

# The Forrestal Diaries — Chapter 6 A Fateful Decision--to Force Chiang to Accept Communists



Gen. Albert C. Wedemeyer, commanding general U. S. forces in China theatre and U. S. chief of staff to Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek presides over a meeting of the combined Chinese-American staffs in Chungking. Left to right—Gen. Chang Ping-chun, director of department, ministry of military operations; Gen. Chu Shih-ming, former military attaché in Washington; Gen. Chien Tachun, personal chief of staff to the generalissimo; Gen. Wedemeyer; Brig. Gen. Mervin E. Groes, acting chief of staff, USF, China theatre; Gen. Liu Fel, vice minister of military operations; Col. L. G. Clarke, assistant chief of staff, G-1, USF; and Gen. Hsi En-sul, director of the Chinese services of supply. Photo taken in Chungking, June 6, 1945.

## The Morass of China

Our growing difficulties with the Soviet empire were worldwide, but in the closing weeks of 1945 Washington's attention was largely focussed upon their reflection in the tangled problems of the Far East. China, in particular, already presented a dilemma.

20 November 1945

### STATE-WAR-NAVY MEETING

At the meeting with Byrnes and Patterson this morning the question of our future policy in China and Manchuria arose. Wedemeyer (Lieutenant General Albert C. Wedemeyer, then commander of United States forces in China) has asked for instruction, his present directive being first to keep troops in China to accomplish the disarmament of the Japanese and to provide for their repatriation up to the point when he considers the Chinese National government troops alone can carry out this mission. In his original cable of last Friday he put the decision up to the Washington government. This morning's cable to him made clear that we were looking to him for a recommendation on the latter point, namely whether the Chinese Nationalist government troops had the capability of carrying out the disarmament and return to Japan of Japanese in Manchuria.

### Invite a Vacuum

There is strong pressure to bring Americans out of China, particularly the marines. If we do, we invite a vacuum of anarchy in Manchuria, and it is obvious that into that vacuum ultimately either the Japanese or the Russians will flow. At the moment of course it will be the Russians. In this connection I referred to a conversation with Admiral Mitscher on Sunday, in which he pointed out that in any future war between a combination of Russia and the Asiatic powers the manpower available to such a combination would be so tremendous and the indifference to the loss of life so striking that it would present a very serious problem to this country.

(The problem was complicated by one factor that was again and again thereafter to vitiate effective policy. In the answering cable to Wedemeyer (a copy of which Forrestal included in the diary) it was made clear that while the state department wanted to help the Nationalists under Chiang Kai-shek to get the Japanese out of China, "it does not wish to support the National government directly against the communists." The Chinese Communist armies under Mao Tse-tung were at that time less well organized and far less well armed than they were later to become.

### Avoid "Meddling"

But the state department, impressed by the backwardness, corruption and unpopularity of the Nationalists under Chiang Kai-shek, convinced that Mao's communists represented an important popular movement and that the United States could not openly combat it without suffering disastrously under the charge of "imperialist meddling," wished to stay clear of the struggle between Chiang and Mao. This telegram clearly recognized the difficulty: even to help Chiang get the Japanese out would "result in some collateral aid or prestige in favor of the National government vis-a-vis the Communists," yet "conversely withdrawal now" of American troops "may mean substantial frustration of a policy we have long supported which contemplated unifying China and Manchuria under Chinese National forces." They were never, throughout the succeeding years, to find the answer to that one.

(An assistant's more extensive notes of the meeting show that it came back at the end—as so many discussions of high policy inevitably did that winter—to the swift observation of our armed strength. Mr. Patterson said that in November 1 he had written a memorandum . . . to Mr. Byrnes

pointing out that under present accelerated demobilization plans, by next April we will have in Europe only some four hundred thousand men. . . .

### Worried About China

In China we are faced with the same reduction and the same problem. In addition to the numerical decline in our forces, the loss in their fighting prestige is even greater. He said that he realized that these forces were not sufficient to have an effective influence on our over-all national policy. He knew that the state department, no doubt, considers it highly important to maintain adequate military strength, but unfortunately congress is on the other side. In connection with war department appropriations they are saying that if the army will demobilize fast enough, present appropriations will last. . . . Mr. Byrnes said that the situation in China worried him considerably more than that elsewhere.

(Wedemeyer had been asked for his advice; he now proceeded to give it in a series of long telegrams, exhaustive in their analysis of the situation but, when it came down to what could or should be done about it, little more illuminating than the state department had been. Under date of November 20 his final recommendations were either to withdraw all troops at once or to announce continued military and economic support for Chiang. On the 23rd he emphasized that it would be impossible to support Chiang and at the same time stay clear of the latter's war with the Chinese communists; "such United States support to the National government will definitely involve American forces in fratricidal warfare. There can be no mistake about this. . . . If the unification of China and Manchuria under Chinese National forces is to be a U. S. policy, involvement in fratricidal warfare and possibly in war with the Soviet Union must be accepted and

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would definitely require additional U. S. forces far beyond those presently available in the theater to implement the policy." This was a question he thought should be decided by the State Department.

### Document Vague

(On Nov. 26 there was completed a long memorandum for the Secretary of State, for joint signature by Forrestal and Patterson, setting forth the military departments' considered conclusions. This document was not one must admit a model of either clarity, conciseness or decision. It was wordy and somewhat vague. But there was a certain amount of iron in the verbiage. The specific recommendations were to keep the Marines in North China "pending clarification of U. S. political policy," in spite of the admitted danger of involvement in "fratricidal strife"; to lend every aid to Chiang in getting the Japanese repatriated, and to try to get an international agreement on China and Manchuria among the major powers, including the U. S. S. R.

(This document was discussed at the state-war-navy meeting next morning. Forrestal asked whether the matter could not be taken "realistically" to the real center of the trouble, which was Moscow. Byrnes was "puzzled" over what to say to the Russians, but after much discussion came up with the suggestion that, "taking everything into account, perhaps the wise course would be to try to force the Chinese government and the Chinese communists to get together on a compromise basis, perhaps telling Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek that we will stop the aid to the government unless he goes along with this. It might be well, he said, to tell Russia what we intend to do and to try to line them up with this policy. Mr. Patterson stated that it is in his opinion clearly in our interests to see China united under Gen-

eralissimo Chiang Kai-shek if that is possible."

### Surprise Awaits

(But when they went on from this discussion to a cabinet lunch that day, a surprise awaited them.

27 November 1945

### CABINET LUNCHEON

Hurley's Resignation: At the Cabinet luncheon today the single topic of discussion was the resignation of Pat Hurley as ambassador to China, charging the sabotage of his work for reconciliation between the C. C. P. (Chinese Communist Party) and Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek. His action was a complete surprise to both the president and the secretary of state, both of whom had the impression that he had agreed to return to China.

After lunch, in discussing the question of his possible successor, Clinton Anderson, the secretary of agriculture, said he believed the appointment of George Marshall would take the headlines away from Hurley's resignation the following day. I seconded Anderson's suggestion, and it was the general consensus that he would make an able ambassador. The president said he was reluctant to put additional tasks on Marshall, who had earned a rest after five arduous years. He confided to us that the place he had in mind for him was chairmanship of the Red Cross. It was pointed out, however, that Marshall could take the China assignment as a special envoy of the president on a temporary basis. Later in the day the president telephoned Marshall and he accepted.

(Thus it fell to Marshall to attempt to carry out the policy which Mr. Byrnes had sketched that morning.)

The next article—"Crisis With Yugoslavia."

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Mount Baker, in Washington state, reaches an altitude of 10,694 feet.

## Chest Drive Underway in Jefferson Area

JEFFERSON—The annual drive for Community Chest funds is underway locally with Mrs. Oliver Stephenson and Clayton Wills, chairman of solicitor in Jefferson. This area includes Jefferson, Talbot, Sidney, Marion and Ankeny Hill with a total quota of \$1,300.

Jefferson has been asked to raise \$500 of that amount. Talbot and Sidney each have \$300 to contribute and Marion and Ankeny Hill each have a quota of \$100.

Mrs. A. E. Blinston heads the drive in the Talbot district; Mrs. Lawrence Finlay and Mrs. Robert Blanche Schmidt, Marion, and Blanche Schmidt, Marion, and Mrs. Henry Thiessen, Ankeny Hill.

Workers in the Jefferson district and their territories include Marjorie Fontaine and Mrs. Marvin Hutchings, Main Street; Mrs. Hal Wynd and Mrs. W. H. Brown, South Main; Mrs. Guy Roland, Third Street; Mrs. Wallace Dawson, Marion road; Mrs. Clayton Wills, Mrs. Lee Wells and Mrs. Charles Borst, highway to Terhunes; Mrs. Al Gurgurich, Talbot road; Mrs. Joyce Robnett, east of railroad tracks; Mrs. Leland Wells and Mrs. Margaret Hart, Greens Bridge road; Mrs. Varion Goin and Mrs. Henry Hockspeler, Looney Butte; Mrs. G. A. Robinson and Max Schulz, Parrish Gap and Clayton Wills, teachers.

### PTA MEETE TONIGHT

WILLAMINA — The Willamina grade school PTA will have its first fall meeting tonight at the grade school gym. The meeting will be a get-acquainted one, and all the teachers will be introduced. Plans for the coming year will be announced.

Macley — The Macley Grange agricultural committee headed by A. J. Mader will have charge of the grange program Friday at 8:30 p.m. at the grange hall.  
Sheridan — The Sheridan Methodist church plans a Fellowship dinner October 5 at 6:30 p.m. at the church. A program and group singing will be presented.



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there will come a finger on your doorbell, a quiet knock at your door. A neighbor will step into the friendly light of your hall with a smile and a word of greeting. You will reach into your pocket or maybe hand him a check; and with another smile and a "Thank you" he will be gone . . .

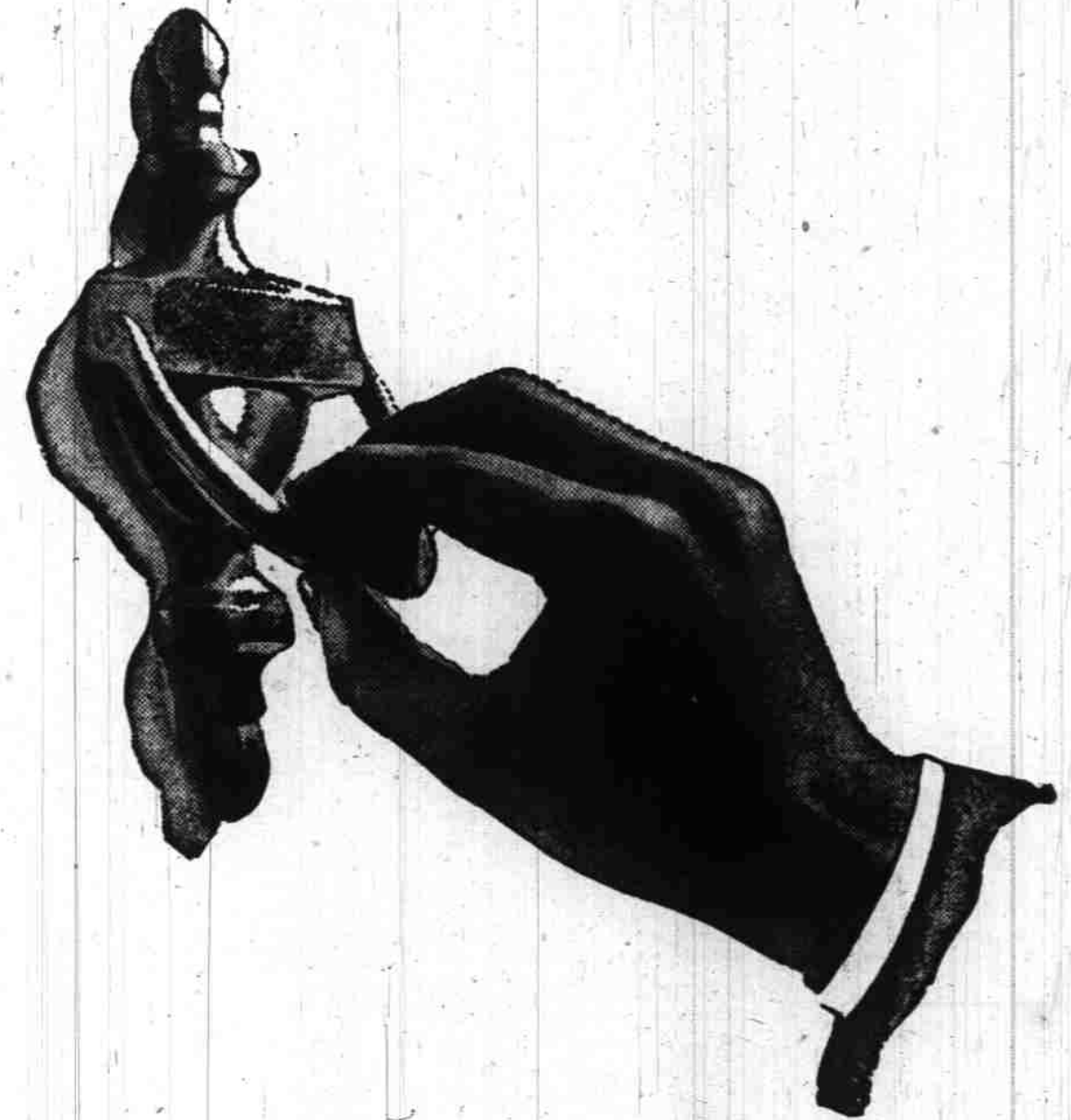
This little incident at your front door will take but a moment or two. Yet it will leave you with a glow of fulfillment that is strangely warming. The warmth will linger with you in your living room; it will follow you to bed. We'd like to tell you why.

Because of *your* contribution to the Community Chest a sick baby is going to get well. Because of *your* check an underprivileged boy is going to have a decent place to play in after school—instead of the crowded streets. Because of *your* donation a young woman you know is going to walk in safety down a dark street some night next winter. These things are going to happen because—tonight—you gave in response to the Community Chest's appeal for funds. And—such are the little things that change our lives and history—who could say that they *would* happen if you did not give tonight?

The Community Chest drive is your Opportunity to help a needy child . . . a sick baby . . . a wounded Korean veteran . . . a feeble old person who needs your help now. The Community Chest drive is your Opportunity to assist the helpless and needy of THIS community in a straightforward, well-organized, efficient, effective AMERICAN way. The Community Chest drive is your Opportunity to do all of this without waste to time or effort on your part.

The Community Chest will knock on your door tonight, or another night this week. Like every other Opportunity, it may knock only once.

## THE NEED IS GREATER . . . THE COST IS HIGHER—GIVE MORE TO THE COMMUNITY CHEST THIS YEAR!



THIS MESSAGE IN BEHALF OF SALEM'S COMMUNITY CHEST CAMPAIGN OCTOBER 2-10, IS PRESENTED BY SEARS, ROEBUCK & CO.