

Heroes and Traitors: The China Hands, The China Lobby, and the War for America's China Policy

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On August 2, 1943, as wars raged around the globe and political leaders among the Allied nations contemplated the post-war order, John Paton Davies boarded a C-46 cargo plane from Assam, India to Chungking, China. A political attache of General Joseph Stillwell's staff, Davies was returning after a brief stint in Washington, D.C. to his post in the free Nationalist Chinese capital of Chungking. Known colloquially as "the Hu mp," American soldiers and diplomats made this journey hundreds of times over the course of the Second World War. For Davies however, such a flight was to be anything but routine. Roughly halfway over the Himalayas the plane's port-side engine gave out. The collection of GIs and diplomats on board attempted to lighten the load by dumping suitcases and equipment but the plane continued to lose altitude. Finally the pilot gave the order to jump. No one onboard had ever parachuted out of a plane before but John Davies stepped up, stuffed his attache case under his shirt, and jumped. The adventure did not end there because Davies spent the next month leading his fellow passengers through the jungles of Burma, braving Naga headhunters and Japanese patrols before arriving in Chungking.¹ Davies's actions were so spectacular that in 1948, he was awarded the Medal of Freedom. That same year however Davies and several of his colleagues from his time in the Far East were called before Congress during a formal investigation of their loyalty. Davies would endure another six of these "loyalty" investigations between 1948 and 1954 before finally being asked to resign by the Secretary of State at the time, John Foster Dulles. Adding insult to injury, an internal State Department Board recommended his termination on the basis of "weakness of

¹ E. J. Kahn, *The China Hands: America's Foreign Service Officers and What Befell Them* (New York: Viking, 1975), 29.

character.”² Thus John Paton Davies, war hero and former first secretary of the American embassy in Moscow, found himself removed from his post and publicly shamed for doing little more than reporting the truth while in China.

Regretfully, Davies had ample company in his fall from grace in the State Department following an appointment to China during and immediately after the Second World War. Men such as John Service, Colonel David Barrett, Edmund Clubb, John Carter Vincent, and Raymond P. Ludden all faced personal and professional censure after the war because of their work in China. Collectively these men became known as “the China Hands,” and from 1946 on were blamed for the growing Communist dominance of Asia. Many fell victim to the infamous Joe McCarthy and subsequently found themselves drummed out of the State Department and Foreign Service. While charged with everything from treason to incompetence to downright “weakness of character,” the alleged crimes of the China Hands remain particularly complex. Along with men not listed above, the China Hands had been dispatched to Yen-an province in northwestern China in the fall of 1944.³ Their mission there required them to assess the capacity of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in its ongoing guerilla war against the Japanese and its political support in the region. Little did these soldiers and diplomats realize that their reports, observations, and recommendations would come to occupy almost half of a decade’s Congressional debate over who “lost” China to the CCP. Thankfully, the search for scapegoats to censure for “losing” China no longer occupies a prominent place in mainstream

² Kahn, 30.

³ Carolle J. Carter, *Mission to Yen-an: American Liaison with the Chinese Communists, 1944-1947* (Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky), 11.

historical literature, and the debate has shifted to why American policymakers failed to prevent a quarter century of mistrust and alienation between the two nations.

Looking ahead for the course of this thesis, a number of topics will be covered. First, the context in which the China Hands were sent to China is of great importance. Each man was assigned with specific tasks and duties that shaped his outlook on both the current military and political difficulties in the country while also defining the range of options for solving those problems. One of the first men to openly push for greater contact with the Communist faction within China was John S. Service and his writings and actions make up a significant portion of this paper. Service's fall from grace was particularly harsh as well and his numerous hearings before Congress make him one of the most talked about and controversial China Hands. The role of the "China Lobby", anti-Communist businessmen and Congressmen, also play an important part in framing the debate over China policy and deserve mentioning here. The actions of John Carter Vincent, a high ranking member of the State department's Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs from 1944 until 1947, are also discussed here. Unlike Service who focused on policy in the ground in China and observational reporting, Vincent offers the perspective of a Washington-based career-oriented diplomat whose charge was actually to create policy in Asia. Attention is also given to George Marshall's mission to China and the frustrations and failure of creating a unified China. The dismissal and removal of the China Hands ends this work with a brief highlighting of attempts at rehabilitation and their historical legacy.

Before examining the fates and actions of the various military and diplomatic

men who made up the China Hands, the context in which they worked to shape US foreign policy must also be understood. While the Japanese attack at Pearl Harbor in late 1941 plunged the United States into the Second World War, American involvement in what came to be known as the China-Burma-India theater remained minimal.⁴ Having assigned General Joseph Stilwell to the campaign in the early months of 1942, President Franklin Roosevelt hoped to rally and support Nationalist Chinese troops who had been fighting against the invading Japanese forces since 1937. While there, Stilwell was specifically charged with marshaling local forces to assist in the recapturing of the British colony of Burma but received few American troops and often encountered stiff resistance from commanders of local forces who resented his blunt nature. Chief among these frustrated commanders was none other than Generalissimo Chiang Kai-Shek, leader of the Kuomintang, the Chinese Nationalist party (KMT), and initially considered a leader who could unify a divided and damaged China. Over time however, it became perfectly clear to Stilwell and many of the "China Hands" that Chiang, despite his past status as the best hope for the political unification of China, had no intention of actively fighting the Japanese or tolerating any political power in China besides his own.⁵ Further blocking Stilwell's attempts to use local forces against the Japanese occupation, Chiang resisted any notion of shared military action and American requests for reform or assistance. On the ground, coordinated KMT resistance to the Japanese achieved little between 1941 and 1945, thus creating the need for efforts by the "China Hands" to find alternative military resources. In practice, this meant they had no choice but to communicate

⁴ Jonathan D. Spence, *The Search for Modern China* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1999), 444.

⁵ Carolle, 8.

with Mao Zedong's CCP.

American officials, diplomats and businessmen had operated in China almost continuously since the founding of the United States. Indeed many of the men who went on to become China Hands were children of missionaries and had grown up in China.⁶ Others had come to China seeking employment or looking to establish trading partnerships. Many of these missionary children and job seekers ended up with jobs in the State Department and by association the Foreign Service.⁷ Because they spoke Mandarin and had experience in China prior to their appointment to the State Department, many were better positioned to understand the subtleties of Chinese culture and the existing political situation. In fact during the years leading up to the attack on Pearl Harbor, State Department officials issued a flurry of reports dealing with the operational failures of the KMT and the ineffectiveness of the Nationalist military forces in stopping the Japanese war machine. In addition, these officials also went into detail about the day-to-day life of Chinese citizens and the overall conditions in the country in an attempt to give American policymakers a better sense of not only military but political life within China in the years leading up to the US's war with Japan.

On the greater political level as well, FDR attempted to elevate China and by association Chiang's regime to the level of a world power. By inviting Chiang to the Cairo Conference of 1943, FDR signaled his intention to build a post-war order in which China could act as a free and independent balance against the colonial powers of Europe and the Soviet power of Eastern Europe and Central Asia. At the conference

⁶ Kahn, 53.

⁷ Kahn, 49.

itself both FDR and Churchill issued a public declaration promising a restoration of Chinese territories and the importance of a free and independent China.⁸ In addition by formally designating China, Burma, and India as a "theater of war" despite both a lack of resources for mobilization there and fewer strategic interests than the European or Pacific theaters, American officials stressed the importance of capitalizing on Chinese resistance to Japanese forces. Throughout the early 1940s, American policymakers used legislative power to increase the global prominence of China as well. In 1943, the United States signed a treaty with China abolishing the century long practice of extraterritoriality and repealed the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1924, both of which had crippled the country as an international force and designated China as a second-class citizen in the global community.⁹ Likewise, both American and Soviet leaders, at least initially, committed themselves to stripping Japan of the colonies, such as Taiwan and Sakhalin island, she had acquired over the past half century and returning many of them to their original owner, China.¹⁰ While these policies did change over time, they confirmed FDR's belief in a unified China as a second front against Japan and later as a buffer state against growing Soviet power on the Asian mainland.

American diplomats and soldiers, however, occupied only one side of an increasingly complicated political landscape in China at the time. From the outset of the young Chinese Republic, KMT and CCP forces viewed each other with mistrust and suspicion. Viewing the CCP as a threat to internal stability and his own plans for

⁸ "Cairo Declaration." *Taiwan Documents Project Gateway*. Web. 14 Jan. 2011.
<<http://www.taiwandocuments.org/cairo.htm>>.

⁹ Kenneth S. Chern, *Dilemma in China: America's Policy Debate, 1945* (Hamden, CT: Archon, 1980), 40.

¹⁰ Chern, 41.

uniting China, Chiang, along with other KMT leaders, broke with the Communists with this First United Front and used his military resources to marginalize or destroy Communist bases in South China.¹¹ Having failed to eliminate the Communists outright, Chiang waged a relentless campaign of encirclement and rural subjugation leading to the death of thousands of pro-communist peasants throughout the later 1920s and the early 1930s. By 1934 however, Chiang's fifth encirclement campaign succeeded in cutting off CCP access to vital resources. In response to this growing pressure, CCP leaders, among whom Mao Zedong played a significant role, embarked upon what came to be known as the "Long March" to Yanan in northwestern China.¹² Likewise, from 1938 onward, the Japanese invasion forced the KMT regime to relocate from its original capital of Nanjing to the southwestern city of Chungking.¹³ Being based in such a remote and distant outpost significantly weakened KMT legitimacy and required American intelligence officers to venture into territory loosely held by the KMT or even occupied by the Japanese. Such expeditions offered American officers an insight into the failures of KMT governance and the opportunities for alternative power bases to establish themselves.

After the invasion of China by the Japanese in 1936, many mainstream Chinese leaders urged at least a temporary truce between the two camps to fight their mutual enemy. Unfortunately, Chiang Kai-Shek resisted this view and in December of 1936 was actually kidnapped by his own general in what came to be known as the Xian

¹¹ Spence, 330.

¹² Spence, 397.

¹³ Spence, 424.

incident.¹⁴ While kidnapped, Chiang was held at the mercy of General Zhang who called together CCP and KMT delegations in order to create a united front against Japan. While an agreement declaring a "United Front" against the Japanese was reached, little changed on the ground in China. CCP units continued to wage guerilla warfare against Japanese targets and thereby angered the more conventional KMT military leaders who lost many of their own men fighting in a more conventional style. Likewise, CCP commanders resented and eventually outright resisted military orders given by the KMT leadership. Indeed, especially in the later years of the Second World War, KMT and CCP forces engaged in active warfare against each other, and diplomatic communication between the two factions nearly broke down entirely.¹⁵ Later on, Presidents Roosevelt and Truman would dispatch envoys and ambassadors such as Patrick Hurley and future Secretary of State, George Marshall, with explicit orders to bring the two political parties back to the negotiation table in attempts to stave off civil war. Thus with the active engagement of the Americans from 1941 on, officials encountered a political landscape riven by divisions, baggage and unresolved conflict that threatened even the most tenuous of peace talks over the course of and after the Second World War.

Finally, the influence of foreign powers weighed heavily upon the minds of both Nationalist and Communist Chinese. American officials, with the exception of General Joe "Vinegar" Stilwell, often cautioned their advisors to the KMT to tread lightly and restrain from overtly promoting American interests given China's long suffering at the hands of both American and European colonialism nearly fifty years

¹⁴ Spence, 408.

¹⁵ John S. Service, *Lost Chance in China*. Ed. Joseph W. Esherick. (New York: Random House, 1974) 62.

earlier.¹⁶ Similarly, CCP officials continuously redefined their relationship with the foreign leaders both during and after the war. While Stalin publicly declared his support for the KMT regime and indeed collaborated with the Kuomintang following the Soviet occupation of Manchuria, CCP leaders also received communications from Moscow advising them on when and how to interact with both the KMT and the United States.¹⁷ Militarily as well, American forces were deployed following the Japanese surrender to help facilitate KMT take-over of formerly occupied northern Chinese cities. Such bold and unpopular actions led to many anti-American riots among the Chinese populace and furthered the cause of the CCP by giving credence to their claim that the KMT was operating under orders from Washington. In essence, while some officials like General Stilwell were simply forced out for their lack of tact when dealing with Chinese leaders, other officials like the China Hands sought ways to persuade or influence the various decisions being made in both occupied and newly liberated China.

John S. Service

According to the narrative laid out by the pro-KMT American lobbyists, one China Hand in particular was responsible for the erosion of American support for Chiang Kai-shek. Known to his fellow Service officers as “Jack” or “Jake,” John S. Service was often treated as the “initial sinner” by searchers for the roots of pro-CCP attitudes in the Foreign Service. However unfair this label may have been, there can be no doubt that Service played a significant role not just in the gathering of intelligence in China but also in the crafting of policy recommendations from 1942 to 1945. In fact,

¹⁶ Service, 148.

¹⁷ Odd Arne Westad, *Cold War and Revolution: Soviet-American Rivalry and the Origins of the Chinese Civil War, 1944-1946* (New York: Columbia UP, 1993), 129.

much of the reason for Service's later troubles stemmed from reports written to members of the State Department in which he begged for a reconsideration of the near universal support for Chiang's rapidly deteriorating regime. In memorandum after memorandum, Service implored General Stilwell, Ambassador Hurley, and anyone in the State Department to, at the very least, entertain the idea of cooperating with and supporting the CCP. Not only did these memoranda fail to generate any change in official U.S. policy, they, along with other complications, later brought Service a dismissal from the Foreign Service that would haunt him for years to come.

In order to best understand Service's perspective on the major Chinese issues of the 1940s, it is important to first understand his own personal background and early years as a Foreign Service officer. Born to missionary parents in Szechwan province in 1909, Service learned to speak the local dialect as a young boy and became accustomed with Chinese culture.¹⁸ Likewise, as an outsider to Chinese society, Service quickly learned the importance of what the Chinese considered "saving face" or "learning and culture."¹⁹ This ability to acknowledge a partner's intellect and pride while downplaying one's own proved immensely useful in Service's encounters with both lowly Chinese peasants and rising revolutionaries who often provided information for his (in)famous field reports.²⁰ After a brief secondary education in Shanghai, Service attended Oberlin College, an institution famous for its work in China. While at Oberlin, Service developed an interest in the US Foreign Service as an opportunity to return to China and serve his country.²¹ After passing his exams in 1933, Service decided to bypass the long placement wait brought on by the Depression and instead opted to sail to China in hopes of acquiring a local clerkship. Finding an open position in Kunming, the capital of the south-western Yunnan province, Service briefly held a clerical position before being commissioned a Foreign Service

¹⁸ Service, xiv.

¹⁹ Kahn, 62.

²⁰ Kahn, 62.

²¹ Kahn, 63.

officer.²² Upon his commission, Service was transferred to the Shanghai consulate where he would form his first diplomatic connection with a future ambassador to China, Clarence Gauss. Knowing no more than a few words in Chinese, Gauss quickly grew attached to a native speaker like Service and the two formed a close bond that would persist even during later Congressional investigations of Service.²³ In addition, with Gauss's appointment to US ambassador to China and transition to the KMT wartime capital of Chungking in 1941, Service found himself promoted to Second Secretary of the Chungking embassy.²⁴ His new position in the American diplomatic community in China allowed Service to meet Chiang Kai-Shek and Soong Mai-ling, his wife who was often referred to as Madame Chiang. Service also became swiftly acquainted with several other influential members of the KMT bureaucracy such as Finance Minister T.V. Soong and Premier H.H. Kung.²⁵ All of these individuals represented the "propagandist" elements in the KMT and would come to resent Service's unambiguous reporting on the regime's shortcomings. Even more significantly though, Service's new position allowed him to venture out into the Chinese countryside to gather field reports that would provide a damning first hand account of the failures of KMT administration.²⁶

Following the commencement of the Second Sino-Japanese War, life for the rural peasantry of China in both occupied and unoccupied provinces became brutally difficult. Not only did Chinese peasants have to worry about death at the hands of the Japanese army or conscription into their own military forces, but parts of China suffered from poor crop yields and widespread famine as well. One of Service's first field reports in 1941 bore the title of "the Famine in Honan Province" and attempted to provide a systematic categorization of the sources of information regarding the famine, the number

²² Kahn, 64.

²³ Kahn, 65.

²⁴ Kahn, 67.

²⁵ Kahn, 68.

²⁶ Service, 8.

of peasants affected, relative severity, and immediate causes of the widespread hunger.²⁷ Likewise, early on in Service's report he offered the bold assessment that "there would be hunger but no real famine if it were not for the war and its background in Honan of brutal and oppressive treatment of farmers by their own government and army. This is so obvious that it was mentioned to me by every relief worker. . . with whom I talked."²⁸ In addition, Service went on to describe the amount of grain requisitioned by KMT forces as "unnecessarily large" and unequally levied. Furthermore, even when relief money was set aside by the KMT, Service noted that "little actually [ended up] reaching the farmers."²⁹ Finally and perhaps most interestingly, Service predicted that "socially, there are immediate effects in the uprooting and infliction of hardships on a large part of the population. But the more important effects are the changes in the attitudes and state of mind of the people. . . the atmosphere of longing for peace and of dislike of the government and army which are supposed to protect them is unmistakable."³⁰ The essence of this early report indicates Service's awareness of the hardships endured by the ordinary Chinese people and more importantly illustrated the abject failure of KMT administrators to do much of anything to remedy the situation.

Aside from the disastrous situation that Service reported on in the Chinese countryside, the young second secretary drafted reports on the state of the KMT military as well. In one entitled "Military Movements Noted Along Road from Chungking to Lanchow," Service observed the arrival of several divisions of KMT troops to the city of Kansu in order to quell a civil insurrection. However, Service went into explicit detail about the conditions of the common soldiers by describing them as "very poor – so poor at times as to almost beggar description. This miserable condition of the conscripts, especially so general in the Northwest that it is a universal subject of comment by both

²⁷ Service, 9 – 20.

²⁸ Service, 12.

²⁹ Service, 16.

³⁰ Service, 19.

foreigners and Chinese.”³¹ He described these conscripts as “walking skeletons” and “obviously starved.” These descriptions no doubt influenced Service against the idea of KMT military superiority and should have made his colleagues question the capability of the KMT not only to defeat the Japanese but also to prevent the rise of the CCP. Likewise, in a later report Service even went so far as to describe the KMT army in 1944 as a “undernourished, half-armed mob” and complained about internal resistance to the idea of downsizing the army to improve its ability to fight the Japanese.³² Thus by being stationed in Chungking but allowed to travel into the provinces to conduct field research for the embassy, Service obtained an early glimpse past the KMT rhetoric into the harsh realities of normal Chinese life and the obstacles that would have to be overcome if a united independent China were to exist.

Although Service’s reports clearly depicted the ineptitude of the KMT, it fell to the leader of the KMT, Chiang Kai-Shek, to doom Service’s hopes for a KMT revival. For all his alleged strengths as a leader, Service’s reports highlighted sharply Chiang’s overriding concern to settle petty pre-war rivalries instead of working to overthrow the Japanese occupation. A report by Service in March of 1944 entitled “the Fall of T. V. Soong” documents one such instance in significant detail. For the better part of the KMT’s administration of mainland China, Soong had occupied important governmental posts. However, due to his disagreements with Chiang over small matters, Soong quickly found himself removed or supplanted from organizations ranging from the Central Bank of China, China Defense Supplies, and the Bank of Canton.³³ In all of these cases, Service postulated “that Soong’s downfall was brought about primarily because Chiang. . . wished to wrest from him all voice in or control over the most important economic stake on China’s horizon.”³⁴ Chiang would go on to engage in such

³¹ Service, 36.

³² Service, 38.

³³ Service, 80.

³⁴ Service, 81.

capricious and petty distractions many more times against groups such as the Kangsi clique and most prominently Mao's CCP.

In sum, by 1944 Service utterly despised Chiang. As he himself put it in a memorandum entitled "Reported Views on the Generalissimo," Service asserted that "China is in a mess . . . [and] for this sorry situation as a whole, Chiang, and only Chiang, is responsible . . . Chiang believes that by bluff and by taking advantage of our weakness and lack of unity in dealing with him, he can evade American efforts to jolt him out of this [active noncooperation]."³⁵ Furthermore, in this report Service laid out his belief that unless the United States adopted a more clear and resolute set of policies toward the Chinese war effort and the KMT, no substantial reform or change would come from Chiang's administration. Thus by mid-1944, all of Service's reports document a sense of complete and utter frustration with the nationalist government due to its failure to address the needs of the Chinese peasantry, the inadequacy of the KMT military, and the ineptitude and incompetence of the Generalissimo himself. It is quite clear why, as the war in China reached its eighth year, men like Service and his fellow China Hands were eager to see if a better form of resistance to Japanese occupation could be found in Yen'an with the CCP.

In the summer of 1944, Service and many of his colleagues finally received the green light for a mission to Yen'an from the recalcitrant Chiang. While both the Foreign Service and the U.S. Army had been trying to visit the CCP mountain base for almost three years, it had taken a visit from the Vice-President, Henry Wallace, to strong arm the Generalissimo into allowing such an expedition.³⁶ Service had himself been particularly interested in gaining better information about both the northwestern provinces and the mysterious Communists who camped there. Ironically enough, Service argued that his interest in the CCP "was simply a careerist decision. To be noticed and advanced in the Foreign

³⁵ Service, 91.

³⁶ Carter, 24.

Service, one had to write notable reports. That meant finding an area of special competence . . . I decided that the key internal political problem which I could handle adequately and well was the CCP and its relations with the KMT.”³⁷ Filling a niche was certainly important for any Foreign Service officer, but even more significant was the young diplomat’s estimation of Washington D.C.’s intelligence regarding internal Chinese politics which can best be described as horribly out of touch. One of Service’s reports in early 1944 entitled “Kuomintang-Communist Situation” discusses the tendency among many “Chinese to question whether the United States has given sufficient realistic consideration to the future in China of democracy. The question is raised whether it is to China’s advantage or to America’s own interests, for the United States to give the Kuomintang government large quantities of military supplies which . . . are not likely to be used effectively against Japan but . . . to enforce ‘unity’ in the country by military force.”³⁸ Foreshadowing later opinions by both Ambassador Hurley and members of Congress, Service’s supervisor back in Washington flatly labeled this report “preposterous,” “ridiculous,” and “scandalous.”³⁹ Given the position of Service and his fellow China Hands however, the possibility of finding an alternative policy had become not only attractive for their careers within the State Department but also came to be considered imperative if any favorable outcome was to be produced in China.

On July 22, 1944, Jack Service arrived in the mountain city of Yen’an with the first collection of journalists, military officials, and Foreign Service officers as part of what was called the “Dixie Mission.” Arriving in an area about which he had received only second-hand information, Service quickly set about composing reports for his superiors. Writing mere days after his arrival, Service prefaced his “First Informal Impressions of the North Shensi Communist Base” by acknowledging that “one enters an area like this, concerning which one has heard so many entirely good but secondhand

³⁷ Service, 169.

³⁸ Service, 172.

³⁹ Service, 170.

reports, with a conscious determination not to be swept off one's feet."⁴⁰ All illusions aside, Service's memorandum detailed an encampment freed of the choking bureaucracy of Chungking, possessing energetic determination, and adequate subsistence. Obviously, this report constituted only an informal assessment compiled after a few days but Service's other reports went on to detail several other positive aspects of Yen'an life.⁴¹ In spite of the KMT's economic blockade of the Shensi region, Service made note of the success of land reform in generating agricultural prosperity and the ability of almost every rural community to sustain itself. Even after acknowledging CCP problems regarding inflation and lack of technical expertise, Service evaluated the economic changes and reforms as "spectacularly successful, and that as a result the economic situation in the [CCP controlled areas] is healthy and improving . . . the contrast between these conditions . . . and the conditions . . . in Kuomintang China too obvious to need comment."⁴² Service's memoranda however took his assessments of economic reform a step further and interpreted them as indicative of democratic political attitudes among CCP leadership. Regardless of the inherent problems with this connection, the young officer pointed to community participation in labor and agricultural collectives and assumed that by encouraging peasant economic involvement, CCP leaders planned to incorporate similar principles in political life.

Militarily, CCP officials also encouraged Service's belief in what he called "democratic appeal" or "democratic popularity." In his report on "The Growth of the New Fourth Army: An Example of the Popular Democratic Appeal of the Chinese Communists," Service went into greater detail on his usage of the word "democratic" and its role in Chinese and CCP society. As he explained early in the report when detailing the ways in which the New Fourth Army is different from previous military forces, Service observed that "to the Chinese peasant . . . the idea of active personal resistance was entirely new. In the past the peasant had regarded all governments merely as something to be endured . . . the

⁴⁰ Service, 178.

⁴¹ Service, 188, 200, 252.

⁴² Service, 187.

peasant needed a great deal of education . . . before he was willing to take up arms.”⁴³ Logistically as well, the New Fourth Army had grown by almost twelve times its original size of twelve thousand between 1938 and 1944 and by the time of Service’s report was effectively in control of whole segments of formerly Japanese occupied territory in western China. Likewise, in other reports like “American Officer and Foreign Correspondents Report Active Popular Support of the Eighth Route Army at Front” and “Verification of Communist Territorial Claims by Direct American Observation,” Service enhanced his assessment of the success of the CCP’s military forces.⁴⁴

However one recurrent theme in Service’s reports and memorandums remained the influential role of CCP leadership in the success of the Communist economic and military policies. Once having engaged Mao Tse-Tung in an eight-hour long conversation about both China’s and the United States’ political landscapes, Service along with his colleagues received unprecedented access to the CCP leadership.⁴⁵ In addition, Service also obtained a detailed accounting from CCP generals such as Chen Yi who were responsible for the success of the New Fourth Army. This conversation with Chen laid out systematically how Chinese communists were able to move into a given region, gain popular support, establish effective taxation, reform landholdings, and wage war against the Japanese occupiers.⁴⁶ In almost every conversation Service had with leaders of the CCP, he found himself being presented with complex and detailed analysis not only of the tactics engaged in by the Chinese communists but also the shortcomings of American policy. In fact, during the aforementioned, eight hour meeting with Mao, Service was ruefully instructed that “the United States has handled Chiang very badly. It has let him get away with blackmail . . . American help to Chiang can be made

⁴³ Service, 216.

⁴⁴ Service, 234, 244.

⁴⁵ Kahn, 119.

⁴⁶ John S. Service, *The Amerasia Papers Some Problems in the History of US-China Relations* (Berkeley: Center for Chinese Studies, University of California, 1971), 153.

conditional on his meeting American desires."⁴⁷ Not only was Mao acutely aware of what both he and the Service considered America's policy failures towards the KMT, but Mao also acknowledged the power of the pro-nationalist "China Lobby" in the US. In fact at one point, both Ambassador Hurley and President Roosevelt in the fall of 1944 refused to respond to any correspondence and invitations to meet issued by the CCP or suggested by any of the Foreign Service officers.⁴⁸ However, Mao correctly surmised that these refusals stemmed more from a desire to avoid any association with communism in the months leading up to the 1944 presidential election than from any sincere confidence in the KMT government.⁴⁹ In essence, CCP leadership displayed a strong sense of pragmatism in dealing with fellow Chinese citizens and an adroit understanding of American motivations, especially in comparison to the inept and capricious KMT government to the south. Both of these leadership elements in conjunction with the aforementioned innovations in economic prosperity and military effectiveness appeared to offer, at least to those in Yen'an at the time, a welcome alternative to the nationalist regime.

In spite of the success of the Dixie Mission in gathering information about the CCP and the territories they controlled, outside actors prepared to change the American position in China dramatically. Relations between General Stilwell, who had been appointed as the chief American military man in China, and Chiang Kai-Shek had never been cordial. By 1944 however, things had deteriorated to a point that these men could not work with each other.⁵⁰ Roosevelt's demand that Chinese military forces be placed under the General's command had been the straw that had broken Chiang's back and old "vinegar" Stilwell, as he was colloquially known, often showed little tact towards the Generalissimo's personal feelings or concerns. It was at this point, when the situation in Chungking seemed increasingly volatile, that President Roosevelt appointed the blustering Ambassador

⁴⁷ Kahn, 119.

⁴⁸ Kahn, 129.

⁴⁹ Kahn, 129.

⁵⁰ Kahn, 126.

Patrick J. Hurley to replace the recently departed Ambassador Gauss. Gauss had himself resigned for many of the same reasons that Service highlighted and went so far as to say "we should pull up the plug and let the whole Chinese government go down the drain."⁵¹ When asked what he thought about Hurley replacing Gauss as ambassador, Service simply classified it as a "disaster."⁵²

To say that Hurley and Service disagreed on matters of policy is an understatement. As Hurley described it when asked why FDR had sent him to China, his mission was "to prevent the collapse of the National Government [and] to sustain Chiang Kai-Shek as President of the Republic and Generalissimo of the Armies."⁵³ Unfortunately for the Foreign Service officers hoping to facilitate American aid and communication with the CCP in Yen-an, Hurley had grossly twisted FDR's orders to "promote efficient and harmonious relations between the Generalissimo and General Stilwell [and] to facilitate General Stilwell's exercise of command over the Chinese armies placed under his direction."⁵⁴ This fabrication of American policy by Hurley flew in the face of everything Service and many of his colleagues had observed, researched, reported on, and advocated for the past five years. Further adding to the coming split in US intelligence in China, Hurley flew to Yen-an, unannounced, in November of 1944. Ever the impulsive diplomat, Hurley remained for only three days and offered a relative simple five-point plan aimed at preventing civil war.⁵⁵ Not only had this plan not been agreed to by the KMT but it also made commitments to the CCP that would never have been accepted by the nationalists.⁵⁶ Compared to Service's years of observation, study, evaluation, and learning, Hurley's cowboy diplomacy not only failed to prevent internal civil conflict but also angered both parties further with its unattainable promises. Likewise, in terms of dictating future US policy following his whirlwind trip to Yen-an, Hurley continued to advocate unconditional acceptance of the KMT and

⁵¹ Kahn, 133.

⁵² Kahn, 134.

⁵³ Kahn, 125.

⁵⁴ Kahn, 125.

⁵⁵ Kahn, 137.

⁵⁶ Kahn, 139.

unwarranted skepticism about all CCP proposals. In fact one of the first actions Hurley undertook as ambassador in early 1945 was to ban the transmission of any unfavorable reports on Chiang to Washington.⁵⁷ Ironically enough, for the first few weeks following this ban, next to no intelligence was sent to Washington regarding the KMT due to the lack of "approved" material.⁵⁸ As Service himself said when reflecting on the period immediately following Stilwell's departure and Gauss's resignation, "I really felt that we were headed down the wrong track . . . so as time went on, I certainly became much more of an advocate of a policy position. After the Stilwell affair, most of [the China Hands] felt that it was worth sticking our necks out."⁵⁹ This desire to stick their "necks out" not only led Service and many of his colleagues into direct debate with Hurley but would haunt them for years to come.

The window through which Service and other Foreign Service officers could "stick their necks" began to close rapidly as US policy in both Chungking and Washington D.C. was shifting beneath their feet. Following Service's return to the KMT capital, Hurley made it clear that the inquisitive officer could be transferred out of China, much as John Davies had been in early January, 1945 if he "crossed" the dictatorial Ambassador.⁶⁰ However, crossing Hurley was exactly what Service intended to do. When, in the spring of 1945, Hurley departed for Washington D.C. he left the American Embassy in Chungking under the command of George Acheson (not to be confused with future Secretary of State Dean Acheson), a colleague of Service's and a proponent of the belief that the State Department had not been receiving accurate intelligence about the situation in China under Hurley. Given Acheson's disposition, Service drafted and transmitted to Washington a memorandum arguing that "time is short and it will be dangerous to [continue the current policies of unilateral support to the KMT]."⁶¹ Unfortunately for Service, Hurley's first reaction upon reading the report was to exclaim "I'll get that

⁵⁷ Kahn, 145.

⁵⁸ Kahn, 145.

⁵⁹ Service, 329.

⁶⁰ Service, 354.

⁶¹ Service, 360.

S.O.B. [Service] if it's the last thing I do."⁶² Service went a step further in attempting to bypass Hurley by requesting travel papers to return to Yen'an from General Wedemeyer, Stilwell's replacement.

Adding further fuel to later attacks on Service, his return to Yen'an coincided with increasing aggressiveness by the CCP towards the KMT. Likewise upon returning to the Communist mountain base, Service noted that the "general atmosphere is defiant determination and expectation of important developments in the near future . . . American policy and the attitude of the Ambassador [Hurley] are partially blamed for [the increasing likelihood of civil war]."⁶³ Further conversations with both Mao and Chou En-lai elicited further frustrations with American policy as a whole and the individuals in China who dictated it.⁶⁴ Interestingly enough, according to at least one member of the Dixie Mission, Dr. Melvin Casberg, Service's discussions with Mao and Chou En-lai were considered one of the group's more significant accomplishments for US intelligence surrounding the CCP.⁶⁵ Likewise, both men were eager to speak directly with top US officials. Mao himself issued a communique addressed to President Roosevelt in January of 1945 in which he and Chou offered to fly to Washington if invited by the White House. Unfortunately for the CCP and perhaps for American policy as a whole, Hurley held the message for several weeks before burying it in a fifteen-page report.⁶⁶ On the whole however, Service's second trip to Yen'an proved significantly less helpful to American interests than the first for two reasons. First, after Hurley's blustery attempts at improvisational diplomacy, CCP leaders became increasingly disillusioned with American promises and KMT commitments of compromise. Second, by attempting to bypass Hurley through both his initial memorandum and his return to Yen'an, Service exposed himself to the criticisms of what Hurley would later call "undermining US policy" and

⁶² Service, 358.

⁶³ Service, 367.

⁶⁴ Service, 359.

⁶⁵ Carter, 206.

⁶⁶ Carter, 149.

insubordination.⁶⁷ In fact, by Service's own admission several decades later Hurley "had found out that I was in Yanan, and that apparently enraged him. He stormed over to the State Department, [and] demanded that I [Service] be recalled."⁶⁸ With Stilwell out, Hurley in and little back-up from the State Department, Service's days as a Foreign Service officer in China were numbered. By the time he returned to Chungking, Service had been informed that he was to return to Washington without any further briefing or discussion.

From here, Service's story took a tragic turn. Returning to Washington on the day of FDR's death, the seasoned China Hand quickly became embroiled in charges of espionage and treason. Having offered his opinions and some of his papers to Philip Jaffe, editor of the controversial and possibly communist magazine *Amerasia*, Service had overstepped his bounds. By showing Jaffe reports that had ostensibly been labeled "classified," Service had stumbled into the middle of an ongoing FBI investigation. On June 6, 1945, Service along with five other government officials were arrested and charged with violation of the Espionage Act.⁶⁹ While all charges against Service were ultimately cleared, the scandal tarred his reputation and made him a magnet for future controversies and witch-hunts. Service faced loyalty hearings and Congressional investigations from 1946 to 1947 and from 1949 to 1951, all of which eventually cleared him of any disloyalty or wrongdoing. In addition, Service also endured the humiliation of being dismissed from the State Department in 1952. Even after being restored by a unanimous decision by the US Supreme Court in 1957, Service suffered from reduced pay and status for the rest of his State Department career and ultimately quit in 1962 to pursue a master's degree at the University of California, Berkeley.⁷⁰

Service's experiences in both Chungking and Yanan offer a number of reasons why US policy

⁶⁷ Kahn, 177.

⁶⁸ "Truman Library - John S. Service Oral History Interview, Chap IX-XI." Interview by Rosemary Levenson. *TrumanLibrary.org*. Harry S. Truman Library and Museum. Web. 29 Nov. 2010. <<http://www.trumanlibrary.org/oralhist/service4.htm#oh10>>.

⁶⁹ Kahn, 169.

⁷⁰ Kahn, 270.

failed to adapt to the reality on the ground in China at the time. First and foremost, the role of Ambassador Hurley cannot be underestimated. Having acquired the post with no background in China or even the China-Burma theatre in which he was operating, Hurley set about redefining China policy in a way totally inconsistent with his predecessors and the majority of the Foreign Service officers in the region. Likewise, on numerous occasions, Hurley made it perfectly clear that the embassy under him and the Foreign Service officers around him were there to further his conception of American policy in China. Furthermore, any attempts at dissent or even frank discussion in Foreign Service reports were temporarily suppressed, squashed or even punished.

Beyond Hurley, Service's time in China reflects the difficulty Foreign Service officers had in even getting their superiors in Washington to listen to and act based upon their observations. It took a visit by Vice-President Wallace to get access to Yen'an and their requests for more effective or efficient aid to the KMT were widely ignored until 1946, long after the departure of Service. Even when reports regarding the CCP were read, State Department officials regarded them as little more than intelligence about a small clique rather than a legitimate alternative to the KMT regime in Chungking. Granted, the CCP may have been the underdogs in both past and future civil wars, but State Department officials refused to commit any resources even on an experimental basis to Communist forces in the north.

In essence, Service's efforts attracted such notoriety due to the outspoken nature of his reports from China and his actions in Washington DC. Unfortunately for Service and most of his colleagues who believed the situation in China was worth "sticking [their] necks out for," their crossing of the vindictive Ambassador Hurley and their early endorsement of America's later Asian arch-nemesis led many to dead-end careers and unjust terminations. However, such tragic endings were not confined to such outspoken advocates as Service and were often meted out to more moderate Foreign Service officers such as John Carter Vincent. Beyond their actions and statements, these men also became victims of the shifting international political landscape. With the defeat of the Japanese and the end of

the Second World War America's fears shifted from the threat of fascism to the threat of monolithic global communism.

The Development of American Cold War Policy and the Rise of the "China Lobby"

By early 1946, relations between the United States and the Soviet union had deteriorated to the point that each side began to view the other with increasing suspicion and hostility. Soviet policies in both Poland and Eastern Europe as a whole caused American policymakers to take a more active approach to confront expanding Soviet power in Asia as a whole and specifically in Manchuria. Having promised Stalin an independent Mongolia and access to Manchurian ports during the Yalta conference in early 1945, FDR had purchased Soviet entry into the war against Japan and a limited degree of legitimacy for the KMT government.⁷¹ However, with the use of atomic weapons against Japan and deployment of US marines to disarm the remaining Japanese troops following the war, the United States signaled a new intention to act as a counter-weight to Soviet influence in Asia. Unfortunately for many State department officials who, throughout the war, had advocated less commitment to the anti-Communist KMT, this shift in foreign policy did not accord with their observations on the ground.

With the ascension of Harry Truman to the American presidency and the end of the Second World War, American foreign policy shifted focus from defeating the Japanese to, at least initially, unifying China and later preventing the growth of Soviet influence in the region. In December 1945, Truman publicly declared "the United States recognizes and will continue to recognize the National [KMT] Government of China and cooperate with it in international affairs" while at the same time promising that "United States support will not extend to United States military intervention to influence

⁷¹ "The Avalon Project : Yalta (Crimea) Conference." *Avalon Project - Documents in Law, History and Diplomacy*. Web. 14 Jan. 2011. <<http://avalon.law.yale.edu/wwii/yalta.asp>>.

the course of any Chinese internal strife."⁷² Coming mere months after the end of the war, Truman's policy stiffened American support for the KMT while also acknowledging the need to protect American marines stationed in China and avoid being drawn into any potential civil war. In contrast, the Roosevelt administration had previously adopted a more flexible approach when Secretary of War Henry Stimson wrote "if we can't get rid of Chiang Kai-Shek, we can't get in touch with the only live body of military men there is in China at present, namely the communists."⁷³

Indeed, Truman's policies came to embody a more open and honest perspective on American interests around the world. According to at least one historian, there can be seen "a process of change from Roosevelt's integrationist, assimilationist approach to dealing with postwar Asia to Truman's more competitive, more simplistic doctrine of anti-Soviet, anti-Communist containment."⁷⁴ Another factor in this shift can no doubt be attributed to the collapse of the so-called Grand Alliance with the defeat of their common enemies. Without Imperial Japan or Nazi Germany, American policymakers found themselves operating in a bi-polar world where the only legitimate challenge to their influence came from Stalin's Soviet Union. While this change in stance towards the Soviets and communism as a whole can in large part be attributed to shifts in the global political climate, the domestic political landscape of the United States also made its own contribution.

As early as 1945, future Secretary of State John Foster Dulles warned that by acknowledging the legitimacy of a growing communist movement in China, Americans "would be disloyal to friendly elements in China, would impair American prestige in the Far East, and would encourage the creation

⁷² Truman, Harry. "Statement by the President: United States Policy Toward China." *Harry S. Truman Library and Museum*. Harry S. Truman Library and Museum. Web. 14 Jan. 2011.
<<http://www.trumanlibrary.org/publicpapers/index.php?pid=506&st=&st1=>>.

⁷³ Michael M. Sheng, *Battling Western Imperialism: Mao, Stalin, and the United States* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1997), 91.

⁷⁴ Harry Harding and Yuan Ming, eds, *Sino-American Relations: 1945-1955 : a Joint Reassessment of a Critical Decade*. (Wilmington, De.: SR, 1989), 75.

of 'a solid oriental bloc.'"⁷⁵ Thus, to many on the right of the American political landscape, the commitment to Chiang Kai-Shek and the KMT went beyond mere practical considerations. In essence, the establishment of a "China Lobby" as it came to be known, embodied an early strand of anti-communist ideology. Composed of prominent Congressional figures such as Senator Styles Bridges, Senator William Knowland, and Representative Walter Judd, the China Lobby initiated broad sweeping campaigns in support of Chiang's regime and aggressively worked to discredit the China Hands. In the days following Ambassador Hurley's resignation in late 1945, Senator Bridges gave a speech claiming that "America's allies paid 'eloquent lip service to the principle of democracy' but used America's supplies and reputation in the Far East to support imperialism and communism; high-level American policies toward China had been sabotaged by State Department career officers biased in favor of the CCP . . . [and] urged a thorough Senate probe."⁷⁶ Focusing on the previously highlighted Amerasia incident, members of the Foreign Relations committee such as Bridges used such scandals to further promote what they believed should be America's policy towards China.⁷⁷

Both inside and outside of Congress, the China Lobby applied serious scrutiny and suspicion to America's policy in the Far East. Men like Alfred Kohlberg, a prominent China importer, worked to discredit the China Hands too. Publishing a magazine from 1947 to 1951 entitled *Plain Talk*, Kohlberg put forth articles that according to one editor would "carry the message on a factual expose basis."⁷⁸ With *Plain Talk* as his mouthpiece, Kohlberg highlighted what he considered communist infiltration of government institutions and pro-Soviet forces within the State Department. Kohlberg himself would go on to become close friends with the

⁷⁵ Chern, 48 +49.

⁷⁶ Chern, 98.

⁷⁷ Chern, 100.

⁷⁸ Joseph Keeley, *The China Lobby Man* (New Rochelle, NY: Arlington House, 1969), 197.

infamous Senator Joe McCarthy and actively campaigned for him during election season. For a businessman like Kohlberg, the KMT's corruption and ineptitude allowed him to operate relatively unregulated. With the CCP's rhetoric of nationalization and redistribution, American business interests in China would undoubtedly feel threatened.

In the Senate as well, Knowland and McCarthy would turn up the heat on the China Hands. According to at least one historian, when discussing the relation between the two Senators, "Knowland was a veteran fighter. McCarthy was a rookie."⁷⁹ The two China warriors would go on to lead investigations and hearings related to American policy in the Far East for almost half a decade. Knowland himself was referred to as the "Senator from Formosa (Taiwan)" on more than one occasion.⁸⁰ Finally, so successful were these China Lobbyists that as late as 1950 one American diplomat when asked why he had not submitted a report detailing KMT governance of Taiwan remarked "what if I wrote the report and someone like Senator Knowland saw it?"⁸¹ Thus in the competition between the China Hands and the China Lobby over China reporting, the conservative Lobby was extremely successful in not only punishing those who had served there but also in censoring future reporting.

John Carter Vincent

If Patrick Hurley and other members of the China Lobby considered John Service to be the source of pro-communist and treasonous influence in American policy towards China, they reserved special venom for John Carter Vincent. Writing during the early 1950s when anti-Communist witch-

⁷⁹ Kahn, 212.

⁸⁰ Keeley, 167.

⁸¹ Kahn, 70.

hunts captivated Congress, Alfred Kohlberg, once described as "The China Lobby Man," ranked Vincent among such other prominent traitors as Alger Hiss, Owen Lattimore, and Edgar Snow.⁸² Another victim of John Foster Dulles's acquiescence to Congressional and political pressure, Vincent had been offered the choice of retirement or dismissal because he had failed to "meet the standard which is demanded of a foreign service officer."⁸³ Unlike Service or many of the other China Hands, Vincent rose above the ranks of mere field reporting and, by the time of his dismissal in 1952, had served as the Director of the Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs in 1945. However, despite having attained such a prominent position in the State Department and having regularly prepared policy recommendations for both President Truman and the U.S. Army in China, Vincent could not escape the "taint" of being known as a China Hand. In reality, the importance of his position led many of his detractors to believe that America's later "anti-KMT" policies emanated from Vincent. In fact, as the years progressed, Vincent would find himself slowly reduced from his peak position as the Director of the Bureau. First he was demoted to the job of the American envoy to Switzerland and then transferred to the American embassy in Tangier where he finally resigned in disgust. Vincent's story however, shines a different light on the experiences of the China Hands than that of John Service. Vincent's time in China and Washington D.C. allowed him to focus less on the day-to-day happenings that Service documented in his field reports and instead offered him a chance to craft American policy in the Far East. Charged first with designing policy to combat the Japanese occupation in China, Vincent would also be involved in policymaking to help prevent further civil strife and the loss of American life in the Middle Kingdom.

Unlike Service and many of the other China Hands, Vincent did not originally hail from China. Born in 1900 in Seneca, Kansas, he grew up in the American heartland and came to embody

⁸² Kahn, 50.

⁸³ Kahn, 11.

many of its core traits. While originally contemplating a career in Baptist ministry, the young John Carter developed a strong attachment to public service and Woodrow Wilson's international idealism. Buying into President Wilson's call for American soldiers to help make the "world safe for democracy," Vincent tried in vain to join the American Army in 1918 but volunteered only months before the signing of the armistice which officially ended World War I. Opting to attend Clemson in early 1919, Vincent once "walked-out" in sympathy with striking busboys who had facetiously adopted the title of "Bolsheviks."⁸⁴ Such an insignificant act and title would have likely merited no further attention had Vincent not related it to Kohlberg many years later while both men were working in the Far East. Following this strike, Vincent chose to transfer to Mercer University as it was "an institution he felt could better prepare him for a career of public service."⁸⁵ While a student there, Vincent recalled one event in particular where a professor implored him "to go into the foreign service, to get out, go abroad, and do things."⁸⁶ After his graduation in 1923, Vincent prepared for the Foreign Service exam with a preference for being sent to Copenhagen on his first assignment abroad. As fate would have it, the State Department had other plans and in April of 1924, the young officer was dispatched to Chang-Sha in China's Hunan province. The son of devout Baptists, this newly commissioned public servant had grown up hearing about the Boxer rebellion of 1900, and the horrors inflicted upon Westerners in the past made Vincent increasingly nervous about being dispatched there in the present.

Arriving in Chang-Sha in May of 1924, Vincent quickly assumed the role of second-in-command at the local American Consulate. Chang-Sha had developed over the past few decades as a base for a variety of American interests ranging from companies such as Standard Oil and Dupont Chemical to local Christian missionaries to the U.S.S. Villalobos which was stationed nearby. Often

⁸⁴ Gary May, *China Scapegoat: the Diplomatic Ordeal of John Carter Vincent* (Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland, 1979), 25.

⁸⁵ May, 25.

⁸⁶ May, 25.

depended on by foreign corporations looking for new markets, Vincent quickly became the diplomat to see at the consulate for information on the local Chinese population. After Chiang's initiation of the Northern Expedition in 1926, Chang-Sha was thrown into turmoil and Vincent documented it in detail. Focusing especially on the actions of the pro-union and anti-foreign labor movements, Vincent concluded that "the continual threat of strikes and the impossible demands which accompany these threats is having an unfavorable effect on foreign and Chinese business alike."⁸⁷ Furthermore, the young foreign service officer observed the seizure of various American churches, residences, and commercial properties. Advocating continued American solidarity, Vincent wrote to a local missionary, urging him to "close your hospitals and schools rather than make concessions before making agreements with the Chinese."⁸⁸ Ever the proponent of the rights of American missionaries, he continued to advocate a policy of autonomy for Americans until the 1940s when extra-territoriality was abolished under Roosevelt.⁸⁹ While extra-territoriality was a major point of contention for the majority of China's citizens, other revolutionary grievances and movements arose alongside increasing political violence. Culminating in April of 1927, Vincent, along with every other American in Hunan province, received evacuation orders from the American minister in Beijing.

After spending a little less than a year in Hankow, the maturing China Hand received a transfer to the more cosmopolitan and intellectually stimulating Beijing. While in Hankow however, Vincent had one of his first encounters with KMT self-promotion in the form the foreign minister of the nationalist regime, Eugene Chen. Arguing that American interests and prospects for peace would be best accomplished by supporting the KMT, Chen tried to persuade Vincent to press for greater US aid to the fledgling KMT government. Vincent however, remained unconvinced about KMT promises of safety and justice for foreigners in Chang-sha and refused to do more than listen to KMT

⁸⁷ May, 32.

⁸⁸ May, 34.

⁸⁹ May, 36.

representatives.⁹⁰ Upon his journey to Beijing, Vincent was required to undergo Chinese language and culture training. Proving a poor student, he often put off studying Chinese characters or reading texts on provincial industrial output in favor of exploring the nearby monuments and countryside. Beijing proved pivotal on a personal level as well for in September of 1929, Vincent met his future wife, Lucille Swann, who would expose him to the cultural and social life of China's eventual capital. After barely passing his language and cultural exams in 1930, Vincent was promoted to the position of "full consul" and dispatched to the highly contested region of Manchuria to work in the American Consulate at Mukden. While almost every American diplomat in China at the time acknowledged that Manchuria could very easily become a flashpoint in Sino-Japanese conflicts, no one could predict what the coming years held for John Carter Vincent and his position there.⁹¹

Having used a bombing of the South Manchuria Railway line as a pretext, Japanese troops quickly occupied Manchuria in September, 1931.⁹² Vincent himself was harassed by the Japanese army when he was ordered off a train he was traveling aboard and interrogated for several hours in the middle of the night before finally being allowed to return to the American consulate. Likewise, Vincent displayed his capacity for insight and analysis by visiting the site of the alleged railway bombing. Observing then that such a provocation "was decidedly desirable from the Japanese Army standpoint and quite as undesirable from the Chinese viewpoint," the diplomat prophetically noted that the Japanese puppet government established in Manchuria would not satisfy their economic goals and would undoubtedly be followed by more Japanese aggression against China.⁹³ These early reports on the Japanese in Manchuria would do much to establish Vincent's ability to assess analytically and honestly the prevailing political powers and their capacity to meet self-established goals. At the time as

⁹⁰ May, 38.

⁹¹ May, 51.

⁹² Spence, 369.

⁹³ May, 54.

well, many of his reports and memoranda proved a prime source of intelligence in an increasingly volatile region. While such critical thinking would be praised in the State Department of the 1930s, by the 1940s Vincent's open and honest criticism of political actors in Asia would bring about his downfall.

While Vincent had always wanted to craft policy concerning China (his views were often in opposition to many of his superiors whom he considered woefully out-of-touch), in February 1936 he was finally given a chance when he was allowed to transfer to the China desk in the Far Eastern Division of the State Department.⁹⁴ Stymied by domestic resistance to foreign intervention and a reluctance on President Roosevelt's part to take any punitive action against an increasingly militaristic Japan, the newly dubbed policy maker was forced to wait until 1938 to persuade any of his fellow diplomats to adopt a more proactive attitude.⁹⁵ Launching a personal crusade to change US policy towards Japanese military aggression, Vincent drafted a series of memorandums to high-ranking bureaucrats both within the Far Eastern division and the State Department as a whole. Not afraid to take up an unpopular or politically unfeasible view, he argued that Japan could "not be expected to become satiated" by its conquests and that the US should offer increased military and economic aid to China.⁹⁶ Many of these documents reached the desk of Cordell Hull, Secretary of State, who considered them "excellent" in spite of overwhelming opposition from diplomats throughout Asia and Washington. Thus by the eve of World War II, Vincent had demonstrated both a keen eye for political analysis of American foreign policy toward East Asia. Likewise, his conflicts with other diplomats and his ability to continue climbing the career ladder inside the State Department displayed his ability to both stir up and play down conflict. These skills, along with others Vincent had developed earlier in his life and career, would prove instrumental in the opaque arena of domestic Chinese politics.

⁹⁴ May, 55.

⁹⁵ May, 56.

⁹⁶ May, 57.

After nearly five years away from the Far East, Vincent finally found himself returning to China. While he had been in Washington D.C. and Geneva, conditions in the Middle Kingdom had rapidly worsened. Vincent's experiences in Manchuria had been only the beginning of Japan's conquest of Southeast Asia, and his predictions of further conquests had proved all too accurate. Following the Marco Polo Bridge incident in 1937, the Japanese army had invaded almost all of central China and looked poised to begin campaigns throughout the region.⁹⁷ Likewise, Vincent's calls for diplomatic action of the part of the United States had finally been heard when, in 1940, Congress enacted embargoes on steel and oil against Japan. Alongside Hitler's conquest of France and Poland in Europe, the world found itself on the brink of catastrophe as John Carter Vincent boarded the S.S. *Pierce*, bound for Shanghai, in February 1941.

Unfortunately for Vincent, the journey aboard the *Pierce* would come to assume a great importance in the years to come. Attempting to pass the time with the rest of the crew, Vincent had a penchant for telling stories from his youth and debating politics. One of the *Pierce*'s other passenger's however was none other than Alfred Kohlberg, the man who would later accuse Vincent of Communist sympathies. One night while eating at the captain's table, Kohlberg proclaimed that he "would rather have fascism than socialism [as] . . . the entrepreneur and property would be safer."⁹⁸ Taking affront to such a challenge to his values, Vincent argued that the world needed a "government organized and administered by and on behalf of the people, responsive to the present day popular upsurge rather than [to] the interests of privilege and property." Such a statement, when coupled with Vincent's story of being a sympathetic "Bolshevik" while on strike at Clemson, would remain lodged in Kohlberg's memory for almost a decade before being raised in committees assembled to determine Vincent's loyalty. At the time, however, his voyage to China was relatively uneventful and by June of 1941,

⁹⁷ Spence, 422.

⁹⁸ May, 61.

Vincent had been commissioned to what amounted to Assistant Ambassador under Clarence Gauss, FDR's Ambassador to China.

While in Chungking working under Gauss, Vincent got to witness first hand the stifling and frustrating consequences of cooperation with the KMT. While drafting the position paper to Washington, Vincent thought Chiang's requests for monetary aid were outrageous and stated as much in a letter to his wife, saying "the billion dollar credit desired [by Chiang] would be misleading and invite attempts at misuse."⁹⁹ Like Service and many of the other China Hands, Vincent's early encounters with the KMT government in Chungking did little to engender personal trust or support. Describing the KMT at first glance as "an 'oliplutarchy' . . . which, bent on its own preservation, bodes [no] good for China," Vincent also characterized the government's finance minister as one who "espouses no social program that is contrary to [the KMT's] interests." Writing from the perspective of a believer in Wilsonian internationalism and FDR's New Deal, Vincent was especially critical of the KMT's abuse and monopoly of power. Although he would later advocate supporting the CCP, early on Vincent hoped for greater involvement with the more liberal and progressive elements of the KMT and Democratic League. In a 1943 report for Ambassador Gauss, Vincent wrote that "reactionary elements . . . hold high and influential office in the party . . . [and] had increased its influence in the government and in party affairs . . . liberal and progressive elements in the Government, the party, and the country are in large measure either stilled or eliminated."¹⁰⁰ Such a repressive political landscape infuriated Vincent in much the same way as it did many of the other China Hands and caused John Carter to question formal American policy as dictated from Washington. In Chungking as well, Vincent no doubt resented the subterfuge which KMT alliance required, and at one point in 1942 he described his attitude towards the Nationalists as "do everything one can to hold them together during this war, and

⁹⁹ May, 70.

¹⁰⁰ John Carter Vincent, "Confidential Memorandum for the Ambassador (On the eve of his departure for Washington)" Print. Accessed at National Archives II, College Park, MD. page 5.

afterwards, to hell with the Kuomintang!"¹⁰¹

A proponent of effective and responsive government, Vincent also had an interesting relationship with Gauss who, while very capable, often alienated people and had less clout in State than many of his peers did.¹⁰² Many of the embassy's social tasks, such as visiting important members of the KMT, fell to Vincent. Indeed, even when Wendell Wilkie, FDR's emissary and a Republican like Gauss, arrived in Chungking, it fell to Vincent to escort him around because Gauss had felt personally snubbed by a lack of acknowledgement from Wilkie.¹⁰³ While in charge of Wilkie's visit to Chungking, Vincent failed to persuade him that KMT gestures of virtue and democracy were little more than propaganda. Even though at the time this failure may have appeared insignificant because President Roosevelt sent many emissaries to China over the course of the war, Wilkie would return to the US to write a book entitled *One World* in which he praised Chiang Kai-Shek as "bigger even than his legendary reputation" and capable of uniting China under one government following the war. Wilkie's opinion infuriated Vincent who only a few months earlier had written a report entitled "Military China" in which he blasted the KMT as incompetent, manipulative, and self-serving. Finally fed up with KMT recalcitrance and State Department ignorance, Vincent exerted considerable pressure for a transfer back to Washington to be reunited with his wife and rapidly growing son. Returning in 1943 to Washington however was the beginning rather than the end of Vincent's struggles over Far Eastern policy.

Before, during and after his time in China, Vincent had locked horns with bureaucrats of all levels within the State department. Perhaps no one bureaucrat clashed with Vincent more than Stanley Hornbeck who had once been the director of the Far Eastern division and in 1943 occupied the post of "Special Advisor" to the Secretary of State, Cordell Hull. According to Vincent, Hornbeck "clung

¹⁰¹ May, 75.

¹⁰² May, 75.

¹⁰³ May, 85.

tenaciously to the idea that the future of China rested in the hands of Chiang Kai-Shek."¹⁰⁴ Allying himself with other disgruntled members of the Far Eastern division, Vincent succeeded in having the more moderate Joseph Ballantine replace Hornbeck. This incident exemplified Vincent's propensity to disagree with his colleagues and make room for his own views as he would later come to do with Ambassador Hurley's and John Service's reports. With Ballantine's appointment, Vincent was offered and accepted the position of the head of Chinese Affairs in the Far Eastern division which gave him direct access to almost all non-military information coming out of China and a much greater hand in crafting American foreign policy towards the Far East and eventually the CCP.

In May 1944, John Carter Vincent was selected to accompany Vice-President Wallace on his trip to Asia in order to meet with Soviet and KMT leaders in the region to further advance the Pacific war effort. While Service witnessed Wallace's influence in obtaining access to the Communist base in Yen-an, Vincent's hand in the narrative was particularly crucial. Attempting to prevent what happened with Wilkie's visit to Chungking, Vincent made sure to involve Gauss in Wallace's visit and worked extensively to provide Wallace with a more accurate view of KMT leadership. Even before the trip, Vincent made certain to funnel Wallace memorandums and reports critical of the KMT propaganda in the hopes that the Vice-President would go into the meeting with a better understanding of the political landscape. Thankfully, Vincent's work paid off and on the last day of Wallace's visit, Chiang finally relented and allowed Service and the Yen-an observer group to fly north to visit the CCP.¹⁰⁵ Indeed, Vincent influenced Wallace's perspective on Chiang Kai-Shek so greatly that upon the Vice-President's return to Washington he noted in his final report that Chiang "was a short term investment" and that American policy should "not be limited to support of Chiang."¹⁰⁶ Undoubtedly Wallace referred here to actors such as the more liberal elements of the KMT or the small but moderate

¹⁰⁴ May, 91.

¹⁰⁵ Carter, 22.

¹⁰⁶ May, 107.

Democratic League within China. However, Vincent's success at preventing the issuing of another "blank check" of KMT support would prove only a short term success.

As detailed previously, Ambassador Hurley's appointment and arrival in China rocked the American foreign intelligence establishment both there and in Washington. To Vincent especially, Hurley's reputation for bucking established protocols and relying heavily on personal charm preceded him.¹⁰⁷ After years of opposing and complaining about American unconditional support for Chiang, Vincent had finally scored a victory by obtaining the passage of the Yen-an Observer Group. However, it took Hurley only a matter of days after arriving in Chungking to inform Chiang that he would have the full, and essentially unconditional, support of the United States.¹⁰⁸ A worse outcome for Vincent's push for greater independence from the KMT is hard to imagine. As time passed, Hurley's persistent belief in his own ability to reconcile the KMT and CCP came to increasingly worry Vincent. Having clashed with Chiang on several occasions and known enough about modern Chinese history, Vincent remained highly skeptical of any chance of a unified government for the foreseeable future. Thus it was under these auspices that Vincent began to receive reports from Service's expedition to Yen-an.

It was with a healthy dose of skepticism that Vincent approached Service's memorandums from Yen-an. Vincent himself described the reports from Yen-an (specifically Service's and Davies's) as "basically sound" but criticized the two as potential "special pleaders [for the CCP]" who lacked judgment on how to represent the CCP to other, more conservative State Department officials.¹⁰⁹ Essentially, Vincent withheld his complete trust from both Hurley and the Yen-an group out of fear that the ideologies of the camps that surrounded them would taint their observations. However, pressed for alternatives in a rapidly degenerating China, Vincent entertained reports on the CCP.

Vincent's tendency towards pragmatism displayed itself thoroughly in his formulation of

¹⁰⁷ May, 110.

¹⁰⁸ Harding and Ming, 86.

¹⁰⁹ May, 120.

Chinese policy during this period. Disagreeing with Hurley's and other bureaucrats' assessments that the CCP was not "truly" communist, Vincent maintained that the CCP was unequivocally Marxist in orientation and most likely used the term "democracy" in a sense quite unlike the Western definition of the word.¹¹⁰ Vincent however also rejected claims from more conservative diplomats that the CCP was merely a Soviet pawn. In a 1945 letter to Ambassador George C. Marshall, Vincent noted that "the Chinese Communists received no important aid from Russia [during the 1930s and early 1940s], and found themselves unable to establish a hegemony of the proletariat over all of China . . ." In the early 1940s, he added, the Russians shifted their support "to the Central Government, and Soviet relations with the Chinese Communists became more tenuous than ever . . . Soviet representatives in Yen'an in late 1944 were confined to a Russian surgeon and two TASS [a Russian news agency] correspondents."¹¹¹ Thus despite the best efforts of Chiang and more conservative members of the American diplomatic community, Vincent worked energetically to reorient American thinking away from the concept of a monolithic Soviet-dominated communist movement in Asia.

In spite of his reservations about the CCP's relatively hardline approach to Marxism, Vincent pushed hard for American military aid to the CCP by arguing that it was the most efficient and effective way to fight the Japanese occupation.¹¹² Writing on March 2, 1945, Vincent summarized his perspective on the situation and passed on Acheson's opinion in China by authoring a report for Secretary Hull entitled "Current Developments in China." Expressing a candor not often seen in State Department reporting on China, Vincent wrote our intelligence in China "expresses pessimism with regard to the achievement of political and military unity in China and recommends that we aid and

¹¹⁰ May, 120.

¹¹¹ John Carter Vincent, "Soviet Relations with the Chinese Communists", 1945. Print. Accessed at National Archives II, College Park, MD.

¹¹² May, 125.

utilize all forces in China, including the Chinese Communist forces."¹¹³ The head of the Chinese affairs division however tempered his report, saying that "no question of withdrawal of support from Generalissimo Chiang is implied in [our reporting from China] but [Acheson] indicates that it is unrealistic to continue giving military support exclusively to Chiang."¹¹⁴ Along with Service and many of the other China Hands, Vincent would later be accused of promoting a complete abandonment of the KMT in favor of the CCP, but the evidence shows almost the complete opposite. Vincent along with almost every other diplomat in Chungking felt that a search for alternatives would promote greater KMT reform and military engagement with the Japanese.

Aside from KMT change and more progress in the war against Japan, Vincent also paid great attention to the larger international arena and the coming post-war division of power in the region. In a January 11, 1945 report to the head for the Far Eastern affairs, Joseph Ballantine, Vincent laid out his vision for "Anglo-American-Soviet policy toward China." Underlying his advocacy of increased Allied cooperation in Chinese Affairs lay the conviction, as he put it, that "an unstable, divided, and undemocratic China would make stability and progress in the Far East impossible and would make exceedingly difficult the task, largely ours, of peace maintenance in the Western Pacific."¹¹⁵ Combining his deep belief in pragmatism and internationalism, Vincent sought to head off post-war struggles for power in the region through international cooperation and avoidance of U.S. interventionism in any future Chinese civil strife. Calling not simply for a "healthy, friendly China or . . . 'preventative' policies of the pre-war period," Vincent considered that US foreign policy "should work for the development of the kind of China that will contribute towards peace in the Pacific; that

¹¹³ John Carter Vincent, "Current Developments in China", 1945. Print. Accessed at National Archives II, College Park, MD.

¹¹⁴ John Carter Vincent, "Current Developments in China", 1945. Print. Accessed at National Archives II, College Park, MD.

¹¹⁵ John Carter Vincent, "Anglo-American-Soviet Policy toward China", 1945. Print. Accessed at National Archives II, College Park, MD.

can cooperate . . . in dealing with post-war Japan."¹¹⁶ Perhaps most importantly out of all of this, Vincent appealed to American interests as a reason for his policy, something his critics and accusers in future years would attempt to undermine. Writing that American "policy toward China is not based on sentiment. It is based on an enlightened national self-interest and on considerations of international security and well-being," Vincent made it clear that State Department policy would be focused on preventing future wars and saving the lives of American marines who were currently fighting in the Pacific against the Japanese.¹¹⁷

For the head of the Chinese Affairs division, this was the moment to force the KMT either to fight the Japanese or risk losing American support. Vincent even ended up having the support of the Embassy in Chungking for such a radical proposal. Unfortunately the supporting memorandum along with Vincent's recommendation to arm the CCP reached the President at roughly the same time as Hurley and drove the already suspicious ambassador into full-blown paranoia. FDR, not wanting to risk losing another China ambassador in less than a year, gave Hurley the go-ahead to transfer those staff members he considered subversive. Further hollowing out the intelligence gathering capabilities of the embassy in Chungking, many of the China Hands who survived Hurley's purge requested reassignments to other posts in Asia and Europe. Vincent received relatively little immediate blowback for challenging Hurley but from then on found his ability to gain objective intelligence in China severely hampered.

Unlike other China Hands such as Service and Davies, Vincent also survived the post-Hurley accusations and purge and continued to work in Far Eastern affairs long after Hurley's departure. While he was eventually transferred to Switzerland when claims of disloyalty and subversion arose, Vincent

¹¹⁶ John Carter Vincent, "Anglo-American-Soviet Policy toward China", 1945. Print. Accessed at National Archives II, College Park, MD.

¹¹⁷ John Carter Vincent, "Anglo-American-Soviet Policy toward China", 1945. Print. Accessed at National Archives II, College Park, MD.

remained head of the Far Eastern Affairs bureau and commented extensively on George Marshall's mission to China. Writing in September 1946 to Will Clayton, Truman's Under Secretary of State for Economic Affairs, Vincent noted that "the very presence of General Marshall in China, irrespective of the progress being made in negotiations is a moderating, if not stabilizing influence."¹¹⁸ Especially after the disastrous naivete of Pat Hurley, the introduction of George Marshall, a more moderate and cautious man, was most welcome to Chiang-skeptics such as Vincent. Likewise, Vincent went on to say that in spite of Marshall's frustrations and lack of progress, "I do not now believe that either of the alternatives – getting out of China or giving all-out support to Chiang which would inevitably involve us in a civil war – is preferable to a continuation by General Marshall of his efforts."¹¹⁹ Along with his other statements, it is clear that by this point in his career in Chinese Affairs, Vincent held that the last chance for any sense of rapprochement between the KMT and the CCP lay with General Marshall's mission.

On a career level as well, Vincent's time in the State Department entered increasingly tumultuous waters. With the growing concern over alleged communist infiltration of the American government, individuals like Kohlberg and others in the China Lobby exerted their influence on legislators such as Senator Styles Bridges to have Vincent transferred out of Asia. Achieving a degree of partial success, Vincent was promoted to the position of career minister and dispatched to Switzerland. Vincent's new position however required Senate confirmation and led to the first of many public accusations of communist taint. At his confirmation hearing, Senator Bridges produced a list of twelve "crimes" including leaking government correspondence to communist agents and undermining Ambassador Hurley. Luckily for Vincent, Secretary of State Dean Acheson spoke in defense of the

¹¹⁸ John Carter Vincent, "Message dated 9/18/46 from John Carter Vincent to Will Clayton", 1946. Print. Accessed at National Archives II, College Park, MD.

¹¹⁹ John Carter Vincent, "Message dated 9/18/46 from John Carter Vincent to Will Clayton", 1946. Print. Accessed at National Archives II, College Park, MD.

seasoned China Hand by refuting all of Bridges's accusations and ensuring a timely confirmation.¹²⁰ Vincent's time in Switzerland however only lasted a few years and continued to place him near the growing storm of the communist witch-hunt taking place in Washington. Finally in 1951, he became the target of one of the most notorious anti-communists of all time, Joe McCarthy. Having been accused by former Communist party activist, Louis F. Budenz, Dulles transferred Vincent to Tangier before finally suspending him pending further security investigations. In spite of being cleared by several boards and committees which had found Vincent to be neither a security risk or disloyal, Dulles none the less in 1952 "concluded that Mr. Vincent's reporting of the facts, evaluation of the facts, and policy advice . . . show a failure to meet the standard . . . of a Foreign Service Officer . . . [therefore] I do not believe that he can usefully continue to serve the United States as a Foreign Service Officer."¹²¹ Having served his country loyalty in the Far East and Europe for almost three decades, John Carter Vincent resigned in disgrace.

Thus by the end of his tenure in the Far Eastern Affairs bureau, John Carter Vincent had witnessed dramatic shifts in US-Sino diplomacy and had played a hand in shaping policy during each phase. From his early years as a reporter in Manchuria where he predicted further Japanese aggression, to his time in Chungking where he foreshadowed the KMT-skepticism that Service and others would later come to champion, to his climatic policy of supplying the CCP with weapons, Vincent led the way on progressive policy making in the Far Eastern division of the State Department. The reports of Service and Vincent clearly made compelling cases for changes in the policy of unerring support for Chiang Kai-Shek. Treading a finer line than some of his colleagues, Vincent also worked hard to maintain an objective perspective not only towards the well documented shortcomings of the KMT but also to the danger of over-glorifying the CCP. Vincent had few misunderstandings about the

¹²⁰ Kahn, 192.

¹²¹ "Text of Dulles Statement Retiring Vincent." *New York Times* (1923-Current file), March 5, 1953, <http://www.proquest.com/> (accessed March 7, 2011).

ideological orientation of the CCP but chose to act pragmatically and to risk unpopularity in order to best save American lives. However, as time passed and the war in the Pacific came to end it became clear that the damage done under Ambassador Hurley's direction would be difficult, if not impossible, to rectify.

George Marshall's Mission and the Breakdown in KMT-CCP Negotiations

On December 19th, 1945, General George C. Marshall boarded a plane for China with the mission to unite the warring KMT and CCP factions under one democratic government. After almost two decades of civil strife and almost a decade of war against Japan, such a task had frustrated lesser men. Indeed, John Carter Vincent, who had just witnessed firsthand the Sisyphean nature of the Chinese political landscape, had watched Marshall's plane take off. Remarking to his ten-year old son at the time, Vincent said "Son, there goes the bravest man in the world. He's going out to try and unify China."¹²² In more ways than one, this mission symbolized an attempt by Truman and his administration to "reset" relations with the KMT and redefine American involvement in the nation itself. However, concerns with Soviet influence inside China undoubtedly occupied the minds of American policymakers and played a continuously shifting role in the decisions being made in Washington.

With Hurley's public resignation and testimony about State department failures before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, President Truman sought to move quickly to "one-up" Hurley by appointing a new envoy to China. According to one of Truman's closest secretaries, Matt Connelly, the President chose George Marshall because "in [Truman's] eyes [he] could never do anything wrong."¹²³ Upon selecting Marshall as his envoy, President Truman emphasized that any further aid to Chiang and the nationalist government would be predicated on the KMT's ability to establish a legitimate

¹²² Kahn, 184.

¹²³ Westad, 32.

democratic and unified government to stave off civil war.¹²⁴ However, the situation on the ground in China did not bode well for further cooperation. Emboldened by the use of American military forces to move KMT troops to northern China, Chiang began planning new offensives against CCP-held strongholds. When Marshall arrived in China in late December 1945, he quickly set about arranging a cease-fire agreement between the two camps. Unaware of Chiang's future military ambitions, Marshall asked the CCP to allow KMT forces to move freely into and within Manchuria, a region that was considered CCP home territory.¹²⁵ In addition, Chiang also rushed to capture several CCP towns near Manchuria before the cease-fire went into effect, thus further poisoning any attempt at trust that Marshall hoped to generate by the cease-fire.¹²⁶ Of course, CCP forces had no intention to allow such offenses to go unanswered and planned campaigns of their own while attempting to hide them from Marshall's mediation officials. With the establishment of the cease-fire however, progress was made and numerous agreements establishing a democratic legislature, a schedule for elections, and tentative moves towards land reform were reached.¹²⁷ These achievements amounted to so much progress that the CCP's central committee sent out a message to its regional bureaus on February 1, 1946 stating that the agreement "is a great victory for China's democratic revolution. From now on China has reached the stage of peace, democracy, and reconstruction" and even went so far as to warn against "left-wing" saboteurs who would seek to prevent peace.¹²⁸

Unfortunately for the CCP, General Marshall, and likely China as a whole, these new arrangements did not sit well with Chiang. Fearful of rejecting the agreements and suffering American disapproval and a CCP propaganda victory, Chiang did his best to slow the negotiation process to find

¹²⁴ Kahn, 184.

¹²⁵ Westad, 145.

¹²⁶ Westad, 146.

¹²⁷ Westad, 147.

¹²⁸ Westad, 147.

an excuse to justify further military action.¹²⁹ The generalissimo's moment came in mid February when, under the pretext that the Soviet Red Army was encouraging CCP military build-up, Chiang launched a new series of attacks on CCP bases in Manchuria.¹³⁰ Further symbolizing Chiang's unwillingness to work with the CCP, the generalissimo instructed his negotiators to insert many restrictive and anti-democratic provisions that would all but guarantee the CCP's rejection. To the China Hands who had worked with the KMT throughout the early 1940s, such stubbornness was expected. As one China Hand, Raymond Ludden, told General Marshall over dinner "[Marshall] was in the same sorry position that Stilwell had been in two years earlier [and] 'the only time we ever got anything out of Chiang . . . was when we backed him into a corner and beat it out of him.'"¹³¹ Thus, with the utter torpedoing of these negotiations and the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Manchuria in April 1946, George Marshall returned to Washington having been stripped of any sense of victory by the KMT leadership. He would announce the failure of his mission later that year.¹³² Upon his departure, Marshall correctly assessed that "the greatest obstacle to peace [was] the complete [and] almost overwhelming suspicion with which the Chinese Communist Part and the Kuomintang regard each other."¹³³

Internationally as well, the situation in China continued to occupy the minds of many prominent Americans. For President Truman, numerous considerations abounded. First and foremost, the American populace and Congress embraced the demobilization of millions of soldiers and at first placed pressure on Truman to remove American marines from China as well. These marines were ostensibly in China to facilitate the surrender of Japanese forces but received explicit instructions from

¹²⁹ Westad, 152.

¹³⁰ Westad, 155.

¹³¹ Kahn, 186.

¹³² Spence, 466.

¹³³ "FOREIGN RELATIONS: The Year of Decision." *Time* 05 Jan. 1948. Web. 14 Jan. 2011.

<<http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,794035,00.html>>.

President Truman to transport KMT forces from their southern base of Chungking to northern cities such as Nanjing and the historical Chinese capital of Peking.¹³⁴ Unfortunately as Cold War tensions escalated in Eastern Europe, the presence of Soviet Red Army forces in Manchuria generated fear among American commanders and politicians that the Soviets were actively engaged in protecting the CCP and shaping the future of post-war China.¹³⁵ According to Marshall's perspective at the time, the United States had two choices in relation to China's place in the global community. America could either continue to aid the KMT government which would likely prolong a divided China and Soviet occupation of Manchuria or she could withdraw entirely and risk China falling into the growing Soviet sphere. Neither option proved particularly attractive which is why a united democratic coalition government remained the first policy choice in Washington. Given Marshall's admission of failure in late 1946 however, Truman hedged his bets and continued to at least partially fund Chiang in the hopes that such funding would at least keep China free of Soviet influence in the short-term.

With Marshall's failure in 1947 and growing evidence of Soviet power, the China Hands increasingly became the primary scapegoats blamed by Congress "losing" China. This was in spite of Secretary of State Dean Acheson's composition of the "China White Paper" which gave a detailed account of American relations in China from 1941 to 1949. Compiling primary source documents with his own personal commentary, Acheson concluded the paper by saying "the unfortunate but inescapable fact is that the ominous result of the civil war in China was beyond the control of the government of the United States."¹³⁶ Truman as well scrambled to co-opt Republican investigations of Communist infiltration of the American government. For a time, this worked, until in 1950 when Chinese troops began to actively assist North Korean forces in their war against South Korea and

¹³⁴ Westad, 172.

¹³⁵ Harding and Ming, 98.

¹³⁶ Dean Acheson, *United States Relations with China with Special Reference to the Period 1944-1949* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1969), xvi.

NATO forces on the peninsula. With Chinese forces firing on American GIs, Congressional interest in China policy and its failings during the mid-1940s grew substantially. As stated previously, Service continued to be subjected to Congressional investigations through the late 1940s and early 1950s even after being reassigned to New Zealand.¹³⁷ Having been dismissed from the Foreign Service in 1951, Service appealed his removal through the legal system. Finally appearing before the US Supreme Court in April 1957, Service won his legal battle in a unanimous decision that restored all benefits and career achievements that had been stripped upon dismissal.¹³⁸ Opting to return to the State Department, Service's past "sins" followed him in every post and position he held. Finally retiring in 1962, Service had spent a little over a third of his time in the Foreign Service fighting to prove his innocence.

Even John Carter Vincent, who had managed to stay involved in the Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs until 1947, was transferred to Switzerland in that year in order to prevent further "taint."¹³⁹ Coming under investigation by the Civil Service Loyalty review board in 1952 after being accused of membership in the Communist Party, Vincent was forced to resign by Secretary Dulles in 1953. Likewise, from 1945 on Raymond Ludden continued to be shuffled around the embassies of Europe doing time in Dublin, Paris, Stockholm, and Brussels due to the accusations leveled against him. Commenting on his predicament years into his retirement, Ludden bluntly observed "from 1949 on, I was just putting in my time. I couldn't get a job as a dogcatcher."¹⁴⁰ Oliver Edmund Clubb had also endured the all too typical post-Congressional investigation career path. Having been questioned by the infamous Senator McCarthy and named by former Communist Whittaker Chambers, Clubb was later vindicated by the State Department's internal loyalty review board. However, in spite of this vindication, Clubb was never allowed to work in Far Eastern Affairs again and was assigned to the

¹³⁷ Kahn, 186.

¹³⁸ *Service v. Dulles*, 354 U.S. 363; 77 S. Ct. 1152.

¹³⁹ Kahn, 192.

¹⁴⁰ Kahn, 10.

division of Historical Research in 1952, from which he resigned only days later out of protest.¹⁴¹

Not even John Paton Davies, recipient of the Medal of Freedom and war hero, could escape the pervasive influence of Joe McCarthy and the China Lobby. Having been transferred to Moscow after explosively clashing with Ambassador Hurley in 1945, Davies endured nine loyalty and security investigations from 1949 on. Finally feeling the full brunt of McCarthy's witch-hunt, Davies was dispatched to Peru before being asked to resign the following year. Unlike his fellow China Hands, Davies was not content to go quietly and when finally fired after refusing resignation on the grounds that he was not "reliable, trustworthy, [and] of good conduct and character," Davies simply replied that "he would be 'content to let history be my judge.'"¹⁴² Unlike Service, Davies had little desire to fight this fate and returned to Peru to build furniture. It would take almost twenty years, before Davies belief that history would vindicate him finally bore fruit.

From the Communist victory in 1949 to the outbreak of the Korean War a year later to US involvement in Vietnam, Sino-American relations remained stagnant at best and openly hostile at worst. But a turning point came in the early 1970s that would change not only Sino-American relations but the course of the Cold War. With mounting opposition to the war in Vietnam growing in Congress, Senators such as William J. Fulbright pressed to gain a clearer understanding of communism in South-east Asia. Inviting Davies along with John Service to testify as a hearing in 1971, Fulbright remarked that it "is a very strange turn of fate that you gentlemen, who reported honestly about conditions, were so persecuted because you were honest about it."¹⁴³ Unfortunately for the rapidly aging China Hands this was the closest the American government ever came to acknowledging the long tragedy of these

¹⁴¹ "O. Edmund Clubb Is Dead at 88; China Hand and McCarthy Target." *New York Times* (1923-Current file), May 11, 1989, <http://www.proquest.com/> (accessed March 3, 2011).

¹⁴² "Dulles dismisses Davies as risk; Loyalty not issue :". *New York Times* (1923-Current file), November 6, 1954, <http://www.proquest.com/> (accessed March 3, 2011).

¹⁴³ By Michael T. Kaufman, "John Paton Davies, Diplomat Who Ran Afoul of McCarthy Over China, Dies at 91." *New York Times* (1923-Current file), December 24, 1999, <http://www.proquest.com/> (accessed March 4, 2011).

Foreign Service officers. Several of them lived long enough to see full rapprochement with the Chinese and in fact, John Service even returned to China in the 1971 as part of a special envoy preceding President Nixon's visit to the People's Republic of China.

It is almost unsurprising that these men suffered devastating career damage from their actions. All of them took unpopular and risky positions that not only challenged their superiors but questioned American policymakers' world views. Several of them proposed that communism was not monolithic and that messages from Yenan were not crafted by Moscow. Others put forth that Chiang Kai-Shek's regime was crippled by corruption and in-fighting. Finally the most radical of the China Hands claimed that in all likelihood the KMT would lose the war, a view that was often confused with active sabotage of American policy. It was the degree to which these men, their associates, and their families suffered which surprises many historians. Not only did the China Hands lose what had been promising careers as State department bureaucrats, they also became caught up in the political witch-hunt of men like Joe McCarthy and the China Lobby. In the end, history ruled on the side of the China Hands rather than their oppressors. The Chinese-Soviet split occurred roughly twenty years later and China became a critical partner in America's Cold War with the Soviet Union. The KMT regime's ineptitude and corruption became only more magnified in the years following the end of the Second World War. Most significantly, the CCP did win control of the Chinese mainland in a violent civil war that laid bare the utter ineffectiveness of the better equipped and wealthier KMT forces. Likewise, in the aftermath of Vietnam, American policymakers became less convinced of a monolithic communist alliance led by policymakers in Moscow, further vindicating the conclusions of men like Vincent and Service. In the light of history, the fault thus lies with American policymakers who believed that they could single-handedly determine the fate of China. When writing his biography decades later, Davies humorously put it best by writing that

the truth of the matter is that China has been since the fall of the Empire a huge and seductive

practical joke. The western businessmen, missionaries, and educators who had tried to modernize and Christianize it failed. The Japanese militarists who tried to conquer it failed. The American government which tried to democratize and unify it failed. The Soviet rulers who tried to insinuate control over it failed. Chiang failed. Mao failed.¹⁴⁴

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¹⁴⁴ Kahn, 59.

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