were familiar with could, in theory, make it easier for Chiang to arouse popular sympathy for his cause. Using foreign historical analogies might not strike a sympathetic chord. The average contemporary Chinese would not readily identify themselves with foreign people.

No Shortcut to National Salvation

In order to convince the nation that national salvation was a long-term process, Chiang called attention to the story of Gou Jian. On May 9, 1932, National Humiliation Day, he addressed party cadres, encouraging them to model themselves on Gou Jian's tasting bitter gall and sleeping on brushwood.[22] (On May 9, 1915, Japan forced on the embryo Republic the Twenty-One Demands, hence National Humiliation Day.)

Gou Jian was the king of Yue during the Warring States period and was defeated by Fu Chai, the king of Wu, in 494 B.C. Thereafter, Gou Jian underwent self-imposed hardships by sleeping on brushwood and tasting gall before going to "bed" as a way to strengthen his determination to avenge the defeat. It took Gou more than twenty years to restore his country and finally in 473 B.C. Yue destroyed Wu.

The story of Gou Jian's revenge became so popular among the Chinese that everyone knows it by heart. The story also enriches the Chinese language by giving it two *chengyu* which were quoted

in the above National Humiliation Day speech and other speeches of Chiang. The first one is "woxin changdan." Meaning literally sleeping on brushwood and tasting gall, it has a connotation of enduring humiliation and insult in order to take one's revenge on a sworn enemy. The other one, "shinian shengju, shinian jiaoxun." may be given a modern reading of ten years of education and ten years of economic development for the purpose of wiping out national humiliation.

> "Ten years of education and ten years of economic development" were two slogans that Gou Jian devised as a guide to saving his country when it was on the brink of destruction. We should not forget these words.....As long as we work hard to live up to the teaching of "ten years of education and ten years of economic development," we will certainly be able to restore our country.[23]

The moral in the Gou Jian story is that men of noble character take time to seek revenge (*junzi baochou sannian buwan*). In quoting this immensely popular story, Chiang was telling the Chinese people that the country should not rush into war with Japan when it was not ready, and that it would take a long-term commitment to wipe out national humiliation.

The account of Gou Jian was one historical example that Chiang hoped would set the people's hearts aflame. Another equally famous historical story cited in his speeches was that of Yue Fei. Yue was the Southern Song general who became not just a national hero but also a martial deity in Chinese folk religion. After the Northern Song fell, Yue was one of the generals who stood for war with the invading Jurchens and was extremely successful in recovering some of the lost territory in north central China. However, prime minister Qin Kui was

colluding with the enemy. Qin Kui, under instruction from the Jurchens, had Yue executed in 1141 on a fabricated charge. Yue Fei's story is just as popular as that of Gou Jian. He was credited with the inspiring words "Restore our lost territories!" (*huanwo heshan*).

Qin Kui and his wife Wang Shi remain the most reviled couple in Chinese history. Their kneeling bronze statues in front of Yue Fei's tomb at the West Lake, Hangzhou, are a constant reminder and powerful testimony of how the people mourn the loss of a national hero and of the disgust they feel for traitors. A recent book entitled *Ancestors* by Asian Wall Street Journal reporter Frank Ching, a descendant of Qin Kui, depicts the anguish of coming to terms with his ancestors' dubious past.[24]

In a speech delivered at the Kuomintang Fourth National Congress, November 1931, Chiang said that in order to accomplish national salvation, the country must make sure that no traitors were sabotaging its war effort in the way that Qin Kui had frustrated Yue Fei.[25] It is ironic that Chiang should use the Yue Fei story. Yue was murdered for advocating military action and not giving in to the pressure coming from the invading enemy and Qin Kui. Chiang was accused by some for not standing up to Japan. Yet Chiang obviously considered himself a modern day Yue Fei and warned others about becoming a latter-day Qin Kui.

Before the Resistance War, what worried Chiang most was not so much how long it would take to do away with national humiliation, nor how much of the nation's territory he would have left to accomplish the task, but whether the Chinese people had the courage and patience to endure national humiliation

before it was wiped out.

On March, 5, 1934, Chiang addressed top government and party officials at his official residence in Nanchang, Jiangxi, maintaining that as long as the people were determined, China would be restored some day even if the country had only one province left at its disposal. In the speech, he reminded the audience how King Wen of the Zhou Dynasty established a great empire using only a small piece of land, and how Shao Kang, the crown prince of the Xia Dynasty, reclaimed his country from the usurpers using a meager force of five hundred men. "Whether or not a country is able to revive itself has little to do with how much territory it has lost. It all depends on if its strength and revolutionary base are consolidated."[26] Today the name Shao Kang has become a synonym of national resurgence.

The Lesson of the Ming Downfall

Facing the Japanese from without and the regional militarists and Communists from within, Chiang found a lot of common ground between himself and the late Ming Chinese. Chiang's obsession with chastising those who refused his authority before resisting Japan was the legacy of a painful historical event: the collapse of the Ming Dynasty as a result of the coincidence of roving bandits and the Manchus.

Historically known as "liukou," the roving bandits were mostly peasant rebels and mutinous soldiers. When the bandit problem first arose, the Ming court could not make up its mind whether to win them over through peaceful means or to eliminate

them by military measures. It lost precious time in putting down the rebels by switching back and forth between the two policies, allowing the rebels enough time to gain strength. Eventually the Ming troops were unable to attend to fighting both the rebels and the Manchus. The consequence was disastrous.

With his profound concern that Republican China might take the same road as Ming China did, Chiang in early 1933 reminded his top generals of the fall of the Ming Dynasty.

> Eliminating domestic rebels is a prerequisite for resisting foreign invasion. The somber example of the Ming downfall is still fresh. If we do not learn our lesson from it we will repeat the same disastrous mistakes. Today the country has neglected the fundamental issue of eliminating those who fan the flames of disorder. Instead, it prates about resisting foreign invasion. This has reversed the order of importance and urgency. I have learned that the generals directly in charge of the anti-Communist campaign in southern Jiangxi consider their assignment too difficult and would like to take on Japan in hopes of currying some momentary fame.....This has more than exposed our revolutionary soldiers' lack of courage and determination.[27]

For fear that the regional militarists and Communists might spoil his war effort, thus abetting another Japanese victory at the expense of China, Chiang sought to eliminate those who stirred up trouble domestically. This was a crucial decision. In the early Han Dynasty and in the Song Dynasty when Fan Zhongyan was chief minister, China was free from domestic distractions such as regional militarists or peasant rebels. Protracted military operations against the regional militarists and the Communists, which Chiang claimed as dire necessity, ran counter to Fan's advice of allowing the country time to recuperate.

The crux of Chiang's problem was the very lack of time. "Rangwai bixian annei" was not something that could be

accomplished in a matter of a few years. It required a long-term commitment. Han China waited seventy years to avenge itself on the Xiongnu. Gou Jian spent over twenty years restoring his kingdom for the final showdown with Wu. As early as 1932, however, Chiang knew time was short when he predicted that World War II would probably start in 1936.[28] He had no opportunity for long-term planning as some of his predecessors did. But he hoped to minimize potential damage to China as a result of war by implementing one major aspect of "annei" in the shortest time possible: chastising those who refused his authority. The Ming lesson had taught Chiang that it was now or never with regard to bringing under control domestic trouble makers.

Chiang Kai-shek, A Latter-Day Li Hongzhang?

Of all historical events, the Jiawu defeat and Li Hongzhang's fall are the most recent historical parallels that Chiang Kai-shek cited in his speeches. As such, they had a tremendous impact on him. Interestingly, Chiang in 1934 said that placing Li Hongzhang and himself on a par was absurd. He claimed that he differed from Li in terms of generation, family background, and education; comparing him to Li only reveals the fact that whoever did so knew very little about him.[29] The following passages will show that Chiang had underestimated the similarity between himself and Li.

Appointed High Commissioner for the Northern Ocean in 1870, Li Hongzhang was one of the most influential political figures in the late Qing period until he had to go to Japan in person to

sue for peace when the Japanese defeated his Huai Army and Beiyang Navy in the Jiawu War. Chiang and Li were only two generations apart. When the Jiawu War broke out, Chiang was seven years old. Chiang was fourteen when Li passed away in 1901 at the age of seventy-eight. The short age gap between the two means that Chiang personally lived through Li's defeat in the Jiawu War and China's subsequent disgrace at the peace table.

Chiang was haunted by Li's defeat. Knowing that history might repeat itself and that he might take the same disastrous road as Li had only decades before, Chiang poured out his woes through the use of Li as a parallel in a speech given to government officials in Nanjing, October 21, 1931.

> Two most shameful things happened to China during the former Qing Dynasty. The first one was that in the Jiawu War when the Beiyang Fleet was defeated by Japan, the Nanyang Fleet stood still and watched, even declaring its neutrality. This clearly shows that the Chinese have no concept of nationalism and no national inspiration, thus allowing the foreigners to deem us as being incapable of uniting as a whole. Under the circumstances, how could we expect the foreigners not to bully us? It is no wonder that we were defeated.[30]

Almost three years after Chiang gave the above speech, his confidence in the Chinese military had not increased. In a speech delivered to the officers' corps on September 9, 1934, at Lushan, Jiangxi, Chiang again used the Jiawu fiasco to disparage the present military situation.

> People working in the Qing court in general were decrepit, muddleheaded, incompetent, and cowardly. They had no sense of what was going on outside the country and knew nothing about the actual situation of the enemy and themselves. Li Hongzhang had some idea of what went on in the outside world and of the country's weaknesses, and he warned against rushing into war but to no avail.....There were many reasons for China's defeat; but the Chinese soldiers' failing to live up to expectations and the kind of corruption going on

> in the Chinese army had to be the major ones.....In terms of the size of the army and navy, our strength was greater than that of Japan, this was particularly true with the navy which ranked number six in the world and was twice the size of its Japanese counterpart. Then why the Japanese did not seem to mind at all and decided to declare war on us? Why the Chinese military suffered a crushing defeat? No other reason: the Japanese know too well that we Chinese soldiers have no idea what is going on in the outside world, have no sense of nationalism, have no *esprit de corps*. The army in particular was fragmented by internal differences.[31]

Elsewhere in the September 9 speech, Chiang regretted that although Li's Huai Army emerged after the fall of the Taipings as one of the most powerful forces in China, Li had no control over forces other than his own. Chiang also expressed his concern that the Chinese troops were split by their regional origins or factions, and each unit cared only about its own business. As for the navy, Chiang once again criticized the Nanyang Fleet for not coming to the rescue of its Beiyang counterpart. He asserted that given the magnitude of corruption in the military, he did not think the Chinese forces currently were any better than their Qing counterpart. In fact, Chiang believed the Chinese military had actually become worse than what it was forty years before.[32]

The Jiawu War was really Li Hongzhang's war, not that of China. There was no nationwide mobilization; only Li's Beiyang Fleet and Huai Army went to war. Throughout the war, Li put up a one-man show, receiving no assistance from his colleagues. Yet he alone was held responsible for the defeat. What happened to Li weighed heavily on Chiang who must have agonized over the possibility of whether he would become a second Li Hongzhang. Finding a parallel in Li meant Chiang had to tackle some

difficult questions before going to war with Japan. Were the Communists and the regional militarists genuine in their plea for war or were they just trying to finish him off as a political rival by Japan's hand? Could he expect support from the regional militarists and the Communists when war started? Was the impending war that of the entire country or his own? Chiang could only find out the truth after the war started. By then it might be too late.

The similarity between Chiang and Li is uncanny. The former, in the 1930s, was facing the same command problem that had cost Li his career. According to Immanuel Hsu,

> The unification achieved by the Northern Expedition was more apparent than real, for although many of the northern warlords had been wiped out, a number of others had maintained themselves by nominally supporting the Expedition. In his eagerness to achieve a national unification, Chiang Kai-shek negotiated with them for a mutual accommodation, granting them appointments which confirmed their semi-independent regional status while receiving in return their recognition of Nanking as the central government of China.[33]

Chiang was unable to put the entire country under his command. Out of twenty-two provinces, Nanjing effectively controlled only four. Shortly after the Northern Expedition, Finance Minister T.V. Soong reported that Nanjing could rely only on the revenues from Jiangsu, Zhejiang, Anhui, and Jiangxi. Revenues from other provinces that were meant for the national treasury had been appropriated by the regional authorities.[34]

In citing Li Hongzhang's defeat in the Jiawu War, Chiang Kai-shek was not only saying that his authority as the supreme commander of the Chinese forces was anything but supreme, but also that the current Chinese military could not be relied on

for repelling the enemy.

Using Li as an example, Chiang was accusing those who stood for war of not bearing in mind Li's defeat and wanting to repeat the same mistake. Since history had proved Li correct when he cautioned against the Jiawu War, Chiang must have come to the conclusion that his opposition to a second Sino-Japanese war in less than fifty years was correct because both of them believed that the Chinese military was unequal to the task. History has shown what would happen to a nation whose armed forces were poorly prepared for war. If history is a mirror, then Chiang had to be seeing a disaster coming his way.

Points to Ponder

The use of historical parallels can better illustrate Chiang's point, but it does carry a risk. By using Li Hongzhang, the Jiawu defeat, and the Ming downfall as exact parallels, Chiang got himself enmeshed in a web of his own spinning, thus narrowing his outlook and reducing his options. As a result, Chiang became too obsessed with historical parallels to deal with foreign invasion any differently from his predecessors. Moreover, in order to use exact parallels, he had to assume that circumstances were immutable. While the wisdom of putting the house in order before resisting foreign invasion remained largely unchanged over the centuries, the circumstances did.

One crucial difference between Chiang and Liu Bang as well as Fan Zhongyan was that Liu and Fan only had to deal with foreign enemies and the country was relatively free from

domestic unrest. Chiang was facing foreign and domestic enemies. Liu and Fan did not live to see the fall of Ming China or the Jiawu defeat. But Chiang could hardly ignore these colossal historical lessons. He learned that the country had to strengthen itself for the impending war with Japan. Yet he could not devote his undivided attention to war preparation when the regional militarists and Communists were constantly distracting him. While "annei" involved only economic development and military buildup in Han and Song China, it had expanded to include campaigns against the Communists so far as Republican China was concerned.

Another fact that Chiang seemed to have overlooked was the distinction between Inner Asian enemies like Xiongnu and modern imperialists such as Japan. As Qian Mu pointed out, Inner Asian nomads in general had no territorial or political ambitions in China, they just coveted China's wealth. As such, China could easily buy them off through "heqin." Japan, however, would not give up until the objective of reducing China to its dependency was achieved. Comparing Inner Asian nomads to Japan, the nature of China's foreign enemies had changed from material incentives to territorial and political domination. Unlike past enemies such as Tibet or Xiongnu, twentieth-century Japan was a far more sophisticated and determined enemy.

In adopting "rangwai bixian annei," Chiang was basically pursuing an old policy. Was a tenth century solution able to solve a twentieth century problem? Even Chiang himself was not certain. In 1934, he wrote that "we know that so far as current Sino-Japanese complications are concerned, Japan holds the

complete initiative. When Japan has no intention to ease off the pressure, China will not be able to do so unilaterally. Our current strategy of 'resisting while negotiating' has revealed the fact that the authorities have run out of options."[35] (Nanjing adopted the "resisting while negotiating" strategy when Japan attacked Shanghai in 1932. See Chapter Seven.)

Chiang's candid remarks regarding "resisting while negotiating" suggest two things. First, "rangwai bixian annei" was his last resort, something the Chinese would describe as "an option when there are no options (*meiyou banfa de banfa*)." Second, he was not confident of or optimistic about the prospect of the policy as the Japanese military had no intention restraining its actions.

In trying to understand Chiang Kai-shek better, *chengyu* and historical parallels, though helpful, can only take us so far. While it is true that Chiang attached great importance to them both and his thinking had been shaped by them, he was by no means living in the shadow of his predecessors. He was not a replica of the past. He was influenced by factors other than historical examples and set phrases, factors such as the vulnerability of Republican China in the 1930s and the extent to which national defense had fallen short of his expectation. Chapters Four and Five feature discussions on contemporary Chinese social, economic, and military situations prior to the Resistance War.

Notes

1. Cai Zhizhong, *Renzhe de dingning: Kongzi shuo* (Taipei, 1987), pp. 149, 165.

2. *Zhongguo geyan da cidian* (Taipei, 1997), p. 83.

3. *Xian zongtong Jianggong sixiang yanlun zongji* (Taipei, 1984), vol. 30, p. 150.

4. Ibid., vol. 10, p. 679.

5. Wei Yuan, *Haiguo tuzhi* in *Yapian zhanzheng* (Shanghai, 1984), vol. 30, p. 150.

6. *Fan Zhongyan yanjiu ziliao huibian* (Taipei, 1988), vol. A, p. 554.

7. Ibid., pp. 185-186.

8. The Song, or the Northern Song, and Liao reached a peace settlement in 1005 known as the Tanyuan Agreement which specified that each year China would give Liao two hundred thousand bolts of thin silk and one hundred thousand taels of silver, and the Song emperor address the Liao emperor as elder brother. As a result, an uneasy truce lasted more or less for one hundred and seventeen years.
   The lost territory that Fan Zhongyan mentioned was the strategically important Sixteen Yanyun States which correspond to parts of today's Hebei and Shanxi. They were ceded to Liao in 936.

9. Miao Fenglin, *Zhongguo tongshi yaolue* (Taipei, 1989), pp. 256-257.

10. *Fan Zhongyan yanjiu ziliao huibian*, vol. A, p. 422.

11. Tang Chengye, *Fan Zhongyan yanjiu* (Taipei, 1977), p. 186.

12. *Fan Zhongyan yanjiu ziliao huibian*, vol.A, pp. 562-563.

13. *Xian zongtong Jianggong sixiang yanlun zongji*, vol. 12, p. 98.

14. Qian Mu, *Guoshi dagang* (Taipei, 1980), vol. 1, p. 152.

15. Li Guoqi, *Zhongguo lishi* (Taipei, 1974), pp. 90-92.

16. Miao, p. 184.

17. Li, p. 180.

18. Cai, p. 169.

19. *Geming wenxian* (Taipei, 1977), vol. 72, p. 222.

20. *Xian zongtong Jianggong sixiang yanlun zongji*, vol. 14, p. 351.

21. Parks Coble, *Facing Japan: Chinese Politics and Japanese Imperialism, 1931-1937* (Cambridge, Mass., 1991), p. 260.

22. *Xian zongtong Jianggong sixiang yanlun zongji*, vol. 10, pp. 527-528.

23. Ibid., vol. 10, pp. 658-659.

24. Frank Ching, *Ancestors: 900 Years in the Life of a Chinese Family*. (New York: Morrow, 1988.)

25. *Geming wenxian*, vol. 72, p. 26.

26. Ibid., vol. 12, p. 97.

27. *Zhonghua minguo zhongyao shiliao chubian: duiri kangzhan shiqi* (Taipei, 1981), Introduction, vol., 3, p. 35.

28. *Xian zongtong Jianggong sixiang yanlun zongji*, vol. 10, p. 489.

29. *Geming wenxian*, vol. 72, pp. 151-152.

30. *Xian zongtong Jianggong sixiang yanlun zongji*, vol. 10, pp. 469-470.

31. Ibid., vol. 12, pp. 458-459.

32. Ibid., vol. 12, p. 459.

33. Immanuel C.Y. Hsu, *The Rise of Modern China* (Cambridge, Mass., 1983), p. 541.

34. Li Yunhan, *Zhongguo Guomindang shishu* (Taipei, 1994), vol. 3, p. 13.

35. *Geming wenxian*, vol. 72, p. 136.

CHAPTER IV

SHORTCOMINGS OF THE CHINESE WAR EFFORT: AUTARKY & MILITARY EFFECTIVENESS

According to the late General Chiang Wei-kuo, his father before the Resistance War believed that the impending conflict with Japan would be a total war, which would not only be a grueling test of the belligerent parties' military might, but of the mental and psychological endurance of their peoples as well. For China to survive the war, it needed to be socially well prepared just as it would be militarily ready.[1] Was China socially ready for war? This chapter affords food for thought.

The National Defense Design Council

To better coordinate their war endeavor, the Chinese Nationalists in November 1932 set up the National Defense Design Council (*Guofang sheji weiyuanhui*) with Chiang Kai-shek as its chairman. It was subordinate to the General Staff. The member list of the National Defense Design Council reads like a who's-who of the Republic of China. Scholars, experts, and government officials of high renown such as Ding Wenjiang, Hu Shi, Jiang Menglin (Chiang Monlin), Zhang Jiaao (Chang Kia-ngau), and Wang Shijie were enlisted for service by Nanjing. The council comprised seven sections: military affairs, international relations, education and culture, economy and finance, land and food production, communication and transportation, and population. Its primary function was to

assess the country's potential and put forward accordingly plans on how to strengthen national defense. The council acted as an advisory body to the National Government.[2]

The National Defense Design Council is not new to Western historians. William Kirby in his *Germany and Republican China* has extensive coverage of it.[3] But what is new to Western and Chinese historians alike is the proceedings of one particular conference held among council members in 1934 at Lushan, the favorite mountain resort of many Kuomintang leaders, located in Jiujiang, Jiangxi.[4] At the conference council members raised issues that they considered critical to China's war preparation. To the best of my knowledge, the Lushan Conference Proceedings of the National Defense Design Council, eighty-six pages long, hand-written, and classified by the National Government as confidential, have never been cited by historians or published, in part or in entirety, by any government agencies in Taiwan.

Education Inadequacy & National Defense

From the educational point of view, Nationalist China in the 1930s was in no position to go to war with Japan. This was the verdict of the country's chief education official Wang Shijie, who presented an analysis of the crux of Chinese education problems at the Lushan Conference.[5]

Wang, who held a bachelor's degree in Politics and Economics from the University of London and a doctorate in laws from the University of Paris, had one of the most distinguished careers in China. Before becoming education minister in 1933, Wang was a

Hubei provincial assembly councilman, director of the Hubei Education Bureau, an arbitrator at the International Court at The Hague, a member of the Legislative *Yuan*, and president of Wuhan University. His career after 1933 was equally remarkable. Between 1939 and 1945, Wang served two terms as the Kuomintang's chief of propaganda. He became foreign minister in 1945 and was twice appointed the Republic of China's chief representative to the United Nations, in 1947 and 1948. In 1947 he was elected to the National Assembly and in the following year elected as a Fellow of the Academia Sinica, an institute he later presided over from 1962 to 1970.[6]

At the Lushan Conference Wang stressed the importance of a sound education system for national defense. It would foster a hatred for the Japanese, nurture patriotism, and make the populace psychologically ready for war in which they would have to make tremendous sacrifices. However, he lamented, important as it might be, education had been given a much lower priority than economy or industry. As a result, the average Chinese did not know what was coming for their country and themselves.[7]

According to Wang, the fact that the northern and western frontiers of China were mainly inhabited by non-Han minorities posed a potential but real threat to national defense. He averred that minority education had long been neglected by all levels of government. He pleaded with Nanjing for more funding to improve the quantity and quality of minority education for he believed that not properly and adequately educating the ethnic minorities was nothing short of compromising China's first line of defense. To better reveal the crisis in China's minority

education, Wang at the conference outlined the major problems in the provinces of Suiyuan, Chahaer, Xinjiang, Qinghai, Ningxia, Xikang, and Yunnan where there were large ethnic populations.[8]

Wang said these seven provinces, lying on the borders of China, were strategically important because any possible foreign invasion by land would have to pass through Chinese defenses in these areas first. As China's first line of defense, these provinces were in a precarious situation because local ethnic groups simply did not feel emotionally attached to one another as they did not share a common tongue or written language. Nor did they coexist in harmony with each other.

Furthermore, he pointed out, Soviet Russia was constantly on the watch for any opportunity to expand its influence into these provinces through coercion or enticement. To make a bad situation worse, local governments usually overlooked not just minority education but education for all due to the lack of foresight or funding. The situation had become so bad that it was not unusual that in several hundred square miles or in a dozen counties there was not a single government sponsored school or a school that used Han Chinese teaching materials. As a result, he concluded, the ethnic groups in general had no sense of a national crisis looming large.[9]

Ethnic peoples in these provinces, Wang claimed, were intellectually and educationally backward. They did not send children to school. This made it easy for foreigners to expand their influence in the border region. Wang warned Nanjing about two disturbing developments: Soviet Russia was luring young Muslims in Xinjiang, Qinghai, and Ningxia to study in the Soviet

Union and French missionaries were setting up elementary schools exclusively for the Miao in Yunnan.[10]

If the situation in the frontier provinces was bad, the situation in the interior provinces inhabited by Han Chinese brought little comfort to Wang. In the Lushan report, he warned about the possibility that most Chinese could become easy prey of the enemy, to be manipulated by the Japanese as puppets. He conceded that due to the scarcity of educational opportunities, China had an eighty-five percent illiteracy rate. He believed that the high illiteracy rate contributed to the lack of political ideology and general knowledge among the masses, and put the government and the military in a difficult situation because they could not readily command popular support.[11]

Financial Straits & National Defense

At the Lushan Conference, the secretariat of the National Defense Design Council reported that recently the Chinese economy had declined as a result of the fluctuation in world silver prices, the loss of the Northeast to Japan, and the chronic trade deficit. Should things continue to deteriorate, the secretariat warned, China would be in danger of bankruptcy.[12] This concern was shared by council members such as Zhang Jiaao and Xu Xinliu.

Zhang Jiaao, a leading financial expert and the author of *The Inflationary Spiral: The Experience in China, 1939-1950* (New York, 1958), was the younger brother of the famous political activist Zhang Junmai (Carsun Chang). A graduate of Keio

University, Japan, Zhang became general manager of the Bank of China in 1928. Seven years later, he was appointed vice president of the Central Bank and railways minister. In 1938, he became minister of communications. Zhang joined the Hoover Institution, Stanford University, as a Senior Research Fellow in 1965.[13] Xu Xinliu studied economics in England and finance in France. He became Beijing University professor in 1914. From 1921 till his untimely death in 1938, Xu worked for Zhejiang Enterprise Bank as deputy general manager and subsequently general manager. Zhejiang Enterprise Bank's total assets were among the top three of all Shanghai banks during the 1930s.[14]

In a joint report put forward at the Lushan Conference, Zhang and Xu doubted if China was financially and economically capable of a sustained war effort. They held that China had always relied on foreign investment for domestic construction. But the country's credit had been ruined by the previous Beijing warlord government which borrowed excessively from foreigners and did not pay back either interest or principal. As a result, foreign bankers now hesitated to make loans available to the Chinese government. The problem was made worse by the Great Depression as foreign governments began reducing their investment in countries such as China. They believed that it was virtually impossible to expect foreign countries to make cash investments in China in the near future.[15]

Deprived of foreign assistance, Zhang and Xu said China could rely only on domestic capital. But they admitted that the outlook was not good, partly because the national treasury was in disarray due to a current annual trade deficit of seven or

eight hundred million *yuan*. Nanjing's effort to raise more revenue by increasing taxes and issuing more government bonds no longer worked as the people were already financially depleted.[16]

Zhang and Xu pointed out that most of China's cash assets were concentrated in one city, Shanghai, where there was an estimated amount of five hundred million *yuan* deposited in the banks. More than three hundred million of it was in the hands of foreign bankers and could not be appropriated by the Chinese government. This left Chinese banks in Shanghai with less than three hundred million *yuan*. Zhang and Xu called attention to the fact that this money was not the surplus of Chinese banks but their reserves. If the depositors were unwilling to invest their money in long-term industrial and economic projects, the banks could do nothing.[17]

The authors pointed out that the recent growth in the amount of cash deposits in Shanghai banks was not a good sign after all because it was caused by two undesirable developments. Business people in the interior deposited their money in Shanghai in order to live on the interest after closing down their businesses as a result of economic depression. Moreover, the middle class who lived in the interior transferred their savings to Shanghai because they were concerned for their own safety due to declining public security. Zhang and Xu stressed that the increase in cash deposits in Chinese banks in Shanghai must not be interpreted as an indication of soaring household income. Rather, it was merely the result of business downsizing and capital relocation. Since the people's wealth in general did not increase and the depositors would not invest their savings as

they intended to rely on the interest for a living, Zhang and Xu concluded that the amount of cash available for domestic development was minimal.[18]

Usually in a country where there is a sound currency system the government could increase the money supply by inflating the currency. This quick fix, Zhang and Xu claimed, would not work for China as it had virtually no currency system. Any talk of inflating or deflating the currency would not possibly do the country any good. Before China attained a sound currency system, they recommended that Nanjing improve the credit worthiness of existing currency issued by the government and private banks. Once a unified currency system was worked out between the central and provincial governments, then it would be the time to increase the volume of currency. They also urged Nanjing to improve China's credit rating by gradually paying off debts to foreign banks. Until the international economy recovered and foreign investment returned, Zhang and Xu said that frugality was the best way to improve China's financial situation.[19]

Autarky & National Defense

In 1933, Guangxi militarist Li Zongren wrote the article "Jiaotu kangzhan lun" (On scorched earth resistance), putting forward his ideas of how China should cope with the Japanese invasion. The article was later published in various newspapers throughout the land. Admitting in the article that China was backward, Li nevertheless claimed that should war break out it would still be self-sufficient even if its coasts were blockaded

and seaports seized by the enemy. Enemy blockade, he argued, would not cut off China's life line because the farmers would still be able to produce enough to maintain autarky.[20] Li's words, though brave and self-assertive, may not reflect the reality of the times.

In addition to educational inadequacy and financial problems, a possible wartime food shortage that would jeopardize China's autarky weighed heavily on council members at the Lushan Conference. In a report put forward at the conference, the National Defense Design Council secretariat said that when a country founded on agriculture such as China failed to achieve autarky and had to import food even in peacetime, this was a cause for concern. The secretariat warned that food shortages would not only have a severe impact on the economy but would also imperil national defense.[21]

Mu Xiangyue, a graduate of the University of Illinois majoring in agriculture and director of the Central Institute for Agricultural Experiment of the Ministry of Industry, advised Nanjing to take action to assure wartime autarky. He stated that a successful national defense strategy required equal attention to the military buildup and to the economy. Modern war, he emphasized, had evolved from a simple contest of military strength of the belligerent parties into a grueling test of a country's overall strength and its people's determination. He doubted if the Chinese economy was strong enough to sustain the war, pointing to the collapse of the village economy, a chronic trade deficit, and the decay of native industries as signs of an impending national economy breakdown.[22]

China's inability to achieve autarky in peacetime was supported by other evidence. Mu noted that 1933 was a prosperous year for Chinese farmers, but the country still purchased from abroad one hundred and fifty million *yuan* of rice, eighty-seven million *yuan* of wheat, and twenty-seven million *yuan* of flour. In the same year, it also imported three hundred thousand bales of cotton at a cost of ninety-eight million *yuan* because domestic production could not meet the demand of the Chinese textile industry. Upset by the gloomy prospects for China's self-sufficiency, Mu said flat out in his Lushan report that he was certain that the situation would only get worse if China's supply of essential commodities was cut off by Japan in wartime. Mu went on to say that it would be a big mistake if the country continued concerning itself exclusively with the military buildup. Acknowledging the importance of military readiness, he nevertheless felt strongly that both the government and the public should also seriously contemplate economic self-sufficiency. If the nation was serious about surviving the war, it must devise plans to assure wartime autarky.[23]

Mu's position was shared by fellow council member Xiao Chunjin, who called attention to the saying "hunger breeds discontentment" (*shiwei mintian*). Throughout history, Xiao said, feeding the people was a national priority and a major concern of Chinese statesmen. The idea of setting up a granary system to assure undisturbed food distribution dated from the Zhou Dynasty and can be found in a number of ancient Chinese writings. The tradition was faithfully observed by the Han, Tang, and Song Dynasties. Sun Yat-sen also accentuated the relations between

national defense and autarky in the "Three Principles of the People" and "Outlines for National Construction."[24]

Xiao believed that China's poor transportation system had complicated food distribution and contributed to the collapse of the time-honored granary system. Consequently, it was not unusual that one province was suffering from famine and its neighbor had more than enough food. For fear that uneven distribution of food might cause serious repercussions, Xiao suggested building more modern granaries in major commercial distribution centers where access to a more efficient transportation system was available in order to avoid a possible food shortage brought about by enemy blockade of the coast.[25]

Playing Off One Barbarian Against Another

The creation of the National Defense Design Council was one indication that Nanjing believed war with Japan was likely to happen soon. How to make an impending war less imminent in order to allow the country more time to prepare itself was a major agenda item at the Lushan Conference.

Playing off one barbarian against another was one of the strategies the Manchus used to set the foreigners against each other. It was never proven to be effective, but council member Xie Guansheng believed that it deserved a second try. Xie, who held a doctorate in laws from the University of Paris and became the Judicial *Yuan* secretary general in 1930, claimed that China must draw in other foreign powers in its fight against Japan.[26]

Xie pointed out that the current international situation was

not in China's favor as Japanese occupation of the Northeast had not generated significant condemnation from the United States and England. Nanjing had to adjust its foreign policy in order to contain Japan, China's foremost enemy. The first thing Nanjing could do was to promote economic ties between China and the United States as well as with England. Since Japan, the United States, and England were the top three trade partners of China, Xie believed China could benefit from intense trade competition among them. He recommended that China purchase more American and English products as substitutes for Japanese ones. Hopefully, in return, the United States and England would buy more Chinese products as substitutes for Japanese goods. This, in Xie's opinion, would cause Japan's economy to decline, thus affecting, indirectly, its military strength.[27]

The next step Nanjing had to take, Xie asserted, was to isolate Japan diplomatically by continuing to support the League of Nations. Acknowledging that the League's prestige had suffered following Japanese and German withdrawal, he still had high hopes for it. He pointed out that Italy had recently proposed to reorganize the League and this would give China an opportunity to isolate Japan internationally. He said China must support this proposal and insist that the League's authority be enhanced and Germany be brought back as a member. China's friendly gesture to Italy and Germany, he concluded, might persuade these countries to help in Nanjing's effort to contain Japanese aggression.[28]

Xie's position of using non-military means to restrain Japan was welcomed by Tang Youren. A graduate of Keio University, Tang

became a member of the Legislative *Yuan* in 1931 and deputy foreign minister under Wang Jingwei in 1933.[29]

In a report presented at the Lushan Conference, Tang said that China should avoid direct confrontation with Japan. The best way to deal with Japan, in his opinion, was to reduce its economic strength by excluding it from the world market. He suggested taking immediate action to rally other countries to economically isolate Japan. Under economic hardship, Japan might retreat. Tang added that while the Western Powers indulged themselves in an illusion of peace after the Washington Conference, Japan kept expanding its armed forces. Yet, powerful as it might seem, Japan had to reckon with the fact that there were other contenders in the region such as Soviet Russia, the United States, and England. He predicted that Japan could not hold out for long if war break out among them.[30]

Distant Water Cannot Quench Present Thirst

After seeing the reports written by some of the most able minds in contemporary China, the question is: what can we make of these reports? Let me begin with Wang Shijie's report on education. Wang's proposal to expand education for the purpose of better preparing China for war seems to indicate that he believed there would be no nationalism or patriotism before the Chinese people, Han and non-Han alike, were properly educated. And he apparently believed that education was the only means to arouse national sentiment against Japan. Wang did not think nationalism was something that the people were born with, but

something that would be acquired later through education.

A nationalism-centered education was not just Wang Shijie's personal aspiration, but the set objective of Nanjing as well. Professor Chen Hsi-en of the University of Southern California points out that in the early 1930s nationalism was the major characteristic of Chinese education. "The Nationalist government conceived and pursued a plan of nation-building, and its leaders were aware of the crucial importance of education as an instrument of nation-building.....A positive educational policy combined with the upsurge of nationalism means an educational program imbued with the spirit of nationalism."[31]

While education can achieve a national consensus, the kind of ideas Wang Shijie proposed to accomplish the goal were unrealistic. For example, he suggested creating a special popular education zone that would include five strategic coastal provinces (Hebei, Shandong, Jiangsu, Zhejiang, and Fujian) where national defense was at stake. Inside the zone, a popular education program that would better suit the needs of national defense and reflect the current national emergency would be implemented through four steps. First, redesigning textbooks using plain language so they would be easy to follow. Second, improving and modifying existing old-style folk operas, folk songs, and novels to make them up to date by adding the elements of nationalism and general knowledge. Third, training more competent teachers to meet the demand of an expanding popular education program. Fourth, building more schools. With these plans in place, Wang hoped to achieve the improbable goal of raising the literacy rate to fifty percent within three years in

the five provinces.[32]

As for improving education for the ethnic peoples, Wang admitted in the Lushan report that fostering a sense of national emergency among ethnic groups in the frontier provinces was no easy task. The most difficult problem in developing minority education was that all of the ethnic peoples had their own spoken and written languages, which varied greatly. There was no common language to be used as the standard teaching language, which had long been the problem that all frontier education authorities had to tackle.[33]

To remedy the problem, Wang recommended designing multilingual textbooks for minority children attending elementary schools. These textbooks would be written in Chinese with accompanying translations in Mongolian, Arabic, Tibetan, Miao, and other languages. Wang cautioned that the content of the new textbooks should above all reflect China's current crisis but should also respect the diversity among various ethnic peoples. With properly written textbooks, more elementary schools, and more competent teachers, he hoped to reverse the situation in the border region and make the ethnic minorities understand that they had to share weal and woe with the rest of the country in the event of war.[34]

Wang's education reform may look ambitious on paper, but it could not produce instant results. His long-term planning can be partially explained by the fact that Republican China during the 1930s was in the tutelary stage. According to Sun Yat-sen, China should go through three stages to achieve democracy: military administration, tutelage, and constitutionalism. Had there been

no Japanese invasion, Wang would still have had to attend to minority education and illiteracy reduction in order to prepare the nation for constitutionalism.

Xie Guansheng and Tang Youren had grandiose schemes to internationalize the issue of Japanese aggression in China. But they seemed to have forgotten a *chengyu* which can be loosely translated as "a weak nation cannot hope to rely on foreign nations to solve its own problems" (*ruoguo wu waijiao*). Unfortunately, China happened to be the weak nation that Japan was preying on. Xie and Tang had overlooked one obvious question: what did the United States and England have to gain by putting themselves on bad terms with Japan in upholding justice for China? Xie and Tang offered no answer to the question in their reports. Assume, for the sake of the argument, that international economic sanctions against Japan were possible, Tang still owed an explanation as to how long it would take to adversely affect Japan's military strength by economic means. This information is particularly necessary given Tang's own prediction that war between China and Japan might break out in 1939 or 1940.[35] Since Tang wrote the Lushan report in 1934, would five or six years of economic sanctions have sufficed to hurt Japan to the point that it would not be able to attack China? Tang provided no answer to his own proposition.

While Xie drew up sketchy proposals devoid of concrete planning, he did know some of the limitations to his ideas. In his Lushan report, he doubted Chinese diplomats would be up to the task for two reasons. First, Chinese embassies and consulates had tight budgets. Second, some Chinese ambassadors

were either too grudging or too lazy to conduct diplomatic activities. As a result, many Chinese embassies and consulates existed in name only. To correct the problem, Xie recommended closing down embassies and consulates in lesser countries and diverting their funding to Chinese diplomatic missions in major countries so they could do their job effectively.[36]

Chiang Kai-shek, in comparison, had a better understanding of the current international situation and was not as diplomatically naive as either Xie or Tang. In his article *Dihu? youhu?* (Enemy? Friend?) published in late 1934, Chiang made it clear that China could not expect support from the League of Nations, the United States, the Soviet Union, or England. None of them would mediate between China and Japan. He said the idea of using the Western Powers as go-betweens only demonstrated that the Chinese were just as ignorant of Sino-Japanese relations as they were of international affairs. Relying on the Western Powers diplomatically could only hurt China by further stirring up Japanese enmity. Chiang averred that any talk of bringing in a third party as mediator was not only foolish, but would also run the risk of allowing Tokyo to accuse China of playing the old game of playing off one barbarian against another, thus further agitating the Japanese.[37]

The Lushan Conference proceedings are a powerful testimony to the Kuomintang's claim that the country was too unprepared to fight Japan. These first-hand accounts are helpful in that they not only reveal China's vulnerability, but also expose the kind of mindset prevalent among the members of the National Defense Design Council: caution.

In being extremely prudent and thoughtful in their assessment of China's war capacity, however, council members were out of touch with reality when they drew up plans that would only produce results over a long period of time. Wang Shijie pleaded for more schools, Xiao Chunjin wanted more modern granaries, Zhang Jiaao demanded the whole nation be frugal, and Xie Guansheng wished for a more efficient foreign service. Their proposing long-term solutions for immediate problems is best described by a *chengyu* which says: "Distant water cannot put out a fire close at hand" (*yuanshui jiubuliao jinhuo*). Given enough time, these solutions might have worked. But war broke out before they could be accomplished.

Influence of the German Experience

The fact that Chiang Kai-shek and the National Defense Design Council members paid particular attention to long-term war preparations can be explained in part by the German experience. William Kirby writes the following.

> With the end of the Weimar period of clandestine rearmament, the Reichswehr, and [the War Economic Office] in particular, sought to push its conception of *Wehrwirtschaft* (a war economy in the broadest sense) to its logical conclusion: the planned, long-term mobilization of the nation's productive capacity and the stockpiling of raw materials for the event of a prolonged and 'total' war, in order to give Germany the economic stamina it had lacked in the First World War.[38]

According to Kirby, the concept of *Wehrwirtschaft* had a strong influence on Nanjing and there were "diverse patterns of [German] influence in the military, economic, and ideological

realms" in Nationalist China during the 1930s.[39]
In its drive for long-term planning, Nanjing seemed to have overlooked one crucial difference between China and Germany. In the 1930s, Germany did not have a foreign enemy who was constantly pressing for war. It was the aggressor, not the prey. By virtue of being a war-monger, Germany decided when and where to make war. China, in contrast, was in a passive position, being barely able to parry Japan's blows and unable to hit back.

Once Bitten Twice Shy

So far we have seen some of the handicaps that members of the National Defense Design Council considered to be holding back China's potential war effort. Their reports were indeed gloomy, but it would be wrong to label them as defeatists because they were all for war if it could not be avoided. They may not have been pessimists, but they were definitely persons of caution. Judging by their Lushan reports, it appears that they all believed a Sino-Japanese war was extremely likely in the foreseeable future yet none of them ever suggested, or hinted, that China would not survive it.

A *chengyu* has it that "once bitten by a snake, one shies at a coiled rope for the next ten years" (*yizhao bei she yao, shinian pa caosheng*). In the 1930s, the wounds of the Jiawu defeat were not yet healed. So long as Taiwan and Penghu remained in the hands of Japan, China was still paying for the blunder of not being able to achieve military preparedness. The Jiawu War made Japan more aggressive. It now demanded more from

China. As another Sino-Japanese war approached, members of the National Defense Design Council were convinced that it was not unreasonable to make China as fully prepared as possible. They felt that the circumstances were indeed critical, but not quite to the level of despair. They believed that they could still make something positive out of an adverse situation. The Chinese Nationalists are fond of a catchphrase "cautious optimism" (*shenshen de leguan*). This sums up the council members' mindset, and that of Chiang Kai-shek, quite appropriately.

Notes

1. Chiang Wei-kuo interview. June 12, Taipei.
2. Liu Weikai, *Guonan qijian yingbian tucun wenti zhi yanjiu: cong jiuyiba dao qiqi* (Taipei, 1995), pp. 235-236.
3. William Kirby, *Germany and Republican China* (Stanford, 1984), pp. 91-101.
4. *Guofang sheji weiyuanhui Lushan yishilu* (1934).
5. Wang Shijie, 'Guanyu guofang jiaoyu zhi tian' in *Guofang sheji weiyuanhui Lushan yishilu*, p. 20.
6. *Zhongguo xiandai shi cidian: renwu bufen* (Taipei, 1985), p. 21.
7. Wang, p. 18
8. Ibid., p. 19.
9. Ibid., p. 19.
10. Ibid., p. 20.
11. Ibid., p. 21.
12. Secretariat of the National Defense Design Council, 'Canmou benbu guofang sheji weiyuanhui mishuting gongzuo baogao' in *Guofang sheji weiyuanhui Lushan yishilu*, p. 82.
13. *Zhongguo xiandai shi cidian: renwu bufen*, p. 359.
14. Ibid., p. 292.
15. Zhang Jiaao and Xu Xinliu, 'Jingji ji caizheng fangan' in *Guofang sheji weiyuanhui Lushan yishilu*, p. 23. (For biographical sketches of Zhang and Xu, see *Zhongguo xiandai shi cidian: renwu bufen*, pp. 292-293, 359.)
16. Ibid., p. 23.
17. Ibid., p. 24.
18. Ibid., p. 25.
19. Ibid., p. 26
20. Shen Xiaoyun, *Li Zongren de yisheng* (Zhengzhou, 1992), pp. 215-218.
21. Secretariat of the National Defense Design Council, 'Canmou benbu guofang sheji weiyuanhui mishuting gongzuo baogao,' in

Guofang sheji weiyuanhui Lushan yishilu, p. 84.

22. Mu Xiangyue, 'Benhui yanjiu diaocha gongzuo ying zhuzhong ruhe mou ziji zizu yi yingfu guoji zhanzheng zhi baofa an' in *Guofang sheji weiyuanhui Lushan yishilu*, p. 34. (For biographical sketches of Mu, see *Zhongguo xiandai shi cidian renwu bufen*, p. 571.)

23. Ibid., p. 35.

24. Xiao Chunjin, 'Qing sheli liangshi chubei cangku yiji minshi jianzu chunliang er gu guofang an' in *Guofang sheji weiyuanhui Lushan yishilu*, p. 36.

25. Ibid., p. 37.

26. Xie Guansheng, 'Guofang waijiao fangan' in *Guofang sheji weiyuanhui Lushan yishilu*, p. 1. (For biographical sketches of Xie, see *Zhongguo xiandai shi cidian: renwu bufen*, pp. 573-574.)

27. Ibid., p. 2.

28. Ibid., p. 2.

29. Tang Youren, 'DuiRi waijiao fangan,' in *Guofang sheji weiyuanhui Lushan yishilu*, p. 6. (For biographical sketches of Tang, see *Zhongguo xiandai shi cidian: renwu bufen*, pp. 249-250.)

30. Ibid., p. 8.

31. Chen Hsi-en, 'Education in China, 1927-1937,' in Paul Sih (ed.), *The Strenuous Decade: China's Nation-building Efforts, 1927-1937* (New York, 1970), pp. 293-294.

32. Wang, p. 23.

33. Ibid., p. 22.

34. Ibid., p. 22.

35. Tang, p.

36. Xie, p. 5.

37. *Geming wenxian* (Taipei, 1977), vol. 72, pp. 144-145.

38. Kirby, p. 105.

39. Ibid., p. 5.

CHAPTER V

SHORTCOMINGS OF THE CHINESE WAR EFFORT: NATIONAL DEFENSE INDUSTRY & MILITARY EFFECTIVENESS

Shortly before the Jiawu War started in July 1894, Li Hongzhang, commander of the Beiyang forces, submitted a report of the Chinese navy to the court. It revealed that the navy was poorly prepared for war, and Li warned that the result would be disastrous should a Sino-Japanese war break out.

> Of all warships available to the Beiyang Navy, only [two] are superior to those of the dwarfs [the Japanese] in terms of fire power. But they are heavy and slow.....As for the rest, the older they get the slower they go. Japan has twenty-one fast warships, both new and old. Nine of them were built after 1889 and the fastest ones can sail twenty-three knots per hour. The slower ships still have a speed of twenty knots or so. We purchased our ships at an earlier time when the Westerners' boat building technology was not quite as advanced as it is now. Back then a speed of fifteen to eighteen knots per hour was considered to be the maximum. Now the maximum speed has increased to more than twenty knots. Recently the Board of Revenue decided to stop purchasing ships and since 1888 our navy has not acquired one single ship. Ding Ruchang and other admirals have been pleading for modern fast sailing ships. I realized the court's financial difficulties and dared not to submit my memorial asking for more ships.[1]

In fact, Qing China was thoroughly humiliated by Japan and paid a heavy price for its lack of military preparedness. But the story did not end there. Some thirty years later, a new Chinese government in Nanjing was facing the same enemy and the same problem of military unpreparedness. Lightning had struck twice.

In the late 1920s and early 1930s, many Chinese who had lived through the Jiawu War were still alive and they would have certainly remembered China's defeat. Chapter Two has shown that Chiang Kai-shek was particularly haunted by the Jiawu fiasco and

wanted to do everything within his power to prevent another one from happening. Chiang, who was eight years old when the war ended, used Qing China's unpreparedness as an analogy to Nationalist China's military inadequacy. In his speeches he referred to Li Hongzhang's defeat to make the point that the country must get its house in order before taking on Japan lest another defeat befall it. The gloomy passages of the Lushan Conference proceedings cited in Chapter Four are a sure indication that China's military effectiveness was in doubt.

Military Effectiveness

Military effectiveness, according to one expert opinion, "is the process by which armed forces convert resources into fighting power. A fully effective military is one that derives maximum combat power from resources physically and politically available. Effectiveness thus incorporates some notion of efficiency."[2] In their article *The Effectiveness of Military Organizations*, Allan Millett, Williamson Murray, and Kenneth Watman write:

> The effort to obtain resources for military activity and the proficiency in acquiring those resources constitute political effectiveness. Resources consist of reliable access to financial support, a sufficient military-industrial base, a sufficient quantity and quality of manpower, and control over the conversion of those resources into military capabilities."[3]

Although Millett, Murray, and Watman are able to define military effectiveness and its relationship to the rest of the society so tersely, they claim that "the basic characteristics of military

effectiveness cannot be measured with precision."[4] They narrow its basic characteristics down to such aspects as industrial base, technical prowess, money, and the ability to turn natural resources into useable military strength.[5] This chapter examines the restraints which compromised Chinese military effectiveness, including the strength and morale of the military, the uncertainty of mineral and gasoline supply, the shortage of military horses and mules, and an inadequate communication network.

Material Strength of the Chinese Air Force & Navy

We have seen Li Hongzhang's dismal analysis of the Chinese navy. Four decades after the Jiawu catastrophe, the Chinese navy was still in a bad shape. The completion of the Northern Expedition in December 1928 enabled the Nationalists to attend to much neglected naval development. In June 1929, Nanjing put forward a plan to expand and update the navy. It went nowhere for lack of money. In 1934, another plan was on the table, calling for purchasing German submarines and sending eighty naval officers to Germany for training. It was put on indefinite hold when war broke out three years later.[6]

As a result of budgetary restraints, between 1928 and 1937 Nanjing only built seventeen new vessels and purchased one vessel from abroad (a light cruiser made in Japan).[7] When war broke out in 1937, the Chinese navy had only seventy-four vessels of various types with a total tonnage of fifty-nine thousand.[8] It had no battleships, aircraft carriers, or

submarines.[9] The limited number of vessels aside, the Chinese navy was further crippled by the fact that most of its vessels were built either in the late Qing or the early Republican period. By 1937, many vessels had become too old and obsolete for modern warfare.[10] In contrast, the Japanese navy by 1935 had more than two hundred and forty vessels of various kinds--including ten battleships, five aircraft carriers, and sixty-seven submarines--with a total tonnage of one million nine hundred thousand. When war began, Japan was building more vessels, including three heavy cruisers and two *Yamato*-class battleships, the biggest battleships of all time.[11]

The Nationalists attached great importance to the development of the air force, believing that air superiority would be crucial in the expected war. Nanjing estimated that the country would need at least one thousand combat aircraft for front line operations. As of 1936, the Chinese air force had only three hundred and fourteen aircraft of various kinds in nine wings. All the aircraft were foreign made, including models from Boeing, Northrop, Fiat, Heinkel, Douglas, and Hawk.[12] Japan did not have an independent air force; it was under the command of the army and the navy. In the mid-1930s, the Japanese army air force had fourteen hundred and eighty aircraft, and the navy air force had twelve hundred and twenty.[13]

In order to make China less dependent on foreign built aircraft, Nanjing sought aviation technology from foreign countries, notably Italy and Germany. In 1936, Nanjing and Junkers Aircraft Company of Germany jointly set up the China Air Equipment Manufacturing Company in Hangzhou. In early 1937, a

Sino-Italian joint venture, the Nanchang Aircraft Manufacturing Company, was created.[14] However, there are no documents to prove that the China Air Equipment Manufacturing Company made any significant contribution to the Chinese war effort.[15] As for the Sino-Italian joint venture, it did not produce any aircraft and the Italian air mission left China as soon as war broke out.[16]

Due to poor equipment maintenance and the shortage of parts, one-fourth to one-fifth of Chinese aircraft and naval vessels could not be put to combat use.[17] According to one source, only half of the planes were airworthy.[18]

Material Strength of the Chinese Ground Forces

Historically, the army, or ground forces, have been the pillar of the Chinese military. By the end of the Northern Expedition in 1928, the National Government claimed to have under its command 2.2 million ground troops in 272 infantry divisions, 18 independent brigades, and 21 independent regiments.[19] General Hans von Seeckt, Chiang Kai-shek's German adviser, said the fundamental problem in the Chinese military was that it had too many troops but too few good ones. Von Seeckt impressed on Chiang that "the effectiveness of an army lies in qualitative superiority," recommending the creation of a new, elite army.[20]

The Conference on Reorganization and Disbandment of the Army which opened in Nanjing on January 1, 1929--three days after the conclusion of the Northern Expedition--was Chiang Kai-shek's first major attempt to reform the army. His call for a crack

army of eight hundred thousand men was received with skepticism by the regional militarists who considered it a front to reduce their military strength.[21] The conference went nowhere.

In addition to the regional militarists' lack of cooperation, Nanjing's effort to reform the military was distracted by the anti-Communist campaigns and Japan's invasion of Manchuria in 1931 and its subsequent attacks on Shanghai and Rehe in 1932 and 1933 respectively. The successful completion of the fifth anti-Communist campaign in late 1934 allowed Chiang to personally draw up his most ambitious military reform plan, *Quanguo biancheng liushige shi zhi zhengjun jihua* (The national army consolidation plan through the reorganization of sixty divisions). The goal was to pick sixty superior infantry divisions from the existing ones, and equip them with better equipment as well as put them through more rigorous training.[22]

In the mid-1930's, Japan had seventeen infantry divisions; seven of them were deployed in Korea and Manchuria to fend off the Soviet Union, leaving no more than ten divisions at Japan's disposal for the upcoming war against China. Given the disparity between Chinese and Japanese troops in equipment and training, Nanjing hoped that what its ground forces lacked in quality could be compensated by increasing the number of divisions, hence the targeted sixty. The outbreak of war in July 1937 cut short Chiang's plan; by then only thirty-five new divisions had been formed.[23]

As a result of reducing the number of recruits through more rigorous selection and stricter enforcement of retirement regulations, Nanjing by 1937 had 1.7 million troops, both

central and regional, in 182 infantry divisions, 46 independent infantry brigades, 9 cavalry divisions, 6 independent cavalry brigades, 4 artillery brigades, and 20 independent artillery regiments. Because formations were not equal in personnel and equipment, and many of them were needed to maintain domestic law and order, He Yingqin, chief of the general staff, reported in early 1937 that he could only spare 80 infantry divisions, 9 independent infantry brigades, 9 calvary divisions, 2 artillery brigades, and 16 independent artillery regiments for front line combat.[24] The Chinese army had no reserves.[25]

Japan had three hundred and eighty thousand troops on active duty in seventeen infantry divisions and various other formations. It also had a reserve of four million.[26] In terms of the number of soldiers on active duty, China had the upper hand. But this advantage was greatly offset by the Chinese army's shortage of heavy weapons and modern equipment.

For example, a regular Japanese infantry division had 21,945 troops, 9,476 rifles, 541 light machine guns, 104 heavy machine guns, 64 field guns and howitzers, 44 mortars, 24 tanks, 528 motor vehicles, and 555 horse-drawn vehicles. In contrast, a reorganized Chinese infantry division had 10,923 troops, 3,821 rifles, 274 light machine guns, 54 heavy machine guns, and 16 field guns and howitzers, and 30 mortars. It had no tanks or motorized vehicles. The strength of non-reorganized infantry divisions was even less.[27] Although the Chinese did have an independent tank corps, the number of tanks it had is believed to be less than 72, the authorized strength of the corps.[28]

Classification of the Chinese Ground Forces

In January 1937, the Japanese military conducted a survey of the Chinese ground forces under Nanjing's jurisdiction. The Japanese divided China's ground force into four categories: direct line central units, collateral central units, regional militarist units, and miscellaneous units.[29]

The direct line (*zhixi*) central units were an outgrowth of Chiang's own First Army of the National Revolutionary Army in the Northern Expedition. Organized into forty divisions, they included the German trained and equipped Eighty-eighth and Eight-ninth divisions. Chiang's army consolidation plan mentioned above started with these units. All direct line central troops were commanded by Whampoa graduates and were considered by Japan the best Chinese forces.[30]

Japanese conclusions about direct line central forces were supported by USMC Major Evans Carlson, who referred to these troops as "The Generalissimo's Own." Carlson wrote in 1940 that "superior technical knowledge, loyalty to the Generalissimo, and the fact that their military equipment is the best that China can secure, combine to make these units the most efficient and reliable of the Kuomintang units."[31]

The collateral (*pangxi*) central forces were an outgrowth of the National Revolutionary Army formations other than Chiang's First Army. They developed from such NRA units as Tan Yankai and Lu Diping's Second Army, Zhu Peide's Third Army, Li Jishen's Fourth Army, Li Fulin's Fifth Army, Cheng Qian's Sixth Army, and Tang Shengzhi's Eighth Army. They also included some former

warlord units of Zhang Zongchang and Sun Chuanfang that were incorporated by the NRA First Army during the Expedition.[32]

Consisting of thirty-six divisions, the collateral central forces could be dispatched freely by Nanjing and were usually deployed side by side with the direct line central units. In general, officers in the collateral central forces had remained unchanged since the Expedition and some units were on a par with the direct line central forces in training and equipment.[33]

There were sixty-three divisions in the regional militarist forces that included Yan Xishan's Shanxi Army, Li Zongren and Bai Chongxi's Guangxi Army, Chen Jitang's Guangdong Army, the Northwestern Army, and the Northeastern Army.[34]

The strength of the regional militarist forces was uneven. For example, Yan Xishan's troops lacked modern equipment but were tenacious in fighting and strong in provincial identity.[35] As for the Guangxi troops, Carlson said that they were "the best of the provincial forces.....The men received excellent care, their morale is high, and they have given a good account of themselves in the battle. The efficiency of the Guangdong troops is second only to that of their Guangxi neighbors."[36] The Japanese investigation also pointed out that the Liang-Guang troops were well trained and possessed good fighting capacity.[37]

Of all commanders in the Northwestern Army, Sun Lianzhong, who commanded the Twenty-sixth Route Army consisting of four divisions, had the closest relations with Nanjing. This was seen in Nanjing's reorganization of Sun's Twenty-seventh division. In fact, the Northwestern Twenty-seventh division was the only regional unit that had been reorganized at Nanjing's expense.

Sun's other three divisions were on good terms with Nanjing as well and could be deployed freely by the National Government.[38] Sun, incidentally, was considered by Carlson to be one of the best Chinese field commanders, along with Bai Chongxi, Li Zongren, and Tang Enbo.[39]

According to the Japanese report, Han Fuqu of Shandong was not always on good terms with Chiang, and his relations with Nanjing were ambiguous.[40] As for Song Zheyuan, whose sphere of influence included Chahaer and Hebei, his troops were considered well trained and experienced.[41] Of all Northeastern commanders, Wan Fulin of Heilongjiang was held to be the most competent and his troops best motivated to fight.[42]

The miscellaneous forces consisted of forty-two divisions; mostly deployed in Sichuan, Gansu, Ningxia, Guizhou, and Shaanxi. There were another six to nine divisions in Yunnan and ten divisions in Xinjiang. But they were not considered government troops as they did not receive central designations. Some of the miscellaneous units were referred to as Mohammedan troops by Carlson for obvious reason.[43] There is not much to say about these troops except that their fighting capability was weak as a result of poor training and equipment, lax discipline, and incompetent leadership.[44]

While the Japanese report was fairly accurate on Nanjing's pre-war military strength, it overestimated that of the Red Army. It claimed that the Red Army in early 1937 had one hundred thousand troops, a figure queried by Liu Fenghan. Liu, a leading expert on the Chinese military, maintains that the strength of the Eighteenth Army Group, the official wartime designation for

the Red Army, was roughly thirty-two thousand when war started, organized into three divisions and one garrison brigade.[45] Later during the war, Xiao Xiangjun, political commissar of the Eighteenth Army Group, claimed that with the addition of the New Fourth Army in late 1937, the Red Army boasted a total strength of two hundred and twenty thousand men.[46]

Before the War, the Japanese referred to the Communists as bandits and regarded the Red Army as a motley entity. They held the Red Army in contempt on the grounds that it avoided direct confrontation with the Japanese army.[47] Japanese comments on the Red Army's military performance were that it valued political orientation, but its recruits were low in the level of competence and the average officers' quality was inferior to that of the political commissars. After the so-called "Battle of the One Hundred Regiments" which took place in August 1940 between the Japanese and the Red Army, Japan's opinion of the latter changed. It considered the Red Army a worthy rival in terms of its anti-Japanese sentiment and its will to fight.[48]

Morale of the Chinese Military

Military effectiveness is a product of morale and *esprit de corps*.[49] The Chinese military's effectiveness as a whole was best illustrated in a report put forward by the Military Commission in April 1933 during the Great Wall campaign.

> Militarily speaking, resisting Japan and eliminating the Communists are our current objectives. The country maintains an army of over a million troops. Approximately three hundred thousand are being used to resist Japan [in the Great Wall campaign], and another three hundred thousand to

> eliminate the Communists. The rest are used to maintain domestic order. But even with this many troops, the implementation of the three tasks falls short of expectation. We cannot but impute the failure to the inferior quality of our troops.....In recent years, military spending has accounted for over eighty percent of the national budget. There is no money for political construction and the economy suffers as a result. This, in turn, causes the armed forces to fall apart.....National defense is supposed to be the military's only duty. But the deficiency in the country's police system makes it imperative that the armed forces be used to maintain law and order. This results in military domination of local governments, contributing to the corruption of the army.[50]

Poor morale was no secret. While Carlson gave high marks to Chiang's troops and those of Li Zongren, he criticized many of the regional troops for slack discipline, poor training, corruption, low morale, incompetent leadership, and inadequate equipment.[51] As commander-in-chief, Chiang could not agree more. But, unlike Carlson, Chiang treated things like lax discipline or low morale as a universal phenomenon across the board in the Chinese military.

In a speech given to high ranking military officers in Jiangxi, May 1933, Chiang maintained that many people joined the army not so much because they wanted to save China but for power and money. So long as they could be promoted to higher positions and get more pay, they did not care what would happen to the country. The pursuit of power and money by many officers had corrupted the military. "I hope that you can get rid of all thoughts about winning promotion and getting rich, and instead work on self-cultivation for the cause of the revolution."[52]

On another occasion, Chiang said that the reputation of the military was sullied as a result of some soldiers' lack of discipline. He asserted that the secret of training soldiers was

to keep them busy so they would not have spare time to do evil. "It is said that too much free time allows vile characters to do evil things. Therefore, in order to maintain discipline, soldiers must be kept busy at all times so they can stay away from gambling and visiting brothels."[53]

Desertion was another sign that discipline was lax and Chiang admitted it. "The reason that there are many deserters is usually because board, bedding, and clothing are not well attended to, thus causing great discomfort to the soldiers. It is also linked to the soldiers' not getting paid in full or on time, or their wages being embezzled by their superior officers, making them feel frustrated. Under these circumstances, the number of deserters will certainly increase."[54]

As mentioned earlier, Chiang was fond of giving speeches. If we use *Xian zongtong Jianggong sixiang yanlun zongji* (The Comprehensive Collection of the Late President Chiang Kia-shek's Thought and Speeches) published by the Kuomintang Historical Commission as a guide, he made no less than 423 speeches between 1924 and the outbreak of the Resistance War in 1937. Almost two-thirds of the speeches were related to the military and their content included such aspects as: showing respect to the national flag; being respectful to one's parents; obeying orders; being loyal to the country; wearing one's uniform properly; paying attention to personal hygiene; not urinating and spitting in public; looking after weapons properly; and improving general conditions to reduce desertion.

Every time Chiang talked about what a disciplined and well trained army should be, he was saying that the Chinese army was

not such a one. His speeches are the best testimony that the Chinese military's capacity to fight was doubtful. As commander-in-chief, when he mentioned things like showing love for the nation and saluting the national flag, Chiang was taking on the role of a drill sergeant. As mentioned in Chapter One, seeing to things big and small was Chiang's personality and this indicated that he was genuinely concerned about raising morale, but he "could not turn iron into steel overnight," as a *chengyu* has it (*hen tie bucheng gang*). Chiang once said: "Victory or defeat is not determined on the battlefield, it is determined before war starts."[55] With the kind of army he had, Chiang was convinced that for China to avoid defeat, he had to delay war for as long as possible until he could turn things around.

Search for New Steel Plants

In addition to the intangible factors such as morale and *esprit de corps*, military effectiveness hinges on something that is as concrete as the national defense industry. Chapter Four elaborates on the founding of the National Defense Design Council and the conference held by council members in 1934 at Lushan. At the conference, many of Nanjing's economic and social woes were discussed. Their concerns, though urgent, only tell half of the story. The other half is in a report put forward by Weng Wenhao at the Lushan Conference on the weaknesses of the Chinese national defense industries.

Weng was the secretary-general and a leading figure in the National Defense Design Council. Weng received a doctorate in

physics and geology from Louvain University, Belgium, at the age of twenty-three in 1912. Weng was non-partisan and a frequent contributor to *Duli pinglun*. According to Kirby, Weng was a man with a vision for China's industry, whose "most significant contribution lay in the formulation of a new strategy for national industrial development."[56] Kirby describes extensively Weng's ideas for Chinese heavy industry prior to the war. But Weng's Lushan report on contemporary China's steel making, metallurgy, and gasoline production is not included in his book. This report offers insights into some of the most vital Chinese national defense industries.[57]

In his report, Weng conceded that due to the limited distribution of iron ore deposits in China and the uncertain international situation, it would be difficult for the country to construct large scale, economically viable steel plants. Nevertheless, he said there were five options, and each one carried some kind of risk. The first option was to smelt steel at Qinhuangdao, an ice-free seaport located in Hebei south of the Shanhai Pass in the Great Wall. The advantage of this option was that raw materials were easily available. The coal needed to make coke came from nearby mines at Kaiping and Luanzhou, and iron ore came from Hubei and Anhui by water.[58]

He said that the Qinhuangdao option was the least expensive way to produce steel. Because of its low cost, a Qinhuangdao steel plant would outperform other plants of its kind in the Far East and would strike a blow at the Japanese steel industry in Liaoning. The Qinhuangdao option would not only benefit China by providing inexpensive steel but would stimulate other related

industries. But Weng realized it was easier said than done. For a Qinhuangdao plant to succeed, foreign investment was needed. Given the fact that the Northeast had been lost to Japan and northern China was in an imminent danger of another Japanese invasion, he doubted that any foreign country would run the risk of investing in the Qinhuangdao project.[59]

The second option called for the construction of a steel plant alongside the existing iron works in Beiping. The steel plant would obtain iron ore from Xuanhua, Rehe, and coke from Jingting, Suiyuan. Weng claimed that it would be relatively easy to expand Jingting's coking mills and add steel smelting furnaces to the existing iron works in Beiping. He said the German company Krupps had repeatedly sent its technicians over to investigate the project and had expressed its willingness to undertake the task. The down side of this option, however, was that recent Japanese penetration into Rehe had put the Xuanhua mines in a precarious situation. Weng cautioned that if war broke out those mines would be indefensible and he considered this option virtually dead.[60]

The third plan called for a steel mill in Qingdao, Shandong, using coal from Boshan and iron ores from Lianjinlingzhen. Weng considered this option difficult to implement. The proposed Qingdao steel plant would be a Sino-Japanese joint venture because the iron mines in Lianjinlingzhen were owned by Luda Company, a Sino-Japanese joint company. If Nanjing decided to pursue this option then it would have to cooperate with Luda Company. Should that happen, it could only enhance Japanese interests in Shandong.[61]

The fourth option was to expand existing steel plants in the mid-Yangzi Valley cities of Hankou, Hanyang or Daye (all of which are located in Hubei) where there was a heavy industry base. Weng said many people mistakenly believed this option was relatively easy to implement and required less capital. There were actually several difficulties. Coal produced in Pingxiang, Jiangxi, was of inferior quality and it had to travel a long distance before arriving in the mid-Yangzi Valley. Shipping coal from either Hebei or Shandong to the mid-Yangzi Valley was prohibitively costly. Although the existing steel plants in Hankou, Hanyang, and Daye could produce a daily total of fifteen hundred tons of steel, the cost was too high to be competitive. Moreover, the Liuhegou steel plant in Hankou was too old to be expanded. The Hanyeping steel plants in Hanyang and Daye had huge debts to their Japanese creditors and were financially incapable of expansion.[62]

For his final option, Weng recommended building a new steel plant in Maanshan, Anhui, where iron ores could be obtained from southern Anhui or southern Hunan and coal could be purchased from Shandong. The Ministry of Industry had previously drafted a plan with German businessmen to build a steel plant in Maanshan, but it was dropped because Nanjing decided that the German bid was too high. Later the National Defense Design Council hired American experts to draft another plan for the Maanshan steel plant at a much lower cost. Of all five options, Weng believed the Maanshan plant had the best chance of becoming successful and he urged Nanjing to proceed without delay as soon as the American proposal was ratified.[63]

Inadequacy of the Metallurgical Industry

The metallurgical industry was another area Weng dealt with in his Lushan report. Copper was by far the most widely used metal in ammunition manufacturing and Chinese arsenals consumed an annual amount of three to four hundred tons, mostly on making bullets. Weng estimated that China would need six thousand tons of copper a year during wartime, a demand that domestic mines could not handle.[64]

Weng pointed out that most of China's copper came from Tongchuan, Yunnan. But production in recent years had dropped from nine hundred tons annually to as low as two or three hundred tons. Large copper deposits were also found in Peng county, Sichuan. The copper smelting plants in Peng county were the only ones in the entire country that had successfully produced copper using an innovative electrical smelting process. Annual production of copper in Peng county was one hundred tons and the quality was very good. But recently production had declined due to mismanagement.[65]

Any prospect of copper mining in Yunnan and Sichuan, Weng stressed, was compromised by the poor transportation system in those provinces. The high costs of shipping finished products to the market would considerably increase the price of domestic copper and the cost of copper mining in the region, thus making Chinese copper less competitive than import.[66]

As for other metals, Weng calculated that China consumed annually one hundred and fifty tons of zinc and one hundred and seventy tons of lead for bullets. He estimated that the national

defense industry needed five thousand tons of lead and zinc each year. He pointed to the Shuikoushan mines in Hunan as a would-be major supplier. The mines' current production could supply all the zinc and half of the lead China needed, but the smelting plants were too small and too old to handle this much ore.[67]

Uncertainty of Gasoline Supply

Last but not least, China's dependence on imported gasoline had Weng worried. In the Lushan report, he pointed out that although petroleum deposits had been found in Sichuan, Shaanxi, Gansu, and Xinjiang, so far he was unable to determine the quantity. In 1912, he said, China imported four hundred thousand gallons of gasoline. The figure jumped to thirty million gallons in 1931 when there were forty thousand motor vehicles in the country. (William Kirby says that by 1936 China had eighty thousand motor vehicles of various kinds.[68]) In the foreseeable future, Weng asserted, the demand for gasoline would soar due to the increasing use of motor vehicles, boats, and aircraft. He predicted that in the near future the number of aircraft in China would reach one thousand and motor vehicles would increase to two hundred thousand. By then, Weng estimated that China's annual demand for gasoline would be at least one hundred million gallons, or two million and four hundred thousand barrels.[69]

In order to locate new oil deposits, Nanjing had conducted a geological survey in Sichuan and Shaanxi. The survey showed no promising signs of large oil deposits. Not to be discouraged, Weng called attention to the encouraging fact that the small oil

wells at Yanchang, Shaanxi, produced several hundred to one thousand gallons of oil daily. He believed that China might eventually ease its demand for import gasoline by increasing the number of such small oil wells if Nanjing continued its geological survey. As for Sichuan, Weng said that it would be impossible to expect large scale production from Sichuanese wells because they were too widely scattered with limited production. He conceded that the future of China's oil industry was not optimistic and so far there was only faint hope of an annual domestic production of one million gallons of gasoline.[70]

Since domestic oil deposits were not enough to meet rising demand, Weng recommended extracting gasoline from bituminous coal, or soft coal. Some preliminary experiments had been done on distilling domestic soft coal with encouraging results. Chinese soft coal was proven to be suitable for a process known as low-temperature distillation, that is, distilling soft coal at a temperature of six hundred degrees Celsius or lower to bring out the oil elements in the coal. One ton of soft coal from Datong, Shanxi, could produce ninety kilograms of crude oil. Twenty percent of that crude oil could be refined as gasoline and the other twenty percent as diesel. In other words, each ton of soft coal could produce eighteen kilograms of gasoline, which equals five gallons. Optimistic about the low-temperature distillation process, Weng recommended setting up low-temperature distillation plants in places known for rich deposits of soft coal including Huaiyuan in Anhui, Liling in Hunan, and Datong in Shanxi.[71]

Shortage of Military Horses & Mules

On von Seeckt's recommendation, Nanjing set up an automobile plant in late 1936 in Hunan, with the goal of producing twelve hundred diesel trucks a year. The first vehicles rolled off the assembly line in autumn 1937.[72] These vehicles' slow arrival meant that the Chinese military would still have to rely mostly on traditional means of transportation such as horse and mule.

In a 1936 report on the shortage of horses and mules for military use, the Ministry of the Army pointed out that horse management since imperial times had been an important function of the state, but with civil strife of the early Republic, this task was neglected, causing the quantity and quality of horses and mules to suffer. After the founding of the National Government in 1925, Nationalist forces had very few mounted troops for several reasons: budget constraints, lack of proper equipment, and the unsuitability of southeastern China's landscape for cavalry maneuvers. As a result, graduates of the first five classes from Whampoa received virtually no cavalry training.[73]

The Ministry of the Army noted that maintaining a reliable supply of horses and mules was a major challenge. Current production failed to keep up with rising demand. In 1931, three military ranches were set up at Liangyi, Shangdu, and Mingan in Chahaer under the direct control of Nanjing. These ranches had a total of seventy-five hundred horses and were able to rear seven hundred and fifty horses annually. A year later, Gourong stud ranch was set up at Jiuhuashan, Anhui, with a total of three

hundred stallions. In 1935, another ranch was set up at Shandan, Gansu. It had five hundred mares. In spite of the fact that Nanjing had five military horse ranches and its troops were allowed to purchase their own horses and mules so long as they were fit for military use, it was becoming more difficult to get the right kind of horses and mules due to fiscal problems and the declining birth rate among these animals. The independence of Outer Mongolia and the loss of the four Northeastern provinces cost China its most valuable breeding ground. The situation got worse when Japan occupied eastern Chahaer in 1933, threatening nearby Mingan, Liangyi, and Shangdu ranches.[74]

Mules mainly came from the central and northern provinces. With Japan increasingly coveting Inner Mongolia and the rest of Chahaer, the Ministry stated that Nanjing would no longer be able to ship horses and mules from northern China to the interior if Japan cut off the Beiping-Suiyuan Railway. Horses from western China could still be brought into the interior, but the distance--seven hundred kilometers--they had to travel on the Xian-Lanzhou Highway would be a tremendous challenge for China's transportation system.[75]

The quality of domestic horses and mules left much to be desired. Chinese horses had not been improved scientifically. The average shoulder height of a horse had shrunk from thirteen hands to twelve and a half hands, making it a pony. Chinese horses and mules were so weak and small that they could not possibly be used to tow field guns or haul impedimenta. Even more alarming was the decreasing number of these animals. In the early Republican years, China had about 4.9 million horses and

mules. A recent government survey showed that the number had dropped to 1.2 million. Of these horses and mules, roughly half were mares and could not be used militarily. Excluding the old and the young, less than twenty percent of domestic horses and mules were suitable for military purposes. The Ministry estimated that the current demand was at least half a million, meaning that it was short three hundred thousand horses and mules.[76]

The Ministry of the Army conceded that as of 1936 the limited and uncertain supply of horses and mules had become a serious problem. It recommended Nanjing purchase horses from Holland, Denmark, or the United States. But with tension between China and Japan on the rise, the Ministry feared that if war broke out and the coast was sealed off by the enemy, it would be impossible to get horses from abroad. As a precautionary measure, the Ministry recommended that Nanjing set up more ranches, both government and private, and encourage people to raise horses not for agricultural but for military purposes.[77]

The shortage of horses and mules was best illustrated by one document prepared by the Military Commission (the second highest military authority in Nationalist China next to the National Defense Conference) in January 1936. This document reveals that China's newly reorganized twenty infantry divisions would need 10,647 horses and 20,688 mules. By late 1935, these divisions had only 6,206 horses and 4,351 mules. Lacking sufficient horses and mules to go around, the Military Commission came up with a compromise. Fifteen divisions would have eighty percent of the quota previously required. The other five divisions would only

have fifty percent of the quota. Even with this compromise, according to the report, these troops were still short of 2,377 horses and 10,501 mules.[78]

China's Transportation Network

A recurring theme in the reports of Weng Wenhao and the Ministry of Army is concern over the existing transportation network. Between 1928 and 1937, China's railway mileage grew from eight thousand kilometers to thirteen thousand. Even more impressive was highway construction. In 1936, the highway network accounted for some one hundred and ten thousand kilometers, as opposed to a mere one thousand in 1921. Improvement of the transportation system was a positive achievement of the National Government prior to the Resistance War.[79] But according to a report put forward at the 1934 Lushan Conference by the National Defense Design Council secretariat, the growth in highway and railway mileage did not dispel the fact that China's transportation network was still backward and that there was much room for improvement.[80]

Sichuan was a good example of how transportation construction fell short of expectations. In 1935, Chiang Kai-shek designated Sichuan as the ultimate base for a long-term resistance against the Japanese invasion.[81] At the Lushan Conference, Chen Bozhuang stressed that geographically and economically Sichuan was critical to national defense, but the routes into and out of the province had yet to be completed. In 1933 Chen had called for the construction of a railway in

northern Sichuan in order to connect the province with the Beiping-Hankou Railway; the construction of a highway in southern Sichuan, linking the province to the Changsha-Changde Highway; and an aerial survey of the province to determine if a route could be built between Chengdu-Chongqing and Xian-Lanzhou. But no measures were taken.[82]

Chen pointed out that although railways surpassed highways in load capacity, local railway authorities were facing problems of bankruptcy, poor equipment maintenance, and mismanagement as a result of civil strife in the early Republican years. The railway administration was so decentralized and fragmented that locomotives came in great variety, making it difficult for the service stations to stock all parts for locomotives of different makes. It was a common sight that locomotives were grounded for lack of parts. Chen estimated that there were thirty-two hundred locomotives, twenty percent of China's locomotive total, awaiting repair. The number of locomotives waiting for repair demonstrated not only the incompetence of the railway administration, it also jeopardized national defense. To make things worse, the load bearing capacity of bridges varied greatly, as did the weight of various locomotives. It was not uncommon that a locomotive could travel on certain tracks but not on others. Chen said that he could not decide if all bridges should be rebuilt to accommodate the locomotives or the locomotives should all be standardized in weight to fit the bridges. Either way, he cautioned, it was going to cost a lot.[83]

In conclusion, Chen said that transportation was supposed to be the Chinese railway administration's foremost responsibility.

Instead, it had become its greatest disappointment. Of all the railway lines, only four were barely efficient: Jiaozhou-Jinan, Beiping-Shenyang, Nanjing-Shanghai, and Shanghai-Hangzhou lines. The rest were hardly worth mentioning.[84]

Not Digging a Well until One is Thirsty

Weng Wenhao, like his associates in the National Defense Design Council, was devising long-term projects for a pressing war. His proposals on raising industrial output required time, something that was not on the Chinese side. He talked about the possibility of raising copper production in Yunnan and Sichuan if new mining methods and better management could be put in place. He urged Nanjing to explore other sources of copper in places such as Ziluao in Hunan, Fuchikou in Hubei, and Xihuanqu in Shanxi that were known for their deposits.[85]

On raising oil production, he emphasized that the prospect of oil drilling in northern Shaanxi deserved further exploration; the government might end up with one or two dozens small wells, each capable of turning out daily several hundred to one thousand gallons of crude oil. Thus, China might have an annual supply of one million gallons.[86] Weng was also excited about what low-temperature distillation of soft coal could mean for China. He claimed that low-temperature distillation could produce by-products of military and economic value. For example, certain by-products could be used to produce poison gas and dynamite. Natural gas, another major by-product, could provide people living along the lower Yangzi River an inexpensive source

of household fuel.[87]

Weng's proposal on oil and copper mining was full of might have beens. The kind of copper and oil production Weng talked about was at best an estimation. His ideas on raising industrial output and the Ministry of the Army's recommendations on breeding more horses and mules for military purposes are best described by a *chengyu* which says: "Not digging a well until one is thirsty" (*linke juejing*).

As touched upon in Chapter Four, with the completion of the Northern Expedition in 1928, the military phase of Sun Yat-sen's three-stage revolution was accomplished. The second stage of political tutelage was due to be introduced. The tutelage stage was a period of nation-building, a subject that has been well documented in *The Strenuous Decade: China's Nation-Building Efforts, 1927-1937* (New York, 1970). As mentioned in previous chapters, Chiang predicted that war would probably break out in 1936. This meant that the country was preparing for war during the nation-building period, and contemporaries such as Weng Wenhao were compelled by the circumstances to attend to two goals: nation-building and war preparation. Pursuing nation-building and war preparation simultaneously might have created the impression that Nanjing and members of the National Defense Design Council were out of touch with reality for coming up with proposals that would require years to be accomplished when war might break out at any moment. With Japan holding the initiative in the Sino-Japanese conflict, China found itself trapped in an impossible situation of attending to both nation-building and war preparation.

Another possible explanation for "not digging a well until one is thirsty" is mere formality, which is best illustrated by Chen Bozhuang's criticism of the Chinese railway administration. Chen said that the work ethic among railway employees was low. As a result of the bureaucratic way of doing things in the railway administration, most employees simply muddled through their work, leaving things to chance. He said the railway administration was good at working out impressive looking plans, but fell short on implementation and follow-up. Perfunctory behavior was so prevalent in the railway administration that Chen declared it would take years to rectify the situation. While Chen admitted that there were indeed conscientious railway employees, they were outnumbered by inefficient ones.[88] Administrative inefficiency in the railway administration can be regarded as the epitome of the entire Chinese bureaucracy. The burden of carrying out national defense plans might be beyond the capability of the average Chinese bureaucrat.

Nanjing acknowledged the problems in national defense. But the solutions came too late and produced little result. When war began, for example, reorganization of the infantry divisions had to be aborted. Commenting on the performance of government troops during the anti-Communist campaigns, Liu Weikai maintains that the fact they failed to destroy the Red Army during the Long March indicates that, in spite of the quantitative edge, they were qualitatively poor.[89] The Lushan Conference proceedings and Chiang Kai-shek's criticism of the military reveal that prior to the War, China's war effort fell far short of expectation. The state of unpreparedness in virtually every

aspect must have weighed on Chiang, reinforcing his conviction that "rangwai bixian annei" was the only way to delay war. The case studies in the following three chapters take a closer look at how "rangwai bixian annei" was implemented.

Notes

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4. Ibid., p. 3.

5. Ibid., p. 3.

6. Liu Weikai, *Guonan qijian yingbian tucun wenti zhi yanjiu: cong jiuyiba dao qiqi* (Taipei, 1995), p. 205.

7. *KangRi zhanshi* (Taipei, 1985), vol. 1, p. 168.

8. Ibid., p. 147.

9. *Guomin gemingjun zhanyi shi di si bu: kangRi* (Taipei, 1994), vol. 1, p. 294.

10. Liu, p. 204.

11. *KangRi zhanshi*, p. 150. *Guomin gemingjun zhanyi shi di si bu*, p. 281.

12. *KangRi zhanshi*, pp. 173-177.

13. Ibid., p. 151.

14. Ibid., p. 177.

15. William Kirby, *Germany and Republican China* (Stanford, 1984), p. 201.

16. Evans Carlson, *The Chinese Army: Its Organization and Military Efficiency* (New York, 1940), p. 46.

17. *KangRi zhanshi*, p. 149.

18. Carlson, p. 47.

19. Liu Fenghan, 'Zhan qian lujun zhi zhengbian,' in *Proceedings of the Conference on Pre-war China, 1928-1937* (Taipei), p. 514.

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22. Liu Weikai, p. 201.

23. Ibid., pp. 202-203.

24. *Zhonghua minguo zhongyao shiliao chubian* (Taipei, 1981), Introduction, vol. 3, p. 351.

25. *KangRi zhanshi*, p. 146.

26. Ibid., p. 149.

27. Ibid., pp. 152-153.

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29. Ibid., p. 370.

30. Ibid., pp. 371-374.

31. Carlson, p. 30.

32. Liu Fenghan, 'Lun kangzhan,' p. 374.

33. Ibid., p. 375.

34. Ibid., pp. 375-378.

35. Ibid., p. 381.

36. Carlson, p. 31.

37. Liu Fenghan, 'Lun kangzhan,' p. 381.

38. Ibid., p. 379.

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40. Liu Fenghan, 'Lun kangzhan,' p. 380.

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42. Ibid., p. 380.

43. Carlson, p. 31.

44. Liu Fenghan, 'Lun kangzhan,' p. 383.

45. Ibid., p. 394.

46. Ibid., p. 396.

47. Ibid., p. 394.

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49. Alan Millett, Williamson Murray, and Kenneth Watman, p. 1.

50. Liu Weikai, p. 200.

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53. Ibid., p. 157.

54. Ibid., p. 155.

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57. Weng Wenhao.'Guofang gongye chubu jihua caoan,' in *Guofang sheji weiyuan Lushan yishilu* (1934), p. 1.

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62. Ibid., p. 6.

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64. Ibid., p. 7.

65. Ibid., p. 7.

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77. Ibid., p. 14.

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80. Secretariat of the National Defense Design Council, 'Canmou benbu guofang sheji weiyuanhui mishuting gongzuo baogao,' in *Guofang sheji weiyuan Lushan yishilu* (1934), p. 13.

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82. Chen Bozhuang, 'Gonglu tian', in *Guofang sheji weiyuan Lushan yishilu* (1934), pp. 3-6

83. Ibid., pp. 7-9

84. Ibid., pp. 6-11.

85. Weng, p. 15.

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87. Ibid., p. 19.

88. Chen, pp. 16-21.

89. Liu Weikai, p. 199.

CHAPTER VI

JINAN 1928: THE FIRST STEP TOWARDS APPEASING JAPAN

Chinese appeasement, "heqin" or "rangwai bixian annei," demands a conciliatory attitude on the part of China towards the invading enemy. Although Chiang Kai-shek did not coin the term "rangwai bixian annei" until the summer of 1931, he had as early as 1928 adopted the position of compromising in order to avoid conflict with Japan in Jinan (Tsinan), capital of Shandong.

The belief that China had to avoid war at all costs due to its military weakness contributed to Nanjing's non-resistance during the 1931 Mukden Incident. Because of the scale of the Japanese attack, the Mukden Incident receives a lion's share of attention from historians. While the Incident has its place in history, it was not the first occasion in which Chiang back down before Japanese aggression.

Significance of the Jinan Incident

Jinan is strategically important. Located at the junction of the Jiaozhou-Jinan and Tianjin-Pukou Railways, Jinan is the hub of communications in western Shandong as well as in northern China. When Chiang Kai-shek resumed the Northern Expedition in April 1928, he set up his headquarters in Xuzhou, a city in northern Jiangsu near the Shandong border, and gathered a large force there.[1]

Shandong was the next objective of the Expedition. Jinan was one of the last major cities that stood between the northward

advancing Nationalist troops and the seat of the warlord government, Beijing, located less than two hundred and fifty kilometers to the north. The importance of Jinan was not lost on Sun Chuanfang and Zhang Zongchang, who deployed their forces along the Tianjin-Pukou Railway between Jinan and Taian (a major city fifty kilometers south of Jinan) when the National Revolutionary Army was closing in on southern Shandong.[2]

When Nationalist forces entered Jinan after warlord troops had fled the city, they clashed with the Japanese soldiers on May 3, 1928. The event is historically known as the Jinan Incident. It is significant for a number of reasons.

First of all, it was the first major incident in which Chiang backed down before Japan. Chiang did not wait until Japan invaded the Northeast to implement the policy of seeking compromises with Tokyo; he began doing that more than three years earlier in Jinan. The difference is that back in 1928 there was no such catchphrase as "rangwai bixian annei." Second, during the Jinan Incident the Nationalists brought their case against Japanese aggression to the League of Nations and Western Powers, setting a precedent for later incidents. Third, the Jinan Incident was the prelude to the Mukden Incident. It marked the beginning of a series of aggressive Japanese acts that culminated in the Resistance War nine years later.[3] Last but not least, the Jinan Incident was a turning point in Sino-Japanese relations. The kind of arrogance and peremptory behavior that the Japanese showed towards the Nationalists throughout the Incident convinced Chiang that Japan was becoming China's ultimate enemy.

The Jinan Incident had its historical background in the triple intervention of 1895. After the signing of the Shimonoseki Treaty in 1895 between China and Japan, the latter was forced by France, Germany, and Russia to sell Liaodong Peninsula back to China. Taking credit for the return of Liaodong and capitalizing on the murder of German missionaries in Shandong, Berlin in 1897 seized Jiaozhou Bay and the ice-free port of Qingdao on the tip of Shandong Peninsula.

The outbreak of the Great War in Europe provided Japan with an opportunity to make gains at Germany's expense. As England's ally, Japan declared war on Germany in 1914 and ousted the Germans from Jiaozhou. To legitimatize its occupation of Jiaozhou, Japan included in the Twenty-one Demands provisions which would recognize its newly established position in Shandong. The transfer of privileges and rights in Shandong from Berlin to Tokyo was finalized when Beijing accepted the Twenty-one Demands in 1915.[4] The acceptance sealed the fate of Shandong, rendering its return to full Chinese sovereignty after the war virtually impossible in spite of the vigorous efforts of the Chinese delegates at the Paris Peace Conference. The Shandong fiasco outraged the Chinese, especially college students, who took to the streets protesting the injustice, marking the beginning of the May Fourth Movement.

The failure of the Paris Peace Conference to settle the Shandong Question was partially rectified at the 1922 Washington Conference, when Beijing signed a treaty with Tokyo by which the

latter relinquished its administrative rights in Shandong. But Japan still retained substantial economic rights in the province. Beijing agreed in the treaty that it would not lease any part of Shandong to another foreign power. As a result, the treaty created more problems than it solved by turning Shandong into a *de facto* Japanese sphere of influence, thus reinforcing Tokyo's determination to hold on to its position in the province.[5] The seeds of the Jinan Incident were thus sown.

During the Northern Expedition, the protection of foreign nationals and properties was a challenge for the Nationalists. Several anti-foreign incidents erupted in Jiujiang, Hankou, and Nanjing in 1927. Tokyo announced in May 1927 that because the Chinese authorities had failed to provide adequate protection to foreign nationals in the above cases, it had decided to take matters into its own hands by dispatching troops to protect Japanese nationals in Shandong.

In late 1927, there were 16,940 Japanese in the province; 13,640 lived in Qingdao and the surrounding area and 2,160 in Jinan.[6] Under the pretext of protecting their nationals from any disturbances that the Northern Expedition might cause, Tokyo twice sent troops to Jinan. The first occasion was July 1927 when Japanese troops were brought in from Dalian. Had the National Revolutionary Army proceeded on to the provincial capital, the Jinan Incident would have happened in 1927. But a turn of events averted it. In late 1926 the Kuomintang was split into two camps, one in Nanjing and the other in Hankou as a result of Chiang's purge of the Communists from the party. To salvage the situation, Chiang stepped down from party and

military positions in August 1927. His resignation called a halt to the Expedition before the National Revolutionary Army could reach Jinan. Tokyo withdrew its troops from Jinan in the following month and the crisis was averted, but not for long.

The Jinan Incident Unfolding

The Northern Expedition was resumed in early April 1928, following Chiang's reinstatement in January. Realizing that the Revolutionary Army was making headway in its drive towards Shandong, Japanese Prime Minister Tanaka Giichi decided on April 18 to dispatch troops to the province.[7] Two days later, Tokyo announced its decision to send troops, under the command of General Fukuda Hikosuke, for the second time in less than a year. Between April 20 and June 5, 26,579 Japanese soldiers were brought in from Dalian, Tianjin, and the Japanese home islands.[8] At the same time, Chiang made public statements vowing that he would do his best to protect foreign nationals in northern China as the expeditionary forces proceeded. The foreign nationals Chiang had in mind were none other than Japanese nationals.[9] Zhang Qun, chief of staff of the Revolutionary Army and a confidant of Chiang, wrote in his memoirs that Chiang tried to make arrangements to prevent bloodshed in Jinan.

> Because Japan had sent troops to Shandong before, Commander-in-Chief Chiang was very concerned about the possibility of conflict. In order to avoid conflict, we, shortly before the Jinan Incident happened, asked the Japanese troops to move from Jinan to Qingdao. And we would pay for the moving expenses. Commander-in-Chief Chiang also indicated that I would be appointed mayor of Jinan. By then, Zhang Zongchang's troops had retreated from the city and fled north. Had the Japanese troops not remained in Jinan,

the conflict could have been avoided. But the Japanese turned down our proposition.[10]

After suffering heavy losses, Sun Chuanfang and Zhang Zongchang fled Jinan. On May 1, the advance troops of the Revolutionary Army under He Yaozu entered the city at daybreak. Chiang did not arrive in Jinan until the late afternoon. Two days later, the Jinan Incident occurred. Little is known about how exactly it happened or who fired the first shot. In *The Northern Expedition: China's National Revolution of 1926-1928*, Donald Jordan, citing Japanese reports, says that conflict erupted as a result of Chinese troops "robbing and massacring Japanese civilians."[11] Akira Iriye writes that both sides accused the other of starting the Incident: "Concerning the origin of the fight, Japan and China later presented different accounts, and to this day there is no satisfactory explanation."[12] Regardless, Chiang on May 7 relieved He Yaozu of his command on the grounds that he had failed to restrain his soldiers from clashing with the Japanese.[13]

As soon as the fighting broke out, Chiang decided that he should stay in the city so he could personally attend to negotiations with Fukuda for a peaceful resolution. He appointed General Xiong Shihui and Foreign Minister Huang Fu as chief negotiators. But Xiong's credentials, as a Japanese Military Academy graduate and as a schoolmate of Fukuda's chief of staff, did not make the negotiations any easier. Worse yet, when Huang Fu went over to Fukuda's headquarters on May 3, he was put under arrest and was not released until the next morning.[14]

Chiang also sent Zhang Qun to Tokyo to talk directly with

the Japanese military leaders, including General Tanaka. Zhang wrote in his memoirs that the high-ranking Japanese military officers he talked to in Tokyo were very hostile to the Nationalists, and some of them even demanded that Chiang come to Tokyo to make representations in person.[15] This unpleasant experience convinced Zhang that the Jinan Incident could not be resolved by the military and he asked Tanaka to hand over the negotiations to professional diplomats. Tanaka refused.[16]

Believing that the continuing presence of his troops in Jinan would only escalate the hostilities, Chiang on May 3 ordered them to evacuate by nightfall, save for a two-regiment garrison force that would remain in the city. The decision to leave three thousand men behind was opposed by one of his commanders who argued that they might be sacrificed for nothing should they stay. Chiang disagreed, maintaining that if he left no troops in Jinan it would give the Japanese an excuse to dispatch their own to the city for peace keeping, since there were no Chinese troops in Jinan to maintain law and order. Should this happen, the Japanese could claim that they were not seizing Jinan and it would make future negotiations with Japan more difficult. Eventually, Chiang prevailed.[17] On May 4, Nationalist troops who had been ordered out of Jinan began crossing the Yellow River to the north. On the morning of May 6, upon learning that most of the expeditionary forces had crossed the river, Chiang left Jinan, setting up a new field headquarters at Dangjiazhuang thirty *li* north of Jinan.[18]

On May 8, Fukuda demanded that Nationalist garrison troops withdraw from Jinan or face the consequences. When the Chinese

refused, the Japanese began shelling the city indiscriminately. They also put on a show of force by dispatching warships to the Yangzi River and the southeastern coast of China. Outgunned and outmanned, the garrison troops evacuated from Jinan on May 10, leaving the city in the hands of the Japanese. Only five hundred men made it to safety. The rest perished in the fighting.[19]

After pulling out of Jinan, the Nationalists resumed the Expedition without further incident. On June 8, 1928, they entered Beijing, marking the end of the military phase of the Expedition. Nanjing and Tokyo reached a settlement in March 1929, in which the latter agreed to withdraw its troops from Jinan. On May 15, the last Japanese troops left. Five days later, all Japanese formations in Qingdao and along the Jiaozhou-Jinan Railway sailed for home.[20] In the course of the Incident, 3,625 Chinese soldiers and civilians were killed and 1,455 were wounded. Japanese casualties numbered 230, including 13 civilians.[21]

The Chiang-Tanaka Meeting, 1927

Japanese intervention in Jinan was carried out under instructions from Tanaka Giichi, prime minister of Japan. Chiang had met with Tanaka only six months before the Incident happened. After resigning from the National Government in August 1927, Chiang sailed for Japan from Shanghai. On November 5, Chiang visited Tanaka for some two hours. According to Iriye, Tanaka believed that "Chiang's political eclipse was temporary and that he would certainly stage a comeback in the future."[22]

At the meeting, Tanaka urged Chiang to stay south of the Yangzi River instead of rushing north. Tanaka said that he did not understand why the Nationalists were so anxious to move northward when they should first consolidate their gains south of the Yangzi. He said that it was Japan's wish to see the Yangzi Valley securely under Nanjing's control so that communism would not resurrect itself.[23]

In reply, Chiang said he appreciated the logic of securing the south before moving northward. But he had to continue the Expedition for two compelling reasons. First, he did not want to repeat the same mistake of the Taipings, who had failed to unify China by not launching a northern expedition.[24] Second, maintaining the Expedition's momentum would prevent further splits within the increasingly fragmented Revolutionary Army. When the Revolutionary Army left Guangzhou it had only three divisions; by the time it reached the southern Yangzi Valley it had more than thirty divisions. Chiang said that these troops would remain united as a whole so long as there were enemies to fight; otherwise they fought among themselves. He told Tanaka that his painstaking efforts to keep the troops under control were beyond words.[25] Tanaka also expressed his concern over the safety of Japanese interests in China, asserting that they must not be affected by the Expedition. Chiang answered that he understood the welfare of the Chinese people would be secured so long as Japanese interests in China were kept intact.[26]

According to Zhang Qun, who was present at the meeting, Tanaka was not impressed by Chiang's intent to unify the north and south. "When Mr. Chiang indicated that the purpose of the

Chinese revolution was to unify the whole country, Tanaka suddenly changed countenance."[27] Zhang wrote in his memoirs that Tanaka had implied at the meeting that he did not wish to see the unification of China become a reality.

> At this meeting, Tanaka repeatedly insisted that the National Revolutionary Army not move northward but should consolidate the south as the top priority. What he actually meant was that he did not want a unified China.....Had China been unified by the National Revolutionary Army, he would not be able to carry out his invasion of China.....Therefore he would try everything to interfere with the Northern Expedition. The Jinan Incident that happened later during the second phase of the Northern Expedition exposed his true colors.[28]

According to Zhang, after talking with Tanaka, Chiang believed that it was impossible to reach a Sino-Japanese *detente*.

> After seeing Tanaka, Mr. Chiang wrote down his thoughts about the meeting in his dairy. He wrote that "judging by today's conversation with Tanaka, I can say with certainty that he is not sincere and there will be no possibility for Sino-Japanese cooperation. I know for sure that he will not allow our revolution to become successful. It is definitely only a matter of time before he interferes with our Northern Expedition in order to prevent China from being unified."[29]

Backing Down in Jinan

During the Incident, 26,579 Japanese troops were deployed in Jinan, Qingdao, and along the Jiaozhou-Jinan Railway.[30] The Chinese had a whole army, the First, in and around Jinan. According to the eyewitness account of Chinese historian Liang Jingdun (Liang Ching-tun), who later became famous for his study on the Mukden Incident, some one hundred and fifty thousand Nationalist troops withdrew from Jinan and the surrounding area on the night of May 3 alone after Chiang gave the evacuation order. Had the Chinese been inclined, Liang Jingdun claimed, to

engage in a battle with the Japanese in Jinan, they had enough manpower to annihilate their adversary.[31] But Chiang chose not to. Iriye has an illuminating observation on the decision.

> Chiang and other leaders were determined not to precipitate another crisis in Sino-foreign relations like the Nanjing incident. Chiang made several statements expressing readiness to respect the lives and property of foreigners.....An important corollary of this line of approach was the avoidance of friction with Japan.....The Nationalists were aware that as they marched northward they might come into conflict with Japanese interests in north China and Manchuria. But before China's unification was completed, they were determined not to provoke a crisis with Japan.[32]

Iriye maintains that Chiang was determined to avoid conflict with Japan and proceed northward speedily, so he could concentrate on his immediate objective, the conquest of north China.[33] Iriye praises Chiang's decision of walking away from a fight. "The attitude of the Japanese military was in marked contrast to the patience and moderation shown by Chinese leaders."[34] What did Chiang have to say about his backing down before Japanese pressure? In a speech given on the first anniversary of the Jinan Incident to the cadets of the Central Military Academy, he offered the following explanation.

> That morning (the morning of May 4, 1928).....I gathered that we could not make war with the Japanese and that we should not clash with them in Jinan. Our only goal then was to conquer Beijing and complete the Northern Expedition; therefore we had to endure humiliation in order to carry out an important mission [the unification of China]. We had to calm the situation down. As long as we conquer Beijing and complete the Northern Expedition, we do not have to worry about not having the opportunity to square accounts with the Japanese. Because I made up my mind that this was what I wanted to do, I had continued sending envoys to carry on negotiations with the Japanese.[35]

Chiang and Iriye's remarks clearly show that before "annei" was

accomplished, "rangwai" could wait. They also indicate that Chiang wanted to complete "annei" as soon as possible so he could embark on "rangwai." Donald Jordan has an insightful observation on this particular subject matter.

> Actually, in China's vast body of historical literature, there are numerous precedents of rulers who had been too distracted by internal division to deal with the menace of the northern barbarians, or who, in going off to suppress the nomads, found themselves overthrown at home. The question of priority is still quite relevant with regard to internal unity over national defense.[36]

The Jinan Incident established the fact that as early as 1928 Chiang had come to the conclusion that the best way to achieve "annei" was to keep it as simple as possible so it could be done without undue delay or causing unnecessary distractions. A *chengyu* has it that "a long night is fraught with dreams" (*yechang mengduo*), meaning the longer the delay the more the hitches. To complete the Expedition with as few hitches as possible, Chiang decided to treat the Jinan Incident as a side issue. It was not worth putting the entire unification process on hold just so he could take on the Japanese in Jinan.

The goal of the Expedition was to unify China, not to make war with Japan. Although there were more Chinese troops in Jinan than there were Japanese, it only meant that Chiang might have a better chance of winning one battle, not a war. Another reason that may account for Chiang's backing down in Jinan was his apprehension of Japanese air and naval superiority in the region. During the Incident, Japan had some fifty aircraft in Shandong and a fleet of fifty-four warships in Jiaozhou Bay.[37] On May 4, an unknown aircraft dropped two bombs on Chiang's

headquarters in Jinan, killing and wounding nineteen people. The aircraft was believed to be Japanese, but its identity was never confirmed.[38] Later on May 20, Japanese aircraft bombed Taian, temporary seat of the Shandong provincial government which had been moved from Jinan to take shelter from the fighting.[39]

Backing down before Japanese pressure was a slap in the face and Chiang admitted it in the above May 3 anniversary speech. As he said, the Chinese "must be prepared to endure humiliations when shouldering an important mission" (*renru fuzhong*).[40] This particular *chengyu* exhorts those who are committed to carrying out such missions to put up with humiliation that might come with the task. Put differently, one should not be troubled by having to suffer humiliation while pursuing a noble cause, as the ultimate reward would make it bearable.

Japan as the Irreconcilable Enemy

In his May 3 anniversary speech, Chiang did not explain why he remained in Jinan to personally oversee talks with the Japanese. But his choice of persons assigned to conduct negotiations was self-explanatory. Xiong Shihui had attended a Japanese military academy and was the classmate of Fukuda's chief of staff. Huang Fu was also educated in Japan and knew Fukuda in person. As for Zhang Qun, who went to Tokyo to confer with the Japanese military leaders as soon as the Jinan Incident erupted, he was educated in Japan as well and had been an acquaintance of Japanese prime minister Tanaka since 1918. Xiong, Huang, and Zhang all had Japanese connections, not to

mention Chiang himself, who had also studied in Japan, and had talked to Tanaka only six months before the Incident. It is logical to assume that Chiang might have hoped that the Japanese would have some consideration for old time's sake and make things easier for the Nationalists. But as it turned out, old friendship meant nothing.

What particularly shocked the Nationalists was the Japanese slaughter of seventeen of their diplomats. Both Chinese tradition and international practice ensured diplomats of the opposing side of their safety even in wartime, was violently disregarded by the Japanese in Jinan. The Chinese who conducted talks with the Japanese and survived were thoroughly humiliated. It was the immediate impression of Xiong Shihui that "the Japanese are pressing for war in Jinan." Huang Fu, after spending a night under arrest at Fukuda's headquarters, averred that throughout the negotiations "the Japanese do not treat us as human beings."[41]

Japan's arrogance and atrocities in Jinan infuriated Chiang Kai-shek. The Incident helped him get a better understanding of Japanese designs on China. It opened his eyes to what Japan was capable of doing to China. Although he did not ask for compensation from Tokyo for property damages and loss of life caused by the attack on Jinan, he was determined not to let bygones be bygones. In the May 3 anniversary speech, Chiang declared the Incident a national humiliation, vowing that he would not dismiss this humiliation from his mind. "Every citizen of the Republic of China and every descendant of the Yellow Emperor should always bear in mind Japanese atrocities [in

Jinan]. We do not deserve to be Chinese if we cannot get revenge....We have to be of one mind, working on wreaking vengeance upon Japan and wiping out the national humiliation."[42]

Quite appropriately, one Kuomintang source says that "when the Northern Expedition started, the anti-imperialist movement in China considered Britain the foremost target.....But after the Jinan Massacre, the situation had changed and Japan became the most imperative target of the movement."[43] The Jinan Incident effectively poisoned Sino-Japanese relations which would steadily deteriorate from this point on.

China Pleads With the World

Although bowing to Japanese pressure, the Nationalists were not helpless victims and they resorted to diplomacy. But diplomacy did not produce the kind of result they hoped for. The National Government in Nanjing lodged official protests to the Japanese government on April 21, April 26, and May 4, 1928. The Kuomintang Central Executive Committee also sent a protest telegraph to Tokyo on May 5. In May 1928 the Nationalists had not yet reached Beijing; the Beijing warlord government was still in existence. Not to be outdone by Nanjing, Beijing protested against Japanese actions on April 20 and May 4. But its wording and tone were much milder than those of Nanjing.

After Nanjing and Beijing's protests fell on deaf ears in Tokyo, the Nationalists turned to the international community for help. On May 10, Tan Yankai, chairman of the Nanjing government, telegraphed Sir J.E. Drummond, secretary-general of

the League of Nations, calling his attention to the fact that "the territorial integrity and political independence of China have been ruthlessly violated and the peace of nations is threatened by the aggression on the part of Japan."[44] Tan maintained that Japanese hostilities in Shandong had amounted to "acts of war against China" and was a blatant violation of the League Convenant.[45]

Two days later, Tan Yankai sent a telegram to President Calvin Coolidge of the United States. Tan said that as a result of the United States' good offices at the 1922 Washington Conference, the Shandong Question had been peacefully resolved. Once again, Shandong had become the testing ground between China and Japan, and he called on the American government and people to uphold justice. On the same day, the National Government sent Wang Chonghui to Great Britain, Li Huangying to France, and Wu Chaoshu to the United States to plead for China's case.[46]

The help China was expecting never came. But the lack of international response came more as a let-down than a shock to the Nationalists. After all, the British, American, Portuguese, and Italian envoys in China had already agreed on May 6 that they would not make a formal reaction to the Jinan Incident.[47] The Soviet Union was the only foreign power to openly condemn Japanese atrocities in Jinan. As for the rest of the powers, none spoke out from a sense of justice. Nevertheless, Nanjing did receive from Drummond a token reply saying that he had informed members of the League of a Chinese protest. And that was the end of the League's enquiry. The Nationalists later conceded that their efforts to bring international attention to

the Jinan Incident achieved little.[48]

Jinan Incident expert Yue Bingnan maintains that it was understandable that the League of Nations did not want to have any part in the Incident because the Nanjing government was not a formal member of the organization (though the Beijing government was). Yue draws attention to the fact that when the League did reply to Nanjing's plea, its message read that the League had informed Chinese representative to the League Chen Ji of Nanjing's protest.[49] Chen Ji was appointed by the Beijing regime. Thus, Nanjing found itself in an awkward situation as it did not have formal recognition from foreign countries that still regarded Beijing as the only legitimate government of China.

The Jinan & Mukden Incidents

Late night on September 18, 1931, Japan attacked Shenyang (Mukden), the largest city in the Chinese Northeast. The city fell before dawn. Thanks in part to Nanjing's instructions to local Chinese troops not to engage the enemy, Japan occupied the entire Northeast in a matter of weeks. On March 9, 1932, the puppet state of Manzhouguo was founded in the Northeast with the deposed Manchu emperor Puyi as the head of state.[50]

Chiang did not fight back in Jinan for fear of jeopardizing the Northern Expedition. Three years later, he did not fight back in the Northeast for a different reason. In his 1934 article *Dihu? youhu?* (*Enemy? Friend?*), Chiang claimed that, in addition to his long-held conviction that China was too weak to

make war with Japan, the Northeast was not worth the bloodshed.

> The fact is that before the September Eighteenth Incident, the Northeast came under the jurisdiction of the National Government in name only. In terms of military, political, and financial authorities, it was *de facto* independent. At least we can say that it was not within the sphere of our revolution's influence. The National Government's relations with the Northeast in the past existed in name only, and now the government had lost the name as well.[51]

In the historical perspective, the decision not to defend Nanjing's nominal sovereignty in the Northeast was best described by Wang Dao, a leading late Qing advocate of modernization. During and after the 1884 Sino-French War, Wang Dao questioned the wisdom of defending China's dependencies such as Vietnam, Korea, and Ryukyu against western encroachment. "What we were fighting for in Vietnam was none other than the preservation of a nominal suzerainty.....The Battle of Vietnam was costly. It had no military merit and our casualties were heavy. It was all because of the kind of argument that China had to defend its vassal states." Wang concluded that China had to value its own interests more, and should not bring trouble to itself by seeking to protect a hollow reputation.[52] Although the Northeast was an integral part of China, not a vassal state, it does not change the fact that Nanjing only exercised nominal sovereignty over it. Chiang decided not to shed blood and jeopardize Sino-Japanese relations over something that Nanjing did not actually possess.

According to William Kirby, Chiang in 1934 made clear to his German advisor Hans von Seeckt "his intention to sacrifice North China and to devote nearly all his resources to the defense of the Yangtze region."[53] Nanjing's appeal to the League of Nations

in the Mukden Incident can be regarded more as a formality than as a serious expectation of concrete action from the international community. This is exemplified in Chiang's October 6, 1931 telegram to Zhang Xueliang. In it, Chiang said that although China should not place its entire trust in the League, holding the League responsible for the settlement of the Mukden Incident would help maintain China's international standing.[54]

Kuomintang ideologist Dai Jitao made an interesting comment during the Mukden Incident that sheds light on this matter. Speaking from his position as chairman of the Special Diplomacy Committee which was created to handle the Northeast crisis, Dai claimed in November 1931 that appealing to the League might alleviate public pressure on Nanjing. He said that Nanjing had to make the Chinese people aware that the reason Japan was becoming more aggressive was because the League had failed to fulfill its duty of imposing sanctions on Japan. By showing the people that Nanjing had total confidence in the League to settle the Mukden crisis, he argued that Nanjing could reduce the amount of criticism directed at it because the League would share part of the blame as well.[55] In trying to create a causality of inadequate League authority and increasing Japanese aggression, Dai thought that Nanjing might be spared being made the scapegoat for the loss of the Northeast.

So far as the Jinan and the Mukden Incidents are concerned, "rangwai bixian annei" had brought about two different results. While the former was, relatively speaking, settled satisfactorily, the latter was never resolved and the Northeast remained in Japanese hands until the end of the war in 1945. The

Mukden Incident must have made Nanjing realize that relying on diplomatic measures alone was not enough to solve Sino-Japanese conflicts. Some kind of self defense was needed. Such was the case of the Songhu Incident, the subject of the next chapter.

Notes

1. Donald Jordan, *The Northern Expedition: China's National Revolution of 1926-1928* (Honolulu, 1976), p. 155.

2. *Zhonghua minguo shishi jiyao* (Taipei, 1978), vol. 1928, pp. 605-606.

3. Yue Bingnan, *Riben chubing Shandong yu Zhongguo paiRi yundong: minguo shiliunian zhi shibanian* (Taipei, 1988), p. 1.

4. Ibid., p. 4.

5. Ibid., p. 6.

6. Ibid., p. 106.

7. *Zhonghua minguo shishi jiyao*, vol. 1928, p. 540.

8. Yue, p. 183.

9. Li Yunhan, *Zhongguo Guomindang shishu* (Taipei, 1984), vol. 2, p. 880.

10. Zhang Qun, *Wo yu Riben qishi nian* (Taipei, 1980), p. 38.

11. Jordan, p. 159.

12. Akira Iriye, *After Imperialism: The Search for a New Order in the Far East, 1921-1931* (Chicago, 1990), p. 200.

13. *Zhonghua minguo shishi jiyao*, vol. 1928, p. 714.

14. Ibid., pp. 615-616.

15. Zhang, p. 39.

16. Ibid., p. 40.

17. *Xian zongtong Jianggong sixiang yanlun zongji*, vol. 10, p. 403.

18. *Zhonghua minguo shishi jiyao*, p. 705.

19. Ibid., pp, 739, 756, 775-776.

20. Yue, p. 244.

21. Ibid., p. 194.

22. Iriye, p. 157.

23. Ibid., p. 157.

24. Zhang, p. 23.

25. Ibid., pp. 29-30.

26. Iriye, pp. 157-158.

27. Zhang, p. 24.

28. Ibid., pp. 24-25.

29. Ibid., p. 25.

30. Yue, pp. 179-183.

31. *Zhonghua minguo shishi jiyao*, p. 627.

32. Iriye, pp. 193-195.

33. Ibid., p. 205.

34. Ibid., p. 202.

35. *Xian zongtong Jianggong sixiang yanlun zongji*, p. 401.

36. Jordan, p. 161.

37. Yue, p. 183.

38. *Zhonghua minguo shishi jiyao*, p. 731.

39. Ibid., p. 893.

40. *Xian zongtong Jianggong sixiang yanlun zongji*, p. 401.

41. Li, p. 882.

42. Ibid., pp. 883-884.

43. *Zhongguo xiandai shi cidian: shishi bufen* (Taipei, 1985), vol. 2. p. 337.

44. *Zhonghua minguo shishi jiyao*, p. 770.

45. Ibid., p. 769.

46. Ibid., pp. 815-816.

47. Ibid., p. 709.

48. Li, p. 886.

49. Yue, p. 204.

50. *Jiuyiba shibian shishu* (A Historical Account of the September Eighteenth Incident) by Liang Jingdun (Liang

Ching-tun), first published in 1934, is still considered a classic study of the event. Since 1992, Mainland China's Liaoning People's Press has published a number of books on the Incident that include *Jiuyiba shibian tuzhi* (An Illustrated History of the September Eighteenth Incident), *Jiuyiba shibian shilu* (The True Account of the September Eighteenth Incident), *Jiuyiba kangzhan shi* (History of the War of Resistance during the September Eighteenth Incident), *Jiuyiba shibian dangan shiliao jingbian* (Compilation of Selected Historical Materials and Documents of the September Eighteenth Incident), and *Jiuyiba shibian qianhou Riben yu Zhongguo dongbei* (Japan and the Chinese Northeast before and after the September Eighteenth Incident).

51. *Geming wenxian* (Taipei, 1965), vol. 72, p. 141.

52. Yuan Weishi, *Wan Qing da bianju zhongde sichao yu renwu* (Shenzhen, 1992), p. 136.

53. William Kirby, *Germany and Republican China* (Stanford, 1984), p. 123

54. *Zhonghua minguo zhongyao shiliao chubian: duiRi kangzhan shiqi* (Taipei, 1981), Introduction, vol. 1, p. 291

55. *Geming wenxian*, vol. 35, p. 1228.

CHAPTER VII

THE ANTI-COMMUNIST CAMPAIGNS & THE SONGHU INCIDENT: NANJING TAKES ON THE COMMUNISTS & JAPAN

Conventional wisdom has it that the Chinese Communists were Chiang Kai-shek's foremost enemy. Like every generalization, this one is too simplistic. While the interviews with the late General Chiang Wei-kuo in Chapter Two reaffirm the long-established notion that Chiang Kai-shek was indeed anti-Communist, it does not necessarily mean that the Chinese Communists had to be his worst enemy. In addition to being anti-Communist, Chiang Kai-shek was anti-Japanese as well. If the Chiang Wei-kuo interviews are any indication, Chiang Kai-shek was actually more anti-Japanese than anti-Communist.

To determine if the Japanese, the regional militarists, or the Communists were Chiang Kai-shek's foremost enemy, the kind of threats to his government that Chiang perceived should be put into a military context. From the perspective of military strength, the Communists were the least threatening enemy that Nanjing had to contend with. Both the regional militarists and the Japanese were much more militarily powerful than the Communists, but the Communist Party was an enemy nonetheless.

Chiang's non-resistance in the 1928 Jinan and the 1931 Mukden Incidents prove that he would not "throw eggs against a rock" (*yiluan jishi*). By the same token, Chiang's relative tolerance of the regional militarists, discussed in the next chapter, supports the notion that the latter were militarily powerful enough to make Chiang think twice before taking action

against them.

The Communists presented a different scenario for Chiang. Their relatively small numbers allowed him to seize the initiative, devising and implementing a systematic and elaborate plan for the final solution of communism in China. Within four years, from 1930 to 1933, the National Government launched five encirclement and extermination campaigns against the Communists. The prime objective of these campaigns was to destroy the Central Soviet Region based in Ruijin, southern Jiangxi.

Encirclement & Elimination Campaigns

The first encirclement campaign lasted only six days, from December 29 to January 3, 1931. Jiangxi chairman Lu Diping assumed overall command of government troops against the Red Army under Peng Dehuai and Zhu De. Both sides matched each other in strength, having roughly forty-two thousand men. But the Red Army had the upper hand because the fighting took place within its domain. Nationalist troops had difficulties adjusting to guerrilla warfare and were unfamiliar with the terrain; one division was annihilated and another almost decimated. After suffering heavy losses, the campaign was called off.[1]

Nanjing lost no time in regrouping its troops and launched a second campaign in early April 1931. This time it had more than one hundred and ten thousand men under the command of He Yingqin against Zhu De's eighty thousand. By April 30, the campaign had ended in another Nationalist failure. Nanjing's superiority in man power was offset by logistical problems and the fact that

many Nationalist soldiers were northerners who had not adjusted to living in the south.[2]

Soon after the second encirclement campaign came to an end, Chen Jitang, allying with Wang Jingwei and Eugene Chen, set up a "National Government" in Guangzhou as a rival to that in Nanjing, protesting against Chiang's house arrest of Guangdong elder Hu Hanmin. The political storm started as a personal dispute between Chiang, chairman of the National Government, and Hu, Legislative Yuan president, over the necessity of a provisional constitution. The former said it was needed and the latter disagreed. Both refused to give an inch, resulting in a split within the government.

The setbacks in the previous encirclement campaigns and the restlessness of the Liang-Guang leaders convinced Chiang that he had to assume personal command of the next encirclement campaign. According to Jerome Ch'en, the Liang-Guang leaders' challenging Chiang by setting up a separatist regime was "partly due to Chiang's inability to quell the communists. In order to foil them again, Chiang had to show quick results in his suppression of the 'Red Bandits,' hence the launching of the third Encirclement."[3]

On July 1, 1931, one hundred and thirty thousand government troops started attacking fifty-three thousand Communist soldiers. The third campaign went extremely well for Nanjing. Government troops succeeded in taking several communist strongholds, including Ruijin. But the success was short-lived. In July, Shi Yousan mutinied in Hebei. The following month, the Yangzi River was in flood. The final blow came on September 18

when the Japanese seized Shenyang (Mukden). Overwhelmed by the turn of events, Chiang called off the campaign.[4]

The Mukden Incident marked the end of the first stage of the encirclement and elimination campaigns. During the Northeast crisis, the split within the Kuomintang between Nanjing and Guangzhou continued. In order to bring about unity within the party and the government in the face of the Japanese invasion, Chiang resigned all government positions in December 1931. A new cabinet was formed with Lin Sen as chairman of the National Government and Sun Ke as Executive *Yuan* president. But the new government was unable to function for lack of military and financial resources.[5]

In January 1932, Wang Jingwei replaced Sun Ke as Executive *Yuan* president and Chiang Kai-shek was appointed head of the newly created Military Commission in March. The new position allowed Chiang to prepare for the fourth encirclement campaign which had dual objectives: elimination of enemy forces in the Henan-Hubei-Anhui area, and destruction of the Jiangxi Soviet.[6] Starting in June 1932, Chiang Kai-shek led the attack on the tri-province region and Chen Cheng assumed the responsibility of attacking the Jiangxi Soviet. Chiang was successful in driving the Communists out of the tri-province border region. After three months of fighting, he destroyed the "Henan-Hubei-Anhui Soviet Government," sending Zhang Guotao and Xu Xiangqian on their flight to Sichuan and Shaanxi. But government troops under Chen Cheng suffered significant reverses when attacking the Jiangxi Soviet.[7]

Like the third campaign, the fourth was given up halfway due

to the Japanese invasion of other parts of China. In early March 1933, the Japanese attacked Rehe, and occupied its provincial capital Chengde. The situation in northern China forced Chiang to divert some of the encirclement forces to the north and call off the campaign. The subjugation of the Central Soviet region would have to wait until the fifth and the last campaign.

The conclusion in May 1933 of the Tanggu Truce that ended fighting in the north allowed Nanjing to launch the fifth campaign. According to Parks Coble,

> The Tangku Truce was a crucial victory for Chiang Kai-shek and his policy of 'first pacification and then external resistance.' A military catastrophe in the north was avoided; Peiping and Tientsin would not fall until 1937. Chiang would not have to return north in a military campaign but could begin immediate preparations for the Fifth Extermination Campaign."[8]

Determined to finish off the Communists once and for all, Nanjing gathered an unprecedented army of six hundred thousand against the Red Army's one hundred and fifty thousand.[9] At Lushan a Military Officer Training Seminar was established to provide officers with political and practical training in fighting the Communists. Moreover, Nanjing adopted a new strategy in this campaign. William Wei makes the following comment on it.

> For his last campaign Chiang Kai-shek adopted a "strategically offensive but tactically defensive" approach that was similar to the one employed by Tseng Kuo-fan against the rebellions of the mid-nineteenth century. In practice this meant the application of a stringent economic and communications blockade that destroyed the self-sufficiency of the [Central Soviet] base area. It consisted chiefly of a network of mutually supporting blockhouses built at key points on the periphery of the Soviet area.[10]

The fifth campaign started in October 1933. As government troops were making good progress, the Fujian Revolt erupted in late November. For fear that the Fujian episode might spoil the campaign or provide the Japanese an opportunity that could be exploited to their advantage by invading other parts of China, Chiang took swift action and crushed the revolt.[11] The Fujian Revolt put the campaign on hold for nearly two months. When it was smashed in January 1934, Chiang resumed the fifth campaign, which proved to be a success. The Communists were driven out of Jiangxi and on to the Long March in October 1934. On the success of the fifth campaign, William Wei writes:

> It is difficult to determine whether the [Lushan] training was successful or not.....Still, the comparatively disciplined performance of the Nationalist Army during the fifth campaign suggests that the training did have some effect. While it failed to restrain the officers of the Nineteenth Route Army from launching the Fukien Rebellion, it did enable the rest of the Nationalist Army to carry out the blockade-blockhouse strategy.[12]

The Communists' military vulnerability became apparent when the overwhelming preponderance of government troops in the encirclement campaigns is considered. In the course of the five campaigns, the number of government troops increased steadily from forty-two thousand to one hundred and ten thousand to one hundred and thirty thousand to one hundred and fifty thousand to six hundred thousand. The increase in number of government troops may indicate that the Red Army was a worthy adversary which needed to be dealt with by a greater counterforce. It can also suggest that Chiang, mindful of his military superiority over the Red Army, apparently believed that he could finish off the Communists in one stroke.

The anti-Communist campaigns strongly suggest that communism was less of a threat than either Japan or regional militarism. They also demonstrate that Chiang needed no second thoughts about taking on the Communists. He had much less patience for the Communists than for either the Japanese or the regional militarists. It does seem that Chiang's patience for his enemies was in reverse proportion to their perceived military strength. There was no talk of compromising with or showing leniency to the Communists. Although government troops suffered defeats in the first two campaigns, it does not change the fact that it was Chiang who held the initiative in Nanjing-Jiangxi Soviet relations. He decided when and where to strike, not the Communists. This was not the case with the Japanese.

The Songhu Incident: Nanjing's New Japan Policy at Work

Chiang Kai-shek's non-resistance position on Japanese aggression in the Jinan and Mukden Incidents changed when Japan attacked Shanghai in 1932, an event known as the Songhu Incident.[13] In the Incident, Nanjing adopted an active policy that allowed them to resist in self-defense while negotiating with the invaders.

The replacement of Sun Ke by Wang Jingwei as Executive *Yuan* president and the Japanese attack on Shanghai fell on the same day, January 28, 1932. Throughout the Songhu Incident, Wang was in charge of the National Government. Although Chiang had resigned from the government a month before, his position in the party as a member of the Central Political Conference enabled

him to take on a decisive role in the Incident. The Central Political Conference (*Zhongyang zhengzhi huiyi*) was created in July 1924 by the Kuomintang as an advisory body to Sun Yat-sen. After the founding of the National Government in 1925, it became the supreme political authority in the Kuomintang [14]

Jiang Tingfu described Wang as the kind of person who stood for war with Japan when he was not in power and then would turn about and embrace peace once he was in power. Jiang made an insightful observation of Wang in his memoirs.

> I knew Wang was anti-Japanese. But before he became Executive *Yuan* president, his henchmen had several times made things difficult for the government by arousing the students to demand war with Japan. In their scramble for power, politicians sometimes would do strange things. But I think it is absolutely inexcusable to take advantage of the peace and war issue.[15]

Background to the Songhu Incident

After the September Eighteenth Incident of 1931, various anti-Japanese national salvation societies arose in Shanghai. In reaction, Japanese nationals organized themselves into anti-Chinese organizations. On the pretext of the outpouring of Chinese hostility, Tokyo announced that it would dispatch troops to Shanghai to protect its citizens should it become necessary. Four days after the September Eighteenth Incident, General Xiong Shihui, chief of staff at Chiang Kai-shek's field headquarters in Nanchang, asked Chiang for instructions on how to respond if Japan attacked Shanghai. The reply was "military self-defense."[16] Later in October 1931, Chiang instructed Shanghai mayor Zhang Qun to prepare for resistance against

possible Japanese invasion.[17] With both sides having their swords drawn and arrows on the bowstring, a conflict might be triggered at any moment.

January 18, 1932 was a sunny day in Shanghai. But what happened that day cast a cloud of gloom over the already strained Sino-Japanese relations. In the afternoon of January 18, three Japanese monks were assaulted by Chinese workers from the Sanyou Towel Factory. The monks were rescued and rushed to hospital by the employees from a Japanese textile factory. One monk died in hospital six days later.[18] The next day, the outraged Japanese consul general in Shanghai, Murai Kuramatsu, demanded that the Shanghai city government apprehend the culprits. Murai also threatened military action if the city government failed to protect other Japanese nationals.[19]

On the 21st, Murai put forward five demands to Wu Tiecheng, the new mayor of Shanghai. The demands included an apology from the mayor; apprehension of the suspects; compensation for the wounded and dead monks; outlawing of anti-Japanese activities; and disbandment of anti-Japanese societies.[20] In the meantime, commanders of the Chinese Nineteenth Route Army which was deployed in Shanghai convened to discuss the situation. The meeting was attended by Jiang Guangnai, the Nanjing-Shanghai Garrison commander, and Cai Tingkai, commander of the Nineteenth Route Army, among others.

According to one source, Cai Tingkai at first opposed the idea of fighting the Japanese, believing that his troops lacked sufficient ammunition and that they were armed with inferior equipment. Brigadier Weng Zhaohuan, one of Cai's officers,

disagreed, maintaining that they should fight because they could rely on popular support. Swayed by Weng, Cai then suggested that the battle be fought outside Shanghai away from the International Settlement to avoid diplomatic complications. Weng argued that it should be fought in the city. He asserted that it had been Japan's wish to see the Nineteenth Route Army out of Shanghai; if the Chinese troops left the city in order to divert the fighting to somewhere else, it would fit in exactly with Japan's wishes. Weng's position was seconded by General Dai Ji, police chief of the Greater Shanghai Area. Jiang Guangnai finally ruled that the Nineteenth Route Army would stay put and defend Shanghai, saying that "if we are not attacked, we will not attack others; if we are attacked, we will fight back."[21] Interestingly enough, this particular meeting is not mentioned in Cai Tingkai's autobiography.

On January 26, Murai presented Wu Tiecheng with an ultimatum, specifying that the latter had forty-eight hours, that is, until 6:00 pm of the 28th, to accept the Japanese demands. Murai threatened that if the matter was not resolved before the deadline, the Japanese navy would act accordingly. Eager to avoid confrontation, the Shanghai city government on January 28 accepted all Japanese demands.[22]

But Chinese acceptance of the demands was not enough. At 11:35 pm on January 28, Wu Tiecheng received a message from Admiral Shiozawa Koichi, commander of the Japanese First Expeditionary Fleet anchored off Shanghai. Shiozawa claimed that given the fact that most Japanese nationals in the greater Shanghai area lived in Zhabei (a district in northern Shanghai

and the garrison area of the Nineteenth Route Army), he had decided to dispatch troops there in order to maintain local security. It was his demand that the Chinese troops in the region be pulled out at once.[23]

In fact, on the day before Shiozawa made his request, Chiang Kai-shek and Wang Jingwei, in their capacity as members of the Central Political Conference, had decided to transfer the Nineteenth Route Army out of Shanghai. They instructed General Zhu Peide, chief of the general staff, to dispatch a military police regiment from Nanjing to Zhabei to relieve the Nineteenth Route Army. Zhu immediately sent a telegram to Gu Zhenglun, commander of the Military Police, explaining Nanjing's position. "In order to prevent clashes between enemy troops and ours, I have ordered one military police regiment to be rushed to the Zhabei area to take over the defense. As a buffer, the regiment will be at the command of General Dai Ji."[24]

The military police left Nanjing late on January 27 and did not reach Shanghai until the afternoon of the 28th. When Wu Tiecheng accepted the ultimatum, the Chinese military authorities in Shanghai thought the crisis had been averted. They decided therefore that the relief of the garrison be carried out the next morning. Shiozawa's last minute demand came as a total shock. At 11:50, less than half an hour after Shiozawa made his demand, Japan attacked Zhabei. As the Nineteenth Route Army had not been relieved of duty, it fought back. The military police regiment that was supposed to relieve the Nineteenth Route Army became its reinforcement.[25]

Japan's attack was met with stiff resistance. Shiozawa had about six thousand marines against twenty thousand Chinese soldiers on the first day of fighting. As both sides brought in reinforcements, eventually eighty-five thousand Japanese faced sixty thousand Chinese. The Japanese had a superiority in navy vessels, tanks, airplanes, and heavy artillery.[26]

To coordinate resistance, the Central Political Conference created the Military Commission (*Junshi weiyuanhui*), with Chiang as one of the members, on the second day of the Incident. The Commission later became one of the most important military authorities in Republican China before and during the War.

Shanghai is over three hundred kilometers east of Nanjing. Enemy vessels could reach Nanjing up the Yangzi, threatening the central government. When the battle broke out, Japan had several warships lying at anchor off Nanjing. Chiang decided not to take the risk of exposing the central government to a possible enemy attack, and recommended that it be moved to Luoyang, Henan. Chiang's suggestion was well received by other Nationalists. On January 30, the Government announced the decision to relocate to Luoyang. But the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Military Commission would remain in Nanjing to conduct diplomatic talks and the fighting with Japan. Chiang's concern for the central government's safety was not unfounded. On February 1, two Japanese warships shelled Nanjing. The Chinese did not return fire and one hour later the Japanese stopped the attack.[27]

Although the fighting was bitter, the Chinese troops were

able to hold the line. As the battle dragged on, Tokyo sent Admiral Nomura Kichisaburo to Shanghai, relieving Shiozawa in early February. Nomura's appointment did not produce a quick victory for Japan. On February 14, General Ueda Kenkichi was sent to Shanghai, relieving Nomura. Two days later, the Nineteenth Route Army, which had been fighting all alone received a substantial boost when the Fifth Army under General Zhang Zhizhong, consisting of the German trained and equipped Eighty-seventh and Eighty-eighth divisions, arrived from Nanjing. It took over the Nineteenth Route Army's left flank.[28]

On February 25, Ueda was replaced by the former Minister of the Army General Shirakawa Yoshinori. Shirakawa arrived with a reinforcement of two divisions. The influx of fresh troops allowed Shirakawa to launch a major offensive on the 29th, forcing the Chinese to retreat. On March 3, the Japanese occupied Nanxiang in southern Shanghai, the seat of Nineteenth Route Army headquarters. Once Nanxiang fell, Shirakawa claimed his duty of protecting Japanese nationals was fulfilled, and agreed to cease fire talks.[29]

The Songhu Incident was costly. Japan suffered 3,091 casualties, including 769 dead. As for China, the casualties were roughly 14,000, including 4,086 dead. The figure of Chinese civilian loses may have been as high as 20,000. Property damage in Shanghai was extensive and economic losses astronomical. For example, out of Shanghai's 932 schools, 238 were destroyed. The Commercial Press, the largest publishing house in China, had its printing facilities entirely wiped out. The fighting also put a quarter of million of people out of work. The revenue of the

Nanjing-Shanghai Railway, a trunk line in the lower Yangzi Valley, dropped by 88% percent after the fighting began.[30]

The battle took a heavy toll on China's finances. T.V. Soong, the finance minister, pleaded with the provincial authorities not to intercept revenue meant for the national treasury.[31] On February 7, Nanjing announced that it would suspend salary payment to all government employees, central or provincial. Instead, they would receive living allowances. Soon public servants began to feel the pinch. Many government employees in Nanjing could not afford to pay their rent. Short of cash itself, Nanjing City Hall came up with an ingenious solution: a rent reduction of fifty percent for all residential housing and a sixty percent reduction on hotel rates.[32]

International Reaction

While putting up resistance, the National Government pleaded for international mediation. On January 28, Nanjing appealed to the League of Nations. On the 30th, it presented notes to the Nine-Power Treaty signatories who had agreed to respect China's territorial integrity and political independence when they signed the treaty in 1922.

During the Incident, Britain and the United States lodged protests against the Japanese attack, accusing Japan of violating the neutrality of the International Settlement and jeopardizing the safety of foreign nationals. The British and American consuls general in Shanghai proposed setting up a neutral zone between the Chinese and Japanese lines. Japan

turned down the proposal.[33]

In the meantime, the French, British, and American ministers in China convened in Shanghai, trying to work out a truce. On February 25, U.S. Secretary of State Henry Stimson released a statement, condemning Japan for violating the Nine-Power Treaty. Touched by Stimson's token gesture, former Executive Yuan president Sun Ke and former foreign minister Eugene Chen published an article in the local Shanghai newspaper *Shenbao*, calling for direct American military intervention on China's behalf. But this was more than Washington was willing to risk.[34]

On March 14, China and Japan began ceasefire talks. The talks moved at a snail's pace, mainly because neither side could agree on the timetable of the withdrawal of the Japanese troops and because of an assassination attempt. On April 29, a traditional Japanese holiday celebrating the emperor's birthday, more than ten thousand Japanese held a party in Hongkou Park in the International Settlement. Korean nationalist In Fung-chi threw a bomb at the crowd, wounding Murai, Shirakawa, Ueda, and Nomura. In Fung-chi was arrested by Japanese military police on the spot and sent to Japan for interrogation. He was put to death on December 19 by a firing squad. Shirakawa died in Shanghai on May 26 from wounds sustained in the bombing.[35]

On May 5, China and Japan signed the Shanghai Ceasefire Agreement. It was not until June 17 that all Japanese formations left the city. In early June, the Nineteenth Route Army was transferred to Fujian to combat communism. The National Government returned to Nanjing in December of that year.

Resisting While Negotiating

The Songhu Incident marked a significant change in Nanjing's Japan policy. Instead of relying solely on diplomacy, Nanjing resorted to resistance. When Wang Jingwei assumed the presidency of the Executive *Yuan*, he issued his proposition "resisting while negotiating" (*yimian dikang, yimian jiaoshe*). Wang's policy of "resisting while negotiating" was a "compromise arising from a situation in which China would not sign a treaty that would surrender its sovereignty and territory under duress, and yet could not afford war."[36]

"Rangwai bixian annei" policy demanded resistance only after the house was in order. "Yimian dikang, yimian jiaoshe" policy called for resistance before the house was in order. Did they contradict each other? The kind of resistance Chiang had in mind was resistance in a broad sense, that is, a full scale war. He did not rule out the possibility of a local, limited resistance so long as it could be contained as such and did not escalate into war. This is best seen in his instructions to Xiong Shihui and Zhang Qun in late 1931 as mentioned earlier. Laying equal stress on negotiation and resistance was critical to China's cause. Negotiation served the purpose of containing the fighting and preventing it from spreading to other parts of the country, so that a battle would not turn into a war. Resistance would make clear to Japan that China was not a helpless victim. Resistance would serve as a bargaining counter in diplomatic talks with Tokyo.

On January 31, 1931, Wang Jingwei gave a speech to party

members in Kaifeng, Henan, explaining why the central government needed to be relocated to Luoyang. Wang spent a good deal of the speech defending Nanjing's retreat under Japanese pressure and its acceptance of the demands made by Murai and Shiozawa. He maintained that the government was practising self-control in handling the monk beating incident. When Nanjing consented to the Japanese demands for an apology, compensation, and disbanding anti-Japanese organizations, he averred, it did so only because it wanted to eliminate any possible excuse that might be used by Japan as a handle against China.

> How should we cope with the Japanese threat? So far as the Shanghai crisis is concerned, we must, within possible limits, do the best we can in yielding to Japan's unreasonable demands. Doing so is to show that we mean no provocation. Even if conflict eventually occurs, our position will let Japan know that it is of its own doing and this will be a fact for the world to see. Some people might say the government's diplomatic response is too flabby; but the reason the government does so is because we know that the Japanese are intentionally picking a quarrel with us. Therefore, we give way to demands that have obviously been used as an excuses for making trouble.[37]

Wang's speech demonstrated Nanjing's desire to gloss things over to stay on good terms with Tokyo. The dispatch of the military police to relieve the Nineteenth Route Army, whose commanders had vowed to fight to the last man, is another proof. When Japan attacked, the scheduled withdrawal of the Nineteenth Route Army was only hours away. Had the army been pulled out sooner to allow the military police to move into Zhabei, the Incident might have been averted. Parks Coble asserted that

> Chiang Kai-shek's actions in the Shanghai war were, in fact, entirely consistent with the Japanese policy he had followed since the Jinan Incident and would follow until 1937. He felt that China could not equal Japan militarily and must go to extreme limits to avoid war.....[Nanjing] would have

avoided conflict entirely had it not been for the brashness of Admiral Shiozawa and the exuberance of the Nineteenth Route Army."[38]

Wang's policy received full support from Chiang, who decided on the day after the Incident began that China should negotiate with Japan while appealing to the League of Nations and the signatories of the Nine-Power Treaty. In the meantime, Chiang ordered the Nineteenth Route Army to hold its ground.[39]

After the Mukden Incident, some Chinese leaders favored severing diplomatic relations with Japan. Eugene Chen was the leading champion of this move. After succeeding Gu Weijun (Wellington Koo) as foreign minister in December 1931, Chen had advocated breaking off relations with Japan. On January 21, 1932, he told several Kuomintang leaders that the best way to resolve the Sino-Japanese deadlock was to sever diplomatic relations with Tokyo and deploy all available troops to Jiangxi to combat communism to show that China had no intention of making war with Japan. Sun Ke, Executive *Yuan* president, replied that any decision concerning severance of diplomatic relations would have to be debated in the Executive *Yuan* and approved by the Legislative *Yuan*. Others who were present at the discussion raised their doubts over the feasibility of Chen's idea.[40] Realizing that his position was not accepted, Chen resigned on January 24. Four days later, the Central Political Conference passed a resolution to look into whether Chen's remarks regarding breaking off Sino-Japanese relations had violated party discipline and if he should be reprimanded.[41]

Chiang was of the opinion that "diplomacy is invisible

warfare."[42] Before "annei" was completed, the pursuit of diplomatic solutions might well be the last resort for Nanjing to avoid a full scale war. Chiang would not allow this last resort to be taken away lightly. It is no surprise that Chiang and Wang, both present when Eugene Chen put forward his notion, opposed terminating diplomatic relations. Chiang criticized Chen's idea as dangerous. "Since domestically the country is not combat ready, severing diplomatic relations hastily regardless of the consequences will be a disaster." On another occasion, Chiang said that "given China's current condition and its strength, if we terminate diplomatic relations with Japan, it would mean that we will have to rely on war to settle the disputes between the two countries. War without preparation always leads to defeat.....We must not let momentary impulse take over reason and take declaration of war lightly."[43]

Chiang's position was seconded by Wang Jingwei, who in his January 31 speech said: "We do not advocate severing diplomatic relations with Japan or declaring war on Japan. Why not sever relations with Japan? Because what Japan has done to us is worse than the termination of diplomatic relations and goes beyond the declaration of war.....Merely breaking off diplomatic relations is not going to have any effect on the situation."[44]

The similarity between Wang's position and Chiang's is apparent. Both sought to keep diplomatic talks open so that disputes between China and Japan could be resolved without stirring up a full scale war. We can deduce from Wang's speeches that resistance did not contradict the determination to preserve peace. As Wang pointed out repeatedly during the Incident, as

soon as Japan stopped attacking, China would do the same. To Wang, resistance served the purpose of maintaining the survival of China so it could continue pursuing diplomatic solutions to solve the crisis and would not have to face a full scale war. As Wang put it, "Why should we not pursue diplomatic solutions? Our country has not perished yet. The Koreans are not able to negotiate because their country is gone."[45]

Aftermath of the Songhu Incident

Cai Tingkai, commander of the Nineteenth Route Army, emerged from the Shanghai fighting a national hero. But his new found status cost him his career. According to Coble, "annoyed with and perhaps fearful of the popular heroes, Chiang transferred them to Fukien province to fight the Communists shortly after the conclusion of the Shanghai Truce."[46] Although Cai mentioned in his autobiography that in early 1933 Chen Mingshu had cautioned him about becoming the object of envy, Cai was not so blunt about the decision to transfer the Nineteenth Route Army to Fujian.[47] Cai said that the decision might have had something to do with overseas Fujianese pleas that the government send troops to the province to suppress communist activity. It was not his job, he said, to comment on government policy.[48]

As for the subsequent Fujian Revolt in late 1933, Cai, while admitting his limited role in it, claimed that it was the Guangdong leaders' idea, not his own.[49] Chen Jitang in his autobiography said he was opposed to the Fujian Revolt, alleging that it was Chen Mingshu's and Li Jishen's idea.[50] Chen Jitang's

claim accords with that of Li Zongren, who asserted that Chen Jitang would not want to be a part of the revolt in spite of repeated requests from Chen Mingshu and Jiang Guangnai.[51] No matter who was responsible for the Fujian Revolt, the fact is that it sullied Cai's illustrious name. I shall use Coble's comment on the Fujian Revolt to conclude the chapter.

> The Fukien farce was a grave psychological blow to the many Chinese who so desperately sought resistance to Japan. The Nineteenth Route Army leaders were great national heroes. Their ill-timed and poorly conceived rebellion, with its rejection of the Sun Yat-sen legacy, squandered their heroic image and disillusioned many who had seen them as nation-saving champions. As Hu Shih commented, during his trips to America and Canada, whenever he entered a Chinese-owned shop, even the simplest laundry, there were always pictures of Ch'en Ming-shu, Ts'ai T'ing-k'ai, and Chiang Kuang-nai. The Fukien affair, lamented Hu, thus left him particularly saddened.[52]

Notes

1. Jerome Ch'en, *Mao and the Chinese Revolution* (London, 1965), pp. 166-167. *Zhongguo xiandai shi cidian: shishi bufen* (Taipei, 1985), vol. 2, p. 107.

2. Ch'en, pp. 167-168. *Zhongguo xiandai shi cidian: shishi bufen*, vol. 2, pp. 113-114.

3. Ch'en, p. 170.

4. Ch'en, pp. 168-169. *Zhongguo xiandai shi cidian: shishi bufen*, vol. 2, p. 122. Li Yunhan, *Zhongguo Guomindang shishu* (Taipei, 1984), vol.3, p. 140.

5. Parks Coble, *Facing Japan: Chinese Politics and Japanese Imperialism, 1931-1937* (Cambridge, Mass., 1991), p. 38.

6. Ibid., p. 58.

7. Ibid., p. 58. Li, vol. 3, pp. 218-219.

8. Ibid., p. 113.

9. Liu Weikai, *Guonan qijian yingbian tucun wenti zhi yanjiu: cong jiuyiba dao qiqi* (Taipei, 1995), p. 192.

10. William Wei, 'The Role of the German Advisers in the Suppression of the Central Soviet: Myth and Reality,' in *The German Advisory Group in China: Military, Economic, and Political Issues in Sino-German Relations, 1927-1938* (Duesseldorf, 1981), p. 175.

11. Liu, p. 193.

12. Wei, pp. 184-185.

13. *Song* refers to the Wusong River, a major river in Jiangsu province flowing through northern Shanghai. *Hu* refers to the city of Shanghai. Together, *Songhu* means the greater Shanghai area.

14. *Zhongguo xiandai shi cidian: shishi bufen*, vol. 1, p. 128.

15. Jiang Tingfu, *Jiang Tingfu huiyilu* (Taipei, 1984), pp. 147-148.

16. *Zhonghua minguo zhongyao shiliao chubian: duiRi kangzhan shiqi* (Taipei, 1981), Introduction, vol. 1, p. 286.

17. Ibid., p. 290.

18. *Zhonghua minguo shishi jiyao* (Taipei, 1984), vol. 1932:1-6, p. 111.

19. Ibid., p. 117.

20. Ibid., p. 128.

21. Qiu Guozhen, *Shijiulujun xingwang shi* (Hong Kong, 1969), pp. 26-29.

22. *Zhonghua minguo shishi jiyao*, pp. 168-170.

23. Ibid., p. 172.

24. *Geming wenxian* (Taipei, 1965), vol. 36, p. 1410.

25. *Zhonghua minguo shishi jiyao*, pp. 173-175.

26. Coble, pp. 43, 48.

27. *Zhonghua minguo shishi jiyao*, pp. 221-222.

28. Ibid., p. 284.

29. Ibid., p. 367.

30. Coble, p. 48. *Geming wenxian*, vol. 36, pp. 1716-1733.

31. *Zhonghua minguo shishi jiyao*, p. 247.

32. Ibid., p. 314.

33. Ibid., p. 226.

34. Ibid., pp. 332-333.

35. Ibid., pp. 669-670.

36. Liu, p. 48.

37. *Geming wenxian*, vol. 36, pp. 1556-1557.

38. Coble, p. 54.

39. *Zhonghua minguo shishi jiyao*, p. 182.

40. Ibid., pp. 167-168.

41. Ibid., p. 167.

42. *Xian zongtong Jianggong sixiang yanlun zongji* (Taipei, 1984), vol. 10, p. 481.

43. *Zhonghua minguo shishi jiyao*, p. 143.

44. *Geming wenxian*, vol. 36, p. 1559.

45. Ibid., p. 1572.

46. Coble., p. 52.

47. Cai Tingkai, *Cai Tingkai zizhuan* (Haerbin, 1982), p. 306.

48. Ibid., pp. 297-298.

49. Ibid., pp. 305-315.

50. Chen Jitang, *Chen Jitang zizhuan gao* (Taipei, 1974), pp. 51-52.

51. Tang Degang, *Li Zongren huiyilu* (Hong Kong, 1986), pp. 430-431.

52. Coble, p. 135.

CHAPTER VIII

THE GREAT WALL CAMPAIGN & THE SOUTHWEST INCIDENT: PRIORITIZING NANJING'S ENEMY LIST

The policy of "resisting while negotiating" as discussed in the previous chapter shows that Nanjing was capable of fighting back in self-defense. While Nanjing opted for local resistance in Shanghai, it had no intention to go beyond that. Local resistance did not contradict Nanjing's determination to preserve peace. So long as full-scale war did not break out, there remained hope for a diplomatic solution. But talks with Japan took time to produce results. Before that happened, China had to resist to allow time for diplomatic measures. The successful implementation of the "resisting while negotiating" policy in the Shanghai fighting showed that Nanjing had a good grasp of preventing battle from escalating into war. This policy was again put to work in another Sino-Japanese clash known as the Great Wall Campaign.

The Great Wall Campaign

Before the Mukden Incident, Japan had made plans to incorporate Rehe into its sphere of influence.[1] As a protective screen between the Northeast and northern China, Rehe was surrounded by Liaoning to the east, Hebei to the south, Chahaer to the west, and Mongolia to the north. After the conclusion of the Shanghai Ceasefire Agreement in May 1932, Japanese forces in Shanghai were transferred to the Northeast for the invasion of

Rehe.[2] On February 21, 1933, Japan attacked. The Chinese troops in the province under the command of Rehe chairman Tang Rulin, who was notorious for his corruption and nepotism, put up a resistance so badly organized that the whole province fell in less than two weeks. After the end of resistance in Rehe on March 3, Japan turned its attention to Hebei. As most of the ensuing battles occurred along the Great Wall, the Nationalists referred to their resistance as the Great Wall Campaign.

Advancing on the crest of the Rehe victory, Japan lost no time in launching the next offensive. Severe fighting broke out along the Great Wall passes in Hebei, threatening Beiping and Tianjin. Commenting on the importance of Beiping and Tianjin, Shanxi chairman Xu Yongchang maintained that "if our troops withdraw from the Beiping-Tianjin line, it would mean the fall of the entire northern China. The creation of a second Manzhouguo would not therefore come as a surprise." Huang Fu, former foreign minister during the Jinan Incident was summoned from retirement to Beiping in May 1933 to assist Minister of the Army He Yingqin in negotiating with the Japanese. Huang said that "the central government will be shaken if Beiping and Tianjin are taken. It will deal a severe blow to China's finances and transportation if trunk lines such as the Beiping-Shenyang, Beiping-Suiyuan, Beiping-Hankou, and Tianjin-Pukou Railways fall into enemy hands."[3]

The fall of Rehe put Beiping and Tianjin on the front line of national defense. Chiang Kai-shek was determined not to allow Japan to transgress the bounds of the Beiping-Tianjin line. After Rehe fell, Chiang sent He Yingqin to Beiping to oversee

the fortification of the city, saying if necessary he would dispatch from Nanjing the German trained and equipped Eighty-seventh or Eight-eighth division. "If we retreat in Beiping, then the party and the country will perish together, and we will be condemned by history."[4] Chiang also instructed Hebei chairman Yu Xuezhong to build up the defenses of Tianjin.

Not everyone appreciated the decision to defend Beiping. Cai Yuanpei, president of the Academia Sinica, opposed the idea of fortifying the city for fear that the fighting would devastate its cultural heritage. Cai's position enraged Chiang. In a telegram to He Yingqin, Chiang said: "I learned that because of Cai Yuanpei's opposition, defense works in Beiping have not been completed. Fortification of the city has a bearing on the survival of our party and country. It cannot be interrupted by Cai. It is my wish that the defense works be completed in shortest time possible."[5]

Some of Chiang's closest associates also questioned the wisdom of defending Beiping and Tianjin. He Yingqin maintained that "Beiping and Tianjin have always been the major source of military revenues in northern China. If they are engulfed in the fighting, it will affect the flow of military revenues. Then how are we going to maintain the troops in northern China for a sustained resistance?" Huang Fu was even bolder, demanding an outright truce with Japan before plunging Beiping and Tianjin into war. "In order to protect Beiping and Tianjin, we must cease fire. To cease fire, we must negotiate with the Japanese."[6] Chiang thus found himself in a dilemma best described by a *chengyu* which says: "hesitate to pelt a rat for

fear of smashing the dishes beside it" (*toushu jiqi*). He had to defend Beiping and Tianjin because of their cultural and financial importance, yet he could not afford to do so for fear that war would devastate the cities.

During the Great Wall Campaign, Tokyo sent out four divisions, half of what they deployed in the Songhu Incident. Nanjing dispatched a quarter million men. That was over four times the number of Chinese troops who took part in the Shanghai fighting. Despite superiority of numbers, the Chinese were overrun by the Japanese for lack of heavy weapons and aerial support. During the fighting, Twenty-ninth Route Army commander Song Zheyuan telegraphed Chiang, saying that "the enemy gains the upper hand by being well-equipped and able to deliver provisions to the front in a timely manner. Our troops can only resist with blood and flesh. I am afraid that this kind of resistance may not last long." Thirty-second Army commander Shang Zhen maintained that "although the morale of our troops is not bad, they lack adequate defensive works and other military materials."[7] Wang Jingwei also conceded that "the adversary has the best weapons available such as heavy artillery, tanks, and aircraft. And we have none of those. As for what we have, we are lagging far behind in quantity and quality. All we can rely on to continue the fighting is courage and human bodies."[8]

The Great Wall Campaign lasted for three months. In spite of casualties of 40,000, the Chinese were able to keep the enemy from reaching Beiping and Tianjin. Song Zheyuan even managed to score a victory at the Xifeng Pass in northern Hebei in March. But, as Song conceded, in the long run flesh and blood were no

match for enemy tanks and aircraft. Eventually China sued for peace. On May 31, the Tanggu Truce was concluded, bringing the Great Wall campaign to an end. Once again, war was averted.

The Tanggu Truce

On May 7, 1933, He Yingqin sent Chiang a telegram, saying "right now the decision for war or peace must be made.....If we hesitate over what move to make in the face of an imminent danger.....it will disrupt the situation." Huang Fu agreed, asserting that the most important thing was to preserve northern China even if this meant making concessions to Japan.[9] Eventually He and Huang prevailed and an armistice was made.

The Truce turned eastern Hebei into a demilitarized zone from where Chinese and Japanese troops were to be evacuated. With the exception of the troops guarding the safe approaches to Beiping as stipulated in the Boxer Protocol, all other Japanese formations would withdraw to the north of the Great Wall. But no timetable was set for such a withdrawal. The Truce gave Japan the right to conduct aerial surveillance of the demilitarized zone and of Chinese military movements to assure that China would not violate the truce. The Truce thus favored Japan.

Chinese reaction to the Truce was overwhelmingly negative. Most Chinese newspapers concurred that the Truce was an insult. Tianjin's *Yishi bao* stated that "China has everything to lose in the Tanggu Truce." Guangzhou's *Minguo ribao* said the truce "restricts the possibility of recovering lost territory, and the four Northeastern provinces are thus abandoned." Beiping's

Shijie ribao maintained that the Truce "degrades China and infringes upon Chinese sovereignty." It averred that "the Japanese warlords gained far more from the truce than from seizing Beiping and Tianjin." It predicted that local truce like this one "would eventually turn the whole country into ruins."[10]

Not all media were so harsh, although media that took kindly to the Tanggu Truce were in a minority. *L'Impartial* (*Dagong bao*), the leading newspaper in northern China and Shanghai, said that the Chinese "should simply accept the failure and treat the Truce as a bitter lesson, and work for the revival of the country." *Renmin zhoubao* pointed out that "the important thing in the days to come is to continue our efforts to resist Japan economically, journalistically, and militarily."[11]

Nanjing's determination to preserve peace in northern China was best expounded in an article Hu Shi wrote for *Duli pinglun* in June 1933. Hu maintained that since Chinese troops could not halt the enemy advance on the battlefield, the Truce was the only immediate way to protect northern China. He stressed that most of China's completed railways were in the north; Tianjin customs revenues were the second largest in the country (after those of Shanghai) and accounted for one-fifth of the national total; and Beiping was a city of cultural and academic significance. In conclusion, Hu stressed that the preservation of northern China was the best Nanjing could do in the wake of military setbacks in the Great Wall Campaign.[12]

Hu Shi's comment on the Tanggu Truce underlines the importance of Sino-Japanese negotiations. It also supports Chiang Wei-kuo's viewpoint that negotiating with Japan was one

way to achieve "rangwai." As mentioned in Chapter Two, Chiang Wei-kuo was of the opinion that diplomacy could serve the interest of "rangwai" just as well as military action. His position was best exemplified by Chinese actions taken in the Songhu Incident and the Great Wall Campaign.

Dorothy Borg says that the Truce allowed Japan to gain control of the area north of Beiping-Tianjin, enabling it to impose political, military, and economic pressure on northern China and Nanjing, thus impeding Chinese unification.[13] But the point was that war had been avoided in 1933. Writes Parks Coble,

> Whatever the long-range problems with the agreement, the Tangku Truce was a crucial victory for Chiang Kai-shek and his policy of "first pacification, then resistance." A military catastrophe in the north was avoided; Peiping and Tientsin would not fall until 1937. Chiang would not have to return north in a military campaign but could begin immediate preparations for the Fifth Extermination Campaign.[14]

The Southwest Incident: The Last Stand of Regional Militarism

Anti-Communist campaigns aside, "annei" dictated that the regional militarists be held in leash. While Nanjing resorted to military measures to deal with the Communists, it did not always rely on arms when it came to handling the regional militarists. Such was the case in the Liang-Guang (Guangdong-Guangxi) Incident. The event is also known as the Southwest Incident, after the geographical location of the two provinces. It is also known as the June First Movement from its beginnings on June 1, 1936. Liu Weikai refers to the Incident as the regionalists' last defiance of Nanjing prior to the War.[15]

The unification of China achieved by the Northern Expedition

in 1928 was more apparent than real. The political disunity that had plagued the country prior to the Expedition still existed in some parts of the country after the completion of nominal unification by the National Government. Although many of the warlords were eliminated during the Expedition, a number of them had managed to preserve themselves. The military authorities in Guangdong and Guangxi were amongst those who held on to their semi-independence after the supposed national unification.

Guangdong and Guangxi, due to their geographical location, shared a common lot. The two provinces had been separate from Nanjing since the late 1920s. Operating as a semi-independent political entity under the lengthy titles of the Kuomintang Central Executive Committee Southwestern Executive Office and the National Government Southwestern Political Affairs Committee, the regional authorities in Liang-Guang called for "equal power and separate administration" (*junquan fenzhi*) with Nanjing.[16] The relations between Nanjing and the Southwest began to change in early 1934. The suppression of the Fujian Revolt in January 1934 allowed Nanjing to expand its influence, both political and military, into Fujian. Later, the fifth anti-Communist campaign gave Nanjing a further opportunity to establish its authority in the southwest. William Kirby writes:

> [The] fifth "bandit-extermination campaign" against the Kiangsi Soviet had succeeded in driving the Communists out of the province and on to their "Long March" in October 1934. As Nanking troops pursued the Red Army through Kweichow, Yunnan, and Szechwan, those provinces came under Nanking's direct influence for the first time. With the expulsion of the CCP and the loss of their buffer provinces, Kwangtung and Kwangsi now faced Chiang's forces in all directions.[17]

By late 1935, Nanjing had eighteen divisions in Hunan, fifteen in Jiangxi, twelve in Fujian, nine in Guizhou, and six in Yunnan, totaling four hundred thousand men.[18] Li Zongren claimed that the presence of a large formation of government troops unnerved Guangdong militarist Chen Jitang, who believed that Nanjing would seek by all means to finish off southwestern autonomy once and for all. In order to maintain the status quo between Guangzhou and Nanjing, Chen decided to launch a pre-emptive strike under the pretext of resisting Japan.[19] Decades later Chen Jitang defended his action, describing it as a manifestation of his anti-Japan stand.[20]

On June 1, 1936, the Liang-Guang provinces launched the June First Anti-Japanese Movement, sending troops northward to combat the Japanese. A declaration from Guangzhou demanded that Nanjing follow suit and lead the national resistance. Southwestern troops under Bai Chongxi set out for Hunan where they encountered central troops who blocked their advance. Once again, China was on the brink of a civil war.

The Southwest Incident Unfolding

The Incident was not well received by the press. Overnight, the southwestern leaders found themselves in the hot seat. The Tianjin and Shanghai based *Guowen zhoubao*, one of the leading Chinese news magazines, called the Incident an attempt not to save China but to undermine national unification and to ruin the country. "The intention of their action is to accelerate the demise of the country, not to save it."[21] Zhang Xiruo, Qinghua

University professor and a frequent contributor to *Duli pinglun*, maintained that Chen Jitang had told the Japanese to ignore his anti-Japanese rhetoric because this was his way of embarrassing Nanjing. Zhang Xiruo said that the southern leaders were in reality rebelling against the nation.[22] Zou Taofen, a Shanghai-based journalist and a leading critic of Nanjing, accused Chen Jitang of "stirring up a civil war in the name of resisting Japan." Chen Zhimai, another Qinghua professor, wrote in *Duli pinglun* that the June First Movement was Liang-Guang's way of "retaliating against a personal enemy (Nanjing) in the name of the public interest."[23]

Perhaps Hu Shi said it best when he wrote in *L'Impartial* that "given the current situation of relentless foreign intimidation and invasion, no matter what kind of vainglorious excuse the Liang-Guang leaders use, it does not mitigate their responsibility for stirring up civil war; regardless of how appealing their slogan is, it cannot atone for their guilt in undermining the survival of the state and the people."[24]

In addition to the media hostility, Chen Jitang and Li Zongren also had to face opposition from their own ranks. Many Guangdong members of the Kuomintang Central Standing Committee including Li Wenfan, Ma Chaojun, and Zhou Qigang telegraphed Chen Jitang, asking him to pull back before it was too late.[25] Other regional leaders including Song Zheyuan in Hebei, Han Fuqu in Shandong, He Jian in Hunan, Long Yun in Yunnan, and Yan Xishan in Shanxi pleaded with Chen and Li, asking them to halt military action for the sake of national unity.[26]

The final blow came when Chen Jitang's own subordinates had

second thoughts. Huang Guangrui, commander of the Guangdong air force, ordered all military aircraft to fly out of Guangzhou to Jiangxi in early July. Yu Hanmou, commander of the First Guangdong Army, flew to Nanjing to show his loyalty to the central government. Yu was followed by Li Hanhun, deputy commander of the Second Guangdong Army. Other army commanders such as Deng Longguang and Wu Jianxiong also pleaded with Chen Jitang not to create further disruption. Finally, the Guangdong navy quit. Several torpedo boat commanders including Kuang Wenguang and Deng Ruigong left Guangzhou.[27]

Realizing that the game was up, Chen left Guangzhou on July 19 for Hong Kong. Yu Hanmou flew back to Guangdong, assuming control of the province. But Guangxi militarists Li Zongren and Bai Chongxi were still holding out. August 11, Chiang arrived in Guangzhou to conduct negotiations with the Guangxi leaders. Eventually Li and Bai gave in and the crisis was peacefully resolved. On September 17, as a gesture of their support for Nanjing, Li and Bai flew to Guangzhou to meet Chiang. As in the 1933 Chahaer Incident, Chiang won a victory over the regional militarists without staining the edges of the sword with blood.

Chiang Kai-shek and the Southwest Incident

Throughout the Southwest Incident, Chiang Kai-shek showed considerable restraint towards the Liang-Guang militarists. As Diana Lary points out, "Chiang Kai-shek presented himself in a light of statesmanlike magnanimity, and flew to Canton to continue negotiations for a peaceful settlement."[28] There was no

talk of retaliation against Liang-Guang.

When the Incident occurred, Chiang Kai-shek first tried to offer the southwestern leaders a face-saving way out of the situation by dismissing the crisis as merely a foreign attempt to divide the Republic and the National Government. On June 8, 1936, Chiang gave a speech to party members in Nanjing, urging the Liang-Guang leaders not to create more internal strife in the name of resisting Japan. Although he acknowledged that Nanjing had indeed received telegrams from the southwestern leaders declaring that they would act unilaterally to fight Japan, he said he believed the Liang-Guang leaders had no intention to overthrow the central government nor did he believe they intended to ally themselves with Japan, as some foreign news reports, Japanese in particular, had stated.[29]

It appears that Chiang Kai-shek was hoping that the Liang-Guang leaders would have a change of heart and back down. So he tried to give them an opportunity to get out of the predicament without losing face. Chiang did not come down hard on them, but he had to say something that would at least preserve Nanjing's face as well as his own. In the above speech, he asserted that a country's foreign policy had to be a national one. He said this was particularly true when it came to such critical issue as war and peace. The central government, Chiang insisted, must override local governments or regional militarists in diplomatic issues.[30]

Chiang's initial attempt to provide a face-saving measure fell on deaf ears. But he kept his patience. In another speech delivered to party members in the nation's capital on July 13,

he criticized Liang-Guang for stirring up trouble, but said that he would not use military force to resolve the Incident and that it was up to the Liang-Guang leaders to mend their ways.[31] Up to this point, he did not mention the Liang-Guang leaders by name. He only referred to them as "several Liang-Guang militarists"[32] Terminology is important in this context as it offered Chiang an opportunity to discuss the crisis without naming names which might be interpreted by the southwesterners as personal attacks, even though it must have been common knowledge who the "several Liang-Guang militarists" were.

After Chen Jitang left China, and the Guangxi leaders still did not back down, Chiang's tone turned stronger. He now called them by names and referred to them as "men who refused to come to their senses." Those were weighty words. More significantly, he now called the Guangxi militarists "the final obstruction to national unification."[33] Although his patience was clearly growing thin, Chiang still refrained from using military force to settle the Nanjing-Guangxi split. In a speech given to the army commanders in Guangzhou on August 29, he said that he wanted a peaceful end to the crisis and would not be proud of having to resort to military measures. "In Guangdong alone we have as many as twenty-one divisions. It will be truly shameful to use these many troops to deal with Guangxi."[34]

In another speech given outside Guangzhou on August 30 to high-ranking military officers at the Whampoa Academy, Chiang called the Guangxi leaders "ambitious militarists who have put up a desperate struggle in order to maintain their separatist regime." But he wanted to give them one more way out, saying

that so far as the Guangxi revolt was concerned, he was willing to let bygones be bygones.[35] Interestingly, Chiang gave another speech the same day to field officers at the same locale, but the message was different. He hinted that he was ready to use military force should circumstances become necessary.

> We all know that this time the Guangxi generals are rebelling against the central government because they want to be the obstruction to national unification. The central government, in order to put into effect its policy of national unification through peaceful means, has on the one hand to do its best to talk sense into these few militarists, and on the other hand, has to deploy a large number of troops in provinces like Yunnan, Guizhou, Hunan, and Guangdong for final preparations. This will allow the central government to implement true national unification by eliminating the obstacle to the revolution if the policy of peaceful unification becomes unattainable.[36]

Chiang's sending out two conflicting messages on one day suggests that he was not totally committed to solving the crisis militarily. Chiang's patience paid off eventually. The standoff between Nanjing and Guangxi ended peacefully. The dire economic situation in the province, and the possibility that continued resistance to Nanjing would further weaken China in the face of Japanese aggression, convinced Li Zongren and Bai Chongxi to seek a settlement with Chiang.[37]

The peaceful end to the Southwest Incident meant that Liang-Guang's military strength was preserved, enabling Li Zongren and Bai Chongxi later to render distinguished service in the Resistance War. Their crowning moment came in March 1938 when Chinese forces under their command annihilated one Japanese division and inflicted heavy casualties on another at Taierzhuang, near Xuzhou in northern Jiangsu. Historically, it is known as the Great Triumph of Taierzhuang.

Prioritizing Nanjing's Enemy List

The case studies in Chapters Six, Seven, and Eight offer clues on how Chiang perceived his enemies, domestic and foreign. They help explain how Chiang prioritized his enemy list. His dealing with the regional militarists, the Communists, and the Japanese in different ways indicates that not all of his enemies were equal. On how Chiang determined if the regional militarists, the Communists or the Japanese were most or least threatening, a few observations can be made based on the case studies. I shall begin with the regional militarists.

Although none of the regional militarists successfully challenged Chiang's authority in the Great Battle of the Central Plains that involved Yan Xishan and Feng Yuxiang (1930), the Chahaer Incident that involved Feng Yuxiang (1933), the Fujian Revolt that involved Cai Tingkai and Chen Mingshu (1933), or the Southwest Incident, these events do reveal the fact that the regional militarists were powerful enough to defy Nanjing. Possessing significant military strength, they could easily disrupt the nation, making it more susceptible to Japanese attack. Chiang's refraining from using force throughout the Southwest Incident suggests that he had misgivings about taking on the militarists for fear that "the fisherman (Japan) might benefit from the grappling between the snipe (Nanjing) and the clam (regional militarism)" (*yubang xiangzheng, yuweng deli*).

The Southwest Incident was not the only occasion that Chiang sought to avoid confrontation with the regional militarists. In early 1933, Chahaer chairman Song Zheyuan led the Twenty-ninth

Army to combat the invading Japanese in neighboring Hebei. Song's absence gave Feng Yuxiang, who was forced to "retire" after suffering defeat in the Great Battle of the Central Plains, a chance to step in and take control of the province, creating a split between Nanjing and Chahaer. Chiang was caught off guard by Feng's action as he was busy dealing with the Japanese invasion of Rehe. Although Chiang had threatened military action, the Chahaer Incident was peacefully settled. According to Liu Weikai, Chiang's strategy during the Chahaer crisis was "to press for a peaceful solution by means of threatening military action."[38] Chiang did it again in the Southwest Incident.

The fact that Chiang left Li Zongren, Bai Chongxi, and Chen Jitang a way out in the Southwest Incident shows that he was relatively tolerant of the regional militarists. This may also be explained by Chiang's need for their support in order to hold the country together. Feng Yuxiang, Zhang Xueliang, and Yan Xishan had made the Northern Expedition easier for Chiang by switching their allegiance to Nanjing. During the Battle of the Central Plains, Zhang Xueliang's coming to Nanjing's rescue made clear that the regional militarists held the balance of power.

Another important thing about the conflicts between Nanjing and the regional militarists was that Chiang considered them family feud. Addressing the Fourth KMT National Congress in 1931, Chiang pleaded for party unity in the face of Japanese invasion and Communist rebellion. "Brothers, in spite of quarrelling at home, must unite against affront from without."[39] The relations between Nanjing and regional militarists were thus

intimate but strained. Regarding the regional authorities, a saying has it best: "the mighty dragon is no match for the native serpent" (*qianglong buya ditoushe*). The mighty dragon symbolizes the central government, as the emperor was considered the incarnation of a dragon. The native serpent is none other than the regional authorities. This saying depicts vividly the central government's difficulties in subduing unruly local authorities throughout Chinese history.

Disease of the Heart & Disease of the Skin

While Chiang was relatively tolerant of the regional militarists, he needed no second thoughts about taking on the Communists. He had much less patience for the Communists than for either the Japanese or the militarists. There was no talk of adopting a conciliatory position towards the Communists. Instead, the encirclement campaigns were his answer. Although government troops suffered defeats in the first two encirclement campaigns, it does not change the fact that it was Chiang who held the initiative in regard to the Jiangxi Soviet. He decided when and where to strike. Ideologically the Nationalists and the Communists were irreconcilable enemies, but the latter were not as militarily threatening as the regional militarists or Japan.

If the Communists were least threatening in terms of military strength, then how do we account for Chiang's famous comment that Japan is like the lice on the body of China, but communism is a disease of the heart? Any sensible person would agree that heart disease is a far more serious illness than a

skin ailment. It seems logical to infer that communism was more serious than Japan. This hypothesis leads to another seemingly convincing conclusion: the Communists, not the Japanese, were Nanjing's foremost enemy. The analogy between Japan and skin disease and communism and heart disease is well known. What is not known to many, however, is that this may not have been precisely what Chiang intended to convey.

Disease of the heart, in its original Chinese text, is "xinfu zhihuan." Literally, "xinfu zhihuan" means illness of the heart and abdomen. As the heart is a vital organ and the abdomen is where other vital organs are located, the Chinese use the expression "disease of the heart and abdomen" to describe, figuratively, serious hidden danger or trouble. But if we interpret "xinfu zhihuan" literally, we will see that it specifically points to the source of the hidden danger. In other words, "disease of the heart and abdomen" indicates that the danger is coming from within. In this context, "disease of the heart and abdomen" does not necessarily refer to the seriousness of the danger but to its location. Therefore, when Chiang referred to Japan as lice on the body of China, he may not have been downplaying the seriousness of Japanese aggression but only reiterating the obvious fact that this threat came from without. In a speech given at his field headquarters at Chongren, Jiangxi, May 8, 1933, Chiang said: "Given the current state of the national crisis, Japanese invasion comes from without, much like sores gradually festering on the skin. Upheavals caused by the [Communist] bandits are from within, as if one's internal organs have malfunctioned."[40]

The malfunctioning of internal organs is indeed more serious than skin sores. But if we focus more on the within and without side of Chiang's remarks, we will see the unmistakable influence of Xun Kuang and Mencius. Chiang's analogy of heart and skin disease clearly owes its origin to Xun Kuang's and Mencius' remarks which state that weakness from within makes one susceptible to affront from without. If the words of Xun Kuang and Mencius are any indication, Chiang's analogy of heart and skin diseases must not be taken metaphorically. It was intended to better illustrate his point that China must put its house in order before going to war with Japan.

The Concept of "Hanzei"

Aside from the Communists being the most militarily vulnerable enemy of Nanjing, the traditional Chinese concept of "han" and "zei" helps explain Chiang's relentless pursuit of them. "Han," meaning hero, or man of upright character, is often used by those in power to describe themselves. "Zei" means traitors or people in opposition to the existing government. Hence the *chengyu*: "winners of civil wars in China become emperors and nobility while losers become traitors to the new regime" (*shengzhe wanghou baizhe zei*) and "men of character must not coexist with traitors" (*hanzei bu liangli*).

The practice of calling one's political opponents "zei" was not lost in modern China. Although Chiang did not label the Communists as "zei," he did call them "fei." Semantically, "fei," which means bandits, is just as bad as "zei." Chiang's

first recorded use of "fei" to depict the Communists appeared in a speech delivered to government officials in Nanjing on November 25, 1930.[41] Before that, he simply referred to the Communists as what they were, Communists. The expressions of "han" and "fei" do not necessarily mean that Chiang regarded the Communists as his foremost enemy. It does mean, however, that coexistence between the Nationalists and the Communists was out of the question and that the Communists would have to be eliminated. As the saying goes, "men of character must not coexist with traitors."

Japan: White & Red Imperialism In One

The Nationalists divided imperialism into two categories: white and red. White imperialism applied to foreign powers that took advantage of China by means of unequal treaties. Red imperialism referred only to Soviet Russia, a country that did not have unequal treaties with China but nevertheless harbored thoughts of subverting it by other means.

An unequal treaty was not the only criterion that Nanjing used to determine whether a foreign country was its enemy. Physical aggression on a regular and escalating basis was the other one. The occupation of the Northeast and Rehe makes clear that Nanjing considered Japan a white imperialist with the intentions and behavior of a red imperialist. When compared with the western white imperialists, Japan appeared insatiable in its greed to annex Chinese territory through military action. But in contrast to red imperialism, Japan had at its disposal unequal

treaties to facilitate its aggression, an advantage that the Soviets did not have.

Japan, possessing great military strength, was like an acute disease that could do severe damage to the patient in no time. Communism was a chronic disease that did not show its effect instantly. As Chiang said, "a nation has two kinds of scourges, one that is chronic and one that is acute.....Dwarf (Japanese) aggression is acute while Soviet aggression is slow."[42] Because Japan would be able to inflict deadly damage on China in the next war, Chiang sought to prevent, or at least delay, war by means of appeasement. From the Jinan Incident to the Great Wall Campaign, China not only lost face to Japan, but territory as well. Nanjing tried in every possible way to put up with Japanese demands. Thus a full scale war was avoided until 1937. Chiang's compromises in order to delay the inevitable for as long as possible strongly suggests that Japan was China's foremost enemy, to be followed by the regional militarists. Communism ranked third on Chiang's enemy list.

The kind of threat to China that Chiang perceived must be measured in military terms: which one of the three parties mentioned just now possessed the greatest military strength and was in a position to inflict on China the most devastating blows? The answer is obvious. Commenting on Chiang's retreat in the Jinan Incident, Donald Jordan says that "the question of priority is still quite relevant with regard to internal unity over national defense."[43] The question of priority was equally relevant with regard to determining who was the country's foremost enemy, and Chiang prepared his enemy list carefully.

Notes

1. Liu Weikai, *Guonan qijian yingbian tucun wenti zhi yanjiu: cong jiuyiba dao qiqi* (Taipei, 1995), pp. 95-96.
2. Ibid., p. 97.
3. Ibid., p. 142.
4. Ibid., p. 142.
5. Ibid., p. 142.
6. Ibid., p. 143.
7. Ibid., p. 251.
8. Ibid., p. 138.
9. Ibid., pp. 138-139.
10. *Zhonghua minguo shishi jiyao* (Taipei, 1984), vol. 1933, January to June, p. 898.
11. Ibid., p. 898.
12. Jiang Yongjing, *Kangzhan shilun* (Taipei, 1995), pp. 404-405.
13. Liu, p. 144.
14. Parks Coble, *Facing Japan: Chinese Politics and Japanese Imperialism, 1931-1937* (Cambridge, Mass., 1991), p. 113.
15. Liu, p. 399.
16. Ibid., p. 399.
17. William Kirby, *Germany and Republican China* (Stanford, 1984), p. 131.
18. Liu, p. 399.
19. Tang Degang, *Li Zongren huiyilu* (Hong Kong, 1986), pp. 433-434.
20. Chen Jitang, *Chen Jitang zizhuan gao* (Taipei, 1974), p. 55.
21. Liu, p. 402.
22. Coble, p. 312.
23. Ibid., p. 311.
24. Liu, p. 405.

25. Li Yunhan, *Zhongguo Guomindang shishu* (Taipei, 1994), p. 284.

26. Liu, p. 405.

27. Ibid., pp. 405-407.

28. Diana Lary. *Region and Nation: The Kwangsi Clique in Chinese Politics, 1925-1937* (London, 1974), p. 198.

29. *Xian zongtong Jianggong sixiang yanlun zongji* (Taipei, 1984), vol. 14, p. 350.

30. Ibid., pp. 350-351.

31. Ibid., p. 385.

32. Ibid., p. 385.

33. Ibid., p. 419.

34. Ibid., p. 423.

35. Ibid., p. 444.

36. Ibid., p. 430.

37. Lary, p. 198.

38. Liu, p. 153.

39. *Xian zongtong Jianggong sixiang yanlun zongji* vol. 10, p. 476.

40. Ibid., vol. 11, p. 68.

41. Ibid., vol. 10, p. 440.

42. Chen Cungong, 'Cong liangguang shibian de heping jiejue tan dao annei rangwai zhengce,' in *Proceedings of the Conference on Pre-War Reconstruction in China, 1928-1937* (Taipei, 1984), p. 448.

43. Donald Jordan, *The Northern Expedition: China's National Revolution of 1926-1928* (Honolulu, 1976), p. 161.

CHAPTER IX

CONCLUSION

Mainland Chinese and many Western historians concur in condemning the policy of "rangwai bixian annei." They maintain that instead of trying to stem the tide of Japanese invasion, Chiang Kai-shek ignored the national crisis, waged civil wars against the Communists and the regional militarists, and suppressed those who demanded war with Japan. Worst of all, they assert, Chiang Kai-shek's policy inflated Japan's aggression towards China. Between 1931 and the start of the Eight-year Resistance War in 1937, the Japanese occupied the entire Chinese Northeast consisting of three strategic and richly endowed provinces, laid siege to the national financial capital Shanghai for three months, instigated the "independence" of the Northeast by setting up the puppet regime Manzhouguo, put Beiping and Tianjin in a precarious situation by taking control of Rehe province, and manipulated the "self-rule" of the eastern portion of Hebei province.

Given the record of Japanese activities in China during the aforesaid period, it is seemingly impossible to defend Chiang Kai-shek and the wisdom of putting domestic stability before resisting foreign invasion. It appears that when Mainland Chinese and Western historians criticize Chiang Kai-shek for not having protected Chinese territory and interests as a result of his ill-fated policy, they are indeed making a valid point. However, their criticism has to be put into context.

Japan as the Foremost Enemy of China

In light of the National Defense Design Council Lushan Conference proceedings as discussed in Chapters Four and Five, the Communist position that Chiang's refusal to go to war with Japan before 1937 was a sure sign of cowardice is highly questionable. The Lushan Conference proceedings provide ample evidence to support Chiang's claim that the country was too unprepared to take on Japan in a full scale war. For the first time, definite proof of the Nationalists' recognition of their own weakness sees the light of day. The proceedings reveal just how badly Chinese war capacity fell short of Nanjing's hopes. Asking China to declare war on Japan when it was not ready is reckless courage, something that Confucius cautioned against by saying: "one cannot fight the tiger bare-handed or cross the river without a boat" (*baohu pinghe*).[1]

Case studies in Chapters Six, Seven, and Eight challenge the position held by the Communists which alleges that prior to the Resistance War they were the true enemy of Nanjing, not Japan. More evidence on this is found in a confidential Kuomintang document *Guofang jihua caoan* (National Defense Project Draft).

In May 1936, the Japanese Guandong Army announced that it would unilaterally abrogate the Nine-Power Treaty which had been concluded in 1922 to uphold Chinese territorial integrity. A month later, the Liang-Guang Incident occurred. In response to the rapidly deteriorating international and domestic situations, Nanjing set up in July 1936 the National Defense Conference (*Guofang huiyi*) under the directorship of Chiang Kai-shek. Its

members included leading military and civil leaders such as Li Zongren, Zhang Qun, Chen Jitang, Zhang Xueliang, Tang Shengzhi, Zhang Jiaao, Kong Xiangxi, He Yingqin, Gu Zhutong, Yang Hucheng, Bai Chongxi, Song Zheyuan, Han Fuqu, Feng Yuxiang, Long Yun, and Yan Xishan.[2]

Prior to the Resistance War, the National Defense Conference was the Republic's supreme military authority, surpassing the Military Commission. It oversaw everything related to national defense such as nationwide mobilization, national defense industries, and foreign policy.[3] It should not come as a surprise that Nanjing vested the National Defense Conference with the power to coordinate foreign policy in spite of the existence of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. As mentioned earlier, Chiang considered diplomacy invisible warfare.

In late 1936, the National Defense Conference submitted the National Defense Project Draft, focusing on the possible Japanese attacks and Chinese countermoves. The following is a verbatim translation of the document's introduction.

> Of all conceivable enemies who have close relationship and conflicts of interest with us, the United States has been friendly to us; England is mostly interested in the pursuit of trade; Soviet Russia is undergoing domestic unrest and is currently isolated from the rest of the world; countries such as France and Italy have a more distant relationship with us and therefore less intense conflicts of interest. Japan is the only conceivable enemy which has the closest relationship with us and the conflict of interest between the two countries is most intense. Since the Sino-Japanese and Russo-Japanese Wars, Japan has resumed Toyotomi Hideyoshi's longstanding policy, annexing Taiwan, Korea, Luxun-Dalian, and the southern half of the Chinese Eastern Railroad. As a result, Japan is contemplating using military force as well as economic power to conquer our land and appropriate our resources. Japan also has its eyes on the Manchuria-Mongolia region. Its military influence has reached Shanxi and Shandong, and its economic influence has even penetrated into our whole interior. To sum up, Japan in

> the past thirty years has devoted all of its attention and energy to the policy of advancing northward [in to Continental Asia].
> Japan has increased the intensity of its activities since the Great War when it realized that Germany's defeat resulted not from military setbacks but from food shortage. The critical connection between resources and victory or defeat weighs on the Japanese mind and Japan is now pressing for the implementation of the Twenty-one Demands, hoping to put our resources at its disposal. At the same time Japan is encroaching on the whole Manchuria-Mongolia-Shanxi-Shandong region, trying to occupy the land by force and take over the property. Japan will then dispatch settlers to these areas in order to strengthen its hold on the resources. Although Shandong was returned to us after the Washington Conference, Japan's desire to occupy the entire Manchuria-Mongolia region has nevertheless increased. It has been said that the Manchuria-Mongolia issue is analogous to that of Alsace-Lorraine. With this in mind, a Sino-Japanese conflict in the foreseeable future is inevitable.[4]

Throughout this particular document, the threat of communist activities and regional militarists is never brought up. However, the omission of communism or regional militarism must be put into the kind of context discussed in Chapters Six, Seven, and Eight. The case studies in these chapters establish the fact that although Chiang Kai-shek had serious doubts as to whether China could take on Japan in the coming war, he was positively certain that he could finish off the Communists and put the regional militarists on a tight leash.

As mentioned in Chapter Seven, military strength was the primary criterion that Chiang Kai-shek used to determine which party--Japan, regional militarism, or communism--would wreak the most havoc. And the answer to him was clear. Because Chiang considered Japan China's foremost enemy, he decided not to provoke it lest history repeat itself. In other words, Japan was high on his enemy list but ranked bottom in the priority for squaring accounts with. As a *chengyu* cautions, "one should

choose the lesser of two evils" (*lianghai xiangquan qu qi qing*). When facing three evils, Chiang sought to avoid direct confrontation with the greatest evil by taking on the weakest one, the Communists.

Nanjing-Tokyo Relations: Asking a Tiger for its Fur

In addition to Japan's longstanding hostility, Chiang asserted that China's domestic strife and military weakness were the other reasons for Japanese aggression. Chiang's subscription to Mencius' remarks "One has to insult oneself before he can be insulted by others; a nation has to attack itself from within before it can be attacked from without by others" must not be taken out of context. When Mencius commented on domestic strife and foreign aggression, he was not blaming the victim, the underdog. Likewise, when Chiang quoted Mencius' words, he was merely making the point that instead of doing the impossible by begging for mercy from Japan, China should strengthen itself in order to take on the challenge.

Many have depicted Chiang Kai-shek as a weak character who was susceptible to Japanese bullying. This kind of view ignores the reality in contemporary Sino-Japanese relations: Japan was the stronger party in this relationship, not China. Militarily powerful, Japan was in a position to make demands. China, in contrast, carried little weight, if any. When Nanjing dealt with Tokyo, it was a classical example of what the Chinese refer to as "asking a tiger for its fur" (*yuhu moupi*). Dating from the Zhou Dynasty (1111-256 B.C.), "yuhu moupi" metaphorically

describes asking someone evil and powerful to act against his own interests for the sake of the underdog. It implies trying to accomplish the impossible or the ludicrous by demanding pity or charity from an evil character. Just as a tiger will never in its right mind surrender its fur voluntarily, Tokyo would not take heed of Nanjing's pleas when it clearly enjoyed military superiority and had so much to gain from China by war.

Satirizing those who are impervious to reason by comparing them to animals has long been a Chinese practice. "Duiniu tanqin" is another example. Meaning literally playing the lute to a cow, it is used to describe placing profound knowledge before a slow-witted audience. While drawing an analogy between Japan and tiger can be fitting, Chiang compared Japan to a mad dog. "Currently there is a rabid dog running loose in the Pacific Ocean. Desiring to see the world plunged into chaos, it snaps at people willfully. Even countries such as the United States and Great Britain are compelled to get out of the way of the mad dog."[5]

Chiang's comparison of Japan to a rabid dog underscores the view that by drawing attention to China's domestic problems he was not blaming the victim. Just as one cannot argue with a tiger, Nanjing could not hope to reason with a mad dog and still expect results. Since tigers and mad dogs will not be persuaded by common sense, China could only change itself by becoming as war ready as possible. But before China could strengthen itself, historical parallels convinced Chiang that he had to appease Japan in order to delay the inevitable.

The moral of Fan Zhongyan's memorials cited in Chapter Three is that recovering lost territory cannot be achieved simply by a bold act. In a 1932 speech delivered to central government officials, Chiang asserted: "In order to reclaim lost territory, we must have the strength. Since we do not possess such strength, we must then have tactics."[6] The kind of tactics Chiang had in mind were none other than "rangwai bixian annei." Call it appeasement, the fact is that Chiang was not the first Chinese leader to embrace concession-making as a way of handling aggressive enemies. Fan's writings provide compelling evidence that appeasement is a stalling tactic, a stratagem to gain a respite by postponing military action. Leaders such as Han Wudi and Chiang Kai-shek did not appease foreign invaders for the sake of appeasement or because of cowardice. They did it exclusively in order to stall the enemy. They thought war was inevitable and could not be stopped by appeasement, but they believed it could be delayed.

In terms of concluding treaties under duress, Qing China was an old hand. In this respect, Prince Gong had been an instrumental figure. Prince Gong's view on resisting Western encroachment puts Chinese appeasement in a favorable light. After the withdrawal of British and French forces from Beijing following the conclusion of the Convention of Beijing in October 1860, Prince Gong, who signed the treaty on behalf of China, wrote a treatise on Sino-Western relations that was later included in "The Complete Account of Making Arrangements for

Barbarian Affairs During the Reign of Xianfeng." When faced the reality of military exhaustion and domestic strife, Prince Gong averred that it would be unrealistic for China to seek revenge on foreign powers when the odds were against her.

> Currently our resisting the barbarians is analogous to the way Shu dealt with Wu [during the Three Kingdom period, 220-280 A.D.]. Shu and Wu were enemies. But [Shu prime minister] Zhuge Liang kept both nations on good terms, sending envoys to Wu to work out an alliance against Wei. He had nonetheless never forgotten that Wu was still an enemy. It is a fact that situations can sometimes be favorable or unfavorable, and matters are of greater or lesser urgency. Those who cannot control their anger and are anxious to test the water will create an even greater disaster. Today the relations between us and the barbarians are not the same as those between Wu and Shu, but what is the same is the fact that we and the barbarians are enemies. Recently the barbarian situation has become rampant. Chinese of courage and uprightness without exception are indignant. As government officials, we know a little about righteousness and propriety. We do not dare to forget vital national matters. But our resources are depleted and our soldiers exhausted as a result of the Nian ravaging the north and the Taipings storming the south. Taking advantage of our weakness, the barbarians are able to subdue us. If we cannot control our indignation and declare war on the barbarians, it will put the country in immediate danger.[7]

Chengyu and Conflict Management in Chinese Society

The kind of *chengyu* that Chiang used in his speeches have one unifying theme: if possible, war must be prevented at all costs. Approaching conflict with caution is deeply imbedded in Chinese culture. As literary quotations from classical writings, *chengyu* reflect faithfully various aspects of the Chinese philosophy of life. One of them is the tolerant attitude of making concessions in order to avoid trouble (*xishi ningren*). Instead of telling people to do the thankless job of trying to convert others or change the situation, Confucianism teaches the

golden rule of "adjusting oneself to others or the situation" (*fan qiu zhu ji*). The consequence of this kind of thinking is a traditional approach to conflict management summed up by the saying "self-preservation through worldly wisdom" (*mingzhe baoshen*). Worldly wisdom is to know when not to engage in a fight. This helps explain why the Chinese think there are two kinds of bravery: true bravery (*da yong*) and foolhardy bravery (*pifu zhi yong*).

One of the three Confucian precepts is abstaining from conflict.[8] It takes experience and wisdom to resist the temptation to fight when the odds are not in one's favor. As men of traditional upbringing, Fan Zhongyan, Prince Gong, and Chiang Kai-shek all cautioned against giving free rein to impulsive behavior when it came to resisting foreign invasion. As a *chengyu* has it, "those who can put up with temporary humiliation shall live to be a hundred" (*ren yishi zhi qi, bao bainian zhi shen*). Knowing when to quit is not unique to Chinese culture. Western saying such as "discretion is the better part of valor" and "he who fights and runs away lives to fight another day" underscore the rationale of "rangwai bixian annei."

The use of *chengyu* and historical analogy in Chiang's speeches establishes the fact that "rangwai bixian annei" was an epitome of traditional Chinese measures to contain conflict between China and its enemies. Past influences are unmistakable in Chiang's insistence on putting the house in order before resisting foreign invasion and in appeasing Japan in order to trade space for time. Commenting on past influences on later Chinese leaders, Frederick Mote wrote:

> Both the apparently moribund and the obviously vital aspects of old China's civilization remain relevant to an understanding of China as it is now. Mao Tse-tung and Chiang Kai-shek both acquired their basic literacy through the study of texts in a language that still is a living written style of Chinese, but written well over two thousand years ago. The leaders of no other nation in our century have so directly inherited the mantle--or is it the pall?--of so ancient a cultural past, whether as proponents of its values or as rebels against them, or as both.[9]

Preservation of the Body at the Expense of the Limb

To paraphrase a popular *chengyu* which says that "heroes must not be assessed exclusively by success or failure" (*buyi chengbai lun yingxiong*), the policy of "rangwai bixian annei" should not be judged solely by such subjective terms as "success" or "failure." Readily declaring "rangwai bixian annei" a failure based simply on how much Chinese territory was lost and how deeply Chinese sensibilities were insulted prior to the war is to miss an obvious point. The policy was not intended to be a quick fix or a comprehensive solution to Sino-Japanese conflict. It was devised to serve a particular long-term objective: the strengthening of China both militarily and socially for the purpose of war. Therefore, the wisdom of the policy must not be judged by what it was not designed to do.

As mentioned in Chapter Three, Chiang accepted the necessity of giving up some provinces in order to preserve the rest of the nation. The Chinese refer to this kind of approach as "preserving the greater self at the expense of the lesser self" (*xisheng xiaowo, wancheng dawo*). During the late Qing period, Taiwan and Penghu were ceded to Japan so the Mainland could be spared. In the Song period, Fan Zhongyan spoke out against the

temptation to recover lost territory in northern China for fear that such a move would cost China more territory. In historical perspective, "rangwai bixian annei" was never about protecting each and every inch of Chinese soil from foreign encroachment. It was essentially about sacrificing borderland in order to preserve the main body of China, and about giving up space for the purpose of allowing China enough time to build up its national defense. The decision to abandon some territory in order to preserve the better part of the nation was painful, and is best described by a *chengyu* which says that "it takes heroic courage for one to sever his limb in order to save the body" (*zhuangshi duanwan*).

The wisdom of "rangwai bixian annei" should be judged by how much territory China still had left at its disposal before the war, not by how much land it had lost. The contrast between the pace of Japanese aggression before and after the start of war is one indication of what "rangwai bixian annei" had achieved. The pace of Japanese invasion before the war was steady but slow. From the 1931 September Eighteenth Incident to the start of war on July 7, 1937, Japan spent almost six years to take forcible possession of the Northeast and Rehe, totaling four provinces. Japanese attacks on Shanghai and Rehe prior to the war were contained as local fighting through diplomatic talks and did not engulf the entire nation. Although diplomacy did not stop Japanese aggression in the long run, it did slow down the pace. But as soon as war started, the Japanese military was no longer fettered by negotiations. And the result was disastrous.

It is surprising how one significant aspect of "rangwai

bixian annei" has often been overlooked: in spite of constant Japanese threats, prior to the start of the war Nanjing was able to retain financial centers such as Shanghai and Tianjin, the cultural capital Beiping, and the vast Chinese interior. The control of the interior, in particular Sichuan, was crucial to China's cause for it provided the National Government a wartime base for long-term resistance.

Japan's aggression accelerated after war started. Many of China's major cities fell into enemy hands during the first few months of fighting. Beiping fell on July 28, 1937, to be followed by Tianjin on the next day. On October 31, Chinese troops pulled out of Shanghai. Nanjing, the nation's capital, was abandoned on December 13. In addition to Heilongjiang, Jilin, Liaoning, and Rehe that were already occupied by the Japanese before the war, the greater parts of four more provinces--Shandong, Jiangsu, Hebei, and Shanxi--were lost during the war. Japan also took control of smaller parts of Henan, Anhui, Fujian, Chiang's home province Zhejiang, Jiangxi, Guangxi, Guangdong, Hunan, Hubei, Yunnan, and Guizhou. Sichuan, Xinjiang, Shaanxi, Gansu, Xikang, and Qinghai were the only provinces that escaped large scale ground fighting. But Sichuan saw some of the worst wartime bombing.

In addition to considerable territorial losses, the war took a heavy toll on China's human and financial resources. According to the official Kuomintang estimate, 3,227,926 soldiers and 9,136,569 civilians were either killed or wounded. The figures do not include Chinese casualties in Taiwan and the Northeast. Nor do they include overseas Chinese casualties during Japanese

occupation of the Philippines, Indo-China, and Southeast Asia. Chinese property losses reached astronomical figures: 51,770,877,000 *yuan*. Chinese military expenses stood at 4,168,967,000 *yuan*.[10] Had it not been for the war, Republican China's resources would have been put to better use continuing the nation building underway since 1928. Instead, they went up in the flames of war, which ended in a Pyrrhic victory.

To Save Lives: A Comparison of Chiang Kai-shek & Wang Jingwei

Acknowledging that war was inevitable, Republican leaders sought to save the country from total destruction. Wang Jingwei chose collaboration with Japan. According to Gerald Bunker, "the basic question of whether Wang was a traitor or a patriot, the historians cannot resolve, except in one sense: Wang was no Petain or Quisling; he did not love the Japanese; he was not hostile to the institutions of his country; he sought nothing for himself but the honor of saving his country."[11]

Opinions differ as to whether or not Wang was a traitor. So far as the Chinese are concerned, Wang's name was sullied as a result of collaboration. Chiang opted for a different strategy. While unrelenting Japanese aggression meant war would not easily be prevented by Nanjing's unilateral effort to preserve peace, Chiang thought the next best thing he could do was to trade space for time in order to strengthen national defense, hoping to minimize Chinese casualties. So he preached patience and did not talk lightly about declaring war. If war could be put off for, say, one year, fewer Chinese would become casualties of war

because China, in theory, should be better prepared for war than it was a year before. Even if the death of those who perished in war was decreed by fate and could not be avoided, at least their life had been extended for a few years as a result of the war being put off from 1931 until 1937.

Knowing that death is unavoidable, the Chinese attach great importance to extending one's earthly life for as long as possible. The significance of the earthly life concept is seen in the Chinese practice of sending out pink obituary notices for those who have lived to be eighty years or older. Normally, white obituary notices are used. When people reach the venerable age of eighty and above, their death, a sad event in itself, is considered in part a joyous event because the deceased have accomplished the achievement of living a long life. For joyous occasions such as weddings and birthdays, the Chinese always use red notices. The funeral of venerable people is both a sad and joyous event, hence the pink-colored obituary notices.

Longevity aside, the Chinese attach equal importance to how one pays one's debt to nature. Dying a natural death is most preferable. Untimely death caused by natural or man made calamities is the worst. But dying of natural causes even at an advanced age is no match for barely surviving. This is best described by the Chinese saying "dragging out a worthless life beats dying of a natural cause" (*haosi buru daihuo*).

As seen in the introduction, the late Colonel-General Chiang Wei-kuo said that it is a Chinese belief that the duty of a soldier is not to wage war but to prevent it from happening in the first place. Although the Allies eventually won the war

against Japan, it does not change the fact that over twelve million Chinese were either slaughtered or wounded in war. In terms of human suffering, there is no real winner when it comes to war. One *chengyu* offers a solemn reminder of the cruelty of war: "ten thousand soldiers will have to die in order to make one general renowned" (*yijiang gongcheng wangu ku*). And it takes considerably more to win a war.

"Rangwai bixian annei" was not a policy to hand over Chinese territory to Japan on a silver platter. It was a policy that hoped to prevent bloodshed and to save life. Considering the number of provinces under Japan's occupation, the human toll, and financial losses in the Resistance War, the kind of argument put forward by the Communists that China could at least have saved face had Chiang Kai-shek declared war on Japan immediately after it invaded the Northeast in 1931 or attacked Shanghai in 1932 calls for more examination. To Chiang, the lives of tens of millions were too high a cost for the preservation of Chinese dignity and territorial integrity. From the perspective of trading space for time and reducing human suffering, "rangwai bixian annei" was not without any merit as it did put off the war--something that might have happened in 1931--until 1937. At the very least, many Chinese had their earthly life extended a few years.

The counter argument to that is if Nanjing had ordered resistance or even declared war as soon as Japan invaded the Northeast that might have made Japan pull in its horns. Alas, historians do not have the luxury of answering questions that are based on "what-ifs" or "might-haves."

Another counter argument is this: was Chiang's belief that China could not win the war implicit defeatism in itself? His pre-war speeches on how China's weaknesses had prevented him from declaring war on Japan were not exactly heartening. While some of the historical analogies in Chiang's speeches are indeed proper examples that could enlighten the benighted such as the Gou Jian and Yue Fei stories, others like the Jiawu defeat and the Ming downfall may not have won the ears of all Chinese. The Jiawu parallel, after all, does convey a sense of hopelessness about China's prospect in the impending war with Japan. Although Chiang was indeed telling the truth that China was too weak to take on Japan, some Chinese may not have appreciated the message as it apparently deflated China's own morale, thus compromising Chinese nationalism. It is a well documented fact in the books of Lary, Coble, and Israel among other historians that as a result of "rangwai bixian annei," Nanjing forfeited its leadership of nationalism.

On history as a guide, Confucius once said: "While past events cannot be rectified, one can still benefit from them by bearing in mind past experiences"(*wangzhe buke zhui, laizhe youke jian*).[12] As previous chapters have shown, past experiences weighed so heavily on Chiang Kai-shek that he was convinced by historical parallels that a weak China could not afford to declare war on Japan. Thus he became preoccupied with the thought of avoiding a full scale war at all cost. As a result, he did not even contemplate the idea of taking an intransigent position on Sino-Japanese relations.

Historically, the decision of war or peace has been a difficult one. Xue Fucheng, one of the leading advocates of modernization in the late Qing period, regretted that after the Opium War many peace advocates were condemned by hardliners as worthless people simply because they stood for peace with foreign powers.[13] Why, Xue asked, did these people want to defy national opinion and risk universal condemnation by advocating peace and compromise? Yuan Weishi, a philosophy professor at Zhongshan University, Guangzhou, has an incisive analysis.

Yuan Weishi points out that the late Qing peace advocates knew China was in an inferior position. In order to save the nation from foreign imperialist subjugation, they believed that China had to endure humiliation in order to gain time to strengthen itself. But hardliners considered themselves champions of China's culture and interests, and regarded whoever had different opinions as traitors.[14]

Yuan asserts that one's stand on war or peace should not be used as a criterion to determine if that person was patriotic or not. That said, Yuan laments that many mainland historians working on the late Qing period still regard those who stood for war with foreign imperialists as patriots, and label those who compromised with foreign enemies as sellouts.[15] "In fact, there was only one criterion to determine who was truly the champion of China's interests: words and deeds that would lay a foundation on which an independent China would thrive."[16]

In recent years, the study of Chiang Kai-shek has gone from

being a risky business to a popular undertaking in the People's Republic.[17] Although a number of academic publications on Chiang have been released in Communist China, Mainland historian Yan Ruping noted in a 1996 issue of *Minguo yanjiu* (Studies on Republican China) that most of them merely repeat the conventional wisdom without breaking new ground.[18] Two years later in the same periodical, another Mainland historian Zheng Zemin unwittingly proved Yan's point. Zheng writes:

> Establishing "rangwai bixian annei" as the strategic policy of the country during the tutelage period, Chiang Kai-shek and the National Government repeatedly launched wars to encircle and eliminate the Chinese Workers' and Peasants' Red Army and to suppress the opposition factions. But they kept giving in to the constant aggression and expansion of Japanese militarism, thus harming the country and hurting the people.[19]

Zheng Zemin's remarks demonstrate the fact that even as recently as 1998, popular perception of Chiang Kai-shek on the Mainland has remained virtually unchanged. Once the negative characterization of Chiang was established, it has proven exceedingly difficult to alter it. To remedy the situation, Yan Ruping recommends looking into Chiang's thought and speeches.

> Chiang Kai-shek's life was very complicated. His activities were many-sided. He had a profound influence on his time and on modern Chinese society, as well as the modern world history. Scientific research on such a historical figure is an important subject in Republican history.....We must go under superficial phenomena and look into the essence, thoroughly analyzing Chiang Kai-shek's thought in all its various aspects.[20]

With the completion of this thesis, it is hoped the beginning of a better understanding of Chiang Kai-shek has been made. It is my humble wish that "jade will be attracted as a result of my casting a brick" (*paozhuan yinyu*).

Notes

1. Cai Zhizhong, *Renzhe de dingning: Kongzi shuo* (Taipei, 1987), p. 156.

2. *Zhongguo jindai shi cidian: shishi bufen* (Taipei, 1985), vol. 2, p. 68.

3. Ibid., p. 68.

4. 'Guofang jihua caoan,' in *Guofang huiyi an* (1936).

5. *Xian zongtong Jianggong sixiang yanlun zongji* (Taipei, 1985), vol. 10, p. 255.

6. Ibid., vol. 12, p. 329.

7. Liu Weikai, *Guonan qijian yingbian tucun wenti zhi yanjiu: cong jiuyiba dao qiqi* (Taipei, 1995), p. 2.

8. Cai, p. 170.

9. Frederick Mote, *Intellectual Foundations of China* (New York, 1971), pp. v-vi.

10. Li Yunhan, *Zhongguo Guomindang shishu* (Taipei, 1994), vol. 3, p. 618.

11. Gerald Bunker, *The Peace Conspiracy: Wang Ching-wei and the China War, 1937-1941* (Cambridge, Mass., 1972), p. 285.

12. Cai, p. 173.

13. Yuan Weishi, *Wan Qing da bianchu zhongde sichao yu renwu* (Shenzhen, 1992), p. 137.

14. Ibid., pp. 137-138.

15. Ibid., p. 294.

16. Ibid., p. 138.

17. Yan Ruping, 'More Science needed in Research on Chiang Kai-shek,' *Minguo yanjiu* (Studies on Republican China), vol.3, (1996), 63.

18. Ibid., p. 66.

19. Zheng Zemin, 'Chiang Kai-shek and the training for constitutionalism before the War of Resistance against Japan,' *Minguo yanjiu* (Studies on Republican China), vol.4, (1998), 23.

20. Yan, pp. 68-69.

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