

"THE BACKSTORY TO ONE OF THE WORLD'S MOST IMPORTANT
RELATIONSHIPS - THE UNITED STATES AND CHINA."

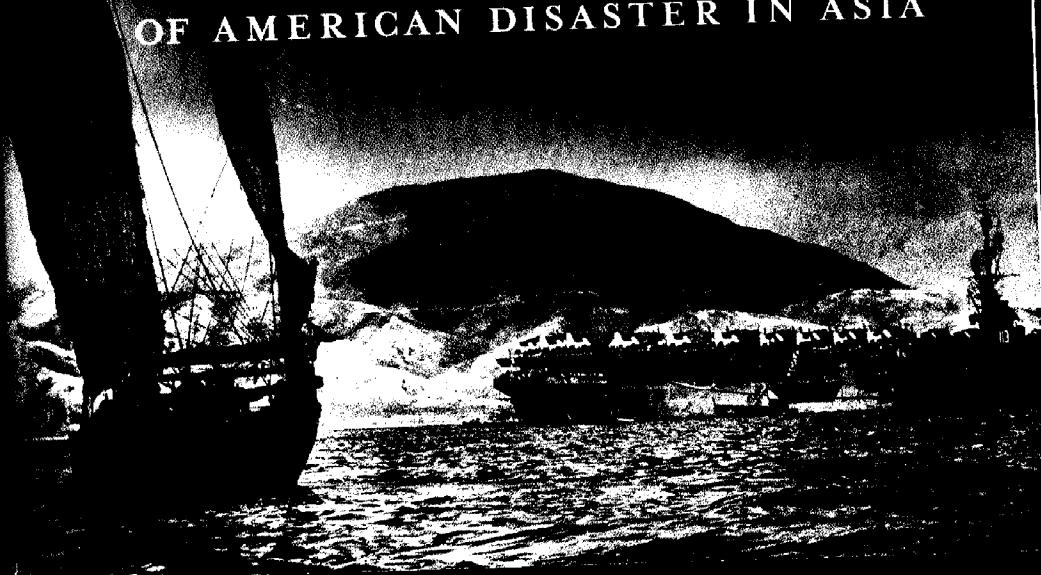
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THE
CHINA
MIRAGE

THE HIDDEN HISTORY
OF AMERICAN DISASTER IN ASIA



INTRODUCTION

The future policy of Japan towards Asiatic countries should be similar to that of the United States towards their neighbors.... A "Japanese Monroe Doctrine" in Asia will remove the temptation to European encroachment, and Japan will be recognized as the leader of the Asiatic nations.

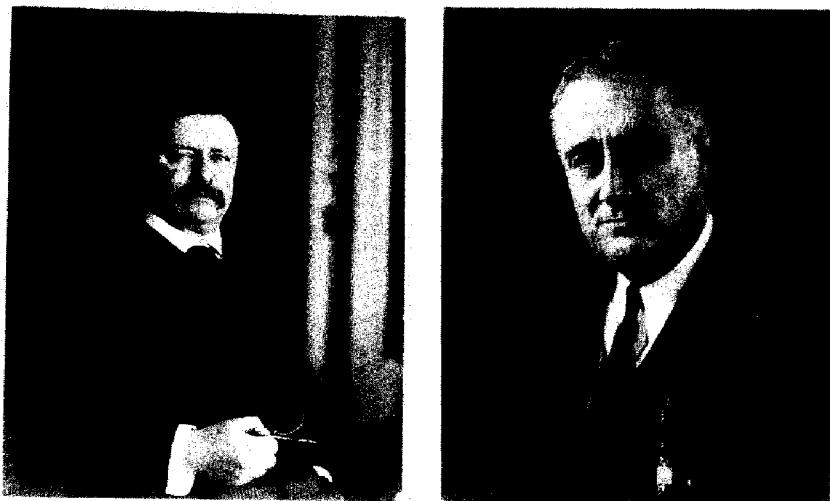
—President Theodore Roosevelt¹

The people of China well over a century have been, in thought and in objective, closer to us Americans than almost any other peoples in the world—the same great ideals. China, in the last—less than half a century has become one of the great democracies of the world.

—President Franklin Delano Roosevelt²

Two American presidents from the first half of the twentieth century blazed the path into Asia still followed by the United States today. These two presidents were cousins, and, although they lived a generation apart, both followed similar paths to power: from New York State legislator to assistant secretary of the Navy to New York governor and, finally, to president of the United States.

Both Presidents Roosevelt conducted their Asian diplomacy in similar style, personally taking the reins to deal directly and secretly with Asian affairs, often circumventing their own State Departments. Neither Roosevelt traveled to Asia or knew many Asians, but both were



Presidents Theodore and Franklin Delano Roosevelt (Courtesy of the Library of Congress)

supremely confident that they had special insights. The parallels are not exact. Theodore was enamored of Japan and allowed himself to be taken in by a propaganda campaign directed from Tokyo and led by a Harvard-educated Japanese friend. In contrast, Franklin favored China and was influenced by his own Harvard-educated Chinese friend.

Theodore Roosevelt was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for bringing the combatants in the Russo-Japanese War to the peace table. Almost unknown in the United States, though, are the president's backdoor negotiations with Emperor Meiji of Japan over the fate of an independent country, the empire of Korea. During these secret talks, brokered by Meiji's Harvard-educated envoy, Roosevelt agreed to stand aside and allow Japan to subjugate Korea as a colony, becoming the first world leader to sanction Japan's expansion onto the Asian continent.

Sumner Welles, Franklin Delano Roosevelt's friend and the assistant secretary of state, observed, "No one close to the President could have failed to recognize the deep feeling of friendship for China that he had inherited from his mother's side of his family."³ After a meeting to discuss China policy with FDR, one administration official recalled,

"We might as well have saved our breath. Roosevelt put an end to the discussion by looking up and recalling that his ancestors used to trade with China."⁴

Indeed they had. Franklin Delano Roosevelt's grandfather Warren Delano was one of the first Americans to travel to what was seen by Americans as "Old China," where he made a dynastic fortune in the illegal opium trade. As a U.S. consul, Delano oversaw the first American military incursion into China. It was from his Delano line that Roosevelt inherited his love of the sea, his princely fortune, and his confidence that he knew how to handle China. Roosevelt later observed, "What vitality I have is not inherited from Roosevelts...mine, such as it is, comes from the Delanos."⁵

Dealing drugs was only part of Warren Delano's mission. Much as his European ancestors had carved "New England" territory from Indian lands on America's Atlantic coast, he helped carve "New



Warren Delano, Hong Kong, 1860 (CPA Media / Pictures from History)

China" enclaves—westernized and Christianized areas—like Hong Kong on China's Pacific coast. Delano, like many Americans, believed that this was only the beginning, that just as they were sweeping across North America, someday Christian and American values would change China.

Like most Americans, the Roosevelts had only a meager understanding of Asia. Waves of immigration had brought people from all over the world to the United States, but after the Transcontinental Railroad was completed, the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 made it illegal for a Chinese person to enter the country. True, some westernized Chinese were exempted and allowed in as students, businessmen, and diplomats, but they were few and far between. Almost no Chinese could be found in the halls of the White House or the offices of Wall Street.

Likewise, very few Americans had ever traveled to China. Yes, some American missionaries, businessmen, and diplomats made it across the Pacific, but they clung mostly to the westernized New China settlements on the coast. These Americans wrote home about a cultural and spiritual blossoming of the Chinese under their care, decades of hopeful hogwash foisted on unknowing readers. Both Presidents Roosevelt were thus constantly well informed about New China, that place that was always going to be.

This book examines the American perception of Asia and the gap between that perception and reality. The wide gulf of the Pacific Ocean has prevented Americans and Chinese from knowing each other. Generations of accumulated misunderstanding between these two continental giants has so far led to three major Asian wars that have left millions dead and has distorted U.S. domestic politics and foreign policy.

My father, John Bradley, was one of the six men photographed raising the American flag on the island of Iwo Jima during World War II. When I was forty-six years old I published *Flags of Our Fathers*, a book about my dad's experiences. Now I am sixty years old and I

continue to honor the young men who fought in that horrible war, but I increasingly doubt my father's elders, the men in power who allowed Americans to be sucked into a world war at a time when the U.S. military was preparing for war in Europe and was not ready to fight in distant Asia.

Japan surprised the United States at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. On December 8, the U.S. Congress declared war against Japan, but not well remembered is what Americans on that day thought they were fighting for. One of the millions who served in America's Asian war was John F. Kennedy, who later recalled,

It was clearly enunciated that the independence of China... was the fundamental object of our Far Eastern policy...that this and other statements of our policies on the Far East led directly to the attack on Pearl Harbor is well known. And it might be said that we almost knowingly entered into combat with Japan to preserve the independence of China.⁶

For generations, American hearts had been warmed by the missionary dream of a New China peopled by Americanized Christians. Then, beginning slowly in the early 1930s, a foreign-funded China Lobby sprouted in the United States and gained powerful adherents in the U.S. government, in the media, and in pulpits across the country. By 1941, nearly a decade of China Lobby propaganda had been pumped into American churches, homes, and heads, convincing the vast majority of Americans that a Christianized and Americanized New China would blossom as their best friend in Asia if the United States drove the Japanese military out of China.

The China Lobby's premise was that the Japanese military would be forced to withdraw from China if the United States embargoed Japan's oil. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt thought the opposite. Japan—with little domestic production—had only two major sources of oil: California and the Dutch East Indies (today's Indonesia). Roosevelt had a "Europe first" policy in case of war: the United States would defeat Hitler, and then, if necessary, confront the Japanese. Since the United States was supplying over 80 percent of Japan's oil,

FDR thought that if he cut off the California pump, the Japanese military would thrust south toward the Dutch East Indies, and the United States would be drawn into an unwanted Asian war.

Many administration officials were outraged by what they considered to be Roosevelt's appeasement of Japan. They—like the majority of Americans—had swallowed the China Lobby line that an oil embargo would force Japan out of China and that there would be no danger of the United States getting involved militarily. And with the Japanese no longer a threat, the great Chiang Kai-shek would ascend to undiluted command—and a Christian and democratic China would follow. (British prime minister Winston Churchill called the New China dream the “Great American illusion.”)

This is the story of how a few of these officials surreptitiously outmaneuvered and undermined the president of the United States and thrust America into an unwanted Asian war. My father and millions of others fought in a conflict that didn't have to happen, a war that Franklin Delano Roosevelt was trying to avoid, one that could have been prevented or delayed if some overconfident administration officials had heeded their president instead of the China Lobby.

Today, seventy years after World War II, many imagine America went to war against Hitler to save England. History books and a recent television series on the Roosevelts recall the fierce tussle between American isolationists and internationalists in the lead-up to World War II, showing a fiery Charles Lindbergh and other public figures debating what the United States should do across the Atlantic. These stories feature a bold FDR reaching out to Winston Churchill via secret private emissaries like Harry Hopkins, Averell Harriman, and Wild Bill Donovan.

Little noted is that the debate about America's helping Britain was never decided. The U.S. did not enter World War II to defend Britain or oppose Hitler. On December 8, 1941, the United States declared war on Japan and only Japan. Three long days passed, and the United States did not declare war on Germany to defend England. It was only when Adolf Hitler rashly declared war on the U.S. that Americans went to war in Europe.

World War II burst upon America from Asia. Charles Lindbergh's Atlantic focus is better remembered, but it was the China Lobby's arguments about peoples across the Pacific that changed American history.

When Mao Zedong rose to power in 1949, the U.S. government and media portrayed him as an angry, anti-American Soviet pawn, going so far as to paint Mao as not a “real Chinese,” an idea believable because Americans had for decades been propagandized by the China Lobby that authentic Chinese yearned to be Christianized and Americanized. The American public did not realize that five years earlier, Mao had repeatedly extended his hand in friendship, enthusiastically describing to his State Department interlocutors a symbiotic relationship combining U.S. industrial know-how with China's limitless workforce. Mao—who had never flown in an airplane—reached out to President Roosevelt in 1945, saying he was eager to fly to the United States to discuss his vision, a historic opportunity that New China-believing Americans tragically nipped in the bud.

When the U.S.-spurned Mao turned to the USSR, Americans imagined they had lost China, and the United States replanted its New China dream on the island of Taiwan. Senator Joseph McCarthy asked, “Who lost China?” and launched a witch hunt—supported by the China Lobby—that drove the State Department specialists who had dealt with Mao out of the government. Having made itself blind on Asia, Washington then stumbled into the Korean and Vietnam Wars.

The who-lost-China hysteria helped topple the administration of President Harry Truman, distorted U.S. domestic politics, and haunted Dwight Eisenhower, John Kennedy, Lyndon Johnson, and Richard Nixon as these presidents tried not to lose again in Asia.

The China Lobby also warped U.S. foreign policy. From 1949 to 1979, the world's most powerful country refused to have official state-to-state relations with the world's most populous country. But consider your smartphone, which was probably manufactured in China, and you can see that Mao's vision of the relationship—not America's New China dream—is the one that triumphed. Like World

War II in the Pacific, the destructive thirty years of estrangement between Mao's China and the United States did not have to happen.

The Roosevelts' actions in Asia are relatively unknown to Americans, even though the results are clear.

Go to New York City's Chinatown and you'll see the only two statues that Chinese Americans have erected there: one for the revered Confucius and the other for the Chinese government official who asked Warren Delano to stop smuggling opium into China.

Stroll through Seoul, South Korea, and you will come across a memorial honoring an American civilian, the only such statue in downtown Seoul. In 1905, the emperor of Korea had felt the Japanese military's hands tightening around his country's neck. He dispatched an American friend from Seoul to Washington to plead with President Theodore Roosevelt for Korea's continued independence. Roosevelt refused to help. Korea then fell under Japan's control for forty years. Today Koreans honor the American who begged Theodore Roosevelt for Korea's freedom.

Go to South Asia today, look up at the Pakistani sky, and you might see an American drone. The American president controls this lethal program within the executive branch; it's a private air force that's operated with little congressional oversight. Franklin Delano Roosevelt created this secret executive air force one year *before* Pearl Harbor in an attempt to keep the New China dream alive.

Today the United States is the world's largest developed country and China is the largest developing country. Like two huge balloons in a closed room, they will inevitably bump up against each other. The reactions will depend on each side's understanding of and empathy for the other. This is a book about the American disaster in Asia as a result of a mirage in the American mind. The stakes in understanding these past missteps are enormous and, to me, personal. My father was severely wounded in 1945, and in 1968 my brother almost died, both fighting in Asian wars that didn't have to happen. I don't want my son

in boot camp like his grandfather and uncle simply because of more misunderstandings between the Pacific's two great powers.

Today, the United States and China—while cooperating to build wealth—are once again massively uninformed about each other. There was a time when everyone in the United States knew that Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai were China's top leaders and everyone in China recognized President Nixon and Henry Kissinger. A measure of the current relationship is that almost no Americans can name the top two Chinese leaders today and ninety-year-old Henry Kissinger remains China's most recognizable American friend.

With only a narrow, rickety bridge of fellowship crossing the Pacific, misunderstandings are flourishing and both countries employ heated rhetoric. On the American side, generations of missionary dreams about New China created an assumption in the United States about a reality that never existed in Asia. The China mirage took hold in the nineteenth century, affected U.S. foreign policy and domestic politics in the twentieth century, and continues to misguide America. Perhaps the cautionary tale revealed in this book will motivate people in both countries to strengthen that bridge across the Pacific before it's too late. Again.

Chapter 1

OLD CHINA, NEW CHINA

China can never be reformed from within. The manifold needs of China... will be met permanently, completely, only by Christian civilization.

—Reverend Arthur Henderson Smith¹

The written histories of Franklin Delano Roosevelt and his Delano ancestors chronicle their childhoods, schooling, marriages, careers, children, deaths, and legacies. Curiously, the source of Franklin Delano Roosevelt's dynastic wealth is little commented upon by the chroniclers. As the esteemed Roosevelt historian Geoffrey Ward wrote, "The full story of Warren Delano's career in the China trade has not been written."²

Warren Delano was a blueblood. His forebears had left Europe and arrived in Plymouth, Massachusetts, just two ships after the *Mayflower* brought the first colonists to New England. The Delanos were among the earliest settlers of the area of southern Massachusetts—New Bedford, Buzzards Bay, and Fairhaven—that produced so many of America's original whalers and sea merchants.

Warren's father—also named Warren—made a substantial income ferrying corn, salt, and potatoes to New Orleans, England, and the

Canary Islands. The first Warren helped found a Fairhaven church—the Washington Street Christian meeting place on Walnut Street—and his former residence is today the Delano Homestead Bed-and-Breakfast. Warren Junior graduated from Fairhaven Academy—a local trade school—in 1842, and he apprenticed with the Boston importer Hathaway and Company and then with one of New York's premier importers, Goodhue and Company.

Great Britain had decided many years earlier that the Chinese frontier was much more lucrative than America's. By sailing halfway around the world, Delano could participate in the single largest commodity trade of the nineteenth century: smuggling opium into China. Such an enterprise promised him a quick killing and world-class wealth before the age of thirty. Delano grabbed his big chance.

For centuries, China was the richest country on earth, and its people thought it natural that outsiders would come to China to learn from their superior culture. The Chinese saw these visitors as barbarians—more specifically, as *fan kuei*, “foreign devils”: second-class vassals, pitiful in their desperation for Chinese knowledge and goods.

In the late seventeenth century, the English began to import enormous quantities of Chinese tea to satisfy and stimulate its new factory-worker class. British silver flowed in increasingly alarming amounts from London's vaults to the Middle Kingdom, but the money went only one way; the Chinese wanted few English products. The constant importation of Chinese tea to the West caused a gargantuan drain of silver from Europe to Asia. China was a rich country in the 1700s, its population tripling over the course of the century from about one hundred million to over three hundred million.

The imbalance in trade quickly decimated the coffers of many European nations, hitting Britain particularly hard. Deeply concerned, London hit upon a corrective that took advantage of England's colonial holding of India, its naval might, and its disdain for the Chinese. The Brits' dependence on tea made them subject to the Chinese, but they saw a way to reverse the situation, and the flow of silver.

* * *

In the Confucian value system, merchants—consumed by thoughts of profit—were near the bottom of the social scale. Those concerned with the people's welfare—the mandarins who studied the classics and served the emperor—were at the top of the heap. “Barbarian” merchants could access China's market only by making clear they knew their place in the pecking order and following the tribute system. This required foreign missions to travel to Beijing to pay tribute to the emperor and acknowledge their inferiority by kowtowing—kneeling in front of the Son of Heaven (as he was known) and touching their foreheads to the floor. After the foreign devils acknowledged China's superiority and offered valuable tribute, the Son of Heaven benevolently allowed them to purchase the riches of the Middle Kingdom.

Over millennia, barbarians had traveled to China from Korea, Japan, Mongolia, Vietnam, Malaysia, Laos, Cambodia, and many other countries. In the Middle Ages, Europeans ventured in their tiny ships out into the world's oceans, and a new type of foreign devil arrived in China: the sea barbarians, funny-looking, long-nosed cow-eaters in tight trousers and high hats.

In the course of becoming a world power, Great Britain grew accustomed to imposing its trade terms on people around the globe. But China's restrictive tribute system was slow, cumbersome, and devoid of any respect for the British. In 1793, King George III of England sent emissaries to Beijing with impudent demands. Among these was the unthinkable call for the emperor to cede a piece of land—an island or a coastal strip—where England could establish a permanent trading post.

King George also insulted the Son of Heaven by suggesting peer-to-peer diplomatic relations. The English did not comprehend that the Son of Heaven could never comply with this. China had no foreign affairs office because it shunned official relationships with barbarian countries. Instead, the emperor managed trading relations with foreign devils through his Barbarian Management Bureau, whose

mandarins forwarded this response from the Son of Heaven to the English sovereign:

Our Celestial Empire possesses all things in prolific abundance and lacks no product within its borders. There is therefore no need to import the manufactures of outside barbarians in exchange for our own produce. But as the tea, silk, and porcelain which the Celestial Empire produces are absolute necessities to European nations and to yourselves, we have permitted, as a signal mark of favor, that foreign hongs [private businessmen who paid the government for the right to trade with barbarians] should be established at Canton, so that your wants might be supplied and your country thus participate in our beneficence.³

The Barbarian Management Bureau's mandarins designed the Canton system above all to protect ordinary Chinese from infection by the low character and animal nature of foreign devils like Warren Delano. To begin with, the port of Canton, in China's hot and humid south, was about as far away as possible from the Son of Heaven's home in Beijing. The system required the sea barbarians to live and work in white-washed warehouses located *outside* Canton's city wall.⁴ When the roughly four-month trading season was over, the foreign-devil traders had to leave Canton immediately.

If sea barbarians wanted to trade with the Middle Kingdom, they could humble themselves and submit to the Canton system. But the English—and, later, the Americans—were not used to humbling themselves. Quite the contrary.

Like grapes and ginseng, the product that would make Warren Delano a wealthy man grows best in certain parts of the world. The prime opium-producing area was a vast swath stretching five hundred miles across the Bengal region of India. Arab merchants dominated the India-to-China opium trade for hundreds of years, until Portuguese sailors took it over in the sixteenth century. The Portuguese also

brought tobacco from their Brazilian colony, and the Chinese especially enjoyed smoking tobacco mixed with opium. Sensing the potential harm to his people, the emperor outlawed the sale and use of opium.

Opium was big business for the British, one of the critical economic engines of the era. Britain controlled India and oversaw one million Indian opium farmers. By 1850, the drug accounted for a staggering 15 to 20 percent of the British Empire's revenue, and the India-to-China opium business became, in the words of Frederic Wakeman, a leading historian of the period, the “world’s most valuable single commodity trade of the nineteenth century.”⁵ Notes Carl Trocki, author of *Opium, Empire and the Global Economy*, “The entire commercial infrastructure of European trade in Asia was built around opium.”⁶

The Chinese emperor had outlawed opium, so some back in England judged that this illegal business had to be immoral. To evade criticism, the British government employed the ruse of selling the opium in Calcutta to a private Crown-chartered enterprise—the East India Company—and pretended that London wasn’t involved with what happened next. East India Company ships sailed the contraband up the Chinese coast and, with the protection of British naval might and expertise, used both offshore islands and anchored ships to stash the drugs. Chinese criminals would row out to the offshore drug warehouses to get the English opium. Massive bribery of local officials made the trade possible.

The British were breaking Chinese law and pushing back against the restrictive Canton system. Exploiting coves and islands along China’s rocky coast, the sea barbarians opened more areas for their illegal trade, while partnerships with local gangsters allowed further circumvention. One English merchant reflected on his work in Asia:

No doubt your anticipations of future evil have a certain foundation.... But it is my business to make a fortune with the least possible loss of time.... In two or three years at farthest, I hope to realize a fortune and get away and what can it matter to me, if all Shanghai disappear afterwards, in fire or flood? You must

not expect men in my situation to condemn themselves to years of prolonged exile in an unhealthy climate for the benefit of posterity. We are moneymaking, practical men. Our business is to make money, as much and as fast as we can.⁷

The India-to-China opium trade was exclusively the domain of the East India Company; no private English merchants were allowed in. The British Parliament forbade America's colonial merchants to trade directly with China, forcing them to buy tea from British sources and thus generating substantial tax revenue for London. (The Boston Tea Party in 1773 was a protest by American colonists against this British tax on a Chinese product.) In 1784, with the ink barely dry on the Treaty of Paris, which ended the American Revolutionary War, Robert Morris—a wealthy Philadelphian known as "the financier of the Revolution"—dispatched a ship called the *Empress of China* to Canton. Morris had done his research well and sent off an attractive cargo of ginseng (which grew wild on the shores of the Hudson River), a valuable herb esteemed by the Chinese, along with a variety of other wares. The goods sold quickly in Canton, and with the proceeds, the American sailors bought Chinese tea, which they sold profitably back in the United States. Morris's venture—the first successful American round-trip trade voyage to China—turned a whopping profit of 35 percent, which spurred more American interest in the China trade.

A number of East Coast merchants then pooled their resources to send ginseng, South Pacific sealskins, and Hawaiian sandalwood to Canton. But the American sea merchants encountered the same problem as their British counterparts had: before long, the new nation had its own trade imbalance, thanks to its appetite for Chinese tea. American merchants sourced a supply of opium in Turkey, and because private British merchants weren't allowed to carry it, the Americans had a virtual monopoly on the Turkey-to-China opium trade. Soon these East Coast families—led by the Perkins clan of Boston—were raking in fortunes. One American opium merchant estimated that the Turkey-to-Canton opium trade turned profits of 37.5 percent.

Samuel Russell of Middletown, Connecticut, established Russell and Company, which quickly became America's biggest smuggler of Turkish opium into China.

Russell put out the word that he would train ambitious young men and that they could score what China traders called a "competence," a profit of \$100,000, by the time they were thirty years old. (This was the equivalent of a young person today amassing millions of dollars within six years of graduating from college.) A fortune of that size in the capital-poor United States would assure its owner a comfortable life of financial independence and social leadership.

Warren Delano's breeding and education made him one of the lucky few who caught the eye of Samuel Russell. Delano, twenty-four years old, sailed out of New Bedford, Massachusetts, in 1833. He met Russell for the first time in Macao, a small Portuguese enclave on China's coast where American sea barbarians lived while awaiting the



Samuel Russell (CPA Media / Pictures From History)

fall-to-winter trading season during which China would allow them entrance into the Middle Kingdom.

Delano began studying the many items Russell and Company imported to the United States, including tea; he learned its many shades and how to buy, store, and ship it. Silk, chinaware, and other items had to be accounted for in the ledger books, and there was a steady flow of mail to tend to. It was an intense apprenticeship, and Delano was learning from the founder, an ideal position.

Then came the exciting day when Delano sailed to China for the first time, going north from Macao to the Pearl River Delta, where the Russell and Company warehouse was situated on the riverbank outside Canton's walls.

The Russell and Company warehouse—a compact three-story building housing about a dozen partners—would become Delano's home, but it also functioned as a place of business and recreation, a storeroom, and even a church. The lower floor held the merchandise, kitchen, and servants' quarters. The upper floors held the offices, dining room, and traders' personal quarters.

As a barbarian within the Canton system, Delano was ordered to stay put. Under no circumstances was he to enter Canton or any other city in China. Delano could not travel to the real China, walk through a Chinese village, or see a rural rice paddy. And that's just how the Chinese wanted it.

Delano was governed by the Canton system's rules. Barbarian traders like him never dealt directly with an official of the Chinese government; the odious business of interacting with foreign devils was assigned to the hong merchants. The rules decreed that one of the worst crimes a Chinese person could commit was teaching the Chinese language to a barbarian. As a result, Delano learned a pidgin or business lingua franca that was neither English nor Chinese. He could not carry a gun. He could not gather with others in a group larger than ten. He could not row a boat on the river, and for exercise, he could stroll along only a small strip of land. Once a year, he and other barbarian traders were allowed a walk in the gardens on the oppo-



The Son of Heaven restricted the sea barbarian traders to a tiny spit of land outside Canton's borders. (CPA Media / Pictures From History)

site shore, but only under the watchful eyes of government-appointed minders. The Russell and Company warehouse had Chinese servants to cook and clean, but these were provided by their hong overseer, who used them as spies.

What little of Chinese life Warren was able to glimpse he found downright weird. At the dinner table his Chinese hosts placed Warren at their left as the honored guest and kept their hats on. The food was served in bowls, the wine was warm, and the Chinese ate with sticks instead of knives and forks. Chinese read from up to down and from right to left. Their last names came first and their compasses pointed south. Chinese friends greeted each other by closing their hands and letting them hang limply by their sides. Porters with Warren's luggage walked ahead of him; Chinese shoes were broad in front and narrow at the heel; the men wore gowns and the women trousers.

The hong merchant assigned to deal with Russell and Company was

named Howqua. He was the emperor's official minder of Russell's men, and he would trade with Delano and oversee his warehouse. It is believed that through his dealings with Americans and other barbarians, Howqua became one of the richest men in the world.⁸

John Perkins Cushing—also a Russell and Company partner—had preceded Delano and initiated the close American relationship with Howqua. The two men had established an offshore base—an anchored, floating warehouse—where Russell and Company ships would offload their opium contraband before continuing up the Pearl River Delta to Canton with their legal cargo.

In the dark of night, “scrambling crabs”—long, sleek, heavily armed crafts propelled by as many as sixty oarsmen—rowed out to Russell and Company's floating warehouse and exchanged silver for opium. The entire transaction happened very quickly and enabled Howqua's and Cushing's hands to stay clean. The dirty work—the illegal landing of the drug on Chinese soil, the bribing of officials to look the other way, the wholesaling to opium dens and retailing to street addicts—was performed by Chinese criminal gangs.

In similar fashion, a procession of American sea merchants made their fortunes smuggling opium. They were aware of its poisonous effects on the Chinese people, but few of them ever mentioned the drug in the thousands of pages of letters and documents they sent back to America. Robert Bennet Forbes—a Russell and Company contemporary of Delano's—defended his involvement with opium by noting that some of America's best families were involved, “those to whom I have always been accustomed to look up as exponents of all that was honorable in trade—the Perkins, the Peabodys, the Russells and the Lows.”⁹

On a macroeconomic level, the sea barbarians had turned the tables, as Chinese silver now flowed to Europe. But to the Chinese, the opium trade was an unmixed evil, corrupting its officials, demoralizing its people (including, most vexingly, its soldiery), draining its wealth, raising the cost of living, and undermining the Son of Heaven's authority.

Most alarming to the mandarins in Beijing was the potential erosion of what they believed to be the Mandate of Heaven. Peace and prosperity meant that Heaven favored the current ruler; if chaos appeared, it was a sign that Heaven was displeased with the emperor and that the Mandate was in play.

In the West, the divine right of kings granted legitimacy to royal families from generation to generation, guaranteeing that the lowborn would not revolt, for revolution was a sin. In contrast, the Mandate of Heaven gave the Chinese people the right of rebellion. A successful revolt against a sitting emperor was interpreted as evidence that Heaven wanted the Mandate to pass to the next ruler. One of the key indicators that Heaven was displeased was an emperor's inability to discipline barbarians.

In their cramped and restricted situation, Delano and his fellows fantasized about having Christianized and westernized enclaves where they could conduct themselves as they wished, under their own rules. The American missionaries who were just beginning to arrive via merchant ships shared these desires and had additional demands. The Barbarian Management Bureau had earlier threatened American churchmen with beheading if they were caught spreading the evil religion of Christianity. By 1838—with their country's military might supporting them—missionaries insisted on the right not only to preach but also to build schools, hospitals, churches, and cemeteries on Chinese soil, to learn the Chinese language, and in general to be left alone in their quest to change pagans into Americanized and Christianized New Chinese.

In 1839, when Warren Delano was thirty years old and the number-two partner in Russell and Company, the tension between East and West exploded around him. For the previous two years, the governor of Hunan Province—Lin Zexu—had suppressed the sale and use of opium in Hunan. The Son of Heaven now transferred Lin to Canton as an imperial commissioner to stamp out the opium trade there.

Commissioner Lin demanded that Delano and the other foreign devils

come clean and hand over their opium stocks.¹⁰ When the sea barbarians coyly replied they had no opium, he tightened the screws by surrounding their warehouses with troops and withdrawing their Chinese servants. Suddenly, Delano found himself cooking his own meals in the Russell and Company kitchen.

To break out of their hopeless situation, the traders eventually forfeited their valuable opium. (Only the biggest English smugglers turned over more than Delano.) Then, in view of cheering Chinese, Commissioner Lin had three enormous trenches dug. Day after day, workers shoveled the seized opium into the water-filled gullies, mixed it with salt and lime, and flushed the mixture out into the ocean.

A month later, in July 1839, Commissioner Lin addressed a letter to Queen Victoria, then just twenty years old, only two years on the British throne:

We have heard that in your own country opium is prohibited... this is a strong proof that you know full well how hurtful it is to mankind. Since then you do not permit it to injure your own country, you ought not to have the injurious drug transferred to another country.... Of the products which China exports to your foreign countries, there is not one which is not beneficial to mankind.... Has China (we should like to ask) ever yet sent forth a noxious article from its soil?... [If] foreigners came from another country, and brought opium into England, and seduced the people of your country to smoke it, would not you, the sovereign of the said country, look upon such a procedure with anger, and in your just indignation endeavor to get rid of it?...

Let your highness immediately, upon the receipt of this communication, inform us promptly of the state of matters, and of the measure you are pursuing utterly to put a stop to the opium evil. Please let your reply be speedy...

P.S. We annex an abstract of the new law, now about to be put in force. "Any foreigner or foreigners bringing opium to the Central Land, with design to sell the same, the principals shall

most assuredly be decapitated, and the accessories strangled; and all property (found on board the same ship) shall be confiscated. The space of a year and a half is granted, within the which, if anyone bringing opium by mistake, shall voluntarily step forward and deliver it up, he shall be absolved from all consequences of his crime."¹¹

As Timothy Brook and Bob Wakabayashi write in their masterly book *Opium Regimes*, "The British Empire could not survive were it deprived of its most important source of capital, the substance that could turn any other commodity into silver."¹² Queen Victoria speedily dispatched her navy in November 1839 to bombard China's coast, shocking the government mandarins who had built the Great Wall to keep northern intruders out, never imagining their kingdom would be humbled by sea barbarians who had gained entry through distant Canton. Thus began the First Opium War, which lasted until 1842.

Back in America, Delano's congressional representative John Quincy Adams told the country that opium smuggling was "a mere incident to the dispute; but no more a cause of the war than the throwing overboard of the tea in Boston harbor was the cause of the North American revolution. The cause of the war is the pretension on the part of the Chinese, that in all their intercourse with other nations, political or otherwise, their superiority must be acknowledged, and manifested in humiliating forms."¹³

The First Opium War was a boom time for Delano. English traders were forced to observe the British blockade of China, yet valuable cargoes from other sources continued to arrive. Responding to (and encouraging) demand, Delano rented or purchased every ship he could, then charged high transport fees. Delano's accomplishments were recognized in the midst of the war when, on January 1, 1840, the thirty-one-year-old was named the senior partner of Russell and Company.

Russell and Company senior partners often served as U.S. consuls to Canton, an honorific but empty title, because the Chinese would still not countenance state-to-state relations with barbarians. Appointed

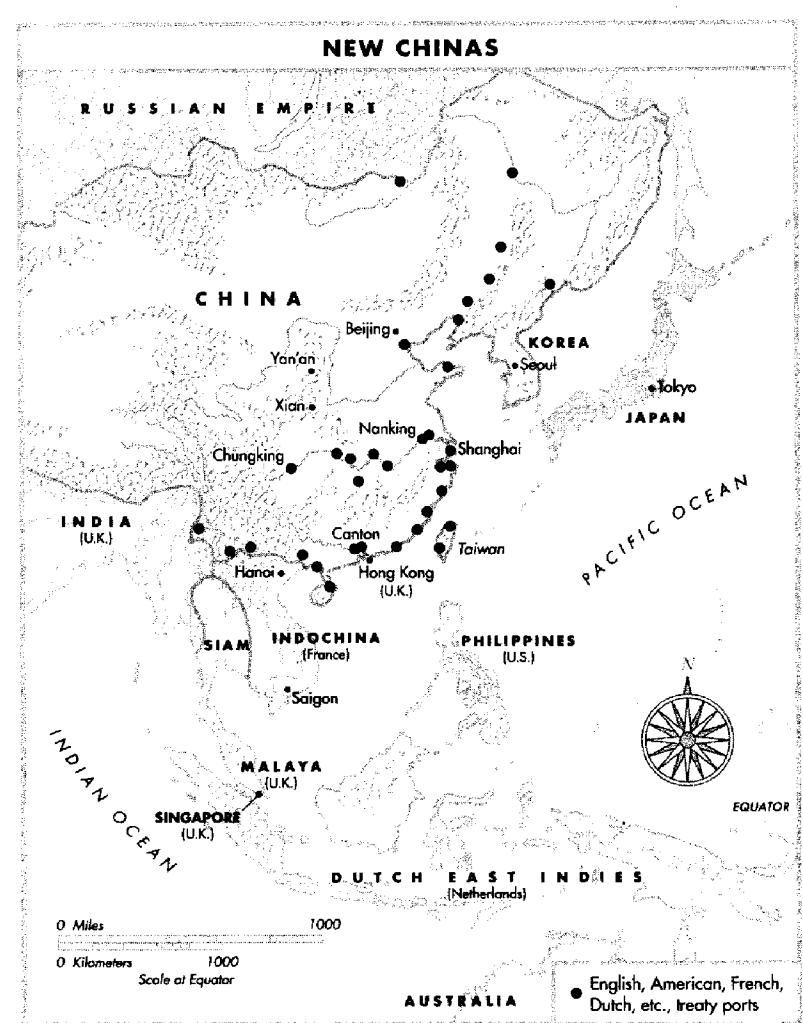
U.S. consul in 1841, Delano cheered the British bombing of China and welcomed the first U.S. warship, commanded by Commodore Lawrence Kearny, dispatched to China to protect American interests.

The Chinese had no effective way to defend themselves against the superior arms and technology of a modern industrialized military. Ravaged on land and sea, China reluctantly capitulated and signed the Treaty of Nanking, the first of what many Chinese still consider the odious “unequal treaties” by which the West would chip away at old China’s sovereignty. China was forced to pay Britain an indemnity of millions and abolish the Canton system. Most alarming, the Treaty of Nanking required China to cede the island of Hong Kong to Britain and to open five ports to trade. In these New Chinas (called treaty ports), foreigners enjoyed extraterritoriality—freedom from Chinese laws and the right to try their own transgressors. Now, just like the first European incursions onto the American continent in the 1600s, white Christians had created an archipelago of trading hubs where Western ways could root and flourish.

With the Canton system destroyed, the drug trade exploded. Soon the British governor of Hong Kong wrote his London masters, “Almost every person...not connected with government is employed in the opium trade.”¹⁴

By early 1843, Delano had spent a momentous decade in the China trade. He had achieved his financial competence and risen to become the head partner of the biggest American firm dealing with China. He had witnessed the destruction of the hated Canton system, the humiliation of the Chinese government, and the creation of New Chinas. Over those ten years, he had seen Westerners transform themselves from huddled supplicants into victors who dictated terms. Delano decided to return to Massachusetts for a short vacation. Commodore Kearny gave him a copy of the Treaty of Nanking to take triumphantly back to the United States for American officials to study as a model for a comparable U.S.-China treaty.¹⁵

Delano’s Chinese partner in crime, Howqua, gave him an elaborate



In the nineteenth century, the West forced China to grant it special rights in treaty ports, Christian outposts where foreign devils could live by their own rules.

send-off feast, which a witness reported as “about 15 courses—bird’s nest soup—shark fins—pigeons eggs—quail &c—sturgeon’s lip, etc. We were 13 hours getting thro’ with it. It is many years since Howqua has given a Chinese dinner at his own house and perhaps never before did he give to a friend the like of this.”¹⁶

* * *

Upon his return to Massachusetts, Delano was viewed as a wealthy young man who had made his fortune in China by dealing in tea, silks, and porcelain. Though considered one of a handful of American experts on China, Delano had never explored the country or its culture. The nation that Delano described to his listeners was a mirage; that China could not be internally reformed, and the pitiful, drug-addicted, backward pagan mess of a place was lucky to have Americans on its coast to civilize it via American values and beliefs.

On July 3, 1844, a meeting that would have been inconceivable just a few years earlier took place between American and Chinese government officials. At a table in the Temple of Kun Yam in Macao, Caleb Cushing, a Massachusetts contemporary of Delano's, sat across from a Chinese official and signed a U.S.-China agreement modeled on the Nanking treaty. For half a century, relations between the United States and China had been strictly commercial. Now, after his country had been pummeled by the combined might of a number of Western navies, a Chinese official had greeted a representative of the United States to negotiate the U.S.-China diplomatic and economic relationship. The Treaty of Wangxia allowed five New Chinas, districts where, extraterritoriality established, Americans would rule supreme. They could buy land and erect homes and businesses in these protected pockets without Chinese interference.

As a show of goodwill, Caleb Cushing noted in the treaty that the Chinese had been just in declaring the opium trade illegal. This was a meaningless concession because Americans in their New Chinas could not be tried by Chinese courts, only by U.S. consuls. The consul at the time was Paul Sieman Forbes; he had succeeded Warren Delano in that position, as well as in the position of senior partner in Russell and Company. Therefore, the man who was head of the U.S. consular court was also the man overseeing the biggest American opium-smuggling operation.

Every American who came to China after the Treaty of Wangxia could consider himself a member of a superior civilization—a co-conqueror of the world's oldest empire. Americans named Delano, Russell, Cushing,

Perkins, Forbes, Low, and Green, among others, had helped transform coastal China into a quasi-colony of the sea barbarians.

Warren Delano returned to the China trade, leaving the United States at the end of 1843 with his new wife, eighteen-year-old Catherine Lyman, whom he had met through John Murray Forbes, another man made wealthy by smuggling opium. For three years, the couple lived in Macao in a grand mansion called Arrowdale. When they returned to the United States in 1846, they assumed their place in the ranks of East Coast society. They purchased a sumptuous town house at 39 Lafayette Square in New York City, where their neighbors included Washington Irving and John Jacob Astor.

Opium merchants like Delano provided the seed corn for the economic revolution in America. Delano invested his new fortune in a host of ventures: New York waterfront property, railroads, copper mines in Tennessee and Maryland, and coal mines in Pennsylvania, where a town was named Delano in his honor. The Perkins family, who had pioneered the transport of Turkish opium to China, built Boston's Athenaeum, the Massachusetts General Hospital, and the Perkins Institution for the Blind. America's first railroad—the Quincy Granite Railway—was built to carry stone from Perkins's quarries to the site of the Bunker Hill Monument.

Opium money funded any number of significant institutions in the eastern United States. John Perkins Cushing's profitable relationship with Howqua helped finance the construction of America's first great textile manufacturing city, Lowell, Massachusetts.

America's great East Coast universities owe a great deal to opium profits. Much of the land upon which Yale University stands was provided by Russell family money. A Russell family trust still covers the budget of Yale's Skull and Bones Society, and Russell funds built the famously secretive club's headquarters. Columbia University's most recognizable building is the Low Memorial Library, honoring Abiel Abbot Low, who worked in China with Warren Delano in the 1830s. John Cleve Green was Delano's immediate predecessor as a senior partner in Russell and Company, and he was Princeton University's

single largest donor, financing three buildings. (Green also founded America's oldest orthopedic hospital—Manhattan's Hospital for Special Surgery—from his opium fortune.)

Among the railways financed with opium money were the Boston and Lowell (Perkins), the Michigan Central (Forbes), the Chicago, Burlington, and Quincy (Forbes), and the Chesapeake and Ohio (Low), among others.

The influence of these opium fortunes seeped into virtually every aspect of American life. That influence was cultural: the transcendentalist Ralph Waldo Emerson married John Murray Forbes's daughter, and his father-in-law's fortune helped provide Emerson with the cushion to become a professional thinker. It was found in technology: Forbes's son watched over his father's investment in the Bell Telephone Company as its first president, and Abiel Abbot Low provided start-up money for the first transatlantic cable. And it was ideological: Joseph Coolidge's heirs founded the Council on Foreign Relations. Several companies that would play major roles in American history were also the product of drug profits, among them the United Fruit Company, started by the Coolidge family. Scratch the history of an institution or a person with the name Forbes attached to it, and there's a good chance you'll see that opium is involved. Secretary of State John Forbes Kerry's great-grandfather was Francis Blackwell Forbes, who got rich selling opium in China.

In 1852 Warren Delano and his growing family moved to their dream house, a brown-and-buff mansion on six acres overlooking the Hudson River. Delano named the home Algonac and furnished it with Chinese décor. In the parlor hung a portrait of Howqua. Now in his forties, Delano regaled guests and associates with colorful stories of trading tea and silk in China, but he rarely mentioned opium. This was in line with custom: American drug dealing was downplayed in polite East Coast society, the finger pointed mostly at Britain.

Delano lived luxuriously until stocks crashed and banks collapsed in the financial panic of 1857, and his investments soured one by one.

Delano was suddenly faced with a grim financial future. Forty-eight years old and slowly going broke, he thought long and hard about how to reconstitute his fortune. He still had sterling contacts with leading businessmen across the United States. He had been an investor in railroads, property, copper, and coal mines. He was healthy, and, despite the crash, the American economy still offered plenty of opportunity. But with a growing family (his seventh child was born in 1857) and an expensive manor lifestyle to support, he wanted to make a lot of money quickly. So Delano returned to the most profitable business in the world.

It wasn't an easy decision. Opium smuggling was a young man's game. Delano had been twenty-four years old when he'd first sailed to China; now he was twice that. The trip to Hong Kong was an arduous four-month-long voyage and he risked contracting malaria or life-threatening dysentery in hot and humid South China. But after fourteen years of playing by the rules in the U.S. economy, he was confronting a reduced standard of living. It was time, he concluded, to go back to the game with no rules.

It took almost two years for Russell and Company to repost Delano to Hong Kong. By then, at fifty years old, he had eight children, and his wife, Catherine, was pregnant with a ninth. Delano gave an empty stamp book to five-year-old Sara and promised the tearful girl that he would send her letters and stamps. In 1859, Delano sailed to the British colony of Hong Kong, where he became once again the senior official in the biggest American firm in New China and proceeded to rebuild his fortune.

The tables had most certainly turned since the days when he'd apprenticed to Samuel Russell. The Barbarian Management Bureau mandarins had naively assumed that the sea barbarians would be satisfied with Hong Kong and the five treaty ports granted in 1843. But now that the inch had been given, the mile was insisted upon. The British, French, and American foreign devils wanted China to rescind its prohibition and legalize opium, exempt internal trade by foreigners from duties, adopt English as the official language of all future treaties, and

allow official state-to-state relations. The foreign devils were demanding the right to poison three hundred million people with their opium while continuing to stay beyond the reach of the emperor's jurisdiction. Just as shocking to the Chinese, the barbarians demanded that foreign-devil ambassadors be allowed to reside in Beijing near the Son of Heaven.

When the Barbarian Management Bureau refused these demands, the British, French, and American navies retaliated with the Second Opium War, this time ravaging not only coastal cities and forts but also the country's interior; they invaded Beijing, chased the emperor out of town, and, in an orgy of fine-art and jewelry looting, destroyed the Versailles of China, the old Summer Palace.

Overwhelmed again, China bent. A new, even more unequal treaty gave the United States and other nations the right to station their diplomats in Beijing; in addition, it pried open ten more New China treaty ports to foreign trade and allowed foreign vessels—commercial and military—to navigate freely on the Yangtze River, thus giving the foreign devils access to the deepest heart of the Middle Kingdom. Crucially for the Americans, the agreement also provided religious liberty for Chinese Christians and ordered the Chinese government to stop using the word *barbarian* in reference to Westerners. Finally, the Barbarian Management Bureau was abolished and replaced by a foreign ministry forced into relations with barbarian countries.

When Franklin Delano Roosevelt was a young boy, his mother's favorite stories from her own childhood revolved around an adventure in a faraway land. Sara Delano Roosevelt told her son how her mother, Catherine, had packed up Algonac and, on June 25, 1862, sailed out of New York Harbor on a fully crewed ship with nine children, two maids, an upright piano, crates of clothes and books, and a hold stuffed with caged pigs, ducks, geese, and chickens. Over four months of sometimes stormy nights and many becalmed days, Sara's mother passed the time by reading aloud to her children from Nathaniel Hawthorne novels and old issues of *Vanity Fair*. On September 21, 1862, the Delano family was in the Indian Ocean, and they celebrated Sara's

eighth birthday with a dinner of roast goose, boiled ham, corn, peas, tomatoes, rice, and cake.

On the morning of October 31, 1862, the Delanos' ship sailed into the Hong Kong harbor. "Papa!" little Sara squealed as Delano came into view, standing at the tiller of a Russell and Company launch rowed by a dozen white-uniformed Chinese. Delano came aboard, embraced his family, and held baby Cassie—born after he left Algonac—for the first time. Little Sara hugged her father's leg.

A procession of sedan chairs took the Delano family up through Hong Kong's steeply inclined streets to their Rose Hill mansion. This large procession of American barbarians proudly asserting their place in New China naturally caught the attention of passing Chinese pedestrians, a few of whom shouted words that young Sara had of course never heard: *Fan kuei*. Both of Sara's parents knew what *fan kuei* meant, but there is no record that they explained it to their eight-year-old daughter. Catherine later wrote in her diary about the Chinese taunts: "I feel very oddly to be again a *Fanqui*."¹⁷



Rose Hill, Hong Kong. Franklin Delano Roosevelt's grandfather and mother lived on this Russell & Company estate. (CPA Media / Pictures From History)

The stories young Franklin heard from his mother of the two years she spent in Hong Kong were mostly about her experiences within the confines of the Rose Hill estate. Those two years were pleasant but monotonous. Sara mingled with the same small group of people and ventured out only for American-style pursuits, like a day at the race-track or to ride her horse (and then only if she was escorted by her father or an adult male Russell and Company employee). She never learned the Chinese language. Other than Delano's Chinese servants, little Sara had almost no contact with the locals. She could later tell Franklin stories about peacocks on the property and recall in detail Thanksgiving dinners, but Sara passed on no insights about the real China. How could she?

It's likely that Sara Delano's single foray into a Chinese person's home was on a family visit to a hong merchant's fabulous Canton mansion in February of 1863 when she was nine years old. This would be the equivalent of a foreigner in America dining at the Astor mansion and nowhere else. Sara wrote that before this adventure, "Papa told us children to pretend that we liked Chinese food though it was very strange to us." After five months in their New China sanctuary, the Delano children had apparently not eaten any Chinese food and certainly did not know how to use chopsticks.

Sara and the family marveled at the merchant's opulent mansion as they strolled through rooms furnished with polished ebony and gleaming marble, priceless carved ivory panels and stained-glass windows. When they sat down to dinner, Sara noted in relief that "as it was a very rich and luxurious house, there were knives, forks, and spoons for the strangers."¹⁸

Sometime later, one of Sara's older sisters—Annie—fell in love with and became engaged to a junior Russell and Company partner, William Howell Forbes. In 1864 Warren Delano had Forbes accompany Sara, Annie, Warren III, and Philippe from Hong Kong to the United States via Saigon, Singapore, Aden, Suez, Cairo, Alexandria, Marseilles, Paris, London, and then across the Atlantic to New York. Delano, Catherine, and the rest of the family returned to the United States in 1866.

* * *

Delano had done it. He was back at Algonac surrounded by opulent Chinese furnishings, once again a rich man who told colorful stories about the primitive Middle Kingdom and how America could help make a shiny New China while, with clever sleight of hand, avoiding speaking the name of the commodity that had made it all possible.

Chapter 2

WIN THE LEADERS; WIN CHINA

The Chinese make good Christians not because they get converted from anything to anything but because the extreme good sense, as expressed in the Golden rule which is the basis of Christianity, the product of another old race, is natural to the Chinese.

—Pearl Buck¹

Stories told by returning East Coast sea merchants about the heathen Chinese inflamed the hearts of Protestant churchmen. While saving their parishioners' souls remained the ministers' primary aim, a small number went off to China as missionaries and quickly began to mail overwrought reports back home. From American church pulpits there soon came shocking tales of pagan, idolatrous, drug-addicted Chinese with strange business practices who spoke at best a childish, fractured English; of a corrupt, collapsing nation across the Pacific with no right to view itself as superior to any nation; of a backward people who could use a stiff dose of American Puritanism.

The stories that passed from church leaders to millions in the pews were a mirage, the perceptions of a tiny number of American sea



Lady Columbia with a Chinese infant. In the nineteenth century, Americans imagined they were guardians of China's future. (Courtesy Everett Collection)

barbarians and missionaries in their New China havens who had little actual knowledge of the Chinese and their country.

The most widely read manual for American churchmen going off to China was Arthur Henderson Smith's *Chinese Characteristics*, in which the former missionary declared, "There is classical authority for the dictum 'rotten wood cannot be carved.' It must be wholly cut away, and new material grafted upon the old stock. China can never be reformed from within."² Continued Smith, "In order to reform China, the springs of character must be reached and purified... it is a truth... that 'there is no alchemy by which to get golden conduct from leaden instincts.'... She needs a new life in every individual soul, in the fam-

ily and in society. The manifold needs of China... will be met permanently, completely, only by Christian civilization."³

A missionary report concluded that the duty of American churchmen to China "is not simply introducing new ideas into the country but modifying its industrial, social and political life and institutions."⁴ The American modification of China was vastly ambitious and would be profitable. Wrote Charles Denby, U.S. minister to China, "Missionaries are the pioneers of trade and commerce. Civilization, learning, instruction breed new wants which commerce supplies."⁵

Admiral Alfred Mahan, nineteenth-century America's greatest naval strategist, warned that someday China's power might equal her geographic size, so Americans should expose the Middle Kingdom to Christian values in order that "time shall have been secured for [the Chinese] to absorb the ideals which in ourselves are the result of centuries of Christian increment."⁶

American missionaries styled themselves "representatives of Christendom, in the providence of God brought face to face with China, the representative of paganism."⁷ Indeed, with more pagans than any other country, this last great heathen empire seemed to have been preserved intact by God for thousands of years precisely so that its inhabitants might benefit from American conversion. One missionary remembered, "China was the goal, the lodestar, the great magnet that drew us all in those days."⁸

Like the sea merchants, American missionaries spent little time learning about the actual inhabitants of China, focusing instead on a future New China, where the Chinese would pray to Jesus in white-washed churches and debate Jeffersonian principles in town-hall meetings. Denby wrote the secretary of state, "The educated Chinaman, who speaks English, becomes a new man; he commences to think."⁹

The challenge was immense. The missionary strategy for this New China might today be called trickle-down Christianity: Win the leaders and we win China.¹⁰ Another missionary concluded that they should focus on the next Chinese generation: "Children of today will become the rulers and leaders of tomorrow, and they must be nurtured and raised with the greatest care."¹¹ And the need was urgent because,

as one veteran missionary noted, "A million a month in China are dying without God!"¹²

Reverend Absalom Sydenstricker and Reverend Henry W. Luce were two devout East Coast Presbyterians who answered this missionary call. While he trained at Union Theological Seminary in New York City, young Luce wrote, "God willing... I purpose to go to the foreign field and witness for Him as best I may in the utter most parts of the earth."¹³ As an American missionary diplomatically put it later, "In general, missionaries lacked the education for a country where the culture was as old as that of China."¹⁴ Nathaniel Peffer—a *New York Tribune* correspondent who lived in China for twenty-five years—observed,

There was fundamentally something unhealthy and incongruous in the whole missionary idea. If the endeavor had been confined to primitive savages something could have been said for it. But to go out to a race of high culture and long tradition, with philosophical, ethical, and religious systems antedating Christianity, and to go avowedly to save its people from damnation as dwellers in heathen darkness—in that there was something not only spiritually limited but almost grotesque.¹⁵

Reverend Sydenstricker's daughter Pearl remembered watching her father deliver his sermon countless times, listening to him preach to the Chinese about sin, guilt, and atonement, Western concepts nonexistent in Confucian thought. She wrote of his Chinese audience: "They did not know what he meant by sins, or who this man was who wanted to save them, or why he did. They stared, half listening, dropping to sleep."¹⁶ Pearl also remembered that when her father left their mission, he always carried a big stick to beat back the dogs sicced on him and to defend himself against enraged mobs chasing him out of town.

The Chinese could not understand why they should embrace an exclusive white God and His white Son. The idea that the American way was superior to that of the Chinese because it was based on Christianity was insulting to an ancient people who now found themselves

condescended to by young missionaries from a new country. The Chinese were also confused by the various American sects—Methodist, Lutheran, Congregationalist, and so on—that seemed to be competing against one another for the same God.

What was clear to the Chinese was that the missionaries were friends with the opium smugglers, Christians all. The simplest Chinese peasant understood it was American military might that had foisted both American-supplied opium and American missionaries on the Middle Kingdom.

As the missionary intruders saw it, they and their families were but tiny white Christian islands in an endless sea of yellow pagans. It was desperate work, ill-conceived and all but impossible. After ten years in China, Reverend Sydenstricker admitted that he had made only ten converts.

Despite such paltry success, the missionaries, in the warmth of their homes, surrounded by family, eating with knives and forks and protected by thick, high walls that kept the Chinese rabble out, continued to study the scriptures and dream of an Americanized New China. Their children—"mish kids"—grew up in this otherworld where they absorbed an idealized portrait of their home country. Pearl described the America she learned about as a "dream world, fantastically beautiful, inhabited by a people...entirely good, a land indeed from which all blessings flowed."¹⁷ As Henry R. Luce admitted later in life, "I probably gained a too romantic, too idealistic view of America....I had no experience of evil in terms of Americans."¹⁸ Thus two mirages: one of an infallible United States, the other of a China that, with some effort and internal allies, might be brought to mirror the flawless United States of America.

Churchgoers back in the United States listened attentively as letters from their hometown missionaries, who had answered the call to save the greatest number of pagans in the world, were read from the pulpit. One China-based missionary wrote home, "How can we save [China] from her own weaknesses? How can we touch her heart to her own dreadful wickedness and weakness?...These are the thoughts that

burn in us by day and night.”¹⁹ Parishioners responded to the missionaries’ hopeful dreams by digging deep into their Sunday-best pockets and purses and sending a river of nickels and dimes flowing across the Pacific Ocean in support of the New China mirage.

The reality in China was that almost none of the Three Hundred Million became Christians. Twenty years after his arrival, Sydenstricker admitted, “We are by no means overtaking these millions with the Gospel. They are increasing on us.”²⁰

The year of Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s birth—1882—was a watershed year for U.S.-China relations. At America’s inception, the concept of illegal immigration did not exist; all foreigners had been welcome to its shores. That changed with the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882. For the first time, the U.S. erected a gate with the specific goal of excluding nonwhites from the country.

In the early nineteenth century, merchants and missionaries had created the impression that Chinese men and women were laughably inefficient, lazy drug addicts who would be better off in a Christianized and Americanized New China. But when Chinese immigrants sailed to California to mine gold, they mined more efficiently, saved more of their earnings, and drank and caroused less than their white counterparts. George Hearst, a mining magnate and later a U.S. senator from California, observed Chinese miners for ten years in four different states, and he worried: “They can do more work than our people and live on less . . . they could drive our laborers to the wall.”²¹

During the building of the Transcontinental Railroad, white immigrants from Europe tried to bore through the hard granite of the Sierra Nevada Mountains and failed. Yet the Chinese, generally with smaller physical stature and strength, succeeded in the Sierras, laying the most challenging sections of the railroad. Governor Leland Stanford of California wrote President Andrew Johnson, “Without the Chinese it would have been impossible to complete the western portion of this great National highway.”²²

The California gold rush and the building of the Transcontinental Railroad were one-off affairs, but what happened next galvanized

white-male-dominated Big Labor. With the railway complete, the now unemployed Chinese workers fanned out across the West, becoming miners, farmers, and hotel, restaurant, and laundry owners. With a frugal, disciplined lifestyle and diligent work habits, the Chinese frequently produced goods and services of higher quality and at lower prices than their American competitors. White workers who were merely irritated when a fellow Caucasian did better were shocked and outraged when bested by a member of a supposedly lesser race. Senator James Blaine of Maine warned that those “who eat beef and bread and drink beer . . . will have to drop his knife and fork and take up the chopsticks” if the Chinese were allowed to stay in America.²³

Pressure from labor unions moved Congress to act. Samuel Gompers, the president of the American Federation of Labor, explained, “Racial differences between American whites and Asiatics would never be overcome. The superior whites had to exclude the inferior Asiatics, by law, or if necessary by force of arms.”²⁴ Unions led by the Knights of Labor raised the call: “The Chinese must go!”



“The Chinese Must Go!” The cleansing of the Chinese from America’s West created a vacuum in U.S.-Chinese affairs, as few Americans would ever encounter a Chinese person again. (Courtesy Everett Collection)

Senator George Hoar of Massachusetts described the Chinese Exclusion Act as "nothing less than the legalization of racial discrimination."²⁵ Yet most Americans supported the racist legislation. Twenty-four years old and just out of Harvard, Theodore Roosevelt proclaimed in 1882, "No greater calamity could now befall the United States than to have the Pacific slope fill up with a Mongolian population."²⁶

The Chinese Exclusion Act allowed Big Labor vigilantes to take things into their own gun-toting hands. Rock Springs, Wyoming, was a windy and dusty coal-mining town that produced almost 50 percent of the coal that fueled the Transcontinental Railroad. Seven hundred to nine hundred Chinese lived in Rock Springs, along with about three hundred whites. On the morning of September 2, 1885, the town's white miners and others fortified themselves with whiskey and talk of solving their "Chinese problem." They surrounded Rock Springs' Chinatown and began to shoot. Unarmed Chinese were killed in cold blood while others ran in terror. White women who had formerly tutored the Chinese in English now entered those homes in search of loot. The Chinese who fled to the surrounding countryside were ambushed by Knights of Labor gunmen who had been waiting to pick them off.

The first Wyoming state official to arrive in Rock Springs described the scene:

Not a living Chinaman—man, woman or child—was left in the town, where 700 to 900 had lived the day before, and not a single house, shanty, or structure of any kind, that had ever been inhabited by a Chinaman was left unburned. The smell of burning human flesh was sickening and almost unendurable, and was plainly discernible for more than a mile along the railroad both east and west.²⁷

A horrified Governor Francis Warren of Wyoming sent this message to President Grant:

An armed body of white men at Rock Springs, Wyoming, have attacked Chinese coal miners, working for Union Pacific Rail-

way at that point. Have driven Chinamen out of town into hills. Have burned their houses and are destroying railroad property; some forty houses burned; three men known to be killed, many more believed to be. Mob now preventing some five hundred Chinamen from reaching food or shelter.²⁸

Sixteen white miners were charged with riot, arson, murder, and robbery. The man who heard the case—justice of the peace John Ludvigsen—was a dues-paying member of the Knights of Labor. When asked to serve on the jury, one prominent Rock Springs man declined, saying his back was "not bulletproof."²⁹ There were no convictions.

Many communities followed the Rock Springs example. On September 28, 1885, Mayor Jacob Neisbach of Tacoma, Washington, chaired a meeting of white laborers at the Knights of Labor hall to discuss Tacoma's "Chinese problem." The next day Neisbach led an armed mob of about five hundred to Chinatown, where the men forced the Chinese out of their homes and marched them to a waiting train. The train, bound for Portland, pulled out but stopped eight miles down the track, where a second mob robbed the terrified Chinese and herded them into the wilderness, whipping those who didn't move fast enough.

At dawn on February 7, 1885, the Seattle chief of police led an armed mob to Seattle's Chinatown and then marched the frightened Chinese to a warehouse by the wharf, where they spent an uneasy night. The next day the Chinese were loaded onto a steamer at gunpoint and sent off. "The trouble is over," wrote a local reporter, "and the people have proved their ability to govern themselves. They have done this not as the friends of the Chinese, but as the friends of law."³⁰

The cleansing of the Chinese continued across the West. In Santa Cruz, New Mexico, the Chinese were given twenty-four hours to leave. Near Douglas Island, Alaska, one hundred Chinese were herded onto a boat and set adrift in the Pacific. In Grass Creek, Utah, all Chinese were run out of town. The Knights of Labor called a mass meeting in

Butte, Montana, site of extensive copper mines and a flourishing Chinatown, and the assembled throng passed a unanimous resolution calling for the dismissal of all Chinese from their jobs and for their expulsion from the area. At a mining camp near Orofino, Idaho, white miners hung the five Chinese who worked there. The Chinese of Cheyenne, Wyoming, fled after posters warned that if they didn't leave they would be tarred and feathered.

For years after the establishment of the Chinese Exclusion Act and the resulting race cleansing of the Chinese from the West, very few Americans would behold a Chinese person. The Chinese remaining in the country were restricted to their Chinatowns, like the Indians on their reservations, invisible to most Americans. The majority of Americans were now cut off from these people of the world's most populous country and thus unable to form direct relationships with Chinese and take their measure. This left an enormous void of understanding.

Four years after the Chinese Exclusion Act, Americans dedicated the Statue of Liberty, which had these immortal words on its pedestal: "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free, the wretched refuse of your teeming shore."

Poor, huddled, wretched—such terms were mostly unheard-of in Roosevelt family parlors in Manhattan and Hyde Park, New York. Theodore and Franklin Delano Roosevelt were raised in a European manner, studied European history and languages, and steamed across the Atlantic numerous times, so that they were able to form their own opinions about Europeans based on firsthand experience. Theodore and Franklin attended America's best private college—Harvard—which offered no courses in the Chinese language or philosophy, and neither one ever crossed the Pacific to see China for himself. China was not much of a subject during Theodore's childhood. But the Middle Kingdom came alive to Franklin as he listened raptly to the exotic tales about New China told by his mother, grandfather, aunts, and uncles, who in truth had only marginally more direct experience of the Chinese than Americans who had never visited.

In 1877, just five years before she gave birth to Franklin, Sara returned to Hong Kong for a long visit with her sisters Annie and Dora (both had married Russell and Company partners), and she stayed at Rose Hill, where she had lived as a little girl. Years later, when Dora and Annie traveled home from Hong Kong for visits, they entertained young Franklin with pidgin English and stories of weird Chinese ways. As one Roosevelt chronicler wrote, "By the time FDR reached adulthood, Delano memories of the 1862 voyage to Hong Kong and their experiences there during the American Civil War were as real to him as if he had personally sailed...to that distant port of call to take up the life of a 'Foreign Devil' of China-merchant pedigree."³¹

James Roosevelt was fifty-four years old and his wife, Sara Delano, was twenty-eight when their son, Franklin, was born. James, a loving but relatively elderly father, died when Franklin was just eighteen years old. His wife, however, was a vigorous young mother who made her son her mission and dominated Franklin's early years, even home-schooling him. One special day Sara gave her son the beloved stamp collection she had assembled from letters her father had sent her from Asia.

Young Franklin lionized Grandpa Delano and loved to visit him at Algonac, just down the Hudson from Hyde Park. The child would race to the parlor where Warren Delano sat surrounded by Chinese art and furnishings, report his progress in school, and read his schoolboy essays as Grandpa nodded his approval. Warren was a gifted storyteller and he fired his grandson's imagination with colorful tales of a faraway people who would be better off if they were more like Americans.

Years later Franklin's son Elliott admitted, "Delano ships sailing out of New Bedford made the family rich...[money] earned from the sale of opium."³² But none of Warren's stories told at Algonac revealed this fact. When Delano's fellow Russell and Company partner Robert Bennet Forbes asked him to write his reminiscences about the



Franklin Delano Roosevelt (top) with his grandfather Warren Delano in a wheelchair (Courtesy of the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library and Museum, Hyde Park, New York)

old China trade, Warren responded with a short account that never mentioned the main source of his fortune. Geoffrey Ward, the prime chronicler of Franklin Delano Roosevelt's younger days, concluded, "In a family fond of retelling and embellishing even the mildest sort of ancestral adventures, no stories seem to have been handed down concerning Warren Delano's genuinely adventurous career in the opium business."³³ One of his sons remembered how strictly Warren Delano "complied with the admonition not to let his right hand know what his left hand was doing."³⁴

Franklin Delano Roosevelt had five uncles, five aunts, two great-uncles, and a few great-aunts—all from his mother's Delano line. Having no brothers or sisters except for a much older half brother from his father's first marriage, Franklin shared his childhood with an ever-widening circle of Delano cousins. As her son grew older, Sara told Franklin that he bore a close physical resemblance to her father, which likely pleased him greatly—and she had no doubts about which side

of the family he came down on character-wise. Her son, Sara was fond of saying, was "a Delano, not a Roosevelt at all."³⁵

Warren Delano's legacy would be much more than financial. His narrative became the foundation of FDR's understanding of China. Roosevelt would tell his secretary of the treasury Henry Morgenthau, "Please remember that I have a background of a little over a century in Chinese affairs."³⁶

Hulbert concluded, "It was our duty to protest against Japan's encroachment in Korea... Roosevelt failed to protest the rapacity of Japan in 1905."⁸²

Theodore Roosevelt was the first world leader to endorse Japan's military advancement onto the Asian continent. Roosevelt's Japanese Monroe Doctrine for Asia assumed the Japanese would push back the Russians, respect the Anglo-American Open Door policy, help Christianize and Americanize China, and maintain the Anglo-Americans' naval channel. But an American businessman who watched his fellow countrymen abandon Korea observed, "The Japs have got what they have been planning for these many moons and it is clear that Roosevelt played into their hands when he posed as the great peacemaker of the 20th century."⁸³

A few years later, an American missionary visited Resident-General Ito in his headquarters nestled on the slope of Mount Namsan, overlooking the city of Seoul. Ito was dressed formally in his resplendent uniform and seated behind an enormous polished desk. On the walls of his cavernous command post, Ito had hung only two pictures. One was a portrait of Meiji. The other, slightly lower than the emperor's, was a photo of President Theodore Roosevelt. The missionary asked why Ito had so honored the American president. Ito responded, with a smile, "President Roosevelt is a man I admire for he is an honest man. He always means just what he says. He is frank and straightforward and never leaves you in doubt. He gives every man a square deal."⁸⁴

Chapter 4

THE NOBLE CHINESE PEASANT

When the Christian prayer first came to China the humblest farmer instantly understood it, so like it was to his: "Our father who are in heaven" ... China has embarked upon a vast reformation—inspired by the Christian gospel.... In their great crisis they found the man they needed... the greatest soldier in Asia, the greatest statesman in Asia, America's friend: Chiang Kai-shek.

—Henry Luce¹

Days after Secretary Taft and Prime Minister Katsura agreed on Japan's Monroe Doctrine for Asia, another secret meeting occurred blocks away in hot and humid downtown Tokyo. The participants were Chinese revolutionaries in pursuit of the Mandate of Heaven to rule. (After Japan bested China in the 1894–1895 Sino-Japanese War, a number of Chinese intellectuals and nationalists traveled to Japan to study its seemingly successful westernizing ways.)

Dr. Sun Yat-sen was a revolutionary firebrand from Canton, the southern Chinese city that had endured so much at the hands of the sea barbarians. Sun had studied in Hawaii and Hong Kong and had been



Sun Yat-sen. Sun's "Three Principles of the People" were Nationalism, Democracy, and People's Livelihood. (Courtesy of the Library of Congress)

baptized a Christian by a Congregationalist missionary. Sun, a charismatic dreamer, had led two failed uprisings by the summer of 1905, and Manchu officials sought his head.

Sun's goal for China was what he called the Three Principles of the People: Nationalism, Democracy, and People's Livelihood. *Nationalism* meant the reassertion of the ethnic Han population over Chinese affairs. In 1638, the Manchu—the ethnic majority in Manchuria—had taken Beijing from the Han and had ruled since then as the Qing dynasty. Sun's nationalistic calls to kick out the interloping Manchu and the Western foreign devils resonated with the broader Han majority. *Democracy* promised eventual rule by the people after an interval of political tutelage. Sun believed that China's masses were not yet ready for democracy and needed a training period during which he would teach them, and then, at some undefined future date, Sun would



Charlie Soong (CPA Media / Pictures From History)

transition China to full democracy. *People's Livelihood* was that happy time that would result from following Sun's principles.

Sun's continual headache, apart from simply staying alive, was raising money to support his revolution, which was the subject of this gathering on Sunday, July 30, 1905. As talk turned to fund-raising, eyes turned to Charlie Soong, the richest man in the room.

Charlie Soong was a wealthy Shanghai publisher and mill owner and one of Sun's key moneymen. He had been born Han Jiaozhun on Hainan island, south of Canton. At about the age of fifteen, Charlie had made his way to the United States as a laborer. The West Coast of the U.S. was aflame at that time with the "Chinese must go!" pogroms. Soong wisely chose the East Coast, where few Americans had ever seen a Chinese person.

Southern Methodists in North Carolina took Soong under their wing, introducing him to the word of God and baptizing him in 1880.



Charlie Soong, Duke University, 1881: "The only Chinese Christian in North Carolina." (CPA Media / Pictures From History)

No longer a poor, faceless Chinese laborer, Charlie became a hot topic of discussion in Southern Methodist parlors. A Chinese person in North Carolina was a rarity—indeed, Soong was the first and only Chinese Christian in the state at that time.² Southern Methodists realized that they could mold this young Chinese man and then return him to his homeland to help build a Southern Methodist New China.

Church leaders reached out to thirty-six-year-old Julian Carr of Durham, North Carolina, to assist in that effort. Carr was one of America's outsized characters, a devout Southern Methodist and a partner in the manufacturing company that produced the Bull Durham brand of tobacco, which he had helped make famous with creative and attractive advertising across America and around the world.

In April of 1881, Carr met eighteen-year-old Charlie Soong at the Durham train station. They rode in Carr's horse-drawn carriage to Somerset Villa, one of the South's grand homes. Soong was suddenly

living in a mansion and learning from one of America's leading Southern Methodists—who also happened to be a marketing genius—about Jesus, business, and life.

Carr gave Soong a beautiful leather-bound Bible. Durham was a religious town, and Soong observed that every family in Durham had not just one but often a number of Bibles. Indeed, Charlie saw people walking to church on Sundays clutching their personal Bibles like jewels. Furthermore, every classroom in Durham displayed Bibles, as did doctors' waiting rooms and restaurants. Charlie was amazed; everywhere he turned, it seemed, he saw a Bible.

In church, Charlie heard Southern Methodist missionaries' letters read from the pulpit, describing a New China in the process of being Christianized and Americanized. After the letters were read, Soong saw the plate passed for the missions in China and watched in amazement as pew after pew of parishioners put nickels, dimes, quarters, and dollars into collection plates. The ushers then heaped the take from the collection plates into one glittering pile, every cent bound for China.

Trinity College—later renamed Duke University—was North Carolina's finest Southern Methodist institution of higher learning. Julian Carr was one of the school's biggest benefactors, and though Charlie lacked academic qualifications, Trinity accepted Soong into its theology department, where he would study Christianity.

While Trinity carried plenty of prestige as a local institution, the premier Southern Methodist college in the United States was Vanderbilt University, in Nashville, Tennessee. Bishop Holland McTyeire, who had helped found Vanderbilt, learned of Soong's progress at Trinity and successfully recruited North Carolina's only Chinese Christian. Vanderbilt awarded Charlie a degree in theology in 1885.

Charlie Soong offered hope for a Southern Methodist New China. Soong was an object of fascination not for who he was (a Chinese) but for what he had become (an Americanized Chinese Christian). Perhaps this young man would help the Southern Methodists win China.

Charlie Soong returned home to China in 1886, assigned to preach to Shanghai's pagans. He quickly realized what American missionaries

had missed: very few of his countrymen wished to be either Christianized or Americanized. As a Chinese who had lived in the United States, Soong understood the difference between the reality in China and America's New China mirage. Soong had been duly impressed by all the funds flowing to China from the pews of American churches, and he made a practical and, some might say, cynical calculation: while in reality, few Chinese would submit to being Christianized, there was a lot of money to be earned from American Christians who believed that mirage.

American missionaries were spending a small fortune to print Bibles in the United States and ship those heavy piles of paper across the Pacific. Charlie approached the American Bible Society and secured permission to print much cheaper Bibles in Shanghai. He founded the company that would make him a wealthy man, the Sino-American Press. Soong was soon China's biggest publisher of Christian books, selling Bibles by the box to Americans chasing the dream.

Charlie Soong and Sun Yat-sen met for the first time at the Shanghai Methodist church in 1894. Charlie and Sun—a rare pair of English-speaking Chinese Christians—were delighted to learn how much they had in common. They were about the same age, came from the same area—southern China, near Canton—and spoke similar dialects, and both had studied American ways and craved change in China. The men soon became best friends and revolutionary partners. Sun supplied the ideas, and Charlie risked his own life by secretly printing them. And with his own personal fortune and contacts with wealthy Americans, Soong became one of Sun's behind-the-scenes financiers.

Soong needed to go to the U.S. to raise funds, but Chinese who entered the United States during Theodore Roosevelt's administration risked detention. To avoid being held in a Bureau of Immigration pen, in 1905, Soong purchased a Portuguese passport in Macao and came through U.S. customs at San Francisco as a Portuguese citizen. Charlie raised money from patrons in San Francisco, New York, and other

cities, but the largest contributor to Sun's cause lived in Durham, North Carolina.

Julian Carr—now sixty years old—again rode in his horse-drawn carriage to the Durham train station to welcome Charlie Soong, now forty-two years old. The two friends had done a lot of business together over the past nineteen years, as Carr had helped Charlie diversify his Bible empire and move into wheat and cotton milling. Back in Somerset Villa again, Soong told Carr the exciting news: the American New China dream was about to come true.

Carr gathered friends to hear Soong make his case, and at Durham's Old Club, a group of North Carolinians witnessed what no other Americans had ever seen: a nattily dressed, Vanderbilt-educated, North Carolina-baptized Southern Methodist Chinese man describing, in Southern-accented English, the coming of a Christianized New China. To his devout listeners, Charlie was the China mirage made flesh, a living, breathing incarnation of the missionary dream.

Soong told his audience that Dr. Sun would become China's George Washington and that Sun's Three Principles of the People were modeled after Abraham Lincoln's "of the people, by the people, for the people." His sales pitch was believable only because Carr and his friends knew so little. If a revolutionary had come from Germany or England seeking support, the Old Club men could have evaluated his assertions critically, having the benefit of a wealth of prior cultural experiences in Europe. But China to them was a great blank canvas, now skillfully colored in by Soong.

Soong was especially convincing as he explained Sun's platform of Nationalism, Democracy, and People's Livelihood. The gathered men were hearing Sun's concepts translated from Chinese into English by a Vanderbilt University theology major smart enough to filter and slant. What Charlie termed *nationalism* meant to most Chinese an intense hatred of all foreigners, *especially* white barbarians like the men listening to Soong in Durham. Indeed, it was the Manchu leaders' failure to stop the sea barbarians from slicing New Chinas from Middle Kingdom territory that had convinced most Chinese that the Manchu were

losing the Mandate of Heaven. (That was not how Soong explained it to his North Carolina audience.) And while democracy sounded just fine to the Old Club bunch, there was a catch that Charlie did not elaborate on: during the tutelage period, Sun would become a Christian dictator with one-man rule.

Julian Carr and those like him dug deep into their pockets. Charlie returned to Shanghai with over two million U.S. dollars for Dr. Sun's revolutionary cause.

Charlie Soong married well, and by 1897, he had sired three daughters (Ailing, Chingling, and Mayling) and a son (Tse-ven, called T.V.).³ Raised in a world between two cultures, his children were influenced by their father's Christian faith, his American education and business success, his support for Sun's revolution, and his ability to leverage the China mirage for financial gain. The Soong family lived in a Western-style house in a New China area of Shanghai carved out by the sea barbarians. They were Chinese and connected to the hundreds of millions who sought the expulsion of foreign devils, but they ate with knives and forks and went to Christian schools.



The Soong sisters: Ailing, Chingling, and Mayling. Two of the sisters sided with Chiang Kai-shek; one sided with Mao Zedong. (CPA Media / Pictures From History)

Charlie provided his offspring with American college educations at Harvard, Wellesley, and Georgia's Wesleyan College. While living in the United States, the Soong children saw how little Americans knew about China and realized that these people believed China was destined to be Christianized and Americanized. Like their father, they understood that Americans accepted them not for who they were (Chinese) but for what they had become (Americanized Chinese Christians).

Ailing Soong, Charlie's oldest child, inherited her father's drive. Ailing journeyed to the United States alone at the age of fourteen and graduated from Wesleyan College in Macon, Georgia, in 1911. She then returned to China to serve as Dr. Sun's personal assistant.

The Mandate of Heaven had for years been in play. Sea barbarians on China's coast had humiliated the Manchu dynasty, which then endured the nineteenth century's largest civil war—the Taiping Rebellion—and was further humbled by foreign troops who marched on Beijing during the Boxer Rebellion. The corrupt Empress Dowager Cixi finally died in 1908, at the age of seventy-three, after forty-seven years of rule. At the age of two, Puyi—depicted in popular culture as the Last Emperor—became the new Son of Heaven.

By 1911 the Manchu dynasty was on its last legs, its emperor only five years old. Numerous uprisings—some of which Sun Yat-sen led or participated in—sought to gain the Mandate of Heaven. In the fall of that year, Sun was in the United States raising funds when he learned from press reports that on October 10, 1911, one of his allies had staged a successful military uprising in the city of Wuchang. Sun arrived back in China on December 21, 1911. On December 29, a meeting of representatives from some of China's provinces elected Sun provisional president of what would be proclaimed on January 1, 1912, as the Republic of China. But Sun had competition within the ranks for the Mandate and was unable to dominate the unruly coalition of revolutionaries. Sun lost out in a clash of arms, and China descended into chaos as warlords quickly divided the country among themselves. Suddenly the lives of Sun and Soong were in jeopardy. In 1913 Sun and Charlie Soong packed up their families, boarded a ship in the dark of night, and fled to Japan.

* * *

Ailing continued as Sun's personal assistant in Japan, but she soon grew uncomfortable with the unwelcome sexual advances made by her married, older boss. Even as a young woman, Ailing was a shrewd operator, more interested in money than power. In 1914, twenty-six-year-old Ailing extracted herself from the forty-eight-year-old Sun's grasp with no hurt feelings and married H. H. Kung, a Chinese Christian also in Japan who was reputedly China's richest banker and a lin-eal descendant of Confucius.

At this point, Chingling Soong, Charlie's second daughter, was twenty-one years old and, like her sister, a graduate of Wesleyan College. Chingling took Ailing's place as Sun's secretary.

Sun made advances to the beautiful young Chingling as well. Unlike her older sister, Chingling fell for Sun and/or his ideas. As she later remembered: "I didn't fall in love. It was hero-worship from afar. It was a romantic girl's idea...but a good one. I wanted to help save China and Dr. Sun was the one man who could do it, so I wanted to help him."⁴

When Charlie realized that his married best friend was pursuing his young daughter, he dragged Chingling back to Shanghai and ordered her to forget Sun. Father and daughter quarreled. One night, Chingling escaped through a window, boarded a ship, and returned to Sun's arms in Japan.

Forty-nine-year-old Sun abandoned his wife and married twenty-three-year-old Chingling in Tokyo on October 25, 1915. Chingling recalled, "My father came to Japan and bitterly attacked Dr. Sun. He tried to annul the marriage on grounds that I was underage and lacked my parents' consent. When he failed he broke all relations with Dr. Sun and disowned me!"⁵

Charlie Soong died three years later, in 1918, having had no contact with Sun and Chingling since their marriage. Friends remember Soong lamenting, "I was never so hurt in my life. My own daughter and my best friend."⁶ Dr. Sun did not attend his funeral.

Ailing took the reins of the Soong empire upon her father's death. At this point, many factions were competing to unite a fractured China,



Chingling Soong and Sun Yat-sen. She was twenty-three years old; he was forty-nine. "I wanted to help save China and Dr. Sun was the one man who could do it, so I wanted to help him," Chingling said.

(Courtesy Everett Collection)

one of them the Dr. Sun-founded Nationalist Party, which espoused his Three Principles of the People. Ailing naturally supported the man who was her father's former best friend and her sister's husband. Sun's fortunes—and those of his Nationalist Party—rose, fell, and then rose again, with Sun sometimes close to grasping power, other times fleeing into exile once more. All along, the Wesleyan-educated Ailing, her Yale-educated husband, H. H. Kung, and her Harvard-educated little brother, T. V. Soong, raised funds for the Nationalist Party. Sun and the Soongs would have liked American help, but actions by the United States at this time enraged millions of Chinese, and in the fallout, another white Western country emerged as Sun's chief supporter.

* * *

When World War I erupted in Europe, Britain used its New China colony of Weihaiwei to recruit an eventual 140,000 Chinese to serve in the Chinese Labor Corps (CLC) in Britain, working in place of the British men marching off to war. While in Europe, these CLC forces—and millions of relatives back in China following them in press reports—learned that America had declared this Great War to be a “war to end all wars.” President Woodrow Wilson entered the Paris peace talks preaching “self-determination” as a salve for a ravaged world.

Wilson accidentally inspired millions of colonized Asians held in the clutches of white Westerners. A young Ho Chi Minh petitioned Wilson and other leaders to help him free Indochina from the grasp of the French, a request that was cast aside. The Chinese warlords who controlled Beijing at that moment sent a delegation representing China’s interests to Paris. Inspired by Wilson, the Chinese imagined that the conference would help China evict the Germans—who had lost the war and who were being taken to the cleaners by the victorious Western powers—from the Middle Kingdom. Instead, Wilson and other leaders at the Paris Peace Conference upheld the right of foreign devils to *expand* their New Chinas by granting Japan the former German China area of Shandong, on China’s Pacific coast.

When news of the West’s—and especially Wilson’s—sellout hit, millions of Chinese protesters flooded the streets, among them a youthful Mao Zedong who “attacked Wilson’s failure in his first recorded criticism of the United States.”⁷ To protest the people’s treatment, the Chinese delegation to the Paris Peace Conference was the only one that did not sign the treaty officially ending hostilities between the Allied and Central Powers.

As Chinese seethed at America, a new revolutionary player, the Soviet Union, cannily renounced many of the deposed czar’s unequal privileges in China (which imperial Russia, along with other Western countries, had gained in the nineteenth century under the unequal treaties but that the new Soviet Union didn’t have the power to exploit).

This created a tremendous sense of goodwill between those two nations. Communist Russian agents soon established warm contacts with important Chinese intellectuals and political figures. For over two generations, America had sent thousands of political, cultural, economic, and missionary workers to China. Communist Russia didn’t have a single school, church, or even debating society in China. Yet, within little time, the new Soviet Union had made a greater impression on the Chinese than all the Christian missionary influences combined.

Eventually, Moscow agreed to bankroll two small factions within the fractured China and dispatched advisers to found a Chinese Communist Party and help organize Sun’s Nationalist Party along Soviet lines. Moscow’s advisers told the Nationalists and the Communists to combine forces in a united front. Both parties would receive Soviet aid.

In the Nationalist camp was a rising star, Chiang Kai-shek, a traditional Confucian thinker on the political right. He’d trained as a soldier in Japan, and Sun had appointed him Generalissimo of the Nationalist army. In Chiang’s idea of revolution, he would seize military control of the country, and the masses would then obey him as a father figure according to his code: inferior yielded to superior, soldier deferred to general, and the general bowed to Heaven. Chiang bought into the father-son model as long as he was the father: “I believe that unless everyone has absolute trust in one man, we cannot reconstruct the nation and we cannot complete the revolution.”⁸ About his army, the Generalissimo said, “I look upon the soldiers under me as a father regards his children.”⁹ Chiang valued loyalty above ability and surrounded himself with yes-men. When someone criticized an incompetent general, Chiang replied, “But where do you find a man who is so obedient?”¹⁰

Chiang chanted Sun’s principles of Nationalism, Democracy, and People’s Livelihood, but what interested him most was the tutelage period during which one leader would control China. He ruled out democracy as “absolutely impossible for the entire nation.”¹¹

While he didn't say it to foreigners' faces, Chiang later wrote a too-candid book in which he attributed almost all of China's ills to the foreign devils and their unequal treaties. Yet Chiang was not on the side of China's peasant majority; instead, he favored the wealthy bankers and landlords who got fat on peasant labor. Indeed, while claiming to be a revolutionary, Chiang was actually a staunch defender of the status quo—with one exception. When Sun appointed him Generalissimo, Chiang exclaimed to his wife, Jennie: "If I control the army, I will have the power to control the country. It is my road to leadership."¹²

On the left, within Sun's Russian-supported politically flexible big tent, was a far different character, the Communist Party's Mao Zedong.¹³ Mao grew up in relatively comfortable circumstances in the province of Hunan with a financially successful father and his own bedroom, a rare luxury in rural China. As a boy, Mao read voraciously, developing what would become a lifelong habit. "What I enjoyed were the romances of Old China, and especially stories of rebellions," he later recalled. "I used to read [these outlawed books] in school, covering them up with a [Chinese] Classic when the teacher walked past... I believe that perhaps I was much influenced by such books, read at an impressionable age."¹⁴ Mao also devoured books about the history of Western countries, including the United States. He remembered, "I had first heard of America in an article which told of the American Revolution and contained a sentence like this: 'After eight years of difficult war, Washington won victory and built up his nation.'"¹⁵ Rebellion in search of the Mandate of Heaven—a long and hallowed Chinese tradition—excited the young man.

As a youth, Mao read an 1894 pamphlet written by white Christians entitled "The Dismemberment of China"; it repeated the claim that China could not be reformed from within but would have to be civilized by foreign countries. Years later, he remembered the opening line: "Alas, China will be subjugated." Mao credited the reading of this pamphlet with the beginning of his political consciousness; as he later recalled, "I felt depressed about the future of my country and began to realize that it was the duty of all the people to help save it."¹⁶

In the early 1920s, the young Mao joined the New Culture movement, which held that traditional Confucian values would not help China advance. Leaders advocated a cultural revolution to regenerate China. Old ways had to be dispensed with, and the consciousness of the people had to be transformed. Until there was a cultural revolution, there was little hope that China would become strong enough to oust the foreign devils.

Mao and the members of the New Culture movement were young men who faced away from China's past and toward its future. Inspired by the success of the Russian Revolution, he and a small group of others founded the Chinese Communist Party in Shanghai in July of 1921. Mao accepted Russian guidance and Marxist language before he fully understood many Western—and especially Marxist—concepts. In *Mao Zedong: A Political and Intellectual Portrait*, Maurice Meissner writes, "It is a striking feature of the origins of the Chinese Communist Party that its founders became politically committed to Communism well before they became intellectually committed to Marxist theory, indeed, in most cases well before they acquired any significant knowledge of Marxism."¹⁷ Marxism addressed itself to modern industrial countries where the urban workers would supposedly rise in revolution, so Mao began by attempting to organize China's urban workers into trade unions. But soon he imagined a revolution the exact opposite of that prescribed by conventional Marxism or Communism.

Most Chinese people lived in small villages; only a small fraction had jobs in the coastal cities. The villages were often little more than a dozen or so mud huts, with no electricity or sewers. Half the people died before the age of thirty. Landlords held sway, owning the vast majority of the land, and the farmers often paid them more than 50 percent of their crops in confiscatory taxes. A British social scientist compared the Chinese farmer to "a man standing permanently up to the neck in water so that even a ripple is sufficient to drown him."¹⁸ Mao imagined a revolution in which the powerless peasants would rise together to become powerful and take land from the landlords. This was the beginning of Maoism.

When Mao revealed his new thinking, his fellow Communist Party members were aghast. Communist dogma held that peasants were low-class, simple-minded conservatives who could not be roused to revolution. Mao begged to differ and submitted an article arguing for a revolution in which the countryside would dominate the cities, but Communist leaders refused to publish his heresy.

Against the majority's criticism, Mao retained his certainty. As early as 1925, Mao was already talking about organizing the peasant masses. In January of 1926 Mao published an astute analysis of rural society, identifying as China's real problem the big landlords who controlled too much land. Mao complained that the revolution had focused too much on city people and not enough on the peasant majority. Almost alone, he predicted that those who rode the wave of peasant revolution would inherit the Mandate of Heaven. Duxiu Chen, the secretary-general of the Chinese Communist Party, expressed the majority view as he rebuked Mao: "The peasants are scattered and their forces are not easy to concentrate"; their "culture is low, their desires in life are simple, and they easily tend toward conservatism... these environmental factors make it difficult for the peasants to participate in the revolutionary movement."¹⁹

Sun Yat-sen died in 1925, his principles of Nationalism, Democracy, and People's Livelihood an intellectual construct that he had never translated into a real revolution. Many had approved of Sun's rebellious ideas because he called for Chinese nationalism, but Sun was a Western-oriented Christian who had inspired no impassioned nationwide mass movement. His Nationalist Party (along with its Communist adjunct) was a Moscow-funded organization with influence mostly in southeast China. Traditional Chinese society had not changed and the status of the peasantry versus the landlords remained the same.

Sun's United Front had been a big tent masking fundamental differences. Sun's death set off a struggle for succession. Chiang Kai-shek was allied with the urban, Western-oriented moneyed classes and the bankers and landlords who feasted on the status quo. Diametrically

opposed was Mao Zedong, who thought that China's future rested with the rural poor. As the English author Philip Short puts it in his excellent study *Mao: A Life*, "Among a nation of 400 million, 90 percent of whom were peasants, land redistribution—taking from the rich and giving to the poor—was the primary vehicle carrying the Communist revolution forward, the fundamental point of divergence between [the Communists] and [the Nationalists]."²⁰

Sun's passing also meant a realignment within the Soong family: number-two sister Chingling, although only thirty-three years old, was now the revered widow of the sainted Sun Yat-sen. Chingling appreciated Communist Russia's support for her husband's revolution and was a liberal who believed, like Mao, that a resolution of the peasants' plight was the key to China's future. However, the oldest Soong sister, Ailing, remained the most powerful force within the family. Ailing exuded confidence and strength. An American correspondent observed, "Here was authority, conscious of itself, conscious of power.... I suspected a mind that forgot nothing and forgave little."²¹ Another American correspondent with experience in Asia noted that as a "hard-willed creature possessed of demonic energy and great will-to-power, violently able, cunning, and ambitious, she is as powerful a personality as any in China."²² U.S. State Department cables from China to Washington referred to Ailing as the "most powerful person in China."²³ The FBI later described her as "an evil and clever woman [who] sits in the background and directs the family."²⁴

In July of 1926, the Russian-funded Chinese United Front—combining Chiang's Nationalist forces and Mao's Communist followers—launched the Northern Expedition, a military effort involving a hundred thousand troops that was designed to break out of southeastern China, beat back various warlords, conquer central China (with the booming metropolis of Shanghai), and gain control of the vital Yangtze River. In United Front spirit, Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek led the military assault while Mao Zedong helped spearhead the political effort.

Mao sent his political operatives in advance of Chiang's military forces, creating support for the Nationalist cause among the peasants with promises of land reform. When Chiang's armies arrived, peasant support, as Chiang later recorded, "sprang up with the vigor of storms and cloudbursts."²⁵ Despite Chiang's forces being outnumbered by his warlord opponents ten to one, the peasants—newly liberated and promised land by Mao—welcomed his armies.

Ailing Soong was alarmed by Mao's peasant uprisings and workers' strikes. Landlords and industrialists were Ailing's friends and business associates. With a deal in mind, Ailing took a Bank of China steamer upriver to the city of Jiujiang, Chiang Kai-shek's temporary headquarters on the Yangtze, and invited him aboard for a heart-to-heart talk. Chiang might have been the Generalissimo, but Ailing took control—she made Chiang come to her, and they negotiated for hours. She proposed an alliance between the powerful Soong empire and the ambitious Chiang. The Generalissimo listened attentively as Ailing described an opportunity for him to leave the United Front, reject the Russians, eliminate Mao's threat, and seize control of a cleansed Nationalist Party.

Ailing made three demands that would later have a dramatic impact on U.S.-China relations. Each demand concerned her family. To assure herself of political control, Ailing told Chiang to appoint her husband, H. H. Kung, as prime minister. For financial control, Ailing told Chiang that her little brother T. V. Soong would serve as Chiang's finance minister. The third condition was both political and personal. Ailing possessed something priceless through her father's support of, and Chingling's being the widow of, Sun Yat-sen: around the Soong family hovered the aura of the fabled Mandate of Heaven. Ailing offered Chiang an unimaginable prize: marriage into the Soong clan and a stake in the Mandate.

Ailing had earlier told younger sister Mayling that she would offer Mayling's hand in marriage to Chiang Kai-shek. Twenty-nine-year-old Mayling was one of Shanghai's most desired bachelorettes, a beautiful,

cultured, rich Chinese Southern Methodist. She had spent a decade of her young life living and studying in New Jersey, Georgia, Tennessee, and Massachusetts, learning to speak perfect American-style English. In 1917, when twenty-year-old Mayling graduated from Wellesley College with a major in English literature and minor in philosophy, she had lived half her life in the United States. Mayling later admitted, "The only thing Chinese about me is my face."²⁶

Sun Yat-sen's widow, Chingling, was appalled by the idea of Chiang marrying into the Soong family; she regarded the militaristic Generalissimo as a traitor to her late husband's memory. But young Mayling saw no choice but to side with dominant sister Ailing. Little brother T.V. was also less than enamored by the stiff, militaristic Chiang, but he, too, fell in line behind his oldest sister.

Ailing was proposing a Soong-Chiang syndicate with her relatives in the Generalissimo's bedroom, office, and pockets. As a final condition, Ailing demanded that Chiang Kai-shek become a proper Southern Methodist like the Soongs. Chingling later observed, "If Elder Sister had been a man, the Generalissimo would have been dead, and she would have been ruling China."²⁷

Ailing dismissed Chiang after making her proposals, saying she would await his answer. Chiang hurried home and told Jennie Chen, his wife of seven years:

I am desperate. Ailing has struck a very hard bargain, but what she says is true. Her offer is the only way for me to achieve my plans to unite China. I now ask you to help me. I beg you not to say no. After all, true love is measured by the sacrifice one is willing to make.²⁸

Chiang pleaded with Jennie to go to America for five years so he could consolidate power with the Soongs. Jennie was dubious, so Chiang lied to her, saying her time overseas would be short and that she could later return.

On March 19, 1927, Chiang wrote separate letters to Ailing and Mayling agreeing to Ailing's bargain. He would exile his wife to the



Ailing Soong called the shots with Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek. Note that Ailing is leading and Chiang is holding her arm. (Associated Press)

United States, marry Mayling, and appoint Ailing's husband and her brother to top posts. Chiang and Jennie were never divorced. When Jennie arrived in the U.S., Chiang gave an interview in which he disavowed his wife as a minor concubine. Regarding Ailing's demand that he be baptized a Southern Methodist, Chiang proposed a shrewd strategy, arguing that religion shouldn't be taken all at once, like a pill, but rather sipped slowly, like hot, rich soup. Chiang suggested that they put out the story that he was studying the Bible in preparation for a possible conversion. Chingling later observed, "He would have agreed to be a Holy Roller to marry Mayling. He needed her to build a dynasty."²⁹

* * *

In April of 1927 Chiang moved to oust Sun Yat-sen's Russian advisers, end the United Front, eliminate Mao, and crush the peasant and labor union uprisings. In one of history's bloodiest betrayals, forces loyal to Chiang massacred between twenty thousand and thirty thousand presumed Communists in Shanghai alone. The majority of Chiang's killings took place in the countryside. The Mao-oriented peasant revolutionaries were far greater in number than their urban counterparts, and they were more socially radical—a very direct threat, since the majority of Chiang's army officers were sons of landlords. The Generalissimo's slaughter in the countryside took hundreds of thousands of lives, yet it was little reported in America, as Chiang turned his Soviet-funded and -trained armies against those who had been his Communist allies. Chiang's forces still represented a small percentage of the Chinese population but were regionally strong enough to muscle Mao and his comrades away from China's east coast.

The Soong-Chiang coup was for China both a turning point and a point of no return. Chiang, apparently triumphant, aligned with New China urbanites like the Soongs to impose his Confucian militarism, while the Communists were seemingly decimated, with only a few survivors like Mao hiding in the countryside. Ailing, her obedient husband, H. H. Kung, little brother T.V., and little sister Mayling hoped that after Chiang's "extermination" of the Communists, the Soong-Chiang syndicate would go on to control China from an urban base with foreign support. But Chingling understood Mao's strategy of helping the rural poor majority, and she never forgave her sisters for lending the Soong name to Chiang Kai-shek: "He has set China back years and made the revolution much more costly and terrible than it need have been," she declared. "In the end he will be defeated just the same."³⁰

The Soong and Chiang families were officially joined at a public wedding in Shanghai on December 1, 1927. The Soong-Chiang syndicate staged the event, which was tailor-made for the international press.

Over thirteen hundred guests—including the consuls of France, Britain, Japan, and the United States—packed the ballroom of Shanghai's prestigious Majestic Hotel. Cameras ringed the room. The crowd hushed as forty-year-old Chiang Kai-shek, dressed like an American bridegroom in a natty morning coat, striped pants, and wing collar, entered. Thirty-year-old Mayling, resembling a demure American bride in a silver-and-white beaded gown with a lace veil, followed on her brother's arm. As cameras clicked and filmed, Chiang and Mayling met in front of the dais and bowed to a huge portrait of the departed Sun Yat-sen, emphasizing the couple's tie to Sun's Mandate of Heaven. The bride and groom then bowed to each other and to the guests. Their marriage certificate was read, signed, and sealed. (The couple had earlier exchanged vows in a private ceremony in



Mayling Soong and Chiang Kai-shek: Suddenly China had Christian rulers.
(CPA Media / Pictures From History)

the Soong home.) The newlyweds exited to the American song "Oh Promise Me": "Hearing God's message while the organ rolls / Its mighty music to our very souls."

As with the marriage of Sun Yat-sen and Chingling, charges of bigamy surrounded the Chiang-Mayling marriage. Chiang's decision to repudiate Jennie, with Mayling and Ailing's connivance, was seen by many Chinese as reprehensible, and they scorned the couple as hypocrites who used their supposed Christianity as a front. But the Chinese were not the main audience for this spectacle. Soong-Chiang publicists focused the American press on the promise that China's new leader would welcome the Americanization of his nation. Up until that day, photos of weddings in old China that had appeared in American newspapers were studies in strangeness: the men were exotic-looking pagans in man-dresses with greasy pigtails and long, lacquered fingernails. In contrast, the wedding photograph distributed by the Soong-Chiang press machine was all American-style New China, portraying a demure and virginal Southern Methodist bride marrying a hunky aspiring Christian, both dressed for a Park Avenue wedding. The Soong-Chiang money laid out to make this impression was well spent. The *New York Times* featured the wedding as front-page news. American influence was winning the leaders, and perhaps would win China.

Madame Chiang would become a favorite of U.S. newsmen looking for a colorful quote. American readers were delighted to learn that Mayling was teaching China's new leader the English language. His first assignment was the word *darling*.

On October 10, 1928, the Soong-Chiang syndicate declared a national government in China led by Ailing's favorite, Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek. In certain corners, the applause was loud and prolonged. American missionaries liked Chiang because Ailing, Mayling, and T.V. told New China fables about how the Generalissimo would Christianize and democratize the Middle Kingdom. Ailing, Mayling, and T.V. had spent an accumulated twenty-eight years studying Americans in the United States. Now they used their insights to provide a military dictator with an American-friendly front.

Chiang's government controlled the westernized New Chinas where the American merchants and missionaries lived, places like Shanghai and Nanking. These cities had modernized areas with electricity, running water, and Western-style beds. The Four Hundred Million lived beyond these enclaves, by day bent over their rice fields and at night sleeping with their animals. American-style democracy, Chiang Kai-shek, the United States, the Soviet Union, Communism—these were unknowns to most Chinese, who lived by the eternal rhythms of the sun and the moon. To them, Chiang was just another hopeful warlord.

Parishioners in the United States learned that Chiang studied the Bible an hour each day. One missionary described Chiang as "introspective, patient, tolerant, full of wisdom, ascetic and almost saintly."³¹ Another wrote that Chiang's party was "distinctly Christian and therefore [they had to] prevail for China sooner or later."³²

Ailing Soong was the unseen financial power behind Chiang, using as front men her fabulously wealthy but simple-minded husband and her brainy little brother. H.H. and T.V. would float government securities; Ailing took her insider's cut and channeled some to Chiang. Ailing consistently and brazenly profited from inside information. Chingling later remembered:

She's very clever, Ailing. She never gambles. She buys and sells only when she gets advance information from confederates in the Ministry of Finance about changes in government fiscal policy. It's a pity she can't do it for the people instead of against them.... It is impossible to amass a fortune here except through criminal dishonesty and misuse of political power backed by military force. Every dollar comes right out of the blood of our poor people, who seldom have enough to eat. One day the people will rise and take it back.³³

Mayling served Ailing as the primary Soong-Chiang mouthpiece, giving interviews and translating her husband's utterances into English, always massaging his words into what English-speaking listeners wanted to hear. She also wrote letters and magazine articles for publi-

cation in the United States and broadcast "news" from China via U.S. radio networks. Mayling, in appearance and speech, was the merchant and missionary dream made flesh; to far-off Americans, it was as if a fresh-faced Wellesley girl were guiding China and providing a running commentary. And after decades of opposition from Chinese leaders, American missionaries found themselves seated in Western-style chairs listening to Chiang and Mayling talk about spreading American culture and religion in China. Naturally flattered by their newfound influence at court, the missionaries eagerly portrayed the Generalissimo and Madame Chiang as champions of democracy.

Since 1919, the U.S. State Department had maintained an arms embargo against China. (In the spirit of the humanitarian Open Door, keeping American arms out of China was meant to help those caught in the country's constant civil wars.) In 1928, when Chiang had supposedly unified China and declared a government, the State Department lifted many aspects of the embargo, but the sale of U.S. warplanes to China continued to be prohibited.

The State Department narrowly defined military warplanes as "(a) all types of aircraft actually fitted with armor, guns, machine guns, gun mounts, bomb dropping or other military devices, and (b) aircraft presumed to be destined for military use, whether actually fitted with armament or not." Britain's Foreign Office was more flexible and conveniently classified aircraft into two categories, "armed and unarmed."³⁴ This allowed Chiang to buy unarmed British aircraft and arm them later.

The U.S. Army Air Corps flew the world's finest airplanes (made in the U.S.) and thus produced the world's best pilots. Unsurprisingly, there was a global demand for the services of these highly trained American flyboys. However, the State Department considered American pilots who would fly for a foreign nation the lowest of the low—guns for hire, mercenaries—and informed Chiang that if he hired any such mercenaries, the U.S. would issue warrants for their arrest, deport them, and possibly take their passports away.

The State Department didn't want Chiang to use American warplanes, but Chiang quickly found himself being courted by American commercial-aircraft manufacturers. The largest of these was the Curtiss-Wright Corporation of Buffalo, New York. Curtiss-Wright dispatched George Westervelt, a Naval Academy and MIT graduate with a distinguished record as a U.S. Navy captain, to China as their representative, and in April of 1929, after many banquets and probable pay-offs, the company received the contract to develop commercial aviation in China. The U.S. State Department readily agreed because the sale involved only civilian aircraft.

Like most foreign-devil imports into China, civilian aviation failed to catch on. The vast majority of the Four Hundred Million couldn't afford airline tickets. Curtiss-Wright found few Chinese passengers for its airplanes.

Yet Chiang's priority had never been passenger service. In 1930, Chiang dispatched high-ranking Chinese air force officers on scouting missions to United States airplane manufacturers like Boeing in Seattle and Curtiss-Wright in Buffalo. Chiang's officers went to Washington and had meetings at the Departments of War, Navy, and Commerce, but they avoided the State Department.

Ailing and Chiang soon noticed that the various parts of the U.S. government did not speak with one voice regarding the Chinese purchase of American warplanes. The Commerce Department in particular encouraged American businessmen to sell aircraft to the Chinese, because its task was to promote the sale of American products to other countries, especially important during the Great Depression. Curtiss-Wright knew that the Generalissimo desired American warplanes and encouraged the Soong-Chiang bunch to set up private companies in the United States to purchase warplanes and then ship them to China, circumventing the State Department's continuing embargo.

American newspapers flashed the headline on October 24, 1930: "Chinese President Becomes Christian."³⁵ The Generalissimo's baptism was held in the Soong family's Shanghai home, where Ailing and

Mayling watched as the Reverend Z. T. Kuang poured holy water over Chiang's bald pate to make him a Southern Methodist. The Soong-Chiang press machine later released a suitable one-liner from the newly saved: "I feel the need of a God such as Jesus Christ."³⁶ Ching-ling's observation didn't make it into the newspapers: "If he is Christian, I am not."³⁷

Pulpits across America heralded this remarkable turn of events. China's leaders—Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek, his wife, Prime Minister H. H. Kung, and finance minister T. V. Soong, among others—were Americanized Christians. Just fifty years earlier, North Carolina's Southern Methodists had Americanized young Charlie Soong. The resulting spiritual chain reaction surely meant that America was winning the leaders, and the New China mirage was coming to fruition. At a time when the Great Depression was shaking Americans' confidence in themselves, many were heartened to see leaders of the world's most populous country adopting Christian and American ways.

Chiang's converting to Southern Methodism had been one of Ailing's conditions. He identified with the New Testament's hero and decided he was nothing less than the Jesus Christ of China: "So long as the task of national salvation is not accomplished, I shall be responsible for the distress and sufferings of the people."³⁸

In 1931, Henry Luce, the famous founder of Time Inc., was thirty-four years old. The wealthy and powerful publisher had his own private elevator that whisked him up to his New York office every morning and then back down again in the evening. The elevator operator who shared these rides was instructed never to speak to Mr. Luce, who preferred to close his eyes and silently lean against the back wall of the elevator, communicating with his God.

A cold and gruff man who barked orders to subordinates from behind closed doors as he chain-smoked the cigarettes that would one day kill him, Luce had grown up in a tiny New China as a missionary's son. Henry learned from his father that his Christianity and



Henry Luce. A biographer wrote that "the Christianization of China" was the supreme effort of Luce's life. (Time Life Pictures / Getty Images)

Americanism made him superior to the pagan and impoverished Chinese. And in Reverend Luce's telling, America was a promised land of milk, honey, green lawns, sturdy homes, and the right kind of people.

Young Luce grew up believing that the Chinese needed above all to be Christianized and Americanized and that they should be grateful for their improvement rather than resentful of his father's and others' interference. His father's mission had been to change China, not to understand it. Later, the reverend's son would chisel his father's New China beliefs into the American consciousness.

What young Henry Luce learned about China was his father's American mirage. Henry had little direct contact with Chinese people

except for the servants he bossed around. (Luce later said, "My favorite Chinese was our cook, who smoked opium."³⁹) Many evenings Henry saw his father bent over his desk writing hopeful fiction about the New China to come. Having little contact with the reality of China, young Henry accepted his father's pronouncements as fact. Reverend Luce's failure to convert the Chinese (a washout in terms of numbers, in line with his fellow missionaries) but success in fund-raising from optimistic Americans was testament to the two coexisting realities, one in China, the other in the American mind.

Fourteen-year-old Henry Luce left China knowing neither its language nor its people. He entered Yale in 1916 and became a serious student and the managing editor of the *Yale Daily News*. After being voted "most brilliant" in his class, Luce studied for a year at Oxford University in England and then worked as a reporter for the *Chicago Daily News* and, in 1921, the *Baltimore News*. In 1922 Luce and a partner raised \$86,000 to start a magazine, and on March 3, 1923, they published the first issue of *Time* magazine.

Luce came along in a historical era when news and events entered American homes almost exclusively via newspapers and radio. That initial issue of *Time*, which came out when Luce was all of twenty-five years old, would be the seed of the world's first multimedia news empire.

Luce's genius was his ability to clarify and simplify complex events. He made it *Time*'s goal to summarize the week's news using snappy language and pictures. Luce told stories through the lives of colorful personalities that he thought represented the kind of "right thinking" he wished to promote. As W. A. Swanberg wrote in *Luce and His Empire*, "The fact that this Right Thinking referred to Luce's own thinking attested to the same missionary certainty his father had felt, and placed him vis-à-vis the American reader in the same position as Rev. Henry Luce vis-à-vis the Chinese peasant."⁴⁰

With the massive eventual successes of *Time*, *Life*, and *Fortune* magazines, as well as the *March of Time* newsreels, the topics Luce chose became important across America. Biographer Swanberg wrote that "the Christianization of China" was the supreme effort of Henry

Luce's life.⁴¹ In *American Images of China*, T. Christopher Jespersen wrote, "Like the Protestant missionaries of his father's generation, Luce believed that if Christianity could be brought to China, democracy would certainly flow and from there, the development of trade would rapidly ensue."⁴² Luce was certain that an America–New China partnership would rule the Pacific, just as the Anglo-Americans dominated the Atlantic. One of Luce's most talented writers, Theodore White, observed, "[Luce] loved America; he loved China; with his power and his influence he meant to cement the two together forevermore."⁴³ Luce proclaimed, "One of the best bets for the future of the things we consider important is this New China."⁴⁴

Henry Luce and *Time* magazine quickly gained a troubling reputation for manufacturing facts and quoting unnamed sources. David Halberstam wrote, "[Luce] was the missionary, the believer, a man whose beliefs and visions and knowledge of Truth contradicted and thus outweighed the facts of his reporters."⁴⁵ A former *Time* editor admitted, "The way to tell a successful lie is to include enough truth in it to make it believable—and *Time* is the most successful liar of our times." Another of Luce's men said, "The degree of credence one gives to *Time* is inverse to one's degree of knowledge of the situation being reported on." Author Bertrand Russell wrote, "I consider *Time* to be scurrilous and I know, with respect to my own work, utterly shameless in its willingness to distort."⁴⁶

Luce understood that for visual symbols of New China, he would need, first and foremost, good-looking, English-speaking, Christianized, Americanized, right-thinking Chinese individuals with whom his readers could identify. Presenting the Soong family as representatives of real Chinese was like suggesting that the Rockefellers were typical Americans, but facts didn't matter when it came to promoting Reverend Luce's unfulfilled dream. From the 1930s to the 1970s, Ailing, Mayling, and T. V. Soong hosted Luce at their mansions in Nanking, Shanghai, Chungking, Hong Kong, Taipei, Washington, and New York, and the publisher dutifully took notes as they spun the mirage just as Father Charlie had.

Luce especially appreciated the media value of the beautiful and charming Mayling Soong. The two had lived remarkably parallel lives: they were the same age, had been born as Christians in separate New Chinas within thirty days of each other, and were later sent to America to be appropriately educated. The two shared any number of cultural references: the Lord's Prayer, Bible verses, New York sophistication, Washington power, Shakespeare's sonnets, and the never-to-be-forgotten American mission in Asia.

In Chiang Kai-shek, Henry Luce believed he had found a photogenic, unblemished savior, "the greatest soldier in Asia, the greatest statesman in Asia, America's friend."⁴⁷ A prominent *Time* staffer later wrote, "We felt we were on the side of the angels in most cases, with the possible exception of Chiang Kai-shek, whom we regarded as a protégé of Mr. Luce, and who was the only sacred cow we admitted."⁴⁸

Luce was a communications genius who made New China easy for American readers to comprehend: Beijing was China's Boston, Shanghai was New York, Nanking was Washington, Hankow was Chicago, and southern Canton was "the teeming, sultry New Orleans of China."⁴⁹ Charlie Soong was "Old Charlie";⁵⁰ Sun Yat-sen was "China's George Washington";⁵¹ Ailing was "Mother of Confucius's 76th generation"; Ailing's husband, H. H. Kung, was "China's Sage"; Ching-ling was the "widow of China's saint"; Mayling was "the Christian Miss Soong"; and the Generalissimo was "Southern Methodist Chiang."⁵² Chiang and Mayling would be featured on more *Time* covers than any other people on the planet.

Just months after Southern Methodist Chiang's blessed conversion, a remarkable novel shot to the top of American bestseller lists. This story of a farm family's struggle appeared at an opportune time: 1931 was a disastrous year for American farmers, as the Great Depression further emptied their pockets and bruised their souls. Severe drought and decades of extensive farming without crop rotation had caused soil erosion, and now gigantic dust storms drove farm families off their land. The novel *The Good Earth*, by Pearl Sydenstricker Buck, told a

similar story, but it was set in China.⁵³ As a young girl, Pearl had watched her missionary father, Absalom, churn out fantasies for American consumption about the coming of New China. She had later served as a Presbyterian missionary in China and, like her father, ran from howling mobs chasing her as a foreign devil. Yet she still penned notes back to the U.S. about a future Christianized and Americanized China.

Just as the fictional dispatches of Reverend Sydenstricker and his fellow delusionaries had been a nearly exclusive source of information about China to millions in the U.S., *The Good Earth* was the only book most Americans would ever read about China. At the same time that Walt Disney was creating lovable characters like Mickey Mouse, Buck created the Noble Chinese Peasants, whose major attraction was that they embodied American values.

Buck's views of Chinese city and country life had more in common



Pearl Buck (Courtesy Everett Collection)

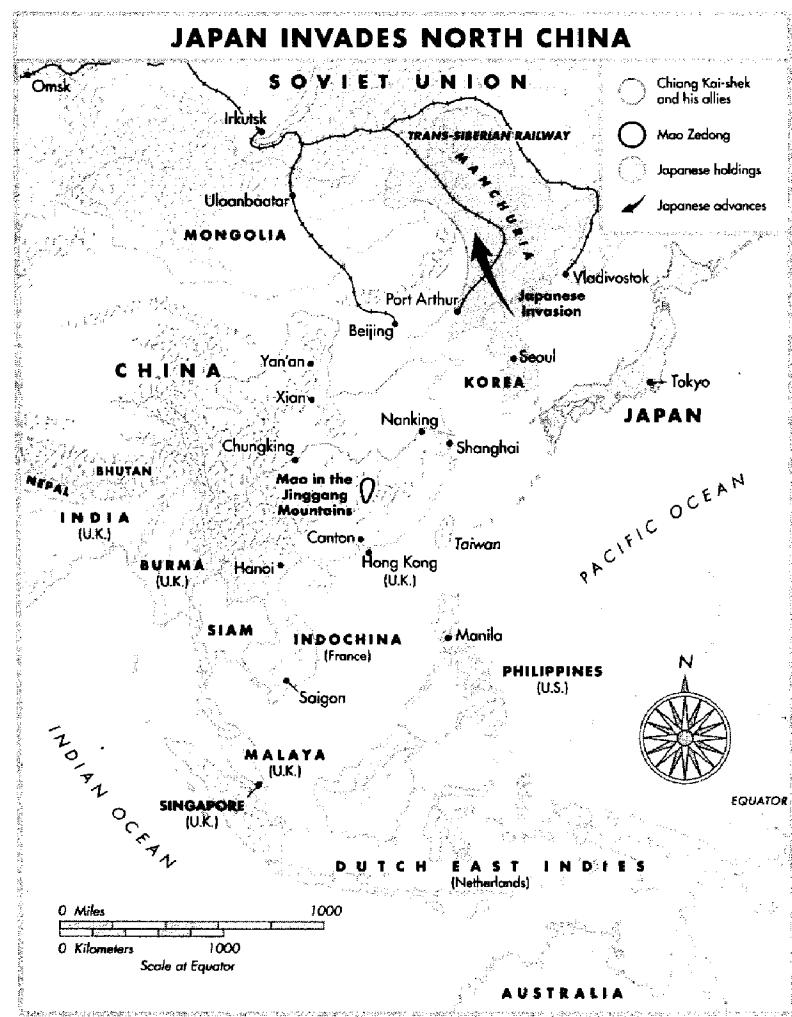
with American mythology than Chinese experience; *The Good Earth* was a Jeffersonian tale in which rural life was good, city life was bad. The husband-wife team of Wang Lung and O-Lan worked hard on their farm, loved their children, and cherished their community, but outside forces uprooted them from their good earth, just like what had happened to millions of Dust Bowl Americans. In the city, the Noble Peasants experienced demeaning extremes of wealth and poverty and were forced into debasing labor. Wang and O-Lan eventually rejected the city in favor of the good earth and returned to the soil and their honest farmer values. The happy ending has the admirable Noble Peasants embracing their simple yet fulfilled lives. *Christian Century* magazine observed, "As far as the spiritual content of Wang Lung is concerned, it would not have differed greatly had he toiled on the Nebraska prairie rather than in China."⁵⁴

The Good Earth became a phenomenal blockbuster, the only twentieth-century book to top *Publishers Weekly* bestseller lists two years in a row (1931 and 1932). Millions of Americans had fallen in love with cuddly images of a distant people that U.S. laws protected them from knowing in reality.

Americans had cheered Japan as it gobbled up Korea in Theodore Roosevelt's time, but they had grown wary over the years as they watched Japan's ambitions grow. *Time* magazine reported from Tokyo that leaders there spoke of a "Japanese Monroe Doctrine claiming the right to protect all Asia... and that the originator to be cited for this idea was none other than the late great Theodore Roosevelt."⁵⁵ Few Americans knew what to make of this information about their former president. Teddy had died more than a decade earlier and had successfully hidden his involvement in handing Korea over to Japan. Without citing Roosevelt's authorship, the prestigious *Foreign Affairs* magazine noted, "The idea of a Monroe Doctrine for Asia arose in Japan shortly after the Russo-Japanese War" and "the intent of the Japanese Government to claim the rights of a Monroe Doctrine for the Far East is perfectly clear."⁵⁶

Americans who had believed they were providing Open Door moral

protection for the Noble Chinese Peasants were shocked and angry when the Japanese military advanced beyond its Korean colony and invaded Manchuria on September 18, 1931. Japanese warplanes and tens of thousands of Emperor Hirohito's troops soon brought one of Asia's richest areas under control.



The world gasped when Japan expanded from its Korean colony into Manchuria, but it was Mao Zedong's embryonic movement in the Jinggang mountains that would eventually conquer China.

The United States had, of course, been encouraging Japanese expansion ever since Commodore Perry opened Japan in 1853. True, in recent years the messages had been mixed; after World War I, the United States, Britain, and France tried to give imperialist expansion a bad name—after all, they had enough colonies and wanted everyone else to stay put. The Western democracies now called imperial conquest “immoral” and even contrived to make it illegal with policies like the Kellogg-Briand Pact, which renounced all war. In the United States, isolationist peace movements had become a major political force, and supporters feared that Japan’s military aggression was a contagion that might drag America and other countries into future wars.

By contrast, many in Japan felt constrained by their country’s “potted-plant existence” and yearned to broaden its boundaries. Japanese leaders believed that their nation needed to expand just as England and America had. Japan’s minister of war observed, “The United States loudly professes to champion righteousness and humanity, but what can you think when you review its policy toward Cuba, Panama, Nicaragua and other Latin American nations?”⁵⁷ Japanese foreign minister Yosuke Matsuoka asked, “What country in its expansion has ever failed to be trying to its neighbors? Ask the American Indian or the Mexican how excruciatingly trying the young United States used to be once upon a time.”⁵⁸

Why was it fine for the United States to ship American soldiers halfway around the world to keep its hold on the Philippines but not okay for Japan to expand into its sphere? Prince Konoe, later Japan’s prime minister, explained that Japan “was perfectly entitled to aggrandize [its] Chinese territory to meet the needs of its own exploding surplus population.... It was only natural for China to sacrifice itself for the sake of Japan’s social and industrial needs.”⁵⁹

At the time of Japan’s invasion of North China, Baron Kaneko was a spry seventy-nine-year-old. He penned a magazine article suggesting that if his friend Theodore Roosevelt were alive, he would understand Japan’s actions: “Now when Japan’s policy in Manchuria is much criticized by foreign Powers, it is a matter of the greatest regret to me and

to Japan that Theodore Roosevelt died unexpectedly without having uttered in public speech his views on a 'Japanese Monroe Doctrine' in Asia. This opinion, held by one of the greatest statesmen of our time, would have been of high importance, had Roosevelt lived to announce it himself at the present moment, when Manchuria is once more a burning international question."⁶⁰

Henry Stimson was secretary of state when the Japanese invaded North China. A Harvard Law graduate and Wall Street lawyer, he had been brought into government by Theodore Roosevelt. He would serve every president from Teddy to Harry Truman except Warren Harding. Stimson had been secretary of war under President Taft, fought in World War I during Wilson's administration, mediated in Nicaragua for President Coolidge, and served as governor-general of the Philippines, and in 1931 he was secretary of state under President Hoover. Pulitzer Prize winner Kai Bird wrote that "no man casts a longer shadow over the American Century than Henry Lewis Stimson."⁶¹ Indeed, one of several Stimson biographies is subtitled *The First Wise Man*.⁶²

A follower of Theodore Roosevelt, the First Wise Man believed in a hierarchy of peoples. In this hierarchy, American white males groomed in the Ivy League—especially at Harvard, like Roosevelt and Stimson—were the best of the best. Stimson accepted the notion of the white man's burden, that only by the application of American values did lesser nations have any hope of succeeding. Stimson had already experienced firsthand the inadequacies of the lesser races. In 1927 President Calvin Coolidge had appointed him to the biggest bwana job in the American portfolio: governor-general of the Philippines. Stimson felt himself well qualified to provide tutelage to his Filipino inferiors, which he did for two years, until 1929.

Stimson had not uttered a peep during the long years of Japanese mistreatment of Koreans because Korea had been Teddy's gift to Japan. But Roosevelt's Japanese Monroe Doctrine for Asia had envisioned Japan's expansion eventually being blocked by Russia in North

Asia and by the Anglo-American Open Door policy in Manchuria and the rest of China. Roosevelt had been wrong. Now the Japanese had overstepped their promised bounds and challenged America's Open Door.

Roosevelt had detested the Chinese, but by 1930, Stimson and many Americans came to prefer them to the Japanese. After all, the Japanese had defied American strategic expectations, whereas the Noble Chinese Peasants were progressing down the road of Christianity and democracy. On October 9, 1931, Stimson met with President Herbert Hoover and demanded that the United States and the League of Nations jointly condemn Japan's actions on the grounds of a number of international treaties. Hoover based his calculations of America's interests in Asia on hard dollars and cents. The bottom line was that the value of U.S. trade with Japan was many times larger than it was with China. While Americans might shed a tear for Noble Peasants Wang and O-Lan, the Japanese were buying fully half of America's cotton crop, and Japan's military-industrial complex bought large amounts of U.S. oil and steel. Nelson Johnson—the U.S. ambassador to China from 1929 to 1941—wrote that Japanese control of North China would not cause "the loss of a dollar from an American purse."⁶³

At this critical point, Henry Luce featured Generalissimo and Madame Chiang on the cover of *Time*, a major media event. At a moment when *The Good Earth* was all the rage and Americans awaited the U.S. reaction to the Japanese incursion into Manchuria, here were brave, smiling, Christian Noble Chinese Peasants standing firm against the Japanese.

Time's October 26, 1931, cover was startling, historic, and well timed. As Stimson searched for a policy Hoover would endorse, Americans held in their hands a picture of Noble Chinese Peasants like those suffering at Japan's cruel hands.

When Stimson was secretary of war under President Taft, from 1911 to 1913, the U.S. Navy developed a contingency plan for war against



On October 26, 1931, Time magazine's cover featured Chiang Kai-shek and Mayling Soong as "President of China and Wife." (Courtesy Everett Collection)

Japan. The Navy admirals of that time had in their youth served as officers enforcing the Union's economic embargo against the Confederacy, which was, like Japan, an "island" that could be blockaded. The U.S. Navy and their civilian overseers advocated a nonviolent economic war against Japan, a resource-poor island nation dependent on imports. In this siege plan, the U.S. would establish bases near Japan, choke off vital exports, and, finally, strangle the island chain financially by denying it funds. This U.S. naval plan was based on the theory that it was possible to force Japan to capitulate with no risk to the United States of a prolonged war.

Since Meiji's time, the military had become powerful. Indeed, the army's invasion of Manchuria had surprised many civilian officials in Tokyo. Stimson wrote that the "Japanese Government which we have

been dealing with is no longer in control" and that "the situation is in the hands of virtually mad dogs."⁶⁴

The United States was Japan's largest supplier of oil and steel, the profitable blood and muscle around which the Yankees of the Far East had built their Western-style military-industrial complex. Though there would be some economic pain in the U.S., Stimson reasoned that via a stoppage in exports, he could bring Japan's military to its knees. The First Wise Man's logic was that the Japanese mad-dog military, once deprived of U.S. oil and forced to withdraw from China, would be humiliated back home. Stimson theorized that moderates in Tokyo would then retake the government, resurrect democracy, and become peaceful partners with the United States once again.

The First Wise Man had little insight into Japanese thinking, and some worried that an American embargo might cause an indignant Japan to attack the United States. Stimson dismissed such concerns, confidently asserting that the Japanese would never dream of making such a move. There were plenty of things for the First Wise Man to worry about when it came to Japan, but that country's attempting a direct strike against America was certainly not one of them.

Wrote Stimson biographer David Schmitz, "Stimson distrusted mass politics, had concerns about too much democracy, and believed in a greater concentration of power in the executive branch of the government. He was comfortable only with those of his own class and attitudes, and those who accepted authority and followed clear lines of power."⁶⁵ Stimson believed in a "strong Executive," meaning that the president of the United States had the right and duty to intervene in the affairs of other countries without consulting Congress. As the First Wise Man said, Congress tended to take "more and more the viewpoint of the locality rather than the viewpoint of the nation. On the other hand the President and his Cabinet by force of their position represent the national viewpoint."⁶⁶

On the afternoon of Sunday, December 6, 1931, Stimson met with President Hoover. He argued that the risk of war had to be weighed

"against the terrible disadvantages which Japan's action was doing to the cause of peace in the world at large and the danger that Japan was setting off a possible war with China which might spread to the entire world."⁶⁷ From Japan went China, from China went Asia, from Asia went the world; in years to come, other advisers in Stimson's wake would sell a similar domino logic.

Harvey Bundy, Henry Stimson's closest associate at that time, later recalled that Stimson "had been brought up in the Teddy Roosevelt tradition and believed in the exercise of power, and not waiting...he believed in taking the bit in his teeth and going forward." But though Stimson "was on his horse and ready to shoot the Japanese at sunrise," he did not have Hoover's support.⁶⁸ The president quashed Stimson's dream of an embargo but came up with a compromise, and on January 7, 1932, Stimson announced America's nonrecognition of Japan's conquests in China.

Stimson's nonrecognition doctrine—like the Open Door policy—was ignored by Japan and the other Western powers, who were busy with their own colonies in Asia. And as Hoover had hoped, American companies continued to supply the Japanese war machine with all the steel and oil it wanted. Generations of missionary letters and the Open Door policy had convinced the American people that the nation's priority was to help China, so there was now a wide gap between the actual U.S. foreign policy in Asia and Americans' perception of it. Sympathy for the Noble Peasants ran higher than ever as Americans clutched copies of *The Good Earth* and read headlines about China's new Christian leaders. The heavily Protestant churchgoing public felt that America had a responsibility to save the Noble Peasants and not lose China to Japan's aggression. But the business interests reaping profits from the Japanese felt no such religious or moral compunction. A Chinese newspaper noted, "The Chinese people thank Mr. Stimson for his pronouncements but they are only words, words, words, and they amount to nothing at all if there is no force to back them. At present there is no force, because America [has] made it very plain that they will not support with force the ideals, which they themselves assert are just and desirable."⁶⁹

Hoover opposed an economic embargo against Japan, but he allowed Stimson to write a public letter to the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee appealing to the world to join in nonrecognition of Japanese aggression and warning Japan that if it expanded its military, the U.S. Navy and Army would also build up its involvement in Asia. Instead of backing down, Japan responded by announcing the creation of a new country—the former Manchuria was now Manchukuo (Land of the Manchu). Soon, a pro-Japanese government headed by the Last Emperor, Puyi, was installed. The League of Nations agreed with Stimson's nonrecognition policy and condemned Japan for invading Manchuria. Japan thumbed its nose at Stimson, walked out of the League of Nations, and continued to feast on both Korea and Manchuria.

Japan's easy seizure of Manchuria was not entirely due to its military prowess. Generalissimo Chiang sat atop a large Nationalist army, but he retreated from the Japanese menace and focused on his top priority of vanquishing Mao, who had regrouped and was again posing a threat. Chiang had trained with the Japanese military and had decided that Japan's army was too strong to be resisted and that such a conflict would be damaging to his own troops, which he needed for his fight against Mao.

China had erupted in outrage when Japan invaded its north. Tens of thousands of demonstrators took to the streets of Nanking and Shanghai. Mao called for Chiang to have some spine and fight the Japanese. The *China Times* published a song: "Kill the enemy! Kill the enemy! Hurry up and kill the enemy!"⁷⁰ But Chiang decided to "cede land for time," hoping that his going passive and allowing the Japanese to have a large piece of territory might satisfy them. As Jonathan Fenby wrote in *Chiang Kai-shek*, "This would be seen as his first great failure to stand up for national interests against the enemy from across the sea, setting a pattern for the following years."⁷¹

From his early years in the Roosevelt administration and on throughout the 1920s, Henry Stimson was one of the East Coast elite who

supported various right-wing dictatorships. By 1930, the U.S. executive branch had "sent gunboats into Latin American ports over 6,000 times, invaded Cuba, Mexico (again), Guatemala, and Honduras; fought protracted guerrilla wars in the Dominican Republic, Nicaragua, and Haiti, annexed Puerto Rico, and taken a piece of Colombia to create both the Panamanian nation and the Panama Canal."⁷² America preached democracy in Asia, but by the end of the First Wise Man's term as secretary of state, dictators with U.S. military support ruled fifteen of Latin America's twenty republics. Among these dictators was Nicaragua's brutal autocrat Anastasio Somoza. Stimson and the strongman went way back: Somoza's first step up the ladder was serving as Stimson's interpreter when Stimson refereed Nicaraguan peace talks in the 1920s. Taken with the polite, Philadelphia-schooled Nicaraguan, the First Wise Man had green-lighted the brutal Somoza family dictatorship that would rule into the 1970s. Although Stimson withdrew American Marines from Nicaragua by 1933 (despite the inevitable protests of American businessmen), control remained with a U.S.-supported military dictatorship. In his diary Stimson claimed that intervening south of the border "would put me in absolutely wrong in China, where Japan has done all this monstrous work under the guise of protecting her nationals with a landing force."⁷³ So said the pot to the kettle.

On January 28, 1932, the Japanese bombed Shanghai, China's best known and most visible city in the West. Stimson was ready to go to war with Japan, although Hoover had repeatedly told his secretary of state that he would not risk war by denying U.S. steel and oil to Japan. Still, the First Wise Man continued to insist that there was no danger in cutting off Japan's supply, because "Japan was afraid of" America's "great size and military strength." Hoover, however, understood Japanese thinking better than the First Wise Man and told Stimson his idea was "folly," that a strict embargo would indeed lead to war with Japan and "that such a war could not be localized or kept in bounds." A defiant Stimson challenged the president to be a strong-willed executive in

foreign affairs like Theodore Roosevelt and to "speak softly and carry a big stick!"⁷⁴

Hoover declined to take the advice of his upstart secretary of state. He would fight to defend U.S. territory, but—unlike Theodore Roosevelt—Hoover had no interest in becoming the world's policeman.

Chiang's armies skirmished with Japanese soldiers in the winter and spring of 1932, not in North China where Japan had invaded, but far to the south, in Shanghai. Both sides employed airpower; Japan had a sophisticated carrier-based air wing, while Chiang had a ragtag bunch of battered planes flown by mercenary pilots who were mostly from America but also from Britain, France, Italy, Russia, and Germany. A U.S. Army Air Corps-trained airman named Robert Short became the very first of these pilots to die flying for Chiang Kai-shek in China. Short, a native of Tacoma, Washington, had been sent to China by the Boeing Company to sell airplanes. Once in China, Short crossed the line and became a mercenary. On February 22, 1932, he took off and encountered Japanese planes from the aircraft carrier *Kaga*; they destroyed his plane in midair.

Japan eventually beat back Chiang's ill-trained and badly led troops. Chiang never imagined that his forces alone would be able to defeat Japan in China and expected that he would need foreign support, in line with the ancient Chinese state strategy of *yi-yi-zhi-yi*, which meant playing one barbarian—in this case, Japan—against the other. On May 24, 1932, the U.S. ambassador to China, Nelson Johnson, met with Chiang, who spoke enthusiastically about a future war between America and Japan "in which the United States will figure as the champion and savior of China."⁷⁵

George Westervelt, the Curtiss-Wright airplane salesman, observed some of the bombing of Shanghai from his hotel-room window. Seizing his opportunity, Westervelt wrote finance minister T. V. Soong and told him that if China had possessed a professional air force, Chiang could have prevented the Japanese from landing at Shanghai by bombing

their ships in advance. Westervelt further pointed out that if Chiang now got serious and built a major air force, airplanes flown from China could burn down the paper cities of Japan.

Soong was excited about the Curtiss-Wright plan, especially Westervelt's intimation that the U.S. War Department might provide leadership for the Chinese air force and perhaps even foot the bill to stimulate American airplane production. T.V. contacted the U.S. military attaché in Shanghai, Colonel W. S. Drysdale, and asked for his help in securing War Department backing. Drysdale was enthusiastic and wrote a message supporting the plan to the War Department in Washington. In response, General Douglas MacArthur, the Army chief of staff, told Drysdale, "The War Department is not interested in sending an aviation training mission to China."⁷⁶

Most thoughtful military men understood why Chiang would never be able to establish an efficient air force: warplanes required secure airfields, and Chiang's armies were incapable of defending an airfield against the Japanese. So now both the State Department and the War Department impeded Chiang's efforts.

T. V. Soong was not about to give up, however, and he contacted the Commerce Department's trade commissioner in Shanghai, Edward P. Howard. This was 1932, and Howard knew that airplane sales would be a boon to the sagging U.S. economy. Within a week, Howard gave T.V. a plan to build a U.S.-supplied air force, beginning with twelve aircraft and eight instructors to train fifty pilots within one year.

When the State Department in Washington learned what the Commerce Department was up to, it wired Howard in Shanghai to explain that Commerce could help with "civilian aviation," but "in relation to plans for the Chinese Government in connection with 'military air training,' it is the Department's opinion, known to and concurred in by the War Department, [that] it would be inadvisable for this Government or any of its officers to be associated with military training."⁷⁷ Commerce's Howard advised T.V. to ignore State and proceeded to present to him a more elaborate training mission with more airplanes and pilots.

Ailing's husband, H. H. Kung, served as both Chiang's prime minister and Standard Oil of New Jersey's main representative in China.

Retired U.S. Army Air Corps colonel John Jouett managed Standard Oil's private airplanes. When he learned through Kung that T.V. was looking for someone to head his Chinese air force, Jouett jumped at the chance.

T.V., working around the State and War Departments and with the help of Curtiss-Wright and the Commerce Department, deposited dollars in American banks in May of 1932 for the purchase of aircraft and spare parts and to pay the salaries and travel expenses of American airmen.

The State Department realized what was happening when Colonel Jouett and his hopeful mercenaries applied for passports. State called in the chief of Commerce's Aeronautics Trade Division and explained that as long as the mission to China was civilian in nature, it would have no objections, but that State's policy was that the United States government was not to become involved with Chinese military aviation. Commerce coyly tried to portray the sales as purely civilian but eventually admitted the truth and explained that "this whole situation had now gone pretty far; that the Department of Commerce had transmitted messages to and from the Chinese government and the interested Americans; that the interested Americans had signed a contract; that the Chinese government had advanced money; and that the interested Americans had made the necessary arrangements to leave for China."⁷⁸

State was now between a rock and a hard place. Chinese purchases of American-made airplanes would mean millions of sorely needed dollars for the United States. Curtiss-Wright and the other airplane manufacturers who would supply T.V. were politically powerful, and they provided high-paying jobs in a high-tech industry. The exchange was already in midstream. State hesitated, then noted its disapproval but did not block the transaction.

T. V. Soong had hit the jackpot, acquiring not only American airplanes but also access to the inner workings of the U.S. Army Air Corps. Colonel Jouett had served as chief of personnel of the Army Air Corps during the 1920s. He had inside information on American training methods and could get to the personnel files of almost all the American pilots, active and retired. Now on T.V.'s payroll, Jouett looked through confidential records and took away copies of Air Corps

training manuals, expertise derived from decades of trial and error and many millions of American tax dollars.

In early July, Jouett, nine instructors, a flight surgeon, four mechanics, and a secretary—all U.S. Army Air Corps-trained—arrived in Shanghai. Major Howard of Commerce introduced Colonel Jouett to his new boss, T. V. Soong. T.V. selected Hangzhou—a prosperous city on the Yangtze River about a hundred and ten miles from Shanghai—as the training site. Jouett and his men reached there by the end of July and quickly set up the Central Aviation School. Through a corporation called the Central Aircraft Manufacturing Company—CAMCO—that she founded with Harvard graduate William Pawley, Ailing became Curtiss-Wright's Chinese manufacturer. Having successfully done an end run around the State and War Departments, the Soong-Chiang clan was finally getting a barbarian air force with which to destroy another barbarian.

The Japanese had invaded North China thinking they'd wrap up hostilities in a few months, but soon they were bogged down in China's vastness. They were further surprised to see the United States opposing Japan by building Chiang an American-style air force. On January 16, 1933, the Japanese Foreign Office complained to the U.S. State Department that the U.S. Army Air Corps had lent American mercenaries to Chiang to "take part in the hostilities against Japan."⁷⁹ To those who knew Japan, such language was ominous. But among the American leadership, there was almost no one who knew Japan.

The phenomenal success of *The Good Earth* made Pearl Buck an assumed authority on all things Chinese. In a major speech at the University of Virginia, Buck explained why the Noble Peasants were just like Americans:

The real reason why we do not like Japan as well as China is because the Japanese are emotionally different from ourselves.... I believe of course that these emotional likenesses and differences... are due simply to geography. That is, peoples

living, as do the Chinese and ourselves, in broad, rich, abundant land—in continents, really—upon landscapes varying from seacoast and northern cold to high mountains and tropical plains, come to be alike.... The lands of the United States and of China are extraordinarily alike—the northern plains in China and our western plains, the deserts of north and west, the rich central plains of both countries, the long seacoast, the vast, long rivers the bleakness of the north and the tropics of the south...here are great similarities, inevitably producing, or so I think, similarities in temperament....

In brief, then, our emotions are not so much the result of our ideas or our religion as of the food we eat and the land and the climate in which we live, and because China and the United States are so much alike in these respects, we are very much alike in the way we feel.... The same kind of land, feeding the same kinds of foods, under the same sun and winds, the shores washed by the same seas, will produce the same kind of hearts and minds, however the skins may differ. The skin, the color of the hair and eyes—these are, after all, only a kind of dress given us by our chance parents, and not more important than dress ever is. Inside we have the same heart and lungs, the same organs by means of which we live and feel and are.⁸⁰

In a speech to the American Academy of Political Science, she claimed that China would change only if forced to by outside forces: "[China] is at last knocking at [American] doors... entering eagerly into the colleges and universities, examining critically all that she sees, seizing ideas which she thinks will be useful to her, and returning again to her own land to use her new knowledge in her own fashion."⁸¹

But the Noble Chinese Peasants were not knocking on American doors—the Soongs were. And soon Charlie Soong's offspring would have someone new to approach: Warren Delano's grandson.

A few days after receiving Currie's report, in a speech at the White House Correspondents' dinner, President Roosevelt proclaimed,

China...expresses the magnificent will of millions of plain people to resist the dismemberment of their historic nation. China, through the Generalissimo, Chiang Kai-shek, asks our help. America has said that China shall have our help.⁴⁹

After he briefed Roosevelt, Currie billed T. V. Soong \$1,388.88 for his salary from January 25 to March 11, 1941, with expenses of \$1,681.53.⁵⁰ Secretary Morgenthau complained to his staff, "The trouble with Mr. Currie is, I don't know half the time whether he is working for the President or T. V. Soong, because half the time he is on one payroll and the rest of the time he is on the other."⁵¹

Chapter 9

A WAR OVER OIL

The support of America against the Japanese was the government's only hope for survival; to sway the American press was critical. It was considered necessary to lie to it, to deceive it, to do anything to persuade America that the future of China and the United States ran together against Japan. That was the only war strategy of the Chinese government.
—Theodore White, adviser to China's Ministry of Information¹

Dean Acheson was born on April 11, 1893, in the brick rectory of Holy Trinity Church in Middletown, Connecticut, where his father, Bishop Acheson, was rector. As a boy, Acheson listened to his father lecture Middletown's citizens on right and wrong. Over time, he developed a self-righteousness that would inform his life and career. Once, in a heated argument, Acheson called his father a fool, and Bishop Acheson kicked Dean out of the house for one year. Eventually Bishop Acheson seemed to forgive his son, but Dean never apologized for the insult. When he later wrote his memoirs, the younger man made no mention of the episode. Dean Acheson was not one to admit mistakes.

Young Dean Acheson had many reasons to believe he existed above most mere mortals. Acheson attended the elite Groton School in Groton, Massachusetts, where he studied Latin, mathematics, physics,



Dean Acheson and Felix Frankfurter. Acheson was one of Frankfurter's Harvard Hotdogs—both men admired the First Wise Man, Henry Stimson—and Acheson would go on to become the leader of the Wise Men.

(Courtesy Everett Collection)

chemistry, Greek, Roman, and European and U.S. history. Like fellow Groton alumnus Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Acheson learned a tremendous amount about a tiny part of the earth—Europe—and virtually nothing about Asia.²

Felix Frankfurter recognized Acheson's brilliance at Harvard Law School and recommended him to Roosevelt, who appointed Acheson undersecretary of the treasury on May 19, 1933. Acheson agreed to serve Roosevelt but was determined not to be servile:

The President could relax over his poker parties and enjoy Tom Corcoran's accordion, he could and did call everyone from his valet to the Secretary of State by his first name and often made up

Damon Runyon nicknames for them, too—"Tommy the Cork," "Henry the Morgue," and similar names; he could charm an individual or a nation. But he condescended. Many reveled in apparent admission to an inner circle. I did not...to me it was patronizing and humiliating.³

When Secretary of the Treasury William Woodin fell ill, Acheson found himself acting secretary. The strong-willed and overconfident Acheson soon clashed with Roosevelt. ("My attitude toward the President," Acheson wrote, "was one of admiration without affection."⁴) He resigned in a huff and returned to his legal practice. As with his father, Acheson never apologized. And, like Bishop Acheson, Roosevelt seemed to forgive the younger man. Frankfurter kept Acheson's name in front of FDR, and from time to time Acheson lent his legal skills to the Roosevelt administration. Acheson had a strong bond with Henry Morgenthau, who had succeeded him as secretary of the treasury and whom Acheson admired as a true Washington Warrior:

Henry Morgenthau was the most dynamic character in Washington; he had passion. His description of the kind of man he wanted hired was: "Does he want to lick this fellow Hitler... that is what I want to know.... Does he hate Hitler's guts?" Henry did.⁵

Like Morgenthau, Acheson bought the First Wise Man's China Lobby line that the U.S. could embargo Japan with no repercussions. He also agreed that a few Wise Men should control U.S. foreign policy, that transparent democracy was fine for domestic matters but secrecy was vital in the conduct of foreign affairs.

On February 1, 1941, Frankfurter looked on as his fellow Supreme Court justice Louis Brandeis swore Acheson in as undersecretary of state for economic affairs. (Morgenthau had probably suggested to FDR that he appoint Acheson under Hull to put some spine in the State Department.) Morgenthau, Stimson, Knox, and Ickes now had a kindred spirit within State. Wrote John Morton Blum, author of *From the Morgenthau Diaries*, "There was no one at the State Department

with whom [Morgenthau] could talk candidly except for Dean Acheson.”⁶ It went both ways. Recalled Acheson, “There was no one at all with whom I could talk—sympathetically. From top to bottom our Department, except for our corner of it, was against Henry Morgenthau’s campaign to apply freezing controls to axis countries and their victims.”⁷

Acheson was a fighter who believed that “by the spring of 1941 the American people were ready for a stronger lead toward intervention.” He chafed at Secretary Hull’s deliberate pace, deciding, “What was most often needed was not compromise but decision.” Acheson complained that Hull was “slow, circuitous, cautious—concentrated on a central political purpose, the freeing of international trade from tariff and other restrictions as the prerequisite to peace and economic development.” He ridiculed in writing Hull’s oft-repeated goal of “mutually beneficial reciprocal trade agreements” by making fun of Hull’s speech impediment: “wecipwocal twade aqueements.” And Acheson dismissed Roosevelt’s decision-making ability: “Unfortunately, the capacity to decide does not descend in Pentecostal fashion upon every occupant of the White House.”⁸

President Roosevelt thrived on intrigue and secrecy, and in 1941 he enjoyed plenty of both. FDR was enthusiastic about communicating with Chiang and Mayling through their secret code and was soon having confidential chats with them. Ambassador Clarence Gauss complained to Hull and pleaded for “normal diplomatic channels of communication,” pointing out that “no Ambassador to China can function intelligently and efficiently under present conditions without some background on what is transpiring through other than the usual diplomatic channels.”⁹

Hull asked Currie to have “messages which he sends to officials in Chungking pass through the hands of our own Ambassador.”¹⁰ Currie agreed to report regularly to the State Department. Finally Hull succeeded in stopping FDR’s back-channel discussions. (Currie wrote Mayling that Roosevelt “would communicate more frequently directly with me if it were not for the very understandable resistance of the

State Department.”)¹¹ History will never know how many secret conversations occurred or what Roosevelt promised.

Another of FDR’s intrigues in the spring of 1941 was the clandestine air force he was arranging for Chiang. Purchasing and then shipping fighter planes from the U.S. to the receiving docks in Rangoon, Burma, was relatively easy to manage and keep secret. Roosevelt was much more concerned that he might be held responsible for creating a corps of American mercenaries. Remembered Corcoran, “Roosevelt was troubled by the soiled label that Chennault’s irregulars might wear.” Tommy showed FDR a British martial poem called “Epitaph on an Army of Mercenaries,” about the first 160,000 English soldiers to die in World War I; they were called mercenaries because, unlike the draftees that followed them, they were a paid prewar army. Corcoran wrote that Roosevelt “was moved by the poem’s wisdom. It bolstered his determination to act.”¹² Tommy and the Skipper cooked up a scheme that utilized private front companies to recruit and pay American pilots outside of government channels (a process the CIA would later call sheep-dipping). U.S. Army pilots and airmen would “resign” from the service and then sign private contracts with CAMCO, Ailing Soong’s company.

Roosevelt asked Lauchlin Currie to take Chennault to the War Department to pitch his plan to the head of the U.S. Army Air Corps, General Henry “Hap” Arnold. FDR might have assumed that the presence of Currie, a top presidential assistant, would influence Arnold, but in the 1930s the general had been in the forefront of those who ousted Chennault, and he wanted nothing to do with FDR’s secret mercenary effort. Currie and Chennault next knocked at the Navy’s Bureau of Aeronautics and spoke to Rear Admiral John Towers, who also turned his back on FDR’s half-baked air-war scheme.

Having been rejected by his uniformed military, Roosevelt turned to Corcoran, who approached the military’s two civilian bosses, Henry Stimson and Frank Knox. Tommy told them what the president wanted. In the end, Currie had to draw up a formal presidential directive ordering Stimson and Knox to release pilots from their military service:

I suggest...that beginning in January, you should accept the resignations of additional pilots and ground personnel as care to accept employment in China, up to a limit of 100 pilots and a proportional number of ground personnel.¹³

Chennault recalled that when his recruiters visited air bases across the U.S. offering "a one-year contract with CAMCO to 'manufacture, repair, and operate aircraft' at salaries ranging from \$250 to \$750 a month...several spluttering commanders called Washington long distance for confirmation of their orders."¹⁴

For additional cover, Ailing's CAMCO and FDR's CDS disguised the fighter squadrons as "advanced training units"; the airplanes were "advanced trainers," and Chennault was a "supervisor."¹⁵ Sensing which way FDR's winds were blowing, Hull caved in. He informed the Chinese embassy that, though the U.S. would not accept an open military alliance, it was willing to issue passports to Americans to work in China as "aviation instructors."¹⁶ Chennault later described his interaction with a State Department clerk in the passport division:

In applying for my passport, I listed my occupation as farmer. The clerk was skeptical. "I own land in Louisiana, and I make a living from it," I replied to him. "That makes me a farmer." He insisted I change my occupation. It took a call to the White House to convince him that I was a farmer.¹⁷

Roosevelt was now running an off-the-books secret executive air force through Ailing's front companies. Claire Chennault was a private contractor—a mercenary—being paid by the China Lobby. Roosevelt was sheep-dipping: taking U.S. personnel, cleansing them with the fiction of their resignations, and then sending them off as secret mercenaries. Today, many mistakenly believe that Chennault's mission was an American invention controlled by the U.S. military, but when he returned to Asia, Chennault reported back to Washington not through American military channels but privately, through his boss, T. V. Soong.

* * *

In March of 1941, T. V. Soong presented his Lend-Lease shopping list: a thousand planes, three hundred fifty technical assistants, two hundred flying instructors, enough arms and supplies to outfit thirty infantry divisions, and sufficient equipment for what would have been the world's largest construction project: a highway and a railway connecting China and India.¹⁸ T.V. expected that his enormous requests would be filled as quickly as possible. When he went to Roosevelt, FDR was noncommittal. Soong complained to his China Lobby man on the Supreme Court, Justice Felix Frankfurter, that he had "begged [FDR] specifically to say that China's demands would be granted." Roosevelt had smiled and responded, "So long as the Battle of the Atlantic is won everything will be all right."¹⁹

T.V. was also frustrated with Henry Morgenthau, who was refusing to hand over the entire \$100 million that FDR had promised. (Morgenthau wanted the loan released in installments of \$5 million per month.) Soong asked Frankfurter to take time out from his duties and dicker with the president over terms. Soong also contacted China Lobbyist Thomas Corcoran, and together Tommy and Frankfurter argued T.V.'s case to FDR, who in turn pressured Morgenthau, who then complained to associates about T. V. Soong's "special representatives" and "special attorneys," wondering "who is on the U.S. payroll and who is on the Chinese payroll and who is working for what."²⁰

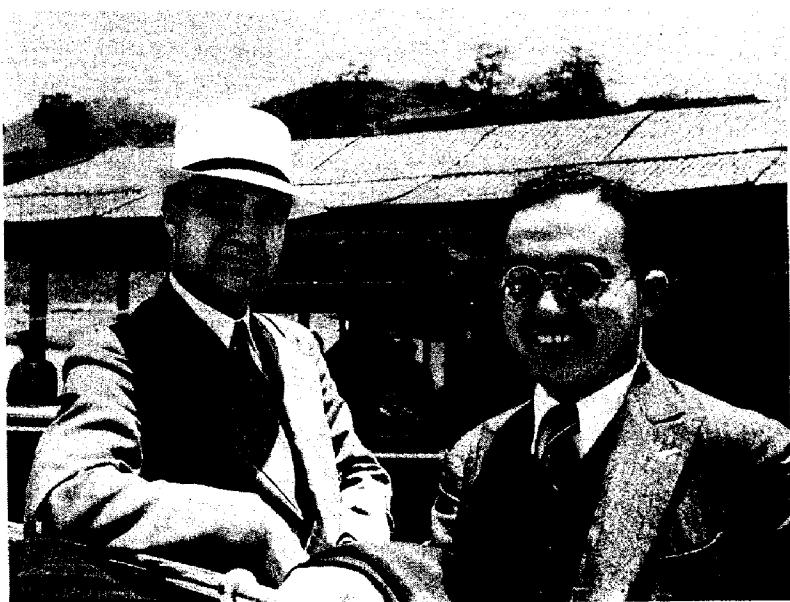
The Currie-FDR plan to "say nice things" about Chiang surfaced in the form of an article about Currie's mission to China that appeared in *Life* magazine on May 5, 1941. The piece was crafted by China Lobbyist Eliot Janeway, who wrote that FDR believed Chiang was "Roosevelt's fellow-leader of democracy," a man through whom the president would promote the "democratic principles of the New Deal."²¹

That same month, Henry Luce ventured to the country of his birth with his wife, Clare Boothe Luce. By the time the couple arrived in Chungking, on May 8, 1941, Ailing and Mayling had already run

hundreds of Americans through the Soong-Chiang drill. Ailing housed the Luces in her Western-style Chungking home, where she could almost literally watch their every move. The Soongs controlled the Luces' schedule; the publisher and his wife went where the Soong sisters wanted them to go, and they met the people who were put in front of them. The Soong sisters kept the Luces on a stimulating treadmill of daily meetings with graduates of U.S. universities and late-night banquets hosted by smiling American-trained Chinese who, in American-style English, toasted Henry's brilliance and Clare's beauty.

The Luces were accompanied on parts of their trip by their newly hired *Time* magazine correspondent Teddy White, lately of Chiang's Ministry of Information.

Luce was thrilled to witness a Japanese air raid on Chungking, which he observed from the safety of the American embassy, located across the river from the city. "There they come!" Luce wrote. "There



Henry Luce and Theodore "Teddy" White. Luce hired White from Chiang's Ministry of Information. (Time & Life Pictures / Getty Images)

they come! I could hear nothing nor see anything except the blazing sky. Then: Corrump, corrump, corrump, corrump. And again: Corrump, corrump, CORRUMP."²² Luce admitted that he never actually saw any Japanese aircraft, but Minister of Information Hollington Tong told him there had been forty-two Japanese airplanes, which Luce reported as fact. After the bombing, Luce and company crossed the river and drove through Chungking's streets. He saw no injured people, but Tong said there had been casualties, which Luce also reported.

No barbarian's tour of the China Lobby's New China theme park would be complete without a visit to "the front," so Luce took a short airplane hop north to the city of Xian and was thrilled to find that it was becoming Americanized with "wide long straight streets with sidewalks... Western clothes... and above all, rubber tires—rubber tires even on oxcarts."²³

Tong roused the Luces at 3:15 the next morning so they could witness the army's dawn rituals. Well-muscled troops in crisp uniforms paraded past the publisher, came to attention, saluted a flag, and listened to a band. After the men marched away, Tong told Luce there were twelve thousand such troops in the area fighting the Japanese, another unverifiable claim parroted by Luce in his dispatch home.

Escorted by General Chow, the Luces went to "the wall of the city nearest the river and the Japanese." In the city was a frontline headquarters. A colonel sat the Americans down to tea and showed them brightly colored maps. The colonel next took them to an observation post, and then Henry Luce—dressed in suit and tie with polished shoes—descended with the commander into the trenches.

Luce wound through the trenches, encountering soldiers who were reading, not fighting, and finally made his way to the observation point: "On the cliffs beyond we could see the gun emplacements and then we spotted one Japanese sentry and through the glasses we could see the flag of Nippon. That was all."²⁴

Did Luce see a real Japanese soldier or one of Hollington Tong's Chinese actors? Luce—and the American reader—never knew.



*Henry Luce at the "front" in suit and tie
(Courtesy Henry Luce Foundation)*

Based on his observation of a few hundred soldiers and his examination of war maps over tea, Luce reported that Chiang had an army of three million snappy, ready-to-fight soldiers:

Let it be said right now that the Chinese Army of Chiang Kai-shek has a fine morale, as strict discipline, as earnest and as intent an expression as ever characterized any army in history.²⁵

When the Luces met with the Generalissimo and Madame Chiang, Henry found it a transcendent experience. Mayling greeted them first and Luce wrote, "We were in almost no time at all talking 100% American faster than I have ever heard it talked." When Chiang

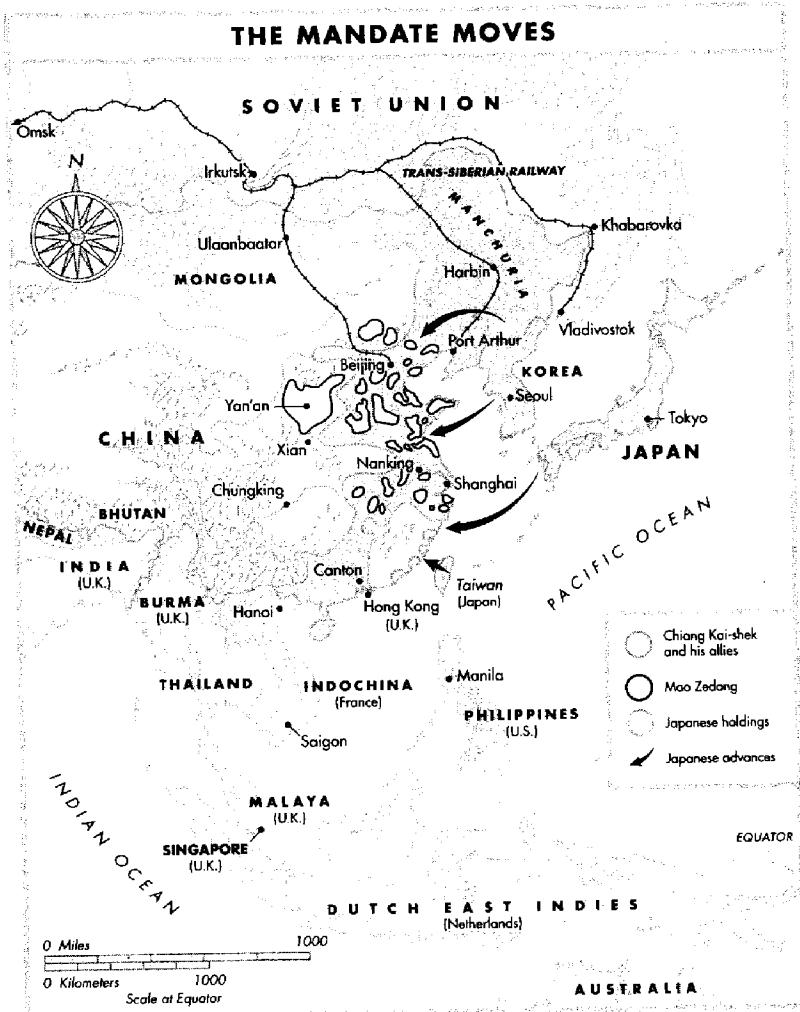
arrived, the four of them had a simple lunch, and Luce presented the Generalissimo with a portfolio of photographs. Luce concluded, "An hour later we left knowing that we had made the acquaintance of two people, a man and a woman, who, out of all the millions now living, will be remembered for centuries and centuries."²⁶

There were three Chinas at that point: Chiang's, Mao's, and Japan's. Henry Luce had fully examined none of them; he had obediently stayed within the China Lobby bubble. Perhaps if the publisher had not been a missionary's son, someone at Time Inc. might have reported on Mao's China and revealed the twentieth century's largest revolution as it developed from embryo to maturity.

Had Luce made his way to Yan'an, no lavish banquets in marble halls would have been awaiting him. But Luce would have found that Yan'an, which six years earlier most Chinese had never heard of, was now one of China's largest educational centers. Before Mao had marched to Yan'an, there had been few schools scattered across a vast area of North China, and what schools there were taught only the Confucian Four Books and Five Classics. Mao founded the University of Resistance, which graduated over ten thousand students a year. He built primary schools, middle schools, three colleges, the largest arts academy in China, and a vocational training school. A publishing house hidden deep in the loess hills printed books, magazines, and newspapers. A factory produced many types of medicines.

Before Mao's arrival, women in North China were hired out as labor by their husbands and fathers, who collected their wages. Mao created the Women's University, housed in a series of caves connected by internal walkways. The Women's University had students of all ages who were from all over China—astonishing, considering that Chiang had this area surrounded and that the aspiring scholars who ventured to Yan'an risked arrest.

Even if he had traveled to Yan'an, Luce might not have comprehended what he was seeing. Luce, like most Westerners, understood only positional warfare, maps with lines of troops facing each other. A map of Mao's empire would have resembled a net. The Japanese



The late 1930s saw chaos in China as Chiang Kai-shek's holdings shrunk while Mao Zedong and the Japanese expanded.

lifelines—cities and connecting roads—were the cords. The open spaces—the majority of the net—were the areas under Mao's influence. When the Japanese advanced, Chiang retreated. Into the resulting vacuum Mao dispatched his acolytes to teach the villagers a new type of resistance warfare.

Mao—like Chiang—had a torture and detention center out of sight. After all, this was a Chinese civil war, and Mao was no saint. The difference was that Mao inspired the Four Hundred Million to reclaim their country.

In the ten months following FDR's July 1940 partial embargo, the Japanese purchased more oil than they had in 1939, and they obtained State-approved licenses for five million gallons more. Shipments from California to Japan in May of 1941 totaled over two million barrels, a record for the year. Newspaper photographs of Japanese ships loading oil in California ports infuriated many Americans, who were two to one in favor of "nonparticipation in Japanese aggression." It was "ghastly" how we were letting Japan "pile up" oil, complained Henry Morgenthau.²⁷

Surprisingly, despite all the controversy, the Roosevelt administration's contacts with the Japanese were minimal and limited mostly to official exchanges. No individual Japanese had anything like the personal access to the Roosevelt administration that the China Lobby had. Indeed, the Japanese ambassador was an old navy admiral with minimal English skills. Kichisaburo Nomura was dispatched from Tokyo to Washington in November 1940 because he had served in Washington when Roosevelt was assistant secretary of the Navy. In Tokyo's eyes, Nomura's value in Washington was symbolic. He represented the Japanese navy, which, like the U.S. Navy, did not want war. Roosevelt respected Nomura, but the admiral had none of the public relations skills possessed by Baron Kaneko or T. V. Soong. Nomura's diplomatic experience was limited and he had never attended any overseas English-speaking school, let alone Harvard. Without the benefit of Ivy League ties, the communication between Tokyo, through its embassy in Washington, and the Roosevelt administration was stilted and formal.

In the spring of 1941 Roosevelt agreed to let members of his administration talk with the Japanese government, but, perhaps because of the public's sympathy for the Noble Chinese Peasants and China Lobby pressure, FDR green-lighted the negotiations only if Secretary of State Hull conducted them in secret. On April 14, 1941, Nomura

quietly called on Hull at his apartment at the Wardman Park Hotel. Hull's speech impediment and pronounced Tennessee drawl exacerbated the challenges raised by Nomura's poor grasp of English and the complex, layered language of diplomacy.

The subject of their first talk was a draft understanding that Nomura had given to Hull days earlier. Written by a Japanese army colonel in the Japanese embassy in Washington, the draft understanding was a wish list that expressed the Japanese desire to maintain their presence in China. Tokyo officials were unaware of its existence, yet Nomura had submitted it to Hull.

Hull told Nomura up front that their meetings did not constitute formal negotiations, that before the U.S. and Japan could begin talks, Japan must agree to "the integrity and sovereignty of China and the principle of equality of opportunity in China."²⁸ Hull had just informed Nomura that Japan had to reopen the Open Door before the U.S. would even *begin* negotiations. Nomura—quickly lost in the twists and turns of Hull's legalistic language—never grasped that the secretary of state had drawn a line in the sand.

Two days later, at another meeting in the secretary's apartment, Hull educated Nomura on the four principles upon which any U.S. agreement with Japan must be based:

- (1) Respect for the territorial integrity and the sovereignty of each and all nations.
- (2) Support of the principle of noninterference in the internal affairs of other countries.
- (3) Support of the principle of equality, including equality of commercial opportunity.
- (4) Nondisturbance of the status quo in the Pacific except as the status quo may be altered by peaceful means.²⁹

Hull was demanding that Japan get out of China, a momentous change in American policy that was expressed in secret by a man who couldn't speak Japanese to a man who barely understood English. Hull's goal was "regeneration," the theory that if the U.S. forced the Japanese military

into a humiliating withdrawal from China, moderates in Tokyo would seize power from the militarists. Hull had no interpreter and recorded in his memoirs that Nomura "spoke a certain—sometimes an uncertain—amount of English," so Hull "took care to speak slowly and to repeat and reemphasize some of [his] sentences." Hull concluded that he "was not sure" whether Nomura understood him.

Nomura asked Hull a yes-or-no question: Did the U.S. agree with the draft understanding Japan had submitted? Nomura struggled to comprehend Hull's answer: "If your Government is in real earnest about changing its course, I can see no good reason why ways could not be found to reach a fairly satisfactory settlement of all the essential questions presented."³⁰

Unsure if Hull had answered yes or no, Nomura optimistically guessed it was a yes.

None of what Hull had carefully laid out to Nomura was transmitted to Tokyo. Nomura simply cabled the draft understanding to Japan's Foreign Ministry, saying that Hull was willing to go ahead with it. Historian Robert Butow noted,

Nomura's brief account gave not the slightest hint of the innumerable statements with which Hull had patiently built up his position like a mason carefully laying one stone upon another. The ambassador's few clipped words did not even report the sense of what he had been told by the American Secretary of State.³¹

The drawling Hull had asked Nomura to have Tokyo examine the draft understanding so Japanese leaders could decide whether they wished Japan to officially present it to the State Department *as a basis for starting negotiations*. Instead, Nomura implied to his superiors an American eagerness to go ahead *on the basis of the draft understanding*. Nomura's vague and stilted phrasing led Tokyo officials to conclude that the draft understanding was an *American plan prepared as a response to the various inside moves initiated by Nomura and his staff*. Nomura also failed to forward Hull's crucial four principles, which effectively demanded that Japan withdraw from China.

The draft understanding cabled by Nomura was received in Tokyo on April 18 "like welcome rain in the desert" and a "boon from Heaven." As army minister Hideki Tojo later said, "We regarded the Japanese-American negotiations as having begun from the moment we were asked to indicate our attitude with respect to this proposal."³² Suddenly what was the draft understanding in Washington became the "American plan" in Tokyo.

Tokyo responded on May 12 with its answer to the American plan, which Hull accepted as Japan's initial offer. Thus, as a result of this tragicomedy of errors, from May 12, 1941, negotiations were doomed; when Hull suggested changes, leaders in Tokyo were outraged that he was backing down on the promises he had made in the American plan.

Arthur Schlesinger Jr. wrote in *The Age of Roosevelt* of FDR's management style:

In many cases jurisdictions overlapped each other and even spilled into cabinet departments. This was sloppy and caused much trouble. Yet this very looseness around the joints, this sense of give and possibility which Henry Stimson once called the "inherently disorderly nature" of Roosevelt's administration, made public service attractive to men of a certain boldness and imagination. It also spurred them on to better achievement. Roosevelt liked the competitive approach to administration, not just because it reserved the big decisions for the President, but perhaps even more because it enabled him to test and develop the abilities of his subordinates. How to tell which man, which approach was better? One answer was to let them fight it out.³³

By early May, the study groups established by the canny bureaucrat Henry Stimson had produced eighteen plans on how to cripple Japan with economic warfare.³⁴ The First Wise Man initiated no accompanying analysis of how Japan might react.

In May of 1941 Roosevelt established the Office of Petroleum Coordinator for National Defense, headed by Secretary of the Interior

Harold Ickes. Ickes was knowledgeable about domestic energy, but he had no foreign-policy experience. Like Morgenthau had, Ickes complained that the secretary of state was a softy:

All that [Hull] ever tried to do in addition to his futile protests at continued encroachments by the dictators, was to negotiate reciprocal trade agreements. These were all right so far as they went; they might have led to something in ordinary times when peace was the principal preoccupation of the nations of the world, but as I remarked to the President on one occasion, with the world in a turmoil they were like hunting an elephant in the jungle with a fly swatter.³⁵

Ickes searched for a way to cut Japan's oil, publicly (and incorrectly) blaming Japan's purchases of oil on the West Coast for a gas shortage on the East Coast. Hull complained to Roosevelt. FDR scolded Ickes, telling him that oil exportation to Japan was a sensitive issue, "so much a part of our current foreign policy that this policy must not be affected in any shape, manner or form by anyone except the Secretary of State or the President."³⁶

Roosevelt and Hull wanted the Japanese to have all the California oil they desired. A growing team of Warriors was trying to shut off the oil spigot, but as long as the president and his secretary of state remained vigilant, the U.S. would not be drawn into an unwanted war in Asia.

June of 1941 saw secret turmoil in the lives of the president and the State Department's two top officials.

Undersecretary of State Sumner Welles was accused of making homosexual advances to black Pullman porters on the presidential train. While some warned FDR that Welles was a criminal who should be fired, Roosevelt stuck by Welles.

At 9:30 p.m. on June 21, a U.S. Navy ambulance arrived at the White House, and medics carried Missy LeHand out on a stretcher. Missy had been at FDR's side as his secretary and companion since the early 1920s; she had arranged the president's days and enlivened

his nights. Her bedroom was above FDR's in the White House. Wrote historian Doris Kearns Goodwin, "Missy was in love with her boss and regarded herself as the other wife."³⁷ Presidential speechwriter Raymond Moley said about FDR's affection for her: "There's no doubt that Missy was as close to being a wife as he ever had—or could have."³⁸

Missy had suffered a stroke, leaving the president for the first time in decades without her organizational skills and affection.

Hours after the person who had been closest to FDR left him, Germany invaded Communist Russia. Something momentous had just taken place on the world stage, but Secretary of State Hull was on his way to White Springs, West Virginia, for an extended vacation. Hull was sick, tired, and probably frustrated that the president hardly seemed to need him; FDR was outsourcing many of his diplomatic moves through Harry Hopkins. Hull would be gone for six weeks at a time when the president was recovering from a tragic personal and professional loss, and a besieged Sumner Welles ran the State Department.

While FDR and Tommy the Cork could keep their Asian air-war scheme a secret from the American public, the enemy was not fooled.

After the first contingent of FDR's mercenaries sailed to Rangoon, Burma, aboard the *President Pierce*, Japanese intelligence informed their offices in Nanking, Shanghai, Beijing, and Canton:

The first party of 100 members of American aviators and technicians dispatched recently has arrived in Rangoon...it is expected that large numbers will be sent out from the United States...Chungking requested that the United States supply some 500 first-class airplanes, and as a result of the contacts made by T. V. Soong...for the time being, a mere 80 planes had been supplied.³⁹

In early July, about ten "retired" U.S. Army Air Corps pilots and a hundred and fifty mechanics quietly checked into San Francisco's swanky Mark Hopkins Hotel. Their U.S. passports identified them as ordinary missionaries, clerks, bankers, teachers, and students. Farmer

Claire Chennault joined them on July 7 for a night of partying. The next day Chennault boarded a Pan American clipper, and two days later—escorted by American naval vessels—FDR's second contingent of mercenaries sailed out of San Francisco Bay aboard the Dutch freighter *Jagersfontein*.

Chennault later admitted that after the *Jagersfontein* pulled out of San Francisco Bay, his men heard a Japanese radio broadcast boast, "That ship will never reach China. It will be sunk."⁴⁰

At a meeting in Emperor Hirohito's presence on July 2, Japanese leaders decided to go south beyond China toward the rich resources of Southeast Asia. Because U.S. code breakers had decrypted Japanese diplomatic communications, Roosevelt and a few others were aware that Japan intended to occupy the southern half of Indochina and use it as a staging area—a serious challenge to the ABCD powers because Japan could place bombers within range of their Philippines, Malaysian, and Dutch East Indies colonies.

Roosevelt had earlier frozen German and Italian funds deposited in the United States. The freeze process existed, and Japan could be added with a stroke of FDR's pen. Welles now suggested that FDR freeze Japanese assets. Roosevelt took no action.

Roosevelt continued to spend much more time focused on Europe than Asia. Working around his State Department, FDR sent Harry Hopkins to England to meet with Winston Churchill and arrange a secret meeting between the two leaders in Canada. Via Hopkins, Roosevelt briefed Churchill on his strategy of keeping peace in the Pacific. Roosevelt wanted the U.S. and Japan to agree to "neutralize" Indochina, turning the area into a neutral zone from which both Japan and the U.S. would acquire resources. But first Japan would have to withdraw from Indochina.

On July 18, Roosevelt informed his cabinet that a reliable source (his code breakers) thought that Japan would occupy southern Indochina within three or four days. Roosevelt said that the U.S. should do little, especially not embargo oil, since "to cut off oil altogether

at this time would probably precipitate an outbreak of war in the Pacific and endanger British communications with Australia and New Zealand.⁴¹

Roosevelt instructed Welles to draft regulations for a freeze of Japanese assets, but he had not decided whether to implement it. Edward Miller wrote,

Welles was an unusual choice because financial sanctions... were the province of Morgenthau's Treasury Department. Perhaps Roosevelt thought an official of the softer State Department would carry out his policy of a partial freeze more reliably than the pugnacious Morgenthau.⁴²

Welles sketched out a freeze of Japanese assets in the U.S., giving Roosevelt a leash to control Japanese purchases. If FDR froze their holdings, the Japanese would have to ask his permission when they wanted to use their funds, and Roosevelt could veto their choices. Welles knew that FDR wanted Japan to continue to get U.S. oil and he designed a system that would release sufficient funds for Japan to purchase plenty of oil from California. Welles outlined the plan on Saturday, July 19, and asked Dean Acheson to draft the details.

Acheson thought it was insane and immoral for FDR to continue selling Japan oil. Like the First Wise Man, Acheson believed America had a share in Japan's war guilt. Acheson ignored Welles's orders and drafted a tough, sweeping embargo against Japan. Later Welles deleted Acheson's more aggressive wording and redrafted the document himself. (Acheson's attempt to radically alter Welles's draft was insubordinate, but in the loosey-goosey Roosevelt administration, Acheson kept his job, just as Morgenthau had remained after he had tried to cut Japan's oil by altering Welles's July 1940 draft.)

On July 23, Roosevelt approved the American Military Mission to China (AMMISCA), a grandly named but relatively small group of Army officers who were to study Chiang's Lend-Lease needs. Roosevelt also approved 269 additional fighters and 66 bombers for the Chiang-Chennault scheme. These moves were groundbreaking: for the

first time, FDR established an official U.S. military connection with Chiang. And bombers were offensive weapons, which the Japanese spies watching the Rangoon docks would surely note to Tokyo.

FDR defended his oil sales to Japan in public for the first time in a speech he gave at Hyde Park to the Volunteer Participation Committee, a group dedicated to informing their fellow Americans of fast-changing world events. In a folksy manner, FDR explained,

Here on the East Coast you have been reading that the Secretary of the Interior, as Oil Administrator, is faced with the problem of not enough gasoline to go around in the East Coast, and how he is asking everybody to curtail their consumption of gasoline. All right. Now I am—I might be called—an American citizen, living in Hyde Park, N.Y. And I say, "That's a funny thing. Why am I asked to curtail my consumption of gasoline when I read in the papers that thousands of tons of gasoline are going out from Los Angeles—the west coast—to Japan; and we are helping Japan in what looks like an act of aggression?"

All right. Now the answer is a very simple one. There is a world war going on, and has been for some time—nearly two years. One of our efforts, from the very beginning, was to prevent the spread of that world war in certain areas where it hadn't started. One of those areas is a place called the Pacific Ocean—one of the largest areas of the earth. There happened to be a place in the South Pacific where we had to get a lot of things—rubber, tin, and so forth and so on—down in the Dutch Indies, the Straits Settlements, and Indochina. And we had to help get the Australian surplus of meat and wheat, and corn, for England.

It was very essential, from our own selfish point of view of defense, to prevent a war from starting in the South Pacific. So our foreign policy was trying to stop a war from breaking out down there....

All right. And now here is a nation called Japan. Whether they had at that time aggressive purposes to enlarge their empire southward, they didn't have any oil of their own up in the north. Now, if we cut the oil off, they probably would have gone down to the Dutch East Indies a year ago, and you would have had war.

Therefore, there was—you might call—a method in letting this oil go to Japan, with the hope—and it has worked for two years—of keeping war out of the South Pacific for our own good, for the good of the defense of Great Britain, and the freedom of the seas.

You people can help to enlighten the average citizen who wouldn't hear of that, or doesn't read the papers carefully, or listen to the radio carefully, to understand what some of these apparent anomalies mean.⁴³

Roosevelt had for the first time publicly revealed that he was appeasing Japan with oil in the hopes of garnering domestic support for his Pacific peace policy. He had clearly signaled that continuing oil sales to Japan was his way of keeping the U.S. out of an unwanted Pacific war. But his American audience had been so bamboozled by constant China Lobby propaganda that they couldn't fathom why FDR would be concerned about Japanese retribution. Liberal journalist I. F. Stone complained in the *Nation* magazine,

The President committed a historic blunder when he [admitted that] we had to sell oil to Japan to keep it from seizing the Dutch East Indies. This translates bitterly into Chinese, for it says that we were content to fuel the bombers that mangled China's children as long as Japan kept out of the rich imperialist preserves in the Indies.... We have been supplying two-thirds of Japan's oil.... There is no way of knowing what has happened to our exports to Japan since March. Neither State Department nor Export Control has ever given out the details... a nation-wide fight must be organized against this most vicious kind of secret diplomacy.⁴⁴

On Saturday, July 26, FDR issued Executive Order No. 8832, which froze all assets owned 25 percent or more by Japanese interests.⁴⁵ Now all Japanese transactions in the U.S. were under FDR's control. While this action made him appear to be getting tough, Roosevelt intended to release plenty of frozen dollars so Japan could purchase the items it needed to fuel its military, especially oil. FDR hoped that the freeze would mollify the China Lobby, calm an aroused American public, and shock Tokyo but not lead to war. As Roosevelt told Harold Ickes, he planned to use the freeze order as a "noose around Japan's neck," and he would "give it a jerk now and then."⁴⁶

Treasury agents now oversaw Japanese banks in the United States. The Japanese in the U.S. got busy filling out Treasury forms to release their frozen dollars.

Roosevelt's actions were understood by many on the inside. Admiral Harold Stark, chief of naval operations, assured his commanders that FDR's financial freeze didn't mean an oil embargo against Japan. He wrote, "Export licenses will be granted for certain grades of petroleum products."⁴⁷

Thus, with his right hand, Roosevelt showed his domestic audience that he was cracking down on Japan. With his left, FDR intended to approve Japan's buying enough oil to keep peace in the Pacific. But at this moment, the president was focused on events across the Atlantic. And even Warren Delano's grandson had only two hands.

Late Friday, July 25, Roosevelt received a cable from Harry Hopkins in England:

I am wondering whether you would think it important and useful for me to go to Moscow. Air transportation good and can reach there in twenty-four hours.... If Stalin could in any way be influenced at a critical time I think it would be worth doing by a direct communication from you through a personal envoy. I think the stakes are so great that it should be done. Stalin would then know in an unmistakable way that we mean business on a long-term supply job.⁴⁸

FDR knew very little about what had happened in Russia since the German invasion; foreigners in Moscow were completely in the dark regarding Stalin's plans. Roosevelt, eager to supply Stalin with military equipment to slow Hitler, responded immediately, "Welles and I highly approve Moscow trip... I will send you tonight a message for Stalin."⁴⁹

Roosevelt spent a long weekend at Hyde Park and then returned to Washington on Monday, July 28, prepared to focus on aid to Communist Russia. He was disappointed to find that most of the Soviet requests for military equipment that he'd thought were moving through the system were in fact stalled in Stimson's War Department. Morgenthau expressed FDR's sense of urgency that the Russians "have just got to get this stuff and get it fast... we will never have a better chance... somebody has been looking over this country and the good Lord has been with us, but we can't count on the good Lord and just plain dumb luck forever."⁵⁰

To administer his freeze on Japanese assets, Roosevelt created a nuanced interdepartmental process. First, the State Department would decide how much oil Japan could purchase, continuing FDR and Hull's exclusive control of America's oil spigot. State's decision would move to Treasury, which would calculate how many Japanese-owned dollars had to be unfrozen to meet State's dictate. Then the Foreign Funds Control Committee (FFCC), a newly created three-man panel, would release the Treasury-approved dollars for the Japanese to use to purchase their State-approved oil. The FFCC wasn't involved in policy-making; it existed only as a mechanism to release to the Japanese the dollars State had authorized and Treasury had calculated. Little did Roosevelt imagine that an obscure committee deep within his bureaucracy would catapult America into World War II.

The FFCC was made up of three representatives, one each from the Departments of State, Treasury, and Justice. Since it was designed to have no important decision-making function, there was no need for the secretaries of each department to serve on the committee, so they appointed surrogates: Dean Acheson from State, Edward Foley from

Treasury, and Francis Shea from Justice. Acheson stood head and shoulders above Foley and Shea in prestige, education, experience, chutzpah, and age (forty-eight for him, versus thirty-five for Foley and thirty-six for Shea). Neither Foley nor Shea had much exposure to foreign affairs, whereas Acheson was an officer in the esteemed diplomatic branch.

After listening to FDR's Hyde Park speech about appeasing Japan with oil to prevent war, Acheson sniffed that "the Foreign Funds Committee was not enlightened on administering the President's policy of no policy."⁵¹

Harry Hopkins met Joseph Stalin on Wednesday, July 30, in Stalin's enormous Kremlin office. Hopkins told the sixty-two-year-old Communist leader, "The President considered Hitler the enemy of mankind and...he therefore wished to aid the Soviet Union in its fight against Germany" and consequently Roosevelt was determined "to extend all possible aid to the Soviet Union at the earliest possible time."⁵²

On Thursday, July 31, 1941, Roosevelt met with a Soviet military delegation. Communists were in the White House.

American and Japanese newspapers were full of stories guessing what the U.S. freeze would mean to Japan. The British ambassador wrote that FDR's policy on oil shipments was to "keep the Japanese in a state of uncertainty."⁵³ FDR was confident that once the Japanese learned they would get all the oil they desired, just under new rules, there would be no war in the Pacific.

Roosevelt was focused on Europe. His closest adviser, Hopkins, was in Moscow, and FDR and Churchill were excited about their coming secret rendezvous. At an August 1 cabinet meeting, Roosevelt once more demanded that aid to Communist Russia get moving. Ickes recalled FDR giving Stimson "one of the most complete dressings down that I have witnessed for giving Russia the 'run-around.'"⁵⁴ Roosevelt said he was "sick and tired of promises" and ordered Stimson to "get the planes right off with a bang next week!"⁵⁵ A fuming Stimson,

whom few had criticized so harshly, complained later to his diary that Roosevelt "was really in a hoity-toity humor and wouldn't listen to argument."⁵⁶

That same day the State Department notified the FFCC that it had approved hundreds of thousands of dollars of oil for Japan. The still vacationing Hull spoke to Welles by phone the next day, August 2. Both men were relieved that Japan would get oil, thus keeping peace in the Pacific.

The White House told the press a cover story that Roosevelt was going on a ten-day fishing trip off the coast of Maine aboard the presidential yacht *Potomac*. On Sunday, August 3, FDR arrived by train at New London, Connecticut, where he transferred to his yacht. In Scotland, his counterpart Winston Churchill boarded the *Prince of Wales* for his five-day trip across the Atlantic.

On Monday, August 4, the *Potomac* sailed into Nonquitt, Massachusetts, where Roosevelt picked up a group of exiled Norwegian royals for a day of fishing. Hundreds of people ashore saw the president. That evening, many watched as the *Potomac* sailed away with the presidential flag flying and a small party visible on deck, including the figure of the president sitting in a chair. It wasn't Roosevelt, but a double. The Secret Service had covertly transferred Roosevelt to the battleship USS *Augusta*, which proceeded secretly to Canada.

Roosevelt had left Washington believing that his loose noose around Japan would on the one hand satisfy domestic American opinion and on the other allow Japan enough purchases to prevent a war in Asia. For a year, since July of 1940, FDR had gotten the better of Stimson, Morgenthau, Knox, and Ickes on the oil issue. Twice—once with Morgenthau in July 1940 and again just recently with Acheson—Welles had caught Warriors changing official language in order to cut Japan's oil. Now Roosevelt was incommunicado out at sea, Hull was worn down and in transit from his West Virginia vacation, and the embattled Welles was flying north to rendezvous with Roosevelt. The cats were distracted and away from Washington. The mice decided to play.

At the August 5 meeting of the FFCC, Acheson, Foley, and Shea

reviewed the flow of oil to Japan and were aghast. As Jonathan Utley explains, "When they saw how much oil Japan would be able to buy under the freeze guidelines, they agreed not to release funds to Japan for the purchase of items for which [Japan had been] issued licenses."⁵⁷ Waldo Heinrichs noted, "The decision on an oil embargo was closely held and deviously managed. Action proceeded not in the formal realm of peacetime quotas and proclamations restricting export, for on paper Japan was supposed to receive some quantities of some kinds of oil, but in the shadowy world of inaction, circumvention, and red tape."⁵⁸

To confront Japan's State-approved and Treasury-calculated requests with a definitive no would have attracted FDR's attention. As Acheson later explained to a British associate, he had "discovered by accident the technique of imposing a total embargo by way of its freezing order without having to take decisions about quotas for particular commodities."⁵⁹ Acheson and Morgenthau passed the buck back and forth to each other, running the Japanese through a bureaucratic maze. A Treasury official later wrote, "The Japanese tried every conceivable way of getting the precious crude oil, but to each proposal the [FFCC] had an evasive answer ready to camouflage its flat refusal."⁶⁰

Acheson had just secretly changed Roosevelt's Asian policy and done the specific thing the president feared would lead to war. As Utley wrote, "Roosevelt intended the freeze...to bring Japan to its senses, not to its knees."⁶¹ History well notes the insanity of Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor but little notes the inanity of the so-called Wise Men—focused on the China Lobby mirage—who provoked it.

In early August of 1941 two Japanese oil tankers docked at the port of San Pedro, California. Japanese officials had sought and received approval from the State Department for the oil months earlier, and the Treasury Department had determined the amount of dollars required. Japan expected that its tankers would be filled as soon as the FFCC released its funds.

Hull had returned to the State Department on August 4 but did not realize that Acheson, aided by Morgenthau, had essentially imposed a complete embargo by refusing to release funds to Japan. Hull was still exhausted; he had been absent for six weeks and had a backlog of

work. Indeed, from Hull's vantage point, the system seemed to be functioning as planned. On August 11, an unaware Hull approved three more Japanese licenses to purchase California oil. Two Japanese embassy officials immediately applied to the FFCC for release of their frozen dollars.

For the past eight months Morgenthau had monitored Japanese transfers from American banks to Brazilian banks. Creating another bureaucratic tar pit, Acheson arbitrarily told the Japanese embassy that their State-approved oil should be paid for from their "free funds" in Brazil rather than from their frozen accounts in the United States. Japanese embassy officials complained that private companies were purchasing the oil while the cash in Brazil belonged to the Japanese navy. Acheson suggested that they try harder to bring the funds from Brazil.

Throughout August, the Japanese met repeatedly with U.S. officials to get their State Department-approved oil. Cleverly, Morgenthau and Acheson never outright refused the Japanese requests, but there was always some small nit to be picked, an unexpected twist or turn to be negotiated. If they did bring dollars up from their South American accounts, Japanese officials asked, would the U.S. promise to let them use those dollars to buy oil? Acheson responded that the question was hypothetical; Japan should transfer the dollars, and then Acheson would decide. The Japanese finally agreed to try Brazil. Acheson then told his Japanese counterparts that the U.S. would accept their "free funds" from Brazil only if Japan identified the sources and locations of *all* its South American accounts. Often, Japanese officials found their phone calls unreturned, and they were told that "many State Department high officials were absent in those hot summer days."⁶²

For the entire month of August, Tokyo officials waited as tankers sat empty in San Pedro. They would have to either persuade FDR to reopen his California oil spigot or advance militarily south and seize oil in the Dutch East Indies. Utley noted, "The policy that was supposed to avoid provoking Japan was transformed into full-scale economic warfare that led to the attack four months later on Pearl Harbor."⁶³

Japan was solvent and had plenty of liquid assets to pay for its oil—dollars as well as gold and silver bars in both the U.S. and Japan. Yet

Roosevelt had effectively made Japan illiquid. Now Japan was dependent on FDR's rules and regulations. As despair mounted in Tokyo, Hull was focused on the aftermath of his talks with the befuddled Nomura, continuing to question and criticize Japan's terms. Hull thought he was negotiating, but Tokyo believed he was backpedaling from his initial offer in the American plan. Like the Foreign Funds Control Committee, Hull kept asking Japanese diplomats for more information without signaling progress. Many Japanese leaders sensed in Washington's delay tactics the tightening of the ABCD encirclement.

Dean Acheson was not the first to attempt to cut Japan's oil supply. Morgenthau, Ickes, and a number of Washington Warriors within Roosevelt's helter-skelter administration had all given it a try. In each of those cases, however, Hull, Welles, or Roosevelt had become aware of what was going on and intervened before any serious damage could be done. The only thing that was different about Acheson's successful exploit was that—supported by Morgenthau, Stimson, and Ickes—he got away with it.

Acheson later defended his insubordination by writing that "no rational Japanese could believe that an attack on us could result in anything but disaster for his country."⁶⁴ Acheson—like most Americans—was saturated in China Lobby propaganda and he assumed that the Japanese would react just as the First Wise Man predicted. The legendary English military historian Sir Basil Henry Liddell Hart later explained what the Wise Men had missed: "No Government, least of all the Japanese, could be expected to swallow such humiliating conditions, and utter loss of face."⁶⁵ As Roland Worth asks in *No Choice but War*, "If the United States would have launched a preemptive war under such circumstances, why is it so surprising that the Japanese did so?"⁶⁶

Chapter 12

WHO LOST CHINA?

Who lost China?

—Senator Joseph McCarthy¹

*I am not going to lose Vietnam. I am not going to be the President
who saw Southeast Asia go the way China went.*

—President Lyndon Baines Johnson²

J. Edgar Hoover's FBI career was rooted in the Red Scare of the 1920s. Since then he had kept an eagle eye out for isms to exploit, especially the evil of Communism. Hoover was a big fan of Chiang Kai-shek as well as a China Lobby insider and a friend of Patrick Hurley.

When *Amerasia* magazine editor Philip Jaffe, whom Hoover suspected of Communist leanings, came to DC, Hoover illegally bugged his hotel room. John Service was in Washington, and at the direction of Lauchlin Currie, he was giving background briefings to journalists, a common practice for U.S. government officials. At six o'clock at night on April 19, 1945, Service walked into Jaffe's hotel room, and the FBI listened as Service told Jaffe he would give him some relatively innocuous documents about Chiang and Mao. Hoover swung into action. FBI agents searched Service's State Department office and decided that there was something suspicious about his writings about

Chinese Communists—even though these were the people he was paid to keep tabs on. They knocked on Service's door at 5:03 on a June night: "We're from the F.B.I. You're under arrest."³ Ambassador Hurley had his first son of a bitch. The China Lobby went into overdrive. Service was dragged into court and eventually subjected to seven State Department investigations, but each inquiry concluded that Service was innocent and had caused no harm.⁴

Mao was upset over Service's arrest. He dashed off an editorial to his followers accusing Ambassador Hurley of not being an honest broker and warned that if the U.S. continued to support only Chiang Kai-shek, America would cause a Chinese civil war after the Japanese were defeated.

The U.S. military brought Japan to its knees by burning out its cities with napalm. General Curtis LeMay was one of the great pilots of the European front. Assigned to bomb Japan, LeMay traveled to China and saw that, contrary to Chiang and Chennault's preachings, China wasn't a secure site from which to launch air attacks on Japan. LeMay instead based his B-29s on the Pacific islands of Tinian, Saipan, and Guam. Indeed, the battle of Iwo Jima was fought to clear the middle airspace between these southern airfields and Japan, far to the north. On March 11, 1945, American B-29s with bellies full of napalm flew over Iwo Jima, headed north. LeMay launched the biggest air attack in history against Tokyo, killing around one hundred thousand civilians in about three hours. More Tokyo civilians died in a shorter time than in any previous military operation in any war. As LeMay later wrote, "We scorched and boiled and baked to death more people in Tokyo on that night of March 9–10 than went up in vapor at Hiroshima and Nagasaki combined."⁵ LeMay exaggerated a bit, but his point was that the two atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki later overshadowed the powerful role of his groundbreaking napalm bombings, which reduced the majority of Japan's cities to ash and made an astonishing fifteen million urban Japanese homeless.⁶

At 7:00 p.m. on August 14, 1945, President Truman announced the

Japanese surrender. Three hours later, Mayling Soong came on the air, broadcasting from Ailing's Riverdale mansion: "Now that complete victory has come to us, our thoughts should turn first to the rendering of thanks to our creator and the sobering task of formulating a truly Christian peace."⁷

At the time of Tokyo's surrender, the majority of Japanese troops in China were stationed in the north. This was Chairman Mao's territory.

In Europe, General Dwight Eisenhower negotiated with Russian Communists over who would accept which German prisoners. While military reality in Asia dictated that Mao had the quickest, cheapest, and most effective way to disarm the Japanese soldiers, General MacArthur ordered the Japanese to surrender only to Chiang. Since many of Chiang's troops were far away in southern China, Mao watched, astonished, as the U.S. mounted a massive cross-country airlift of the Generalissimo's soldiers. Equally astonishing to Mao, Truman inserted American troops into North China to protect railways and other strategic resources for Chiang and ordered them to treat as enemies Mao's warriors, men who had previously risked their lives to rescue downed U.S. fliers. Now there were no American observers in Yan'an, and having had his outreached hand swatted away a number of times, Mao concluded the obvious, that the United States had rejected his attempts at friendship.

Earlier in the year, John Service had tried to inform Washington about Mao Zedong. Now another young American attempted to awaken Harry Truman's Wise Men to the rise of Ho Chi Minh, the leader of the anti-French Vietminh freedom fighters. In the spring of 1945, thirty-one-year-old Captain Archimedes Patti of the OSS parachuted into Ho Chi Minh's base north of Hanoi. Patti spoke French fluently, and Ho liked to smoke Patti's Chesterfields. Patti was an intelligent and canny operative, and he interviewed the French colonizers and many French-speaking Vietnamese. Indeed, over several months, Patti spent hours in conversation with Ho Chi Minh.

On September 2, 1945, General MacArthur took the Japanese surrender in Tokyo Bay. To an international radio audience, MacArthur promised that the defeat of Japan had liberated Asia.

On that same day, four hundred thousand joyful Vietnamese gathered in Hanoi's central square. The vast crowd strained to see the diminutive fifty-five-year-old Ho Chi Minh as he walked across the enormous stage, stepped up to the microphone, and proclaimed,

All men are created equal; they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable Rights; among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness. This immortal statement was made in the Declaration of Independence of the United States of America in 1776. In a broader sense, this means: All the peoples on the earth are equal from birth, all the peoples have a right to live, to be happy and free.⁸

Quoting Thomas Jefferson in Vietnam's declaration of independence was a pretty broad hint that Ho Chi Minh desired friendship with the United States. Captain Patti and other American OSS officers stood nearby as Ho told the world that Vietnamese, and not foreigners, would now control Vietnam. Americans on the spot admired Ho and could see that the future was his. Patti wrote reports to Washington concluding that Ho Chi Minh had both widespread popular support and a potent plan to repel invaders. Julia Child—later America's TV chef—was the young OSS secretary who wrapped Patti's reports in burlap for their long journey to Washington.

As Mao Zedong had, Ho Chi Minh extended his hand in friendship to the United States, sending a number of entreaties to President Truman and Secretary of State Acheson along the lines of this one: "I therefore most earnestly appeal to you personally and to the American people to interfere urgently in support of our independence."⁹ Neither Truman nor Acheson responded.

This was not an oversight. The Wise Men disagreed about whether Asians should be free. America's defeat of Japan did not result in liberty for Asians. On President Truman's orders, the U.S. Navy ferried British,

Dutch, and French government officials and military men back to Southeast Asia to reassert control of their colonies. The merchant-missionary dream that foreigners would control events in Asia was still alive.

After the failure of the Chiang-Chennault air-war dream, Generals Marshall and Arnold had given Chennault the boot. Chennault left China on August 8, 1945. (Since he had contributed so little to Japan's defeat, no one in the War Department asked him to attend the victory celebration in Tokyo Bay.) Nevertheless, Chennault—who had now been drummed out of the U.S. military twice—would continue to spin the mirage in Washington, and with Tommy the Cork and the Soong family, he would make his postwar fortune in Asia through the private airline they founded, China Air Transport (CAT).

China Air Transport was an airline with few customers; most Chinese couldn't afford a plane ticket. No matter—Corcoran solved CAT's cash-flow problem. Tommy's old friend Fiorello La Guardia, former mayor of New York, was in 1945 the director general of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration. Tommy presented La Guardia with a plan to have CAT deliver UNRRA supplies within China. UNRRA officials turned down this costly proposal. China Air Transport was an upstart airline fronted by the discredited Chennault with shadowy China Lobby ties. Tommy pressured La Guardia, who told him there was nothing he could do. Tommy kept the heat on. Just before he resigned as director general, La Guardia reversed his officials' ruling and awarded CAT a nearly four-million-dollar UNRRA contract.

To accept UNRRA aid, Ailing and T. V. Soong created the Chinese National Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (CNRRA). With skids greased by the China Lobby, UNRRA gave Chiang more aid—\$518 million—than it awarded any other country. This UNRRA aid passed through the hands of the Soong family, who also, through CAT, were charging the United Nations big delivery fees and splitting the take with their American friends, the same ones who in 1940 had sold Franklin Delano Roosevelt on a secret air war in Asia.

* * *

President Truman continued FDR's policy of supporting only Chiang, and as the China Hands had predicted, civil war broke out. Many Americans were surprised because the China Lobby line held that once the Japanese left, Chiang's America-loving New China would arise. During four years of war, FDR had promoted the Soong-Chiang myth, and Mao's mastery was hidden under a pile of *Time*, *Life*, and *Fortune* magazines.

In September of 1945 an increasingly frustrated Ambassador Hurley left Chungking and returned to the comfortable mirage back home. On November 26, Hurley was in Washington and learned that six congressmen had criticized "the rotten Hurley policy" that had "now committed us to armed intervention" in China's internal affairs.¹⁰ An infuriated Hurley responded with a letter of resignation to Truman:

It is not secret that the American policy in China did not have the support of all the career men in the State Department. The professional foreign service men sided with the Chinese Communist armed party.... Our professional diplomats continuously advised the Communists that my efforts in preventing the collapse of the National Government did not represent the policy of the United States... the chief opposition to the accomplishment of our mission came from the American career diplomats in the Embassy at Chungking and in the Chinese and Far Eastern Divisions of the State Department.¹¹

This was the first blast of the who-lost-China fears that would later fuel McCarthyism, the witch hunt for the enemy within. Truman dispatched General Marshall to China to referee the spat between Chiang and Mao, but Marshall failed to bring peace between the two men. The China Lobby raised new suspicions about officials who were losing China: they even attacked the great General Marshall—the man who had won World War II for FDR—by accusing him of having been duped by traitors.

The U.S. military and media remained virtually clueless regarding Mao Zedong's military strategies. In 1947, American newspapers

reported as militarily significant Chiang's capture of Yan'an and the fact that Mao was supposedly on the run. Sidney Rittenberg—an American who spent time with Mao in those years—explained:

Mao deliberately used Yan'an as bait. Then after Yan'an was occupied, he used himself as bait, personally, to lead this huge, well-trained, well-equipped—with American military equipment—this army of Chiang Kai-shek's deep into the wilderness of Shansi province, where the population was sparse and heavily supportive of the Communists. Then he used his person to lead them on a merry chase every day until he got them into the ambush spot he wanted them in.¹²

By June of 1948, Mao and Chiang had roughly equal numbers of men and armaments. In October 1948, an astonishing three hundred thousand of Chiang's soldiers defected to Mao's side. The final showdown was near.

The China Hands had predicted that U.S. policy supporting the Generalissimo only would force Mao to turn to the Soviet Union. When Mao did exactly that, Americans believed he was a Soviet pawn, because the first assumption of the mirage was that China could not be reformed from within, only by outside Western forces. Not realizing that Mao's first choice of an ally had been the United States, Americans saw Mao's success as part of a worldwide Communist conspiracy emanating from Moscow.

In November of 1948 Chiang sent a "direct and urgent appeal" to Truman, warning that Mao's warriors were "within striking distance" of Shanghai and Nanking and asking for "speedy and increased military assistance" and "a firm statement of American policy in support of the cause for which my Government is fighting." Chiang contended that such a statement from Truman "would serve to bolster up the morale of the armed forces and the civilian population and would strengthen the Government's position."¹³ But a memorandum prepared by the Joint Chiefs of Staff told Truman there was "now obviously grave doubt as to whether the arrival in China of any further military equipment for the Chinese National Government will buy any time at

all. It might, in fact, have the opposite result in that such equipment might pass into the hands of victorious Communist forces.”¹⁴

Mayling arrived in Washington at the end of 1948 with a demand for three billion dollars in aid. Truman had Mayling cool her heels for nine days before seeing her. (Like the British, Truman referred privately to Chiang as “Generalissimo Cash My-check.”)¹⁵ Truman later remembered,

She came to the United States for some more handouts, I wouldn’t let her stay at the White House like Roosevelt did. I don’t think she liked it very much, but I didn’t care one way or the other about what she liked and what she didn’t like....

I discovered after some time, that Chiang Kai-shek and the Madame and their families, the Soong family and the Kungs, were all thieves, every last one of them, the Madame and him included. And they stole seven hundred and fifty million dollars out of the 3.5 billion that we sent to Chiang. They stole it, and it’s invested in real estate down in Sao Paolo and some right here in New York. And that’s the money that was used and is still being used for the so-called China Lobby. I don’t like that. I don’t like that at all. And I don’t want anything to do with people like that....¹⁶

They wanted me to send in about five million Americans to rescue him [Chiang], but I wouldn’t do it.... He was as corrupt as they come. I wasn’t going to waste one single American life to save him.... They hooted and hollered and carried on and said I was soft on Communism...[but] I never changed my mind about Chiang and his gang. Every damn one of them ought to be in jail, and I’d like to live to see the day they are.¹⁷

In *The Last Empress*, Hannah Pakula wrote, “Most people assumed that Madame Chiang, having failed to get U.S. support, would turn around and go home, but she had another plan, involving settling down in the United States and strengthening the China Lobby, which she apparently believed to be at least partially responsible for the abrupt end to the country’s generosity.”¹⁸ Mayling held meetings to pressure

the U.S. government into reviving its support for Chiang. Wrote Pakula, “The Republicans took on the fight against the Communists as a moral cause; the military men were concerned about a future conflict with the USSR; and the churchmen embraced it as a struggle against the Antichrist in Asia.”¹⁹

In 1948 Henry Stimson published his autobiography, *On Active Service in Peace and War*, coauthored by McGeorge Bundy, a young Harvard Wise Man. Unlike a mere mortal, who refers to him- or herself with the first-person pronoun *I*, the First Wise Man employed the third-person: “Stimson said... Stimson felt.” Curiously, he did not mention his years of service as honorary chairman of the American Committee for Non-Participation in Japanese Aggression, through which position he so successfully convinced the majority of Americans that the U.S. could embargo Japan’s oil and suffer no blowback. He also didn’t mention the creation of a secret air force for Chiang Kai-shek or Dean Acheson’s cutting off Japan’s oil when Roosevelt was out of town. And while he devoted four pages to Army/Navy football games, the First Wise Man made no mention of the twentieth century’s most successful revolutionary, Mao Zedong.

After its defeat, Japan was forced to return Taiwan (then commonly called Formosa) to China, and with American help, Chiang Kai-shek dispatched troops there to take over. Locals recently freed from Japan’s yoke were quickly disillusioned: Chiang’s officials took the best houses and over 90 percent of the important industries, and they replaced Taiwanese workers with mainlanders. Soon, Chiang’s Taiwanese economy was in the same sorry shape as his Chinese one.

Beginning in 1947, local Taiwanese began to rebel against the heavy-handedness of Chiang’s carpetbagging officials. Chiang’s troops—mainland Chinese—flooded the streets. Bodies showing signs of gruesome torture soon lined the roadsides; many men had been castrated and had had their noses and ears sliced off.

In January of 1949, Chiang realized the game was up in mainland China, and he prepared to flee. But first he made a stop in Shanghai to

transfer the government's gold reserves to Taiwan, an operation that took place late one February night after Chiang's soldiers had cordoned off the Bund, Shanghai's Wall Street. A file of coolies with bamboo poles across their backs balanced wrapped packages of gold bullion as Chiang absconded with the small portion of China's gold wealth that Ailing Soong had not yet extracted.

In her book *Shanghai*, Stella Dong wrote, "Chiang Kai-shek's henchmen made Shanghai's last weeks under Nationalist rule a nightmare of disorder and brutality." One American witnessed "the street execution of half a dozen captive students. Bound and kneeling, they had their brains blown out by Chiang's warriors before a great crowd of people."²⁰

The ultimate incarnation of the China mirage was the American fantasy that Chiang's island of Taiwan was now the Republic of China. No one would ever recognize Bermuda as the seat of the British Empire, but with hardly the blink of an eye, Americans accepted that a tiny rock in the Pacific was now the rightful inheritor of a five-thousand-year-old legacy and that a few tens of millions on an island were the real Chinese, while the Five Hundred Million on the mainland were not.

Millions of American believers in the coming of a Christianized New China were shocked when the godless Mao Zedong stood triumphantly overlooking Tiananmen Square on October 1, 1949, and announced his rule from the Son of Heaven's traditional home. Standing near him was Chingling Soong, whose presence as Sun Yat-sen's widow added luster to Mao's claim on the Mandate of Heaven. After a century of his country's humiliation by foreign powers, Mao proclaimed that China would "never again be an insulted nation" now that the Chinese people had "stood up."²¹

For generations Americans had funneled a river of money from their collection plates across the Pacific to China as *Time*, *Life*, and *Fortune* magazines assured readers that China was about to come America's way. The United States had invested more money in backing Chiang than it had in developing the atom bomb. Then, just like



Mao Zedong, Tiananmen Square, 1949 (Everett Collection / Mondadori Portfolio)

that, China had been taken over by a pagan Communist who had recently been living in a cave.

Americans felt they had lost China, but they hadn't felt they'd lost anything when Russia had gone Communist. Then again, the Russian Orthodox Church did not have a direct connection to millions of American hearts the way the Protestant missionaries writing their fictions from China had, and there had been no Russia Lobby sloshing money into Washington's trough. Through the China Lobby's constant efforts, Chiang and Mayling had become the ultimate Noble Chinese Peasants. In contrast, few Americans knew of the Romanov family or

cared when they were shot. Russia had never been considered America's, so it couldn't be lost. But the mirage held that China was destined to follow the American way, so America had now lost China.

When Mao Zedong claimed the Mandate, the chief Wise Man—Secretary of State Acheson—saw him as not a "real" Chinese, but as Moscow's puppet, writing, "The Communist leaders have foresworn their Chinese heritage and have publicly announced their subservience to a foreign power, Russia."²²

Who lost China? Hell, *someone* must have; perhaps a Benedict Arnold—or a bunch of them. The Republicans taunted the Truman administration: "Stupidity at the top. Treason just below."²³

Joseph McCarthy of Wisconsin was sworn in as a United States senator on January 3, 1947. In Washington, he was a bachelor far from home. Sometimes on Friday afternoons, McCarthy would take a taxi from his office to the airport, where a Kennedy family private plane would whisk him and Congressman John F. Kennedy to Hyannis Port for the weekend. As a frequent guest, McCarthy played touch football with Jack, Bobby, and Teddy, and he fancied Eunice. (His wedding present to Eunice Kennedy and R. Sargent Shriver was a silver cigarette box on which he had had inscribed, *To Eunice and Bob. From the one who lost. Joe McCarthy.*)²⁴ Catholic and conservative, Joe McCarthy, a young man on the make, listened attentively as the rich, Catholic, and conservative Joe Kennedy explained his strategy of accusing the Truman administration of losing China.

On January 30, 1949, thirty-one-year-old Representative Jack Kennedy foreshadowed McCarthyism in a speech in Salem, Massachusetts. In a city known for past witch hunts, Kennedy said,

We almost knowingly entered into combat with Japan to preserve the independence of China.... Contrast this policy... to the confused and vacillating policy which we have followed since that day.... This is the tragic story of China, whose freedom we once fought to preserve. What our young men had saved, our diplomats and our President have frittered away....

Our relationship with China since the end of the Second World War has been a tragic one, and it is of the utmost importance that we search out those who must bear the responsibility for our present predicament.... The chief opposition to the accomplishment of our mission came from the American career diplomats, the embassy at Chungking, and the Chinese and Far Eastern divisions of the State Department.²⁵

One year later, on February 9, 1950, Senator Joe McCarthy addressed a Republican Women's Club in Wheeling, West Virginia.

Today we are engaged in a final, all-out battle between communistic atheism and Christianity.... As one of our outstanding historical figures once said, "When a great democracy is destroyed, it will not be because of enemies from without, but rather because of enemies from within...."

It has not been the less fortunate or members of minority groups who have been selling this Nation out, but rather those who have had all the benefits that the wealthiest nation on earth has had to offer—the finest homes, the finest college education, and the finest jobs in Government we can give.

This is glaringly true in the State Department. There the bright young men who are born with silver spoons in their mouths are the ones who have been the worst....

When Chiang Kai-shek was fighting our war, the State Department had in China a young man named John S. Service. His task, obviously, was not to work for the communization of China. Strangely, however, he sent official reports back to the State Department urging that we torpedo our ally Chiang Kai-shek—and stating, in effect, that communism was the best hope of China.

Later, this man—John Service... was picked up by the Federal Bureau of Investigation for turning over to the Communists secret State Department information. Strangely, however, he was never prosecuted.... This man... was not only reinstated in the State Department but promoted....

This, ladies and gentlemen, gives you somewhat of a picture of the type of individuals who have been helping to shape our foreign policy. In my opinion, the State Department, which is one of the most important government departments, is thoroughly infested with Communists.

I have here in my hand 57 cases of individuals who would appear to be either card-carrying members or certainly loyal to the Communist Party, but who nevertheless are still helping to shape our foreign policy.²⁶

Two weeks later, on April 30, the *New York Times* asked, "Who's feeding McCarthy his stuff?" The paper concluded, "That such a thing as a 'China Lobby' exists is indisputable in the minds of most observers... [it is] a loose conglomeration of persons and organizations which for various reasons are interested in China." The China Lobby drew its strength from people "who passionately believe American policy to be wrong; who think that American withdrawal from China has caused a needless and dangerous break in the dike against the spread of communism."²⁷ At the time, no one reflected that the China Lobby first took root during the flowering of the T. V. Soong-Franklin Roosevelt relationship in the early 1930s, and few were aware of how the lobby had manipulated FDR's blunder into the Pacific war and Truman's nonrecognition of Mao.

Senator McCarthy defended his sensational accusations for the first time in a speech before the American Society of Newspaper Editors. McCarthy's fearmongering focused on who lost China: "Communists and queers have sold 400 million Asiatic people into atheistic slavery and they now have the American people in a hypnotic trance, headed blindly toward the same precipice."²⁸

John Service, John Davies, and John Carter Vincent had accurately predicted that Mao Zedong would rise and Chiang Kai-shek would fall, in direct contradiction to Americans' long-held belief in the coming of an Americanized and Christianized New China. After McCarthy's blasts, the State Department fired Service, Davies, and Vincent.

David Halberstam recounted how Henry Luce also served the China Lobby's interests during the McCarthy period:

Luce allowed McCarthyism to take place, he created a vacuum in which the misinterpretation of events led to conspiracy theories. He had no sympathy for those men who had been right and were about to be sacrificed to the witch-hunters.... His publications formed a major obstacle to anyone trying to restore any reality to American Asian policy. He never really recognized Communist China and never accepted the verdict of history. At a personal level this might have been admirable—Harry Luce had not betrayed old friends, he had honored his father's memory—but at a journalistic level it was intensely dangerous. He was unbending. In the pages of *Time* Chiang had never slipped from power and never slipped from grace.²⁹

In 1986 Walter Isaacson and Evan Thomas coauthored a book entitled *The Wise Men: Six Friends and the World They Made*, about Henry Stimson's ideological descendants, the officials most responsible for the creation of the post-World War II national security state. The six Wise Men were Dean Acheson, Charles Bohlen, Averell Harriman, George Kennan, Robert Lovett, and John McCloy, all of whom had served one or more U.S. presidents from Franklin Roosevelt to Lyndon Johnson and who first coalesced as a group under Harry Truman. Truman relied upon the Wise Men for foreign policy advice, and they became the architects of the Truman Doctrine, the Marshall Plan, and Cold War containment policy.

Isaacson and Thomas's book deals mostly with how the Wise Men contained the Soviet Union in Europe. Left out of their tale is the disastrous course the Wise Men pursued in Asia.

It began in what some refer to as the Age of Acheson, when, as undersecretary and then later secretary of state, Acheson influenced decision-making. "I had a constituency of one," Acheson said of his close relationship with President Harry Truman.³⁰ In his living room

Acheson displayed a photo of Henry Stimson.³¹ Acheson's age would see the official who had thrust the U.S. into World War II lead the country into unnecessary wars in Korea and Vietnam.

Korea—due to its location—was the crucial keystone in North Asia. It was Japan's occupation of Korea that had allowed it to invade China. On August 10, 1945—the day after the second atomic bomb exploded over Nagasaki—Wise Man John McCloy divided Korea for the purposes of accepting the surrender of Japanese troops. He drew an imaginary line at the thirty-eighth parallel. Above the parallel would be a new country called North Korea dominated by Russia; below it would be the U.S. ally South Korea. No Wise Man thought to consult the Korean people about this division of their ancient land.

Koreans were even more outraged to learn that U.S. officials would govern South Korea with help from the Koreans' former Japanese colonial masters. North Koreans watched uneasily as South Koreans who had cooperated with the Japanese occupation now helped the United States gain influence on the Korean Peninsula. Koreans had just suffered forty years of Nazi-like domination by the Japanese. North Korean leader Kim Il Sung had begun his military career fighting the Japanese in the spring of 1932, and his government was first of all, and above all else, anti-Japanese.

A major concern of Dean Acheson's was reinvigorating the world economy after the devastation of World War II. In Europe, the U.S. would adopt a program of economic aid called the Marshall Plan; in Asia, it was known as the Policy for Asia, National Security Council document 48/2. According to NSC-48/2, Japan would become Asia's industrial economy, fired by U.S. companies. Washington would "connect up" other Asian economies to Japan's and keep them in subservient roles as suppliers to Japan's industrial machine and as markets for Japanese goods (thus isolating and containing China).³² The Wise Men opposed the industrialization of the rest of Asia, the former and current colonies of Japan, the UK, Holland, the U.S., and France.

Instead, their plan called for Korea, Vietnam, and other Asian countries to be the supply/consumption machines within the U.S.-Japanese orbit. The American military would provide an umbrella of security for Japan and keep the other Asian countries in line.

The Wise Men didn't understand that their Policy for Asia looked to many Asians alarmingly like imperial Japan's recent attempts at empire. To them, it was as if the U.S. was green-lighting another era of Japanese dominance with American backing. When North Korean leaders realized that Washington wanted Japan to once again dominate Korea, they perceived a mortal threat.

The Wise Men's Policy for Asia was a blueprint for American disaster in post-World War II Asia, as it called for the U.S. military to enforce the Japan-centric model, a "for us or against us" policy designed to contain Mao Zedong. Bruce Cumings, one of the leading historians on Korea, wrote about the Policy for Asia, "The United States would now do something utterly unimagined at the end of World War II: it would prepare to intervene militarily against anti-colonial movements in East Asia—first Korea, then Vietnam, with the Chinese revolution as the towering backdrop."³³

In Korea, the two sides skirmished, each repeatedly violating the other's borders. Acheson testified in secret to the Senate that the U.S. had drawn a line of containment in Korea and asked for funding to turn back Communism there. However, Congress and the Pentagon balked at spending Acheson's requested \$600 million for Korea, which seemed too high compared to the \$225 million for containment in Greece and Turkey that Congress had approved.

Dean Acheson published his memoir *Present at the Creation* in 1969. The title referred to the birth of the modern U.S. state, which he had done so much to midwife. Acheson recounts the founding of the CIA, the Defense Department, the NSA, the World Bank, and other organizations. But in his Pulitzer Prize-winning tome, the aging Wise Man didn't mention perhaps his biggest contribution to modern America: the secret policy that he as secretary of state had inspired and that

reoriented the United States, changing it from a robust democracy with a small professional military into the militarized national security state it had become by the time he published his book. Acheson's fateful 1950 policy document was still classified top secret in 1969.

In 1950, despite the Marshall Plan and the Policy for Asia attempts at stimulating the global economy, the Wise Men saw that Germany and Japan were still not performing adequately, thus threatening to slow growth in the United States. Acheson analyzed the U.S. economy during World War II, when massive production of armaments for use around the world had provided a powerful stimulus. A good friend of English economist John Maynard Keynes, Acheson wondered if a huge Keynesian expansion of U.S. military spending could prime the worldwide pump.

Acheson's top secret policy was laid out in National Security Council document 68, or NSC-68, which called for something new in American history: an enormous U.S. military encircling the globe to protect the "war-making capabilities" of its allies, a euphemism referring to countries with resources that American industry needed to manufacture arms to contain Communism worldwide. The Constitution was written by men who feared the corrosive effects of a large standing army under a powerful executive, but with NSC-68, Acheson was tilting government funds away from domestic programs and toward a military stimulus.

President Truman signed NSC-68, but at that point it was only a Wise Men's wish list and had no congressional funding. Following U.S. tradition, Truman had drastically reduced the military's size after World War II. In 1945 the U.S. military had more than eleven million members and a sixty-billion-dollar budget. By 1948, Truman had trimmed this to fewer than a million members and a budget of thirteen billion.

North Korea crossed the thirty-eighth parallel in force on June 25, 1950. Cumings wrote, "The North Koreans attacked the South because of fears that Japan's industrial economy and its former position in Korea were being revived by recent changes in American

policy."³⁴ For many North Korean soldiers, this fighting was the continuation of their recent war against the Japanese.

The Wise Men misinterpreted an incident in a small Asian civil war as a challenge to their global containment policy, incorrectly concluding that Moscow—working through Beijing and Pyongyang—had ordered the crossing, when it was only a North Korean action.

By this time the China Lobby had been assailing the Truman administration for months over losing China. The day after the North Korean crossing, Senator Styles Bridges, a China Lobby stalwart, said on the floor of the Senate, "Will we continue appeasement?... Now is the time to draw the line."³⁵ Senator George Malone said, "It is fairly clear that what happened in China and what is now happening in Korea were brought about deliberately by the advisers of the president [Roosevelt]... and by the advisers of the State Department since then."³⁶ Senator William Knowland (known as the Senator from Formosa) said, "If this nation is allowed to succumb to an overt invasion of this kind, there is little chance of stopping communism anywhere on the continent of Asia."³⁷

In *The Wise Men*, Isaacson and Thomas wrote that Acheson "considered Asia to be a nuisance and a distraction."³⁸ Acheson had made eleven trips to Europe but couldn't be bothered to make one trip to Asia, and his decision-making showed his continuing tone-deafness about peoples across the Pacific. Isaacson and Thomas noted that "Acheson's great fear was that Korea was a fake, a diversionary move from a true Soviet onslaught in Western Europe."³⁹ When he heard the news of North Korea's move, Acheson withdrew to a room alone with a yellow legal pad and, according to Isaacson and Thomas, "scrawled little notes: What were the Soviets up to? Where else would they probe? Berlin? Greece? Turkey? Iran?"⁴⁰

Acheson advised Truman to move quickly and commit troops to Korea without consulting Congress. "[Truman] did not want to slow down the process, and his constant struggles with the Congress over the issue of China and Chiang made him wary of dealing with his enemies in the Senate,"⁴¹ David Halberstam wrote in *The Coldest Winter*. "The issue of China itself hovered over every decision."⁴²

Acheson urged Truman not only to go to war in Korea with no congressional consultation,⁴³ but also to send covert military aid to the French in Indochina for their war against Ho Chi Minh. With no debate—and none was sought—a Wise Man, rattled by events in Asia he little understood, committed the U.S. to current and future wars. A few days later, on June 29, 1950, eight U.S. Air Force cargo planes flew to Asia with war matériel for the French, the beginning of America's long nightmare in Vietnam. (Truman secretly gave the French military more money to fight Ho Chi Minh in Asia than he publicly gave Paris under the Marshall Plan to promote democracy in Europe.)

Kim Il Sung had crossed the five-year-old thirty-eighth parallel—not an international boundary like that between Canada and U.S., but the Wise Men's imaginary line bisecting an ancient nation. Acheson did not comprehend the local antagonisms; he saw only advantage for his NSC-68 Keynesian military stimulus. He later observed, "June 25 removed many things from the realm of theory. Korea seemed to—and did—confirm NSC-68."⁴⁴ Martin Walker wrote in *The Cold War: A History*, "Without the war, the costly plans of NSC-68 would have faced an arduous uphill campaign."⁴⁵ Cumings wrote, "[Kim Il Sung's] invasion solved a number of critical problems for the Truman administration, and did wonders in building the American Cold War position on a world scale."⁴⁶ Acheson later told a class at Princeton University that Korea "came along and saved us."⁴⁷

In bitter fighting, the North Korean army almost pushed the South Korean and American armies off the Korean Peninsula and into the sea, but the latter two regrouped and fought their way north, back to the thirty-eighth parallel.

Having forced the North Koreans to retreat to their original border, the Wise Men could have declared victory. But they wondered if a bold move against Communism was needed and would atone—at least symbolically—for the loss of China. The Wise Men decided to go

beyond containing Communism and proceed to a rollback strategy, with U.S. troops crossing the border and marching into North Korea.

The possibility that the American army might cross the thirty-eighth parallel and invade a country on China's border got Mao Zedong's attention. The Wise Men assumed that Mao would *never* risk confronting the atomic-armed U.S. military, just as the First Wise Man had preached that Japan would not respond to an oil embargo. Though Mao's China was exhausted by decades of civil war, the U.S. military advancing to China's borders was an intolerable barbarian threat.

Korea was General Douglas MacArthur's responsibility. MacArthur was seventy years old now and a China Lobby favorite. (He shared the record of most appearances on *Time's* cover—seven—with Chiang.) He had presided over Japan's surrender and had ruled the country as its temporary father-emperor. The old general had not stepped foot on the Asian mainland since 1905 and was sometimes delusional as he fantasized about New China.

MacArthur boasted that if Mao confronted the U.S. military, "[I will] deliver such a crushing defeat that it would be one of the decisive battles of the world—a disaster so great it would rock Asia and perhaps turn back Communism."⁴⁸ MacArthur, like the rest of the U.S. military establishment, completely missed the effectiveness of Mao's war strategies, continuing to believe that modern airpower could defeat Mao any day. MacArthur made bellicose threats about ways the United States might invade China, even suggesting attacking it with atomic bombs.

Returning to Washington after an August vacation in the Adirondacks, Acheson told Truman that MacArthur should be allowed to push north over the thirty-eighth parallel. Truman agreed with his Wise Man.

Just as he had with President Roosevelt in 1945, Mao reached out to President Truman. As his messenger, Mao chose K. M. Panikkar, the Indian ambassador in Beijing. A top Chinese military official informed Panikkar that Mao would act if American troops threatened China's border. Alarmed, Panikkar asked if Mao had fully evaluated the risks

of confronting the mighty U.S. military. Reflecting Mao's thinking, the Chinese official told Panikkar: "We all know what we are in for, but at all costs American aggression has to be stopped. The Americans can bomb us, they can destroy our industries, but they cannot defeat us on land.... They may even drop atomic bombs on us. What then? They may kill a few million people. Without sacrifice a nation's independence cannot be upheld."⁴⁹

On October 2, Chinese premier and foreign minister Zhou Enlai summoned Ambassador Panikkar to the foreign ministry. Zhou was somber and his message was simple. If the Americans crossed the thirty-eighth parallel, Mao would intervene. At 5:35 a.m. on October 3, a State Department official awakened Dean Acheson with Panikkar's message conveying Mao's warning. Acheson ridiculed the idea of Mao entering the conflict as the "mere vaporings of a panicky Panikkar."⁵⁰

When MacArthur's troops crossed the thirty-eighth parallel, on October 9, 1950, the Wise Men assumed Mao would not be riled, yet when the North Koreans had violated that same border just months earlier, they themselves had judged it intolerable. As the U.S.—allied with Japan—marched toward China's border, Mao ordered hundreds of thousands of troops to confront them.

Though the Chinese had no airpower, they pounded the Americans on the ground in their first clashes. Mao's troops pushed MacArthur's forces out of North Korea within two weeks.

The irrational fear of worldwide Communism as a result of the Wise Men's misunderstanding of a small Asian civil war persuaded Congress to dramatically increase funding for the military. Martin Walker wrote,

The first defense budget presented by President Truman after the war began was for \$50 billion, the precise figure Acheson had hoped for. The US Army doubled, to over three million men. The number of Air Groups doubled to ninety-five, and were deployed to new bases in Britain, Libya, Morocco and

Saudi Arabia. Everything changed with Korea. American diplomacy, defense budgets and military reach exploded across the globe.⁵¹

Bruce Cumings concludes,

The Korean War was the crisis that finally got the Japanese and West German economies growing strongly, and vastly stimulated the U.S. economy. American defense industries hardly knew that Kim Il Sung would come along and save them either, but he inadvertently rescued a bunch of big-ticket projects....⁵²

The Korean conflict [would transform] the United States into a very different country than it had ever been before: one with hundreds of permanent military bases abroad, a large standing army and a permanent national security state at home.⁵³

If the Wise Men had not so bungled the U.S. relationship with China, John Service might have been able to telephone his friends in Beijing to sort things out before trouble erupted. But the mirage lived on. When Truman fired the Mao-beaten MacArthur, the China Lobby shouted that the American anti-Communist crusade in Asia had been undermined. Senator McCarthy snarled about the president, "The son of a bitch should be impeached."⁵⁴ In a speech to the Senate, McCarthy asked,

How can we account for our present situation unless we believe that men high in this Government are concerting to deliver us to disaster? This must be the product of a great conspiracy, a conspiracy on a scale so immense as to dwarf any previous such venture in the history of man. A conspiracy of infamy so black that, when it is finally exposed, its principals shall be forever deserving of the maledictions of all honest men.⁵⁵

In 1952, Democratic incumbent President Truman, having come from behind to win the 1948 election but now tarred by the powerful China Lobby with losing China and almost losing Korea, decided not to run again for president. The 1952 Republican Party's national

convention featured a conga line of China Lobbyists, including Senator McCarthy, Ambassador Hurley, and General MacArthur.⁵⁶

In a 1954 press conference, President Eisenhower spoke of the domino theory in terms of Vietnam—an idea that had initially entered Washington's collective consciousness during the Roosevelt administration:

You have broader considerations that might follow what you would call the "falling domino" principle. You have a row of dominoes set up, you knock over the first one, and what will happen to the last one is the certainty that it will go over very quickly. So you could have a beginning of a disintegration that would have the most profound influences.⁵⁷

Many know that Eisenhower handed his covert war against Fidel Castro to John Kennedy, whose CIA-led invasion of Cuba ran aground at the Bay of Pigs. Fewer link the 1960s killing of millions in Asia with the baton of misperceptions relayed from Roosevelt to Truman to Eisenhower and then onward to Presidents Kennedy, Johnson, and Nixon.

Ho Chi Minh was a brilliant political and military strategist committed to ending foreign domination of Vietnam, but Eisenhower saw him as a tool of international Communism. To contain Ho, Eisenhower created a Potemkin country—South Vietnam—that had never existed in history and, despite billions of dollars in U.S. aid, would fall after just two decades.

To lead his new Asian state, South Vietnam, Eisenhower anointed Ngo Dinh Diem president. Like Chiang, Diem was allied with the wealthy, who kept the peasants in near servitude. Like Chiang, Diem lacked popular support and ruled brutally through his military. And like Chiang, Diem enjoyed excellent press in the U.S., mostly because he was a Christian. (Eisenhower had chosen a Catholic to lead an overwhelmingly Buddhist country.)

The 1954 Geneva Accords ending the French-Vietnamese War called for free elections in Vietnam in 1956. Eisenhower-era Americans were told that the U.S. encouraged democratic elections in other countries, but the president secretly scuttled the Vietnamese vote

because, as Ike later admitted, "It was generally conceded that had an election been held, Ho Chi Minh would have been elected Premier."⁵⁸ In the 1930s and 1940s Henry Luce had supported an Asian dictator whom he'd nicknamed Southern Methodist Chiang. In the 1950s Luce was for another Christian loser, this man dubbed the Tough Miracle Man of Vietnam. The American press, still mostly unaware of Asian affairs, followed Luce's line. *Newsweek* magazine: "Ngo Dinh Diem is living proof of what is often called a miracle...proof of what an authentic patriot...can accomplish." The *New York Herald Tribune*: "The Miracle-Maker from Asia—Diem of South Vietnam." The *New York Journal-American*: "How did the miracle of South Viet Nam happen?...The story is largely written in the ascetic personality of Ngo Dinh Diem." Edward R. Murrow: Diem "has made so much progress in the past six months that some people use the overworked word 'miracle' in describing improvements in South Vietnam."⁵⁹

Many believed that the Chinese Mandate of Heaven had moved to Mao Zedong by 1943, the year FDR hosted Mayling in the White House and posed for photographs with Chiang in Cairo. Likewise, by 1957 the Vietnamese Mandate was clearly Ho Chi Minh's, and President Diem's only base of support was Dwight Eisenhower.

On the hot and muggy day of May 8, 1957, television viewers witnessed a historic event: President Eisenhower at Washington National Airport, squinting into the sun, looking up as his personal plane, the *Columbine III*, brought President Diem of South Vietnam for a visit.

Eisenhower greeted Diem, escorted him down the ranks of his honor guard, and said into a microphone, "Mr. President, it is indeed an honor for any American to invite you to this country. You have exemplified in your part of the world patriotism of the highest order."⁶⁰ Eisenhower and Diem rode into Washington smiling at each other in an open limousine as crowds cheered.

Eisenhower lavished attention on his miracle man: a private White House meeting and a state dinner, and he attended a dinner in the South Vietnamese embassy hosted by Diem. Diem also addressed a joint session of Congress and the National Press Club.

Just as the Protestant China Lobby had propagandized for Chiang, a



President Eisenhower greeting President Diem, Washington National Airport, May 8, 1957 (Courtesy Everett Collection)

Catholic Vietnam lobby—called the American Friends of Vietnam—beat the drums for Diem. When he addressed Congress, his script, authored by the Vietnam lobby, made complicated matters easy to understand. He compared the CIA-instigated exodus of Christians from North to South Vietnam to the pilgrims on the *Mayflower*. Republican senator Jacob Javits dubbed Diem “one of the real heroes of the free world.”⁶¹

In New York, an estimated 250,000 people cheered Diem in a parade from lower Broadway to City Hall. That evening the American Friends of Vietnam threw a glittering banquet to honor him; it was hosted by Henry Luce and attended by Senator John F. Kennedy and Eleanor Roosevelt, among other luminaries. Luce said, “President Ngo Dinh Diem is one of the greatest statesmen of Asia and of the world. . . . In honoring him we pay tribute to the eternal values which all free men everywhere are prepared to defend with their lives.”⁶²

Diem’s eleven-day visit continued, and he traveled on to Michigan, Tennessee, California, and Hawaii. Just as with Chiang, Diem became the only Vietnamese Americans knew: a Christian miracle man who would plant the American flag in Asia.

John Service, John Davies, and other China Hands had been hounded out of the State Department, so they couldn’t warn President Eisenhower that history was repeating itself. Instead of offering Ike advice on avoiding Roosevelt’s missteps in Asia, John Service was selling steam equipment in New York, and John Davies was manufacturing furniture in Lima, Peru.

The 1950s saw Americans knowing less about the Middle Kingdom than ever. Henry Luce and his Time-Life empire didn’t dispatch anyone to China for a firsthand view. Most of what Americans learned about China in this period were slanted stories disseminated from Taiwan by the CIA. In 1957, *Time* reported that journalist William Worthy, a reporter for the *Baltimore Afro-American*, “became the first American reporter to enter China in seven years.”⁶³ When Worthy returned to the U.S., President Eisenhower’s administration took his passport away.⁶⁴

In 1958, author Edgar Snow observed that there was not one Chinese-speaking officer remaining in the State Department.

The China Lobby, first seeded by Charlie Soong in 1905 and planted in the Oval Office by T. V. Soong in 1933, had great staying power. In 1960, author Ross Koen was getting ready to publish his book *The China Lobby* when shadowy yet powerful China Lobbyists forced Koen’s publisher, Macmillan, to withdraw the exposé. It was allowed to emerge only fourteen long years later, as a paperback.

All of the 1960s presidential candidates had witnessed the who-lost-China political knife fights in the Truman administration earlier in their careers. John Kennedy, Richard Nixon, Lyndon Johnson, Barry Goldwater, and Hubert Humphrey had been young senators then, and all understood the political peril in losing an Asian nation. In his book *The Best and the Brightest*, David Halberstam wrote that

when Kennedy and Johnson considered their options in Asia, there were no experienced China Hands available to guide them:

That was the terrible shadow of the McCarthy period....All of the China experts, the Asia hands...had had their careers destroyed with the fall of China. The men who gave advice on Asia were either Europeanists or men transferred from the Pentagon....⁶⁵

Had there been some high Washington officials who had gone through the China experience and survived the aftermath, they would immediately have recognized [the problems in Vietnam]....But people in the administration either did not know what had happened in China, or in a few cases, they knew but desperately wanted to avoid a repetition of it.⁶⁶

A few months into the Kennedy administration, Edgar Snow came calling on Dean Rusk, who had become secretary of state. Snow had just returned from China, where he'd discerned that Mao Zedong—whom he had known for over twenty years—was interested in relations with the United States. Here was Mao once again extending his hand in friendship, but Rusk met with Snow for only ten unreceptive minutes. So it would be.

By the 1960s, Henry Luce had been wrong, wrong, and wrong about Asia for four decades. Now Luce sat knee to knee with JFK and LBJ to push his father's missionary dream. Luce's sister later recalled, "Henry was always looking for the opportunity to overthrow the Communist regime in China. He knew that the United States could not simply declare war on the Communists, but he thought that the wars that the Communists started could give us the opportunity to go to China. Part of him really wanted the Korean War to become an American war with China, and he talked about Vietnam the same way."⁶⁷

Two Catholic presidents had opposed the insertion of American combat troops into Vietnam's civil conflict—John F. Kennedy and Ngo Dinh Diem. They were both assassinated within weeks of each other

in November of 1963. Two days after JFK's murder, the new U.S. president, Lyndon Baines Johnson, met with the U.S. ambassador to South Vietnam, Henry Cabot Lodge, a rock-ribbed Republican and a China Lobby man. When Ambassador Lodge walked into his office, Johnson blurted out, "I am not going to lose Vietnam. I am not going to be the President who saw Southeast Asia go the way China went."

Johnson called his friend newspaper publisher John Knight:

JOHNSON: What do you think we ought to do in Vietnam?

KNIGHT: I never thought we belonged there. Now that's a real tough one now, and I think President Kennedy thought at one time we should never, that we were overcommitted in that area.

JOHNSON: Well, I opposed it in '54. But we're there now, and there's only one of three things you can do. One is run and let the dominoes start falling over. And God Almighty, what they said about us leaving China would just be warming up, compared to what they'd say now.⁶⁸

Johnson telephoned his longtime political ally Senator Mike Mansfield, a fellow Democrat and the current holder of LBJ's former post as Senate majority leader. Mansfield was away from his office when the president called, so Johnson left a message saying, "We do not want another China in Vietnam." Mansfield responded to the president's fear of "another China" in a memo:

I would respectfully add to this observation: Neither do we want another Korea. It would seem that a key (but often overlooked) factor in both situations was a tendency to bite off more than we were prepared in the end to chew. We tended to talk ourselves out on a limb with overstatements of our purpose and commitment only to discover in the end that there were not sufficient American interests to support with blood and treasure a desperate final plunge. Then, the questions followed invariably: "Who got us into this mess?" "Who lost China?" etc.⁶⁹

Johnson's national security adviser was McGeorge Bundy, a well-connected and highly credentialed Wise Man. McGeorge's father had worked for Henry Stimson, who later honored the Bundy family by choosing McGeorge to cowrite his autobiography. In the early 1950s, Bundy had worked clandestinely with the CIA, and in 1953, at the age of thirty-four, he was appointed dean of the faculty of arts and sciences at Harvard, the youngest in Harvard's history. To top it off, Bundy's brother William was married to the daughter of the leading Wise Man, Dean Acheson, upon whom McGeorge relied for advice.

National security adviser Bundy—who kept a framed photo of Henry Stimson on his desk—disagreed with Senator Mansfield's memo and warned LBJ “as an ex-historian” that “the political damage to Truman and Acheson from the fall of China arose because most Americans came to believe that we could and should have done more than we did to prevent it. This is exactly what would happen now if we should seem to be the first to quit in Saigon.”⁷⁰

Henry Stimson had been almost clueless regarding Mao Zedong’s long rise, and Dean Acheson, McGeorge Bundy, Henry Kissinger, and



McGeorge Bundy and Lyndon Johnson. Bundy kept a framed photo of the First Wise Man on his desk. (LBJ Library photo by Yoichi Okamoto)

many other Wise Men never understood Ho Chi Minh’s strategy to beat them, which was based on Vietnam’s two-thousand-year history of expelling invaders, a well-documented chronicle of military triumphs against foreigners. The Wise Men worried about Mao Zedong toppling Asian dominoes instead.

In 1963, in a televised interview, President Kennedy was asked about the domino theory. Kennedy responded, “I believe it. I believe it...China is so large, looms so high just beyond the frontiers, that if South Vietnam went, it would not only give them an improved geographic position for a guerrilla assault on Malaya, but would also give the impression that the wave of the future in southeast Asia was China and the Communists. So I believe it.”⁷¹

Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara was typical of the men who ran national security: a Harvard graduate (in his case, Harvard Business School) and a Europe-focused Wise Man. In 1964 the domino theory became formalized as U.S. policy when McNamara wrote National Security Action Memorandum 288:

We seek an independent non-Communist South Vietnam... unless we can achieve this objective... almost all of Southeast Asia will probably fall under Communist dominance.⁷²

While Johnson told the public that the object of the fighting was an “independent, non-Communist South Vietnam,” the president was reading secret memos from McNamara, who wrote that U.S. objectives in Vietnam were in “support of a long-run United States policy to contain China”:

China—like Germany in 1917, like Germany in the West and Japan in the East in the late 30s, and like the USSR in 1947—looms as a major power threatening to undercut our importance and effectiveness in the world and, more remotely but more menacingly, to organize all of Asia against us.⁷³

Johnson again expressed his who-lost-China fears:

If I don’t go in now and they show later I should have gone, then they’ll be all over me in Congress. They won’t be talking

about my civil rights bill, or education and beautification. No, sir, they'll push Vietnam up my ass every time. Vietnam. Vietnam. Vietnam. Right up my ass.⁷⁴

In 1968, Lyndon Johnson became the second incumbent Democratic president to not run for reelection because of an Asian domino.

In 1973, as America withdrew from Vietnam in defeat, sixty-year-old Archimedes Patti asked the CIA if he could see the reports he had written from Hanoi about Ho Chi Minh in 1945 as an OSS officer. They were still tightly wrapped in Julia Child's burlap, unread by the Wise Men. Patti observed,

In my opinion the Vietnam War was a great waste. There was no need for it to happen in the first place. At all. None whatsoever.... During all the years of the Vietnam War no one ever approached me to find out what had happened in 1945.... In all the years that I spent in the Pentagon, in the Department of State and in the White House, never was I approached by anyone in authority.⁷⁵

Many years later, former secretary of defense McNamara explained why the Wise Men had so little understanding of events in Asia:

Our government lacked experts for us to consult to compensate for our ignorance. When the Berlin crisis occurred in 1961 and during the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962, President Kennedy was able to turn to senior people... who knew the Soviets intimately. There were no senior officials in the Pentagon or State Department with comparable knowledge of Southeast Asia.... The irony of this gap was that it existed largely because the top East Asian and China experts in the State Department—John Paton Davies, John Stewart Service, and John Carter Vincent—had been purged during the McCarthy hysteria of the 1950s. Without men like these to provide sophisticated, nuanced insights we, certainly I, badly misread China's objectives and mistook its bellicose rhetoric to imply a drive for regional hege-

mony. We also totally underestimated the nationalist aspect of Ho Chi Minh's movement. We saw him first as a Communist and only second as a Vietnamese nationalist.⁷⁶

The Chiang-Chennault illusion that American airpower could have dramatic effects on the Asian mainland had long legs. Harvard Wise Men McGeorge Bundy, Robert McNamara, and Henry Kissinger dropped more bombs on Asia than the U.S. military had worldwide in all of World War II, yet they lost.

American airpower in Asia was defeated by the same simple and relatively cheap defense that Mao Zedong had employed: the people went underground. The most heavily bombed country in the world is Laos, which was attacked hour after hour for a decade by U.S. bombing raids. In 2011 I toured the northern mountain strongholds where Laotian Communists had waited out the American air assault. Many thousands of people had been comfortably housed in enormous caverns, and trucks had rumbled along internal roads connecting massive supply areas. The underground theater had a huge stone stage and up to two thousand audience members could sit on polished slabs of stone. Theatergoers remembered enjoying elaborate stage performances as American bombs exploded against the rocks outside. When the Americans eventually stopped bombing, the Communists emerged from their mountain haven and took control of Laos.

The United States dropped 2 million tons of bombs on the combined European and Pacific theaters in World War II, but more than three times as much—6.7 million tons—on Southeast Asia.⁷⁷ McNamara later estimated that the U.S. had killed 1.2 million Vietnamese civilians.⁷⁸ The U.S. bombing killed, maimed, or made homeless tens of millions of Vietnamese, Laotians, and Cambodians.

In 2004, a much older Robert McNamara admitted to the *Harvard Business School Alumni Magazine* that the validity of the domino theory “was never debated at the government’s highest levels.”⁷⁹

Chapter 13

THE CHINA MIRAGE

If the United States in 1945 had been able to... shed some of its illusions about China, to understand what was happening in that country, and to adopt a realistic policy in America's own interests, Korea and Vietnam would probably never have happened.... We would not still be confronted with an unsolvable Taiwan problem.... And Mao's China, having come to power in a different way and not thrust into isolation by a hostile West, might be quite a different place.

—John Service¹

Harvard's Theodore Roosevelt told Harvard's Baron Kaneko that he should use the bully pulpit of the Harvard Club to convince the American public that Japan deserved to colonize Korea. Harvard's T. V. Soong—recommended by Harvard's Felix Frankfurter—sold a secret air war in Asia to Harvard's Franklin Delano Roosevelt, who tasked Harvard's Thomas Corcoran to run the covert operation. Theodore White later recalled that his Harvard degree carried him further in Chungking than it would have in Boston and that the Harvard Club of China had a larger proportion of high government officials than the Harvard Club in Washington.

In the 1960s, McGeorge Bundy and Henry Kissinger of Harvard

served as national security advisers to three presidents and recommended massive bombing in Vietnam. (Bundy was such an all-knowing Wise Man that he authored the initial plans that called for bombing Ho Chi Minh into submission without even visiting Vietnam.)

Within the national security apparatus was a brilliant Harvard graduate named Daniel Ellsberg. By 1971 Ellsberg decided that the United States' bombing of Vietnam was not effective and was wrong. He then risked his freedom by using his top secret clearance to make unauthorized photocopies of a secret Defense Department study documenting presidential deceptions from Presidents Truman through Johnson. If Ellsberg made these Pentagon papers public, he would be in legal jeopardy, so he traveled back to Cambridge to seek assistance from Harvard Law School professor Jim Vorenberg. The two men sat in Vorenberg's living room and, after pleasantries, Ellsberg revealed his evidence of executive war crimes and his belief that in a democracy, the public had a right to know.

[Vorenberg] suddenly held up a hand and said, "I have to stop you right now. I'm afraid I can't take part in this discussion any further."

"Pardon me?"

"You seem to be describing plans to commit a crime. I don't want to hear any more about it. As a lawyer I can't be a party to it."

Ellsberg then leaped out of his chair and said, "I've been talking to you about seven thousand pages of documentation of crimes: war crimes, crimes against the peace, mass murder. Twenty years of crimes under four presidents. And every one of those presidents had a Harvard professor at his side, telling him how to do it and how to get away with it."²

In the 1940s Mao Zedong declared it was important for America and China to be friends, that the United States and China were a much better fit than Russia and China, and that both sides would benefit from the combination of U.S. technological know-how and skilled Chinese

manpower. A generation later, President Richard Nixon—motivated by the American quagmire in Vietnam and competition with Russia—came to a similar conclusion.

In 1971 Nixon announced his upcoming journey to the Middle Kingdom, and many turned to the banished China Hands, the last American officials who had had talks with Mao Zedong, back in the caves of Yan'an. One week after Nixon's announcement, John Service and John Davies appeared before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Service joked, "This is the first Senate meeting where I have appeared without need of counsel."³ Senator William Fulbright recalled that the China Hands had paid a heavy price for bucking the mirage: "It is a very strange turn of fate that you gentlemen who reported honestly about the conditions in China were so persecuted because you were honest about it."⁴ After their Senate hearings, the China Hands went from the doghouse to the spotlight. Service observed, "Even *Time* magazine just fell over itself to be friendly."⁵

Service traveled to China at the invitation of Zhou Enlai, the premier of the People's Republic. In Beijing, Service met secretly with Henry Kissinger. Kissinger was excited by Service's insights and hinted about a meeting between Service and Nixon. But the invitation never came. As Lynne Joiner wrote in *Honorable Survivor*, her insightful book about John Service, "Years later a former aide explained... they had to be extremely careful not to inflame the China Lobby."⁶

After he returned from China, where he saw Zhou Enlai and other friends from their days in Yan'an, Service testified to the Senate again:

My recent visit to China convinces me that the root of the current Chinese reality may be found in what we reported from Yan'an in 1944.... I think that our involvement in Vietnam, our insistence on the need to contain China and to prevent what we thought was the spread of Communist influence in Southeast Asia, was based very largely on our misunderstanding and our lack of knowledge of the Chinese, the nature of the Chinese Communist movement, and the intention of their leaders. We assumed that they were an aggressive country, and I don't



John Service and Zhou Enlai (Courtesy Service Family)

believe that they really have been, and, therefore, I think that we got into Vietnam largely, as I say, through the misinterpretation and misfounded fear of China.⁷

For centuries, foreign devils had journeyed to Beijing to pay homage to the man who possessed the Mandate of Heaven. On February 21, 1972, Mao Zedong welcomed President Nixon to his library, where they sat in overstuffed chairs with spittoons at their feet. Now the symbiotic economic cooperation between the U.S. and China would begin, just as Mao had suggested to John Service twenty-seven years earlier.⁸



Richard Nixon and Mao Zedong. A generation after Mao had suggested it, the two countries would now combine U.S. technological know-how with China's motivated workers. (Courtesy Everett Collection)

In 1973, the American Foreign Service Association (a professional association of the United States Foreign Service) invited John Service and John Davies to the State Department for a luncheon in their honor. The AFSA president recalled, "The luncheon was needed to convince people in the department that McCarthyism was really dead."⁹ Two hundred fifty people filled the auditorium and, in another room, three hundred watched on a closed-circuit television feed as speakers, including the historian Barbara Tuchman, praised Service and Davies. The tall, white-haired Service recalled the lesson he had learned about basing American foreign policy on a manufactured domestic mirage:

There are still countries . . . where the situation is not unlike that in China during the 1940s. If we keep ourselves in ignorance

and out of touch with new popular movements and potentially revolutionary situations, we may find ourselves again missing the boat....The measure of the need for such reporting is not popular sentiment in the United States as reflected in some segments of the press, or by some Congressional committees not charged with foreign relations...the legacy of Senator Joe McCarthy still needs, in some respects, to be shed.¹⁰

The luncheon was not an official State Department affair, however. Secretary of State William Rogers and national security adviser Henry Kissinger did not attend. It was 1973—forty years since T. V. Soong had used Felix Frankfurter to penetrate the Roosevelt administration—and the China Lobby still had political punch.

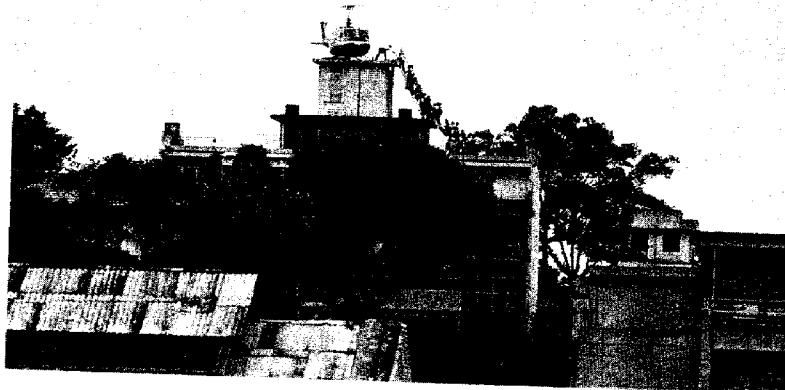
On April 30, 1975, I was a twenty-one-year-old sometime college student back home visiting my parents in Antigo, Wisconsin. A now-famous news photograph appeared for the first time that day; I'm sure that John Bradley, my fifty-three-year-old father, noticed it. All adult Americans probably did.

The photo depicted, according to its UPI caption, "A U.S. helicopter evacuating employees of the U.S. Embassy." I left Antigo a few days later for an Asian journey that would take me to Japan, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Thailand, Nepal, India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran, and Turkey. I never discussed this photo with my father, who passed in 1994.

I wonder what John Bradley—whose iconic 1945 Iwo Jima image symbolized U.S. military victory—thought when just a generation later he saw this photo of American defeat. And what would he say now if he learned that the reality in Saigon that day was very different from what he was allowed to know back in Wisconsin?

In the Paris Peace Accords of 1973, the United States had agreed to withdraw its troops from Vietnam, so a U.S. military helicopter evacuating the U.S. embassy two years later appeared to be a legitimate, massive operation, rescuing embassy dependents from the embassy's

This historic image was shot by news photographer Hubert Van



April 29, 1975, Saigon, South Vietnam: symbol of American defeat in Asia. This photo shows a CIA Air America helicopter atop a CIA apartment building. Air America was the outgrowth of the secret executive air arm started by Franklin Delano Roosevelt in the winter of 1940–41 to save New China. (© Bettmann/CORBIS)

UPI's Tokyo headquarters, "for the caption, I wrote very clearly that the helicopter was taking evacuees off the roof of a downtown Saigon building." But in Tokyo—then as now a key node in the CIA's Asian operations—someone, no one knows who, changed the caption to: "A U.S. helicopter evacuating employees of the U.S. Embassy." Van Es observed thirty years later: "My efforts to correct the misunderstanding were futile, and eventually I gave up. Thus one of the best-known images of the Vietnam War shows something other than what almost everyone thinks it does."¹¹

The apartment building at 22 Gia Long Street in today's Ho Chi Minh City still stands.¹² Senior CIA managers had lived there in 1975, and it was they and their families who were fleeing. The helicopter was also intentionally misidentified; it did not belong to the U.S. military but rather to the executive branch's secret air force, Air America.

Air America is another legacy of Franklin Roosevelt's secret executive war in Asia run by Claire Chennault and Thomas Corcoran. In Chennault and Corcoran talked the CIA into purchasing China transport. (Unknown is the extent of the Soong family's continued financial involvement.) In early October of 1948, CAT flew its first mission, a CIA effort to support the crumbling Soong-Chiang regime.

Later, the CIA rebranded CAT as the airline Air America, based out of Chiang's New China on Taiwan.

Today, the president of the United States commands a private CIA air force. It all began when FDR went around General George Marshall, listened to the Chiang-Chennault siren song, and created a secret executive air force in Asia.

There are remarkable parallels regarding events in Asia during the presidencies of Theodore Roosevelt and Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Both presidents saw Japan launch surprise naval attacks. Theodore Roosevelt had considered the Japanese to be good Asians in 1904, but when Japan repeated its strategy thirty-seven years later, Franklin said it was a day of infamy.

Both Roosevelts would shape America's relations with Asia, believing that China was destined to be changed by Christian and American influences. Both made their Asian policies in secret, consulting neither their State Departments nor those few men around them knowledgeable about Asia. A Harvard-educated Japanese baron guided Teddy's approach. A Harvard-educated Chinese financier shared sandwiches with Franklin in the Oval Office and convinced him that an Americanized New China was near.

The Roosevelt cousins' attitudes toward Asia continued to ripple throughout the twentieth century and into the twenty-first. Today the executive branch dispatches troops overseas without congressional declarations of war. In 1900, Teddy cheered from the sidelines as the first U.S. troops ever dispatched to Asia without consulting Congress landed on the shores of China. Today the executive branch uses deadly drones with almost no congressional oversight and no judicial complaint.

Some may resist the uncomfortable historical connections between Teddy and Pearl Harbor; they may not think that FDR has anything to do with the later domestic political pressure on presidents not to lose an Asian country. After all, Theodore tossed Korea to the Japanese over a century ago, and it has been seventy years since Franklin chose Chiang over Mao. And while American historians do their best to whitewash the Roosevelts' disasters, memories are long in Asia.¹³

American misunderstanding of China caused the nation to support Southern Methodist Chiang, bring on a world war that didn't have to be, oppose the bandit Mao, and go on to fight two bloody Asian wars. About one hundred thousand Americans died in World War II in the Pacific. About fifty-six thousand Americans died in Korea, and another fifty-eight thousand in Vietnam. The total cost of America's wars in Asia is staggering. Millions of lives terminated, trillions of dollars devoted to rifles, airplanes, and napalm rather than to roads, schools, and hospitals. America's social fabric was stretched and then torn by the latter two Asian wars, which challenged its citizens' belief that their country was a beacon of freedom.

Perhaps America's most costly diplomatic mistake was the Chinese Exclusion Act.¹⁴ If Americans had accepted Chinese people into their mosaic then, the United States would have had many more Americanized Chinese as citizens, ensuring a strong bridge of understanding across the Pacific. If the bridge had not been weakened in 1882, perhaps John Bradley would not have had to listen to his buddies scream to death on Iwo Jima in 1945. Perhaps one of his sons—my eldest brother, Steve Bradley—would not have been almost killed in Vietnam in 1968. Perhaps two hundred thousand Americans would not have died in Asian wars. Perhaps a wider and sturdier Pacific bridge is now a good idea.

Theodore Roosevelt and Franklin Delano Roosevelt were neither the first nor the last to imagine New China. There are still among us many Americans who, like Warren Delano, Henry Stimson, Pearl Buck, Henry Luce, Claire Chennault, and Joseph McCarthy, feel the urge to Americanize Asia. After all, the dream is as old as the Republic, a myth that took root when the United States was newly born. From those early days until now, America has dispatched its hopeful sons and daughters to faraway Asia in search of a mirage that never was. And never will be.

I honor my father for giving me my focus on America's relationship with Asia. I thank my children—Michelle, Alison, Ava, and Jack—for their love and support.

James Bradley
December 2014

NOTES

EPigraph

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INTRODUCTION

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4. Raymond Moley, *After Seven Years* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1939), 93–95.
5. Christine M. Totten, "Remembering Sara Delano Roosevelt on Her 150th Anniversary," *Rendezvous* (Winter 2005): 2.
6. China statement of Hon. John F. Kennedy of Massachusetts, extension of remarks of Hon. George J. Bates of Massachusetts in the House of Representatives, Monday, February 21, 1949, *Congressional Record*.

CHAPTER 1: OLD CHINA, NEW CHINA

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2. Geoffrey C. Ward, *Before the Trumpet: Young Franklin Roosevelt 1882–1905* (New York: Harper and Row, 1985), 352.
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6. Carl A. Trocki, *Opium, Empire, and the Global Political Economy: A Study of the Asian Opium Trade, 1750–1950* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 52.
7. Jacques M. Downs, *The Golden Ghetto: The American Commercial Community at Canton and the Shaping of American China Policy, 1784–1844* (Cranbury, NJ: Associated University Presses, 1997), 335.
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9. Ward, *Before the Trumpet*, 71.
10. The government official with a New York City Chinatown statue who was mentioned in the introduction is Commissioner Lin.
11. Fordham University, *Modern History Sourcebook*, Commissioner Lin, Letter to Queen Victoria, 1839; available at <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/1839lin2.asp>.
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13. John Quincy Adams, "Lecture on the War with China, Delivered Before the Massachusetts Historical Society, December 1841," *Chinese Repository* 11 (1842): 281.
14. Martin Booth, *Opium: A History* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996), 141.
15. Downs, *The Golden Ghetto*, 265.
16. Ibid., 81.
17. Rita Halle Kleeman, *Gracious Lady: The Life of Sara Delano Roosevelt* (New York: D. Appleton-Century, 1935), 60.
18. R. J. C. Butow, "A Notable Passage to China—Myth and Memory in FDR's Family History, Part 2," *Prologue* 31, no. 3 (Fall 1999).

CHAPTER 2: WIN THE LEADERS; WIN CHINA

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2. Smith, *Chinese Characteristics*, 325.
3. Ibid., 329–30.
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6. Marilyn Blatt Young, *The Rhetoric of Empire: American China Policy, 1895–1901* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1968), 221.
7. S. Wells Williams, *The Middle Kingdom* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1904), 2: 359.
8. Sherwood Eddy, *Pathfinders of the World Missionary Crusade* (Freeport, NY: Books for Libraries Press, 1969), 50.

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10. The exact quote is "Win the leaders and we win the Empire"; quoted in Jerry Israel, *Progressivism and the Open Door: America and China, 1905–1921* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1971), 19.
11. Ibid., 122.
12. Paul A. Varg, *Missionaries, Chinese, and Diplomats: The American Protestant Missionary Movement in China, 1890–1952* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1958), 68.
13. B. A. Garside, *One Increasing Purpose: The Life of Henry Winters Luce* (New York: Revell, 1948), 36.
14. Theodore Harris, *Pearl S. Buck: A Biography* (New York: John Day, 1969), 309.
15. Nathaniel Peffer, *The Far East: A Modern History* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1958), 117–18.
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24. Wong Sin Kiong, *China's Anti-American Boycott Movement in 1905: A Study in Urban Protest* (New York: Peter Lang, 2002), 19.
25. Roger Daniels, *Coming to America: A History of Immigration and Ethnicity in American Life* (New York: HarperCollins, 2002), 271.
26. Thomas G. Dyer, *Theodore Roosevelt and the Idea of Race* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 1992), 140.
27. Department of the Interior Annual Report, 1885.
28. Ibid.
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30. Craig Storti, *Incident at Bitter Creek: The Story of the Rock Springs Chinese Massacre* (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1991), 166.
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32. Elliott Roosevelt and James Brough, *A Rendezvous with Destiny: The Roosevelts of the White House* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1975), 29.
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49. Theodore Roosevelt to Taft, April 20, 1905, in Morison and Blum, *The Letters of Theodore Roosevelt*, 4: 1162.
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53. Street, "A Japanese Statesman's Recollection of Roosevelt."
54. Matsumura, *Baron Kaneko and the Russo-Japanese War*, 382.
55. Ibid., 383.
56. Kaneko, "A 'Japanese Monroe Doctrine' and Manchuria."
57. Ibid.
58. For more information, see Bradley, *The Imperial Cruise*.
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60. Ibid.
61. It wasn't until nineteen years later—after Roosevelt's death—that a researcher came across Taft's top secret summary of his meeting with Katsura. For protection, Taft had composed his memo with no direct quotes.
62. Theodore Roosevelt to Taft, telegram, July 31, 1905, in Morison and Blum, *The Letters of Theodore Roosevelt*, 4: 1293.
63. "Japan's Policy Abroad," *New York Times*, July 30, 1905.
64. McKenzie, *Korea's Fight for Freedom*, 77–78.
65. He was given the Nobel Peace Prize for bringing Russia and Japan together, not for actually negotiating the treaty.
66. Matsumura, *Baron Kaneko and the Russo-Japanese War*, 450.
67. Kaneko said, "I intend to report this very important and valuable piece of advice to our government's leaders on my return to Japan. And after the war I hope that our policy in Asia will be executed and managed along these lines, and that Your Excellency will consent to this," in *ibid.*, 451.
68. Ibid., 450–51.
69. Homer B. Hulbert, *The Passing of Korea* (New York: Doubleday, Page, 1906), 223–24.
70. Ibid., 221.
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73. Un-yon Kim, *Nikkan Heigo* (Tokyo: Dodo Shuppan, 1996), 195, as cited in Keene, *Emperor of Japan*, 641.
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75. Jongsuk Chay, *Diplomacy of Asymmetry: Korean-American Relations to 1910* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1990), 146.
76. Hulbert, letter to the editor of the *New York Times*.
77. Tyler Dennett, *Roosevelt and the Russo-Japanese War* (New York: Doubleday, Page, 1925), 304.
78. Ibid., 307.
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80. Theodore Roosevelt, *America and the World War* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1915), 29.
81. Roosevelt, *Theodore Roosevelt*, 545.
82. Hulbert, letter to the editor of the *New York Times*. The statue in downtown Seoul mentioned in the introduction honors Homer Hulbert.
83. Beale, *Theodore Roosevelt and the Rise of America to World Power*, 322.
84. Esthus, *Theodore Roosevelt and Japan*, 299.

CHAPTER 4: THE NOBLE CHINESE PEASANT

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4. Edgar Snow, *Journey to the Beginning* (New York: Random House, 1958), 88–89.
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6. Laura Tyson Li, *Madame Chiang Kai-shek* (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 2006), 39.
7. Warren I. Cohen, *America's Response to China: An Interpretative History of Sino-American Relations* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1971), 101.
8. Chiang speech at Omei College, September 1935, as cited in Jonathan Fenby, *Chiang Kai-shek: China's Generalissimo and the Nation He Lost* (New York: Carroll and Graf, 2003), 225.
9. *Proceedings of Conference on Chiang Kai-shek and Modern China*, vol. 3, *Chiang Kai-shek and China's Modernization* (Taipei: China Cultural Service, 1987), 151.
10. Jonathan Fenby, *The Penguin History of Modern China: The Fall and Rise of a Great Power, 1850–2008* (New York: Penguin, 2008), 295.
11. Fenby, *Chiang Kai-shek*, 226.
12. Chieh-ju Ch'en, *Chiang Kai-shek's Secret Past*, ed. Lloyd E. Eastman (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1993), 155.

13. My discussion of Chiang Kai-shek and Mao Zedong is relatively narrow, focused on how and why the Chinese people granted Mao Zedong the Mandate of Heaven. Both men had many faults, both men caused and then covered up massive famines that killed millions, both used terror and torture to discipline the populace, and each was single-minded in his belief that he was right while others were wrong. But one of them captured the Mandate, and I try to explain why.
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18. R. H. Tawney, *Land and Labour in China* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1932), 77.
19. Meisner, *Mao Zedong*, 45.
20. Philip Short, *Mao: A Life* (New York: Henry Holt, 2000), 301–2.
21. Edgar Ansel Mowrer, *Mowrer in China* (Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin, 1938), 80–81.
22. Sterling Seagrave, *The Soong Dynasty* (New York: Harper and Row), 261.
23. Service, *Lost Chance in China*, 79.
24. FBI memorandum to the director, January 9, 1943, quoted in Fenby, *Chiang Kai-shek*, 164.
25. Chiang Kai-shek, *China's Destiny and Chinese Economic Theory* (New York: Roy Publishers, 1947), 118.
26. Seagrave, *The Soong Dynasty*, 284.
27. Ibid., 411.
28. Fenby, *Chiang Kai-shek*, 166.
29. Jung Chang, *Madame Sun Yat-sen* (London: Penguin, 1986), 66.
30. Snow, *Journey to the Beginning*, 85.
31. Lancelot Foster, "The Generalissimo and Madame Chiang Kai-shek," *Hibbert Journal* (October 1937): 100, as cited in Jespersen, *American Images of China*, 35.
32. Jespersen, *American Images of China*, 85.
33. Snow, *Journey to the Beginning*, 89–90.
34. Guangqiu Xu, *War Wings: The United States and Chinese Military Aviation, 1929–1949* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2001), 89.
35. *Milwaukee Sentinel*, October 24, 1930.
36. Ibid.
37. Li, *Madame Chiang Kai-shek*, 97.
38. Ibid.
39. Jessup, *The Ideas of Henry Luce*, 380.
40. W. A. Swanberg, *Luce and His Empire* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1972), 142.
41. Ibid., 96.
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43. Theodore White, *In Search of History* (New York: Harper and Row, 1978), 207.
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49. "Foreign News: Progress," *Time*, October 4, 1937, 19.
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51. "The Army Nobody Knows," *Time*, June 16, 1941, 23–24.
52. "China: Chiang Dares," *Time*, November 9, 1936; "The Finance Minister of the Republic of China," *Fortune*, June 1933.
53. Pearl Buck, *The Good Earth* (New York: John Day, 1931). The novel was published on March 2, 1931.
54. Paul Hutchinson, "Breeder of Life," *Christian Century* 48 (May 20, 1931): 683.
55. "Japan: Fissiparous Tendencies," *Time*, September 5, 1932.
56. George H. Blakeslee, "The Japanese Monroe Doctrine," *Foreign Affairs* 11, no. 4 (July 1933): 671–81.
57. Lieutenant General Sadao Araki, quoted in "Japan: Fissiparous Tendencies," *Time*.
58. Robert J. C. Butow, *Tojo and the Coming of the War* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1961), 106–7.
59. Fenby, *Chiang Kai-shek*, 201.
60. Kaneko, "A 'Japanese Monroe Doctrine' and Manchuria."
61. Kai Bird, *The Color of Truth* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1998), 23.
62. David F. Schmitz, *Henry L. Stimson: The First Wise Man* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2000).
63. Johnson to Hornbeck, June 1, 1933, quoted in Dorothy Borg, *The United States and the Far Eastern Crisis of 1933–1938* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1964), 44. Johnson was a minister at this point and later became ambassador, but because he held a number of titles, I've simplified here.
64. Stimson diary, November 7 and November 19, 1931, Henry L. Stimson diaries, Sterling Library, Yale University, as cited in Schmitz, *Henry L. Stimson*, 106–7.
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66. Stimson to Ford, April 3, 1931, cited in *ibid.*, 19.
67. Stimson diary, December 6, 1931, as cited in *ibid.*, 107.
68. Harvey Bundy, oral history, Columbia University Oral History Project, as cited in *ibid.*
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CHAPTER 13: THE CHINA MIRAGE

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3. Joiner, *Honorable Survivor*, 332.
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6. Ibid., 333.
7. Ibid., 334–35.
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9. Joiner, *Honorable Survivor*, xvi.
10. John Service Papers, January 23, 1973, as cited in Joiner, *Honorable Survivor*, xvi–xvii.
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12. I stood on its roof in 2011.
13. In *Theodore Rex*, by Pulitzer Prize winner Edmund Morris, Homer Hulbert's name is absent and Prince Ito gets one passing mention. You finish the book with no understanding that Emperor Meiji and Prince Ito rolled Teddy regarding Korea during the secret, nineteen-month Roosevelt-Kaneko discussions.
- Likewise, if you read all 858 pages of *FDR*, by Jean Edward Smith (winner of the Francis Parkman Prize), you won't find T. V. Soong mentioned once, and you won't see any hint that China Lobbyists covertly cut Japan's supply of oil in August 1941 and that FDR was unaware of their action for one long month.
14. Slightly loosened in 1943 and then ended in 1965.

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1. From a Winston Churchill speech about authorship, National Book Exhibition at Grosvenor House, London, November 2, 1949.