



UNITED STATES ARMY IN WORLD WAR II

China–Burma–India Theater

STILWELL'S COMMAND PROBLEMS

by

Charles F. Romanus

and

Riley Sunderland



CENTER OF MILITARY HISTORY

UNITED STATES ARMY

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. . . to Those Who Served

Foreword

Although this is the second of a series covering the China-Burma-India Theater of Operations during World War II, it is a story in itself and one full of drama. The previous volume, *Stilwell's Mission to China*, recounts the early efforts of the United States to improve the combat efficiency of the Chinese Army. This second volume presents the problems of a commander, his staff, and his troops in a position so irregular and complex as to be unprecedented in U.S. Army history, and outlines the background of their position in Allied policy, military and political. Their position was determined by an arrangement among allies, one accepted with reservations by the War Department. There is a saying: "There is but one thing more difficult than fighting a war with Allies—this is to fight a war without them."

A history of the Allied effort in China and Burma, to be complete, must be written in three dimensions, American-British-Chinese. The present volume is based on a thorough study of the American records and a wealth of information in General Stilwell's papers not previously explored. The full story of the war on the Asiatic mainland cannot be written until British studies are further advanced and the records and the views of the Chinese, of which only a superficial knowledge is now obtainable, have been disclosed and compared with those of their Western allies. Nevertheless, it seems desirable to tell the American story now. It is needed to round out the history of our Army's global effort and to do justice to the Americans, high and low, who made their contribution to victory in a vast and difficult but at the time little-known theater.

Washington, D. C.
30 January 1953

ORLANDO WARD
Maj. Gen., U.S.A.
Chief of Military History

The Authors

From 1946 to 1953 the authors formed the CBI Section of the staff engaged in writing the history of the U.S. Army in World War II.

Charles F. Romanus received the degree of Master of Arts in History at the University of Illinois in 1937, and pursued his work for the doctorate at Louisiana State University, where he was a teaching fellow in history. Entering the Army in 1943 he was commissioned in March 1945 and became a historical officer in the headquarters of the China Theater. He is now a historian in the Historical Section of the Office of the Quartermaster General, and is a captain in the USAR.

Riley Sunderland graduated from the University of Chicago in 1937. In April 1942 he was called to active duty as a second lieutenant in the Field Artillery, and from July 1945 to May 1946 was in the Historical Section, Headquarters, India-Burma Theater, in New Delhi. He is now a senior operations research analyst for Technical Operations, Incorporated, of Arlington, Massachusetts.

Preface

When, in October 1943, Lt. Gen. Joseph W. Stilwell decided there was little more he personally could do to improve the combat efficiency of the Chinese Army, and decided to concentrate his efforts on the India-Burma scene, in effect his decision marked a change from the role of a staff officer, advising without the power to command, to that of a commander, giving orders. As Commanding General, United States Army Forces, China, Burma and India Theater of Operations, as acting Deputy Supreme Allied Commander, Southeast Asia, as Commanding General, Chinese Army in India, and as Commanding General, Northern Combat Area Command, Stilwell was charged with many duties. He was responsible for the active conduct of a campaign in north Burma, and for its immediate logistical support; for the execution of a number of projects agreed to by the President, the Prime Minister of Great Britain, and the Generalissimo of China to aid China; for the execution of projects ordered by the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff to reinforce U.S. operations in the Pacific, and for their logistical support; and, as deputy commander, for playing an appropriate role in Southeast Asia Command should necessity demand. This multitude of roles, these often conflicting missions and requirements, meant that Stilwell faced a variety of command problems. This volume relates his efforts to solve them.

The narrative, like that in the first volume of the subseries, *Stilwell's Mission to China*, is written at the level of the theater commander's headquarters or command post. Under this inherent limitation, it offers a contribution to an understanding of the American effort in China, Burma, and India in 1943 and 1944, and to the study of Sino-American relations in the same period; it is not a definitive history of the war in Asia. The U.S. Air Force is telling its story in many volumes, written from its own point of view. So are the technical services. A British official history is well advanced. The Chinese may someday tell their story, and the beginnings of a Japanese official history are at hand. From these several sources, some historian may ultimately produce a fairly complete history of the war in Asia, which truly deserves to be called "the unknown war." This volume only continues what its predecessor began, that is, a reconnaissance of part of the area the future historian must cross.

That the authors prepared the volume in this manner reflects primarily

their mission—writing a history of the U.S. Army theater of operations in China, Burma, and India. It also reflects the nature of the documentary sources which the U.S. Army was able to open for them.

The events of 1943–44 in China, Burma, and India, great though they were, were but the prelude to others. Looking back on 1943 and 1944, those who had seen the later events saw the prelude through the glass of their own experiences, and interpreted the actions and motives of the men of 1943 and 1944 accordingly. But the men whose words and acts are recorded in these pages were no better at foretelling the future than men have ever been. Sometimes aware of what the future might hold, they were nonetheless preoccupied with the problems of the day, rather than those of next year. Standing on their side of the veil of the future, they saw through it dimly as men always see through it, not as men see the recent past. It is the historian's task to recreate the scene they saw, and let the reader judge them, as inevitably he will judge them, by the understanding of his own day.

The volume has many references to disagreements between allies. Inevitably, the account of the disagreements takes up more space than the final agreement, though it is the latter which is the more important. The differences and disagreements are of interest to the student because they did happen, and because they are an inevitable part of coalition war. But they should not be magnified out of proportion.

The authors are greatly indebted to many participants in the events described who were willing to offer comment and criticism on several drafts of the manuscript: Lt. Col. Charles E. Beach, Maj. Gen. Haydon L. Boatner, Brig. Gen. Frederic W. Boye, Brig. Gen. Waldemar F. Breidster, Col. Rothwell H. Brown, Col. Harry A. Buckley, Brig. Gen. Robert M. Cannon, Maj. Gen. Gilbert X. Cheves, Lt. Col. George L. Converse, Maj. Gen. William E. R. Covell, Maj. Gen. Howard C. Davidson, Col. Joseph K. Dickey, Brig. Gen. Frank Dorn, Lt. Col. Trevor N. Dupuy, Col. Ernest F. Easterbrook, Maj. Gen. Vernon Evans, Brig. Gen. Benjamin G. Ferris, Lt. Col. John B. George, Capt. Shy S. Greenspan, Maj. Gen. Thomas G. Hearn, Col. Francis Hill, Col. Charles N. Hunter, Maj. Gen. Patrick J. Hurley, Lt. Col. George T. Laughlin, Brig. Gen. Malcolm F. Lindsey, Col. Robert C. Lutz, Col. John E. McCammon, Lt. Col. George A. McGee, Jr., Col. Edward J. McNally, Lt. Col. Harry L. Mayfield, Maj. Gen. Frank D. Merrill, Lt. Col. William L. Osborne, Col. William R. Peers, Lt. Gen. Lewis A. Pick, Brig. Gen. Frank N. Roberts, Lt. Col. Joseph Rockis, General Brehon B. Somervell, Col. Carlos G. Spaht, Col. John H. Stodter, Lt. Gen. George E. Stratemeyer, Capt. James L. Tilly, Col. Thomas F. Van Natta, III, Lt. Gen. Albert C. Wedemeyer, Brig. Gen. Theodore F. Wesels, Capt. Logan E. Weston, Lt. Gen. Raymond A. Wheeler, and Col. Walter S. Wood.

The authors have been aided by and are grateful for the opportunity to dis-

cuss the history of the China–Burma–India theaters with General Boatner, Lt. Col. Dwight E. Brewer, Lt. Col. Charles F. Byars, Colonel Converse, Maj. Gen. William M. Creasy, Mr. John P. Davies, Jr., General Dorn, Colonel Dupuy, Colonel Easterbrook, General Evans, Maj. Gen. Francis W. Festing (British 36th Division), Colonel George, General Hearn, Col. Thomas J. Heavey, Colonel Hill, General Hurley, General Lindsey, General George C. Marshall, General Merrill, Colonel Peers, General Roberts, Colonel Rockis, Col. Robert F. Seedlock, Colonel Spaht, Col. Joseph W. Stilwell, Jr., Colonel Stodter, Col. Thomas F. Taylor, Captain Tilly, General Wessels, General Wedemeyer, and Colonel Wood. They are of course not responsible for any errors of fact or interpretation in the pages following.

A great deal of assistance has been received from other historians. Maj. Gen. S. W. Kirby, C.B., C.M.G., O.B.E., M.C., and Brigadier M. R. Roberts, D.S.O., of the Cabinet Office Historical Section, commented on a draft of the manuscript at very considerable length. Col. Allison R. Hartman and the staff of former Japanese officers of the Historical Section, Far East Command, presented the authors with interpretations and corrections from the Japanese point of view. Dr. Henry Lee Bowen of the Air Force historians gave generously of his time and experience in commenting on Chapter III.

Within the Office, Chief of Military History, the authors were greatly aided by Mr. Joseph Bykofsky, Transportation Section, himself a veteran of the North Burma Campaign. *Stilwell's Command Problems* like its predecessor, *Stilwell's Mission to China*, reflects much of the industrious research, judgment, and narrative skill of Mrs. Jacqueline Perry Griffin, research assistant. The section of Chapter II entitled "SEAC Tries To Salvage Burma Operations" was written by Mrs. Griffin, whose special field was the operations of Southeast Asia Command. Only Mrs. Griffin's departure in October 1950 kept her direct contribution to the text from being a larger one.

Mrs. Dorothy Campbell Liles prepared the manuscript of Chapters I through VI in first draft, and prepared Part Two for circulation among participants in the campaign. Her successor, Miss Mildred Bucan, prepared the final draft of the manuscript for publication. Their quick perceptions, sound common sense, and stenographic skill permitted the authors to concentrate on their proper tasks of research and writing.

This volume, like its predecessor, was edited by Miss Ruth Stout, whose skill, industry, and understanding of authors' ways greatly improved the original manuscript. Miss Gay Morenus, who copy-edited *Stilwell's Mission to China*, has not only performed that exacting task most competently for the present volume but has prepared an extremely helpful index.

Finally, though this volume and the others of the China–Burma–India series are prepared and published under the auspices of the Office, Chief of Military History, the reader must not assume they present an official point of view on wartime events in China, Burma, and India. Indeed, the authors very

soon learned that the witnesses to and participants in these events differed among themselves as witnesses always do. The authors are not aware that there exists in the Department of Defense anything that may be called an official point of view toward the events described below. The point of view here presented is that of the undersigned. Responsibility for it, and for any errors the reader may discover, is solely theirs.

Washington, D. C.
18 June 1954

CHARLES F. ROMANUS
RILEY SUNDERLAND

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The illustrations are from Department of Defense files, except those on pages 129 and 407, which are Japanese photographs.

PART ONE

PLANS AND PREPARATIONS
FOR THE NORTH BURMA CAMPAIGN
OCTOBER-DECEMBER 1943

CHAPTER I

The Last Preparations

Lt. Gen. Joseph W. Stilwell's concern with command problems in China, Burma, and India can be traced to the ARCADIA Conference in Washington, December 1941, when Prime Minister Winston S. Churchill and President Franklin D. Roosevelt proposed to Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek that China's leader become Supreme Commander of a United Nations "China Theater." The Generalissimo agreed and, in replying, asked that a high-ranking U.S. Army officer be sent to China to be chief of staff of the Allied staff that the Generalissimo proposed to organize to help him command China Theater. The United States nominated Stilwell, and the Chinese agreed. This then was the basic command structure of China Theater, which was geographically synonymous with China. The Generalissimo was Supreme Commander; all United Nations forces in China Theater were under him, while he in turn was answerable to himself alone, in no way subject to any other officer or agency of the United Nations. Gen. Ho Ying-chin was Chief of Staff of the Chinese Army while General Stilwell was the Generalissimo's joint (Allied) chief of staff for China Theater. The Chinese were not willing to let Stilwell have a staff to help him carry out his duties as joint chief of staff to the Generalissimo, so Stilwell tried to perform them himself with the aid of an interpreter and a stenographer. And since Stilwell took this course, his American subordinates were often not aware of his plans for China Theater.

Believing that the Chinese Army was not an effective fighting force, the War Department ordered Stilwell "to assist in improving the combat efficiency of the Chinese Army." In endeavoring to carry out this mission, Stilwell, after he arrived in China in March 1942, met with little interest or co-operation from the Chinese Government. An undeclared truce existed along the front, broken occasionally when the Japanese forces advanced to break up Chinese troop concentrations or to train their own troops. On such occasions, the Chinese fell back, then reoccupied their former positions when the Japanese retired. In September 1943 Stilwell told the Generalissimo that many of the 300 divisions on the Chinese order of battle had never been in combat. About thirty Chinese divisions were commanded by officers whose loyalties were primarily to the Generalissimo; the others were loyal to local war lords or provincial

governors. Of matériel, the Chinese said they had about 1,000,000 rifles, 83,000 machine guns, and 7,800 trench mortars. Artillery was so widely dispersed that no division had enough, but there were about 1,330 cannon in China of diverse calibers and origins. Units were far below strength; soldiers were unpaid, poorly fed, and poorly clad; the diseases that accompany malnutrition and insanitary camps were rampant. The Chinese had not succeeded in creating a services of supply; consequently, troop movements were made only with the most extreme difficulty, for trucks and motor fuel were almost nonexistent in China and there was no organization for keeping up a steady flow of rations to troops on the march. In his memorandums and staff studies Stilwell always described the Chinese Army as "immobile."

After the Japanese occupied Burma in May 1942 and destroyed the last line of communications between China and her Allies, Stilwell faced a problem that required a multiple solution if he was to carry out his orders from Gen. George C. Marshall, Chief of Staff, U.S. Army, "to support China."

The solution that Stilwell proposed to the Chinese, British, and U.S. Governments in May and June 1942 was to form within the Chinese Army an elite force of full-strength, well-fed, competently led and well-trained divisions, the gaps in whose equipment would be made good by lend-lease aid. To bring artillery, small arms ammunition, shells, trucks, and spare parts into China, Stilwell proposed to retake all Burma and reopen the line of communications from Rangoon to Kunming. Once this had been done, and a powerful Chinese Army, supported by an adequate line of communications, had been created, then Stilwell (and Marshall) believed the time would be at hand for a powerful air offensive against Japan that would deal punishing blows to the Japanese homeland itself. While these proposals were being considered by the several governments, Stilwell in July 1942 organized the U.S. air force and service troops in China, Burma, and India into an American theater of operations, "U.S. Army Forces in China, Burma and India."

From May 1942 to October 1943 Stilwell, with earnest support from General Marshall and Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson, urged his proposals on the Generalissimo. In Washington, Marshall and Stimson sought to enlist the President's aid. The basic factor controlling the support that Stilwell's American superiors would extend to his efforts to assist China was the American decision to make the principal U.S. effort in the Atlantic area. Stilwell's theater, therefore, with the exception of transport aircraft, received little in the way of supplies and manpower from the United States; to a great degree Stilwell was left to carry out his mission with what resources he could conjure up in China and India.

Some progress was made toward creating a better Chinese Army. Detailed plans were made to assemble thirty reorganized and re-equipped Chinese divisions in Yunnan, and thirty more in east China. An infantry and artillery train-

ing program in Yunnan was begun in March 1943. The nucleus of an American liaison staff was set up for the Yunnan divisions, or Y-Force as they came to be called. But every step of the way Stilwell and his subordinates had to cope with what they believed to be apathy and indifference on the part of the Chinese.

After a brief period in the fall of 1942, when it appeared that the Generalissimo might be actively interested in reforming a major portion of the Chinese Army and joining in an offensive to retake Burma, he stated that operations in Burma in March 1943 could not be undertaken and invited attention to what might be done in China by a small, effective air force.

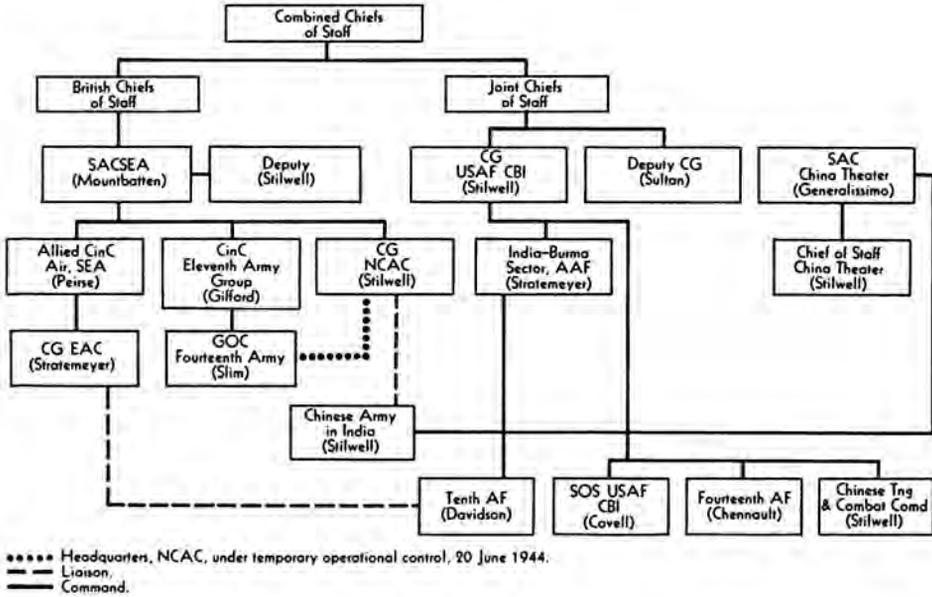
The commander of the Fourteenth U.S. Air Force in China, Maj. Gen. Claire L. Chennault, believed that Stilwell, by concentrating on reform of the Chinese Army and reopening of the ground lines of communications to China, was compromising a great opportunity to deal heavy and immediate blows against the Japanese by air. Chafing at the restrictions placed on him by the small amount of supplies then being flown into China from India, General Chennault in October 1942 finally put his case directly before the President. He told Roosevelt that with 105 fighters, 35 medium bombers, and 12 heavy bombers, he could open the way for the defeat of Japan. By March 1943 Roosevelt gave unmistakable indication that he supported Chennault rather than Stilwell.

At the TRIDENT Conference in Washington during May 1943, the divergent trends in U.S. policy finally came into the open. The Generalissimo as Supreme Commander, China Theater, asked the President to give Chennault the logistical support that officer said would suffice. The President agreed, and Chennault received first priority on supplies flown into China. The War Department advised against giving first priority to Chennault, because it feared that if the Japanese were provoked by Chennault's air offensive they would sweep over the east China bases from which the Fourteenth Air Force operated. The Generalissimo, however, gave Roosevelt his personal assurance that the existing Chinese forces could defend the east China airfields.

The second major development at the TRIDENT Conference was that the Combined Chiefs of Staff decided not to attempt the reconquest of all Burma in the near future but rather to reoccupy north Burma only. Such a limited campaign meant that in lieu of what might come through Rangoon and over the old Burma Road, supplies for the Chinese Army and Chennault's air force would be confined to what could be brought across north Burma—by air until the campaign succeeded, by air, truck, and pipeline thereafter. After the TRIDENT Conference it speedily appeared that Allied resources in China-Burma-India (CBI) were insufficient to support both Chennault's air offensive and preparations to retake north Burma.

The need for a new approach to the problems of war in Asia and for adequate logistical support of Allied operations there was by then obvious. The solution put forward by the Prime Minister in June 1943 and agreed to by

CHART 1—STILWELL IN THE CBI CHAIN OF COMMAND:
DECEMBER 1943—JUNE 1944

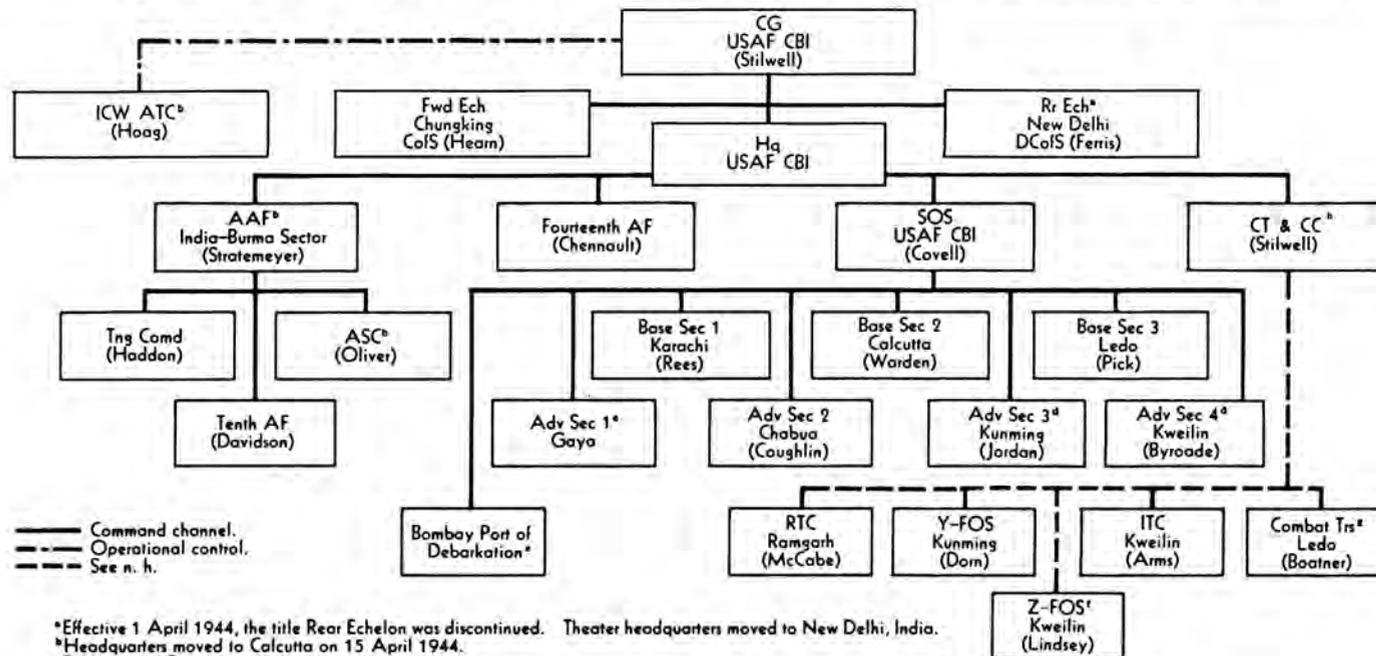


American authority was the creation of Southeast Asia Command (SEAC) under Vice Adm. Lord Louis Mountbatten as Supreme Allied Commander with Stilwell acting as his deputy. An ambitious program of engineering projects was begun. When Mountbatten visited China in October 1943 to present his new command to the Generalissimo, the latter requested that Stilwell be recalled. Though Stilwell and the Generalissimo were not on good terms, though the latter usually ignored Stilwell both personally and officially, this request came immediately after a very brief period in which the Generalissimo had shown a renewed interest in Stilwell's proposals for reform of the Chinese Army, and therefore it surprised and angered Stilwell.

The Generalissimo's request climaxed about twenty months in which Stilwell and his subordinates had sought to improve the combat efficiency of the Chinese Army. Armies do not spring from the ground fully armed and trained; months of time are required for the task of preparing them. The campaigning season was about to begin in the fall of 1943, and the months that should have been used for China's preparation were sped. On the eve of its greatest test the Chinese Army in China was little better than it had ever been, and Stilwell was convinced there was little more he personally could do in China. Henceforth, he gave most of his time and attention to command problems in India and Burma. (*Charts 1 and 2*)

But the diplomatic aspect of Stilwell's presence in Asia remained. His

CHART 2—ORGANIZATION OF U. S. FORCES, CHINA, BURMA AND INDIA: NOVEMBER 1943—APRIL 1944



*Effective 1 April 1944, the title Rear Echelon was discontinued. Theater headquarters moved to New Delhi, India.

*Headquarters moved to Calcutta on 15 April 1944.

*Discontinued December 1943.

*Inactivated 31 January 1944; consolidated into Advance Section No. 1, headquarters at Kunming.

*Effective 31 December 1943, Bombay Port of Debarkation established as an exempted station under Commanding General, Transportation Service, SOS, CBI.

*Established 1 January 1944.

*Discontinued 31 January 1944; Headquarters, NCAC established at Ledo on 1 February 1944.

*Chinese Training and Combat Command, a troop pool providing officers for the organizations indicated.

Source: Organization Chart, Asiatic Sec, OPD, Nav 43. OCMH.

superiors, possibly fearing the diplomatic consequences if the Chinese learned that the U.S. Government no longer attached importance to improving the combat efficiency of the Chinese Army, never formally altered that as his primary mission. Instead, they tacitly acquiesced in his conclusion that there was little more he personally could do in China to carry it out, and gave him a whole series of added tasks which, as the Army Chief of Staff later admitted to Stilwell, added up to what Marshall called a "paramount mission"—one that interfered with, and bore no relation to, his existing primary mission.

Viewed as a whole, the war gave the United Nations grounds for confidence, though much hard and bitter fighting lay ahead. In the Pacific, American and Australian forces were battering through the outer Japanese defenses and by 2 November 1943 were halfway up the ladder of the Solomon Islands. Once the island barrier of the Southwest Pacific was broken, Allied task forces could range more freely among the Japanese island positions. In New Guinea, the Allied advance was almost ready to turn the barrier represented by New Britain Island. But New Britain was many, many miles from Tokyo, and at times it may have seemed that the twenty-three months since 7 December 1941 had done little to bring the Allies closer to Japan. The most immediately hopeful augury lay in that night and day the dockyard crews at Pearl Harbor were putting oil and water, shells and fuel, into spanking-new aircraft carriers, destroyers, and cruisers, on landing craft and transports; that Infantry and Marine officers were intently studying maps of the central Pacific. Occupation of key points in the Gilbert Islands, Operation GALVANIC, was imminent.

In the Mediterranean, Benito Mussolini, the creator of fascism, had been ignominiously deposed on 25 July 1943, and a little more than a month later Italy surrendered to the Allies. A powerful Allied force then landed at Salerno (9 September). Eight days later southern Italy was firmly in Allied hands.

In Russia, the Germans were retreating. In the summer of 1941 and again in that of 1942 the Germans had scored flashy victories without being able to strike a decisive blow. On 5 July 1943, they opened their annual summer offensive on the central front in Russia. In ten days the offensive had been halted and the Red Army seized an initiative it never thereafter lost. By November 1943 Russia could begin to look forward to the day when the last German would be driven from Russian soil; remembering the Russo-German Pact of 1939, the British Commonwealth and the United States might wonder what form Soviet policy would take in that event.

In northwestern Europe, there was as yet no action on the ground, but night and day the bombing fleets flew from England to Germany, cascaded out their tons of fire and steel, and returned less what toll the defense took. At sea the submarine menace, which had so hobbled Allied strategy in 1941, 1942, and early 1943, was under control. So men and matériel were accumulating in England, and Anglo-American capabilities for a cross-Channel assault were steadily improving.

Of the three enemy states—Germany, Italy, and Japan—only Italy had as yet been invaded, and Germany and Japan still sheltered behind their outer defenses. In the case of Germany, the bombers were flying over the defenses, but in the case of Japan, systematic bombing of the Japanese homeland was as yet only a project for the future. China's geographic position, China's assumed resources in manpower, might still play a great, perhaps a decisive, role in the forthcoming attacks on Japan. How these Chinese resources could be brought to bear and the extent of British and American dependence on them for victory in the Pacific were among the major problems requiring solution in October 1943.

Combined Chiefs Order a North Burma Campaign

Stilwell began concentrating on his command problems about 23 October 1943, when he and his immediate superior for operations in Burma, Admiral Lord Louis Mountbatten, arrived in India after conferences with the Generalissimo in Chungking.¹ Stilwell's first task was to aid Mountbatten in the preparation of a plan for operations in Burma to carry out the directives of the TRIDENT and QUADRANT (Quebec, August 1943) Conferences.² With the lifting of the monsoon rains in Burma, the campaign season was at hand, and the time had come to break the blockade of China in the way prescribed by the Combined Chiefs of Staff:

1. to carry out operations for the capture of Upper Burma in order to improve the air route and establish overland communications with China. Target date: mid-February, 1944.
2. to continue to build up and increase the air routes and air supplies of China, and the development of air facilities with a view to:
 - a. Keeping China in the war.
 - b. Intensifying operations against the Japanese.
 - c. Maintaining increased U.S. and Chinese Air Forces in China.
 - d. Equipping Chinese ground forces.³

The Myitkyina (pronounced myī-chē-nä)—Mogaung area of north Burma acquired great importance because of this directive. In the first place, its geographic position at the southern tip of the hump of mountains over which the transports flew from India to China meant that its capture would greatly improve the air route to China. As long as the Japanese held the Myitkyina airstrips, the threat of their fighters forced the U.S. aircraft to fly far to the north, then to swing south to the Kunming air terminals. This increased fuel

¹ Report and Supplement for the Combined Chiefs of Staff by the Supreme Allied Commander, South-East Asia, 1943–1946, Vice Admiral Viscount Mountbatten of Burma, New Delhi, India, July 30, 1947 (hereafter, Mountbatten Report), Pt. B, par. 8.

² Charles F. Romanus and Riley Sunderland, *Stilwell's Mission to China*, UNITED STATES ARMY IN WORLD WAR II (Washington, 1953), Chs. IX and X.

³ History of the China–Burma–India Theater, 21 May 1942–25 October 1944 (hereafter, History of CBI), p. 161. OPD 314.7 CTO, A47–30. (See Bibliographical Note.)

consumption and cut the pay load. The air route itself was narrow, and its saturation with transports sometime in the near future was predicted. With Myitkyina in Allied possession the transports would be able to use a much wider, lower air route.⁴

Secondly, since fall 1942 the U.S. engineers had been building a road south from Ledo, Assam, which was intended to cross north Burma and ultimately link with the old Burma Road. The Hukawng and Mogaung valleys, down which the Ledo Road was being constructed, enter the Irrawaddy valley, which is the most habitable part of north and central Burma, within a few miles of the Myitkyina-Mogaung area. Both towns are on the rail and road net of prewar Burma, so when the Ledo Road reached them the engineering problem would become one of improving existing facilities rather than constructing new ones in the virgin wilderness. Therefore, taking the Myitkyina-Mogaung area was the prerequisite to completing the Ledo Road and opening a ground line of communications, with an all-weather road and a gasoline pipeline, to China.

The purpose of the projected ground line of communications to China was not to supply the Chinese armies or sustain the Chinese economy; a road and a pipeline cannot support 300 divisions in combat or sustain the life of several hundred millions of people. A two-way, all-weather road to China, which was then contemplated, would, the Army Service Forces believed in the fall of 1943, permit the ultimate delivery of 65,000 tons a month to Kunming. Vehicles, artillery, and small arms ammunition from this tonnage would enable Stilwell to fill the gaps in the equipment of such Chinese divisions as the Generalissimo might permit him to train and bring to full strength.⁵ Once revitalized, these divisions might, if the Generalissimo concurred, seize a port on the Chinese coast and secure airfields from which Japan could be systematically and heavily bombed.

Normally, planning precedes logistical preparation, and logistical preparation, fighting. One of the noteworthy aspects of the North Burma Campaign of 1943-44 is that the logistical preparations, the planning, and the fighting proceeded simultaneously. The troops moved forward before the commanders agreed on their plans, and the logistical preparations were months in being completed.

⁴ (1) See remarks of Col Francis Hill, Min, Washington Conf, 9 Feb 44. ABC 384 (Burma), 8-25-42, Sec 5, A48-224. (See Bibliographical Note.) (2) See *Stilwell's Mission to China* re TRIDENT and QUADRANT.

⁵ (1) The principal Army Service Forces and CBI Theater headquarters studies of the projected capacity and requirements of the Ledo Road are discussed in a manuscript by Joseph Bykofsky, *The History of Transportation Service in China, Burma, and India in World War II*. (Hereafter, Bykofsky MS.) (See Bibliographical Note.) (2) The principal staff studies are: 1. Ltr, Col Frank Milani, AG, Rr Ech, USAF CBI, to Marshall, 31 Jan 44, sub: Project TIG 1-C. Folder, AG (537) Transportation Sec, SOS USFCT, KCRC. 2. Rpt, OCoFT ASF, 10 Feb 44, sub: Proposed Motor Transport Service, CBI. Hist Br, OCoFT. 3. History of Services of Supply, China, India, Burma Theater, 28 February 1942-24 October 1944 (hereafter, SOS in CBI), App. 24, Sec. 2, Pt. 1. OCMH. (See Bibliographical Note for these references.)

Improving the Lines of Communications

The QUADRANT Conference, held at Quebec in August 1943, resulted in an ambitious list of engineering projects for India and Burma to increase the movement of supplies from Calcutta to China. (*Map 1*)

1. An increase in the amount of air cargo being flown to China by the Air Transport Command (ATC) to 20,000 tons a month by mid-1944
2. A road from India to China (the Ledo Road) with an initial (January 1945) capacity of 30,000 tons per month
3. A gasoline pipeline from Assam via Fort Hertz in northernmost Burma to Kunming
4. A thin-walled 6-inch pipeline from Calcutta to Assam Province to supply the Air Transport Command airfields there
5. A thin-walled 6-inch pipeline to China
6. An American-operated barge line on the Brahmaputra River to bring supplies forward from the great port of Calcutta to the Allied bases in Assam
7. Improvement of the Bengal and Assam Railway⁶

Basic to this program was the realization that many of the difficulties hobbling the Allied effort in Asia sprang from the fact that the line of communications from Calcutta to the airfields and storage depots of Assam could not bring supplies forward in sufficient quantity to support a major effort in the air and another on the ground. To General Headquarters (India), which was responsible for logistical support of the British and India forces on the border of Burma, Lt. Gen. William J. Slim, commanding the Fourteenth Army, wrote on 30 October 1943:

The supply situation as regards certain commodities in the Army area is so serious that I consider it will affect active operations and should, therefore, be brought to the attention of the Commander-in-Chief [Gen. Sir Claude J. E. Auchinleck] and the General Officer Commanding-in-Chief 11 Army Group [Gen. Sir George Giffard]. . . . In general terms, instead of holding a tonnage of 65,000 tons which is the target for the supply depot in the area, only some 47,000 tons were held on 26 Oct 43, thereby giving an *over-all* [Slim's italics] deficiency of 27%. . . .

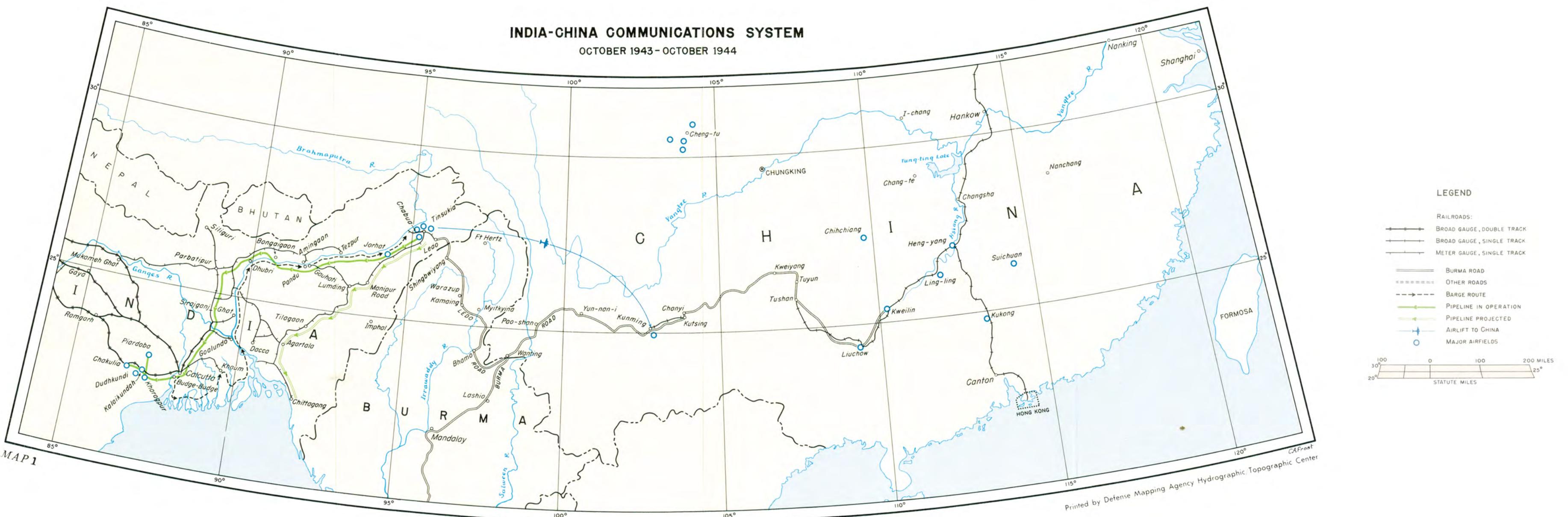
Taking up the supply situation area by area, General Slim noted that in the Arakan district of Burma there was no hay for animal transport or clarified butter in forward areas. In the area forward of the Manipur Road British troops had no meat, nor were authorized substitutes available. For Indian troops in the same vicinity there was no meat, no milk, no butter, the latter two staple items of the Indian diet. Moreover, when tinned foods did come forward, often 50 percent was spoiled. Therefore, "in 4 Corps area the medical authorities have already reported that troops are suffering from malnutrition."⁷ Admiral

⁶ Rpt, Col Frederick S. Strong, Jr., Chief Engr, SOS CBI, to Lt Gen Brehon B. Somervell, CG, ASF, 13 Nov 43. Somervell File, Vol IV, Hq ASF, Theaters of Opns, CBI 1944, A46-257. (Hereafter, Somervell File ---.)

⁷ Ltr, 3872/17/Q, Slim to GHQ (India), 30 Oct 43. SEAC War Diary. (See Bibliographical Note.)

INDIA-CHINA COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM

OCTOBER 1943 - OCTOBER 1944



LEGEND

- RAILROADS:
 - BROAD GAUGE, DOUBLE TRACK
 - BROAD GAUGE, SINGLE TRACK
 - METER GAUGE, SINGLE TRACK
- BURMA ROAD
- OTHER ROADS
- BARGE ROUTE
- PIPELINE IN OPERATION
- PIPELINE PROJECTED
- AIRLIFT TO CHINA
- MAJOR AIRFIELDS



MAP 1

Printed by Defense Mapping Agency Hydrographic Topographic Center

Mountbatten was keenly aware of the intimate connection between the Assam line of communications and the prospects of victory and placed improvement of the Bengal and Assam Railway very high on his agenda.⁸

Vital though it was, the Bengal and Assam Railway was but part of the Assam line of communications. The major factors lessening the efficiency of the line of communications were (1) the congested port of Calcutta, through which supplies for Assam and China entered India; (2) the inefficient rail lines and barge lines which moved them forward; (3) the civilian agencies of the Government of India which controlled the flow of goods and personnel over the line of communications. In point of time, the railway was considered first, but ultimately each of the three factors above had to be appropriately handled, and gasoline pipelines constructed, before a satisfactory solution could be reached.

As a depressing backdrop to the war effort in Bengal, famine racked that great province, in which lay the all-important harbor of Calcutta. The rice crop of 1943 had failed to meet the demands on it; the little skiffs and luggers that plied the intricate Bengal waterways in peacetime had been destroyed by British authority in 1942 for fear of a Japanese invasion, and the Japanese occupation of Burma had effectively cut off a major source of Indian rice. Before the famine ended, more than 1,000,000 Bengalis died. The famine held full and horrible sway in the fall of 1943; it was a heavy added burden on the already strained provincial and central authorities, whose reactions to the needs of war along India's eastern frontier must be judged against the emergent needs of India herself.

On 23 October when Lt. Gen. Brehon B. Somervell visited India, the American supply expert volunteered to provide U.S. railway troops to assume some of the burdens of operating the Bengal and Assam Railway. His offer began a discussion between interested agencies of the Government of India and SEAC. As a result of the initial exchanges the director of transportation of General Headquarters (India) and the general manager of the railway made a rapid survey of the problems that would be created if Americans helped to operate key sections of the line. Their report agreed to U.S. assistance. The Government of India was guided accordingly, accepting it on 6 November, and on 10 November CBI Theater told the War Department that accord had reached the point at which details were being discussed.⁹

Anticipating such success, General Somervell, Maj. Gen. Charles P. Gross, Chief of Transportation, Maj. Gen. Raymond A. Wheeler, Commanding General, Services of Supply, CBI, and their staffs had earlier agreed on the nature of the troops required. Wheeler alerted the War Department when the Government of India's acquiescence appeared reasonably certain, and so the actual movement followed quickly on India's agreement. Orders were issued on 16 November to the 705th Railway Grand Division, the 758th Railway Shop

⁸ Extract, SAC's Personal Diary, 30 Oct 43. SEAC War Diary.

⁹ SOS in CBI, pp. 53-56.

Battalion, and the 721st, 725th, 726th, 745th, and 748th Railway Operating Battalions. Each battalion was less its maintenance of way company, for the use of Indian labor was contemplated. Col. John A. Appleton, former general manager of the New York zone of the Pennsylvania Railroad, arrived in India on 16 November as a member of the Appleton-Ingليس Railway Mission. He was known to be the War Department's choice for the post of director of the proposed Military Railway Service.¹⁰

Therefore, as of mid-November 1943 it was agreed by all concerned that American troops would assist in operating certain key sections of the Bengal and Assam Railway. Exact definition of the sections and the conditions of operation were being negotiated, and the troop movement was under way.

A factor in these negotiations was the report submitted by Col. Paul F. Yount, of the Transportation Corps. Sent by Somervell from Iran, where he had succeeded in increasing the amount of tonnage carried by the Iranian rail system to 500 percent above prewar standards, Yount made a rapid reconnaissance of the Bengal and Assam Railway. His report of 10 November strongly suggested that more efficient and more vigorous operating methods, rather than the tedious processes of rebuilding the railway, would bring a sharp and immediate increase in the tonnage carried.¹¹ The greatest deficiency, he believed, was lack of an aggressive, adequate supervisory staff between management and actual operating personnel.

Mid-November saw major personnel changes among the men guiding the logistic effort. General Wheeler, chosen by Admiral Mountbatten to "push" improvements in the transportation system, became principal administrative officer of SEAC on 15 November. Lt. Gen. Sir Wilfred Lindsell, offered for the same post by Gen. Sir Alan Brooke, Chief of the Imperial General Staff, became instead principal administrative officer for Gen. Sir Claude J. E. Auchinleck's India Command. General Wheeler was succeeded in command of the SOS, CBI, by Maj. Gen. William E. R. Covell.¹²

At the extreme northeastern end of the vital railway line, construction of the Ledo Road was resumed as the end of the rains and the gradual drying of the ground permitted work to begin. The 849th and 1883d Engineer Aviation Battalions and the 382d Engineer Battalion (Separate) had arrived in September to reinforce the road builders. On 17 October Col. Lewis A. Pick assumed command of the road project as commanding officer of Base Section No. 3. Before coming to CBI, Colonel Pick had been division engineer of the Missouri River Division, Omaha, Nebraska, and had drawn up the Pick Plan of Missouri River flood control. Three more units arrived in November: the 45th Quarter-

¹⁰ SOS in CBI, pp. 60-62.

¹¹ (1) Ltr, Yount to Wheeler, 10 Nov 43, sub: Capacity of Assam LOC; Ltr, Somervell to Wheeler, 25 Oct 43. Somervell File, Vol IV, CBI 1944. (2) For Yount's work in Iran, see T. H. Vail Motter, *The Persian Corridor and Aid to Russia*. UNITED STATES ARMY IN WORLD WAR II (Washington, 1952).

¹² (1) SOS in CBI, pp. 29-30. (2) Mountbatten Report, Pt. A, par. 39. (3) Ltr, Somervell to Wheeler, 27 Oct 43. Somervell File, Vol IV, CBI 1944.

master Regiment, the 209th Combat Engineer Battalion, and the 1905th Engineer Aviation Battalion.

From the end of October to the end of November, the lead bulldozer advanced over twenty-two miles, to mile 82.35 from Ledo. To speed construction, three bulldozers left the village of Nawngyang on 28 August to make their way over a trail, once used by the refugees fleeing Burma in 1942, to the village of Namlip Sakan, which lay on the trace of the Ledo Road. Progress was extremely difficult, but the dozer crews brought their machines through the monsoon rains to their goal on 5 October 1943. From Namlip Sakan they began cutting trail in both directions, back toward Ledo and forward into Burma. With dry weather from late October, actual road construction, as distinguished from clearing the way, made good progress. Anticipating that the road would soon be through the mountain barrier into the Hukawng Valley, Colonel Pick sent nineteen men ahead to the village of Shingbwiyang (mile 103 from Ledo on the southern end of the Patkai Range) to establish a supply depot for the first truck convoy. At Shingbwiyang Pick's little supply detachment was about one third of the way to Myitkyina.¹³

Surveying the engineering projects on 1 November, the SOS chief engineer told General Somervell that better progress would be made with the Ledo Road once the men and machinery on requisition were deployed south of Shingbwiyang, but he warned, "Over-optimism on road construction, if more evidence is needed than that furnished at Ledo, and on road capacity, would not be indulged in if the true lessons of the Alcan and Pan American Highways were generally known."¹⁴ Somervell believed that the Ledo Road would reach Pao-shan, China, by 1 November 1944, an estimate which was, of course, an engineering one since no one could foresee just when the Japanese would be driven from the trace of the Ledo Road.¹⁵

In November the construction of pipelines that would ultimately stretch from India to China began. Shortly after the QUADRANT Conference theater authorities had decided to abandon the Fort Hertz pipeline. Proponents of this route had long argued that constructing a pipeline by this short route might be enough when added to the Hump airlift to support the Fourteenth Air Force on an ample scale. The mountainous terrain the Fort Hertz line would have to cross was a powerful argument against the project.¹⁶ Four other reasons influenced abandoning the project for which such hopes had once been entertained: (1) it was not possible to bring men and matériel to CBI Theater as early as they would be needed; (2) the Assam line of communications was congested and would not permit bringing matériel forward as rapidly as needed; (3) it

¹³ (1) For background on the CBI engineering projects, see *Stilwell's Mission to China*. (2) SOS in CBI, pp. 441-43.

¹⁴ Rpt cited n. 6.

¹⁵ Memo, Somervell for JCS, 24 Nov 43, sub: Progress Rpt on Bengal-Assam LOC. Somervell File, Vol IV, Pt I, CBI 1944.

¹⁶ Ltr, Col Hill to Maj Gen Orlando Ward, Chief, Mil History, 2 Sep 52. OCMH.

was feared that unavailable heavy-walled pipe would be needed for the line; and finally, (4) a parallel road would be necessary to maintain the line.

Instead of the Fort Hertz pipeline, a thin-walled 4-inch pipeline would be built parallel to the Ledo Road. Thin-walled pipe was air transportable, and so the line could be built from both ends toward a meeting somewhere in Burma. As soon as possible a second line was to be laid from India, using heavier pipe where advisable, so that ultimately there would be two pipelines from India to China, one carrying aviation gas for the ATC and the Fourteenth Air Force and one carrying truck fuel. Construction began in November.¹⁷

The 6-inch pipelines from tanker terminals in Bengal to Assam were properly part of the Assam line of communications; their building presented no particular engineering problem. Construction of the line by eight engineer petroleum distribution companies assisted by 7,000 Indian laborers was contemplated. As 1943 ended, final preparations were being made to begin the work in January 1944.¹⁸

The B-29 Project Approved

A new burden was added to the already overstrained China-Burma-India logistical structure in fall 1943, the B-29's of the XX Bomber Command. In August 1943 the Army Air Forces (AAF) planners had suggested bombing Japan into submission with an enormous force of heavy bombers based in China and supported by swarms of transports flying from Indian bases.¹⁹ Asked to comment, Maj. Gen. George E. Stratemeyer, Headquarters, U.S. Army Air Forces, India-Burma Sector, pointed out that in order to support the AAF plan the port of Calcutta would require tremendous expansion, communications on a grand scale would have to be installed, north Burma would have to be cleared by 1 July 1944, and a variety of other Herculean projects would have to be successfully completed by that early date. As a substitute plan Stratemeyer's staff offered TWILIGHT.²⁰

TWILIGHT assumed that north Burma would be free of Japanese by 1 July 1944 so that the Ledo Road might speedily go through to China, and further that the Chinese and Fourteenth Air Forces could by 1 November 1944 be made strong enough to hold the east China airfields against Japanese attack. TWILIGHT's original contribution to the development of strategy in China-Burma-India was its suggestion that the B-29's be based in the Calcutta area and staged through Chinese bases to attack Japan. Stratemeyer's planners believed that 412 transports could support 280 B-29's by hauling their supplies to the Chinese bases, and that TWILIGHT would destroy Japan's ability to resist.

¹⁷ (1) Rpt cited n. 6. (2) SOS in CBI, p. 108.

¹⁸ SOS in CBI, pp. 111-13.

¹⁹ *Stilwell's Mission to China*, Ch. X.

²⁰ CM-IN 9027, Stratemeyer to Gen Henry H. Arnold, 11 Sep 43.

Examining TWILIGHT, the Operations Division of the War Department remarked that the concept of staging India-based bombers through China offered the only hope of bombing Japan from Chinese bases in March and April 1944 without major interference with other operations in CBI and with a high degree of security from a Japanese ground reaction. The Operations Division understood that Cheng-tu in west China would be the B-29 China base. Consistent with the views it had expressed when the President was approving Chennault's plans in May 1943, the Operations Division feared that a major Japanese reaction would overrun the Kweilin-Changsha Fourteenth Air Force bases in east China if the B-29's were based there. In the light of the foregoing factors, the China-India Section of the Theater Group, Operations Division, and the Strategy and Policy Group, Operations Division, both recommended that the B-29 project for CBI be pushed to completion with bases at Cheng-tu and Calcutta.²¹

TWILIGHT's conception of the B-29's had been that of a club, bludgeoning Japan into submission. In November 1943 the idea grew in Washington that the air weapons could be used like a stiletto, striking the vital spots with a few skilled blows. The Japanese coke ovens seemed to offer a wonderful target. If they were destroyed, surely the Japanese steel industry would be crippled. In the fall of 1943 the Foreign Economic Administration, the Committee of Operations Analysts, and the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) agreed in believing that the Japanese steel industry was producing to the limit of its capacity, which the analysts set at about 13,690,000 tons annually, an accurate estimate, for 13,970,000 tons was correct. However, they erred in believing Japan's steel industry was producing at capacity, for it was not, by 5,138,000 tons. Shortage of raw materials, not shortage of plant, was hobbling the Japanese. Therefore, attacks on steel plant facilities had to destroy 5,000,000 tons capacity before they cut current Japanese steel production.

Fourteenth Air Force attacks on Yangtze River iron-ore carriers were directly cutting Japanese steel production, but this was not realized at the time. The highly publicized attack on Japanese ocean shipping, for which such claims had been made and such hopes entertained, was relatively minor in its effects, while the routine missions against river shipping were hitting home. They were mainly responsible for cutting down Japanese imports of iron ore from 2,200,000 tons in the first half of 1943 to 1,150,000 tons in the first half of 1944. But this was not appreciated in Washington or in China.²²

When the proposal to base the B-29's in India, stage them through China,

²¹ Memo, Col Thomas S. Timberman, Chief, Asiatic Sec OPD, for ACofS, OPD, 2 Nov 43, sub: Bomber Offensive from China; Memo, Col Frank N. Roberts, Chief, Strategy and Policy Gp, OPD, for ACofS, OPD, 30 Oct 43, sub: Bomber Offensive from China. Case 192, OPD 381 CTO, A47-30.

²² U.S. Strategic Bombing Survey [USSBS], *The Effects of Strategic Bombing on Japan's War Economy* (Washington, 1946), pp. 44-45, 76-77, App. Tables C-16, C-17.

and bomb Japan's coking facilities was laid before the President, he accepted it with enthusiasm. Approving it in early November 1943, he at once sought the co-operation of the British Commonwealth and China. Telling Churchill that Japan's steel industry was strained to the limit, the President stated that the B-29's could destroy half of the coke ovens supporting Japan's steel production and so partially cripple the Japanese. Churchill was asked to give all possible aid in building four airfields in the Calcutta area. To the Generalissimo, Roosevelt sent word that five airfields with limited facilities would be needed in the Cheng-tu area by 1 March 1944. He offered to give the Chinese necessary engineering supervision, supplemented by lend-lease funds if the Chinese would supply labor and materials.²³

The President's initiative, regarded as "approval in principle," started the wheels turning, though passage of the concept through the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) and Combined Chiefs of Staff (CCS) machinery was still to come. In anticipation of JCS and CCS action, engineer aviation battalions and dump truck companies which would be needed to build the Indian airfields were alerted for shipment. Their movement orders were issued on 14 November, and the first project personnel arrived in India on 24 November 1943. TWILIGHT was reduced in scale by the provision that the B-29's would carry their own supplies to China, thus eliminating the 400 transport aircraft. It was intended that they should not be a burden on the Hump airlift. This then was the final edition of the plan to defeat Japan that the AAF had offered at QUADRANT: MATTERHORN—a self-supporting task force of B-29's, based on India, staged through China, was to cripple Japan's steel industry.²⁴

Learning of the B-29 project, Stilwell wrote: "FDR has undercut me again. Told PEANUT [the Generalissimo] all about TWILIGHT, so I can't bargain on that."²⁵

The reference was to Stilwell's and the War Department's consistent view that any American initiative in CBI should adopt a *quid pro quo* or bargaining technique. The President's military advisers had urged that American aid be given to the Chinese only to the degree that they agreed to help themselves. In March 1943 the President explicitly rejected the bargaining approach to China's problems. Stilwell believed that the President's rejection greatly handicapped him in dealing with the Chinese, and that it was one of the reasons he could not persuade the Generalissimo to reform his Army.²⁶

²³ (1) Rad, Air Ministry to ARMINDIA, 12 Nov 43. SEAC War Diary. (2) Rad WAR 3815, Marshall to Stilwell and Stratemeyer, 11 Nov 43. Item 1230, Bk 4, JWS Personal File. (See Bibliographical Note.)

²⁴ Memo, Arnold for Marshall, 12 Nov 43, sub: Early Sustained Bombing of Japan; Memo, Brig Gen John E. Hull, Chief, Theater Gp OPD, for DCofS, 14 Nov 43, sub: Engr Units for CBI Theater. Case 192, OPD 381 Security, A47-30. (2) History of CBI, Sec. II, Ch. VIe, (3) Min, CCS 128th Mtg, 23 Nov 43.

²⁵ Stilwell Black Book, 12 Nov 43. (See Bibliographical Note.)

²⁶ For a fuller discussion of the question of bargaining with the Chinese, see *Stilwell's Mission to China*.

Chennault's Operations

The autumn months of 1943 found the Fourteenth Air Force behind the schedule set for it by the Chennault Plan of May 1943, because the plan had been put into operation before its logistical requirements were on hand. General Chennault had proposed to gain air superiority in China in August 1943, then to attack Japanese ocean shipping, and in the last phase to use B-24's for strategic bombing of Formosa, the Shanghai-Nanking-Hankow triangle, and Japan itself. To do this, which he thought would force the Japanese in six months to begin abandoning their outlying Pacific holdings, he requested 150 fighters, 48 B-25's, and 35 B-24's, plus photo reconnaissance craft. For supply, he asked 4,790 tons per month from July to September, and 7,129 tons monthly thereafter. At TRIDENT, Washington, May 1943, the President gave him first priority on Hump tonnage for a limited time.²⁷

Events did not go as Chennault had hoped. Reinforcements were slow in reaching him. Hump tonnage deliveries were not in the quantities contemplated at TRIDENT. The Japanese reacted vigorously, and flying weather was often bad. Chennault felt profoundly discouraged as his long-sought opportunity seemed to be slipping from him.

Then in September 1943 the picture brightened. Hump tonnage (all carriers) improved from the 5,674 tons of August to 6,719 tons in September and rose to 8,632 tons in October. From these monthly deliveries the Fourteenth Air Force received 3,038 tons, 4,575 tons, and 4,225 tons, respectively. Reinforcements arrived for the Fourteenth Air Force, and it swiftly began to change from the semiguerrilla force of earlier days to a powerful weapon, whose subordinate commands had area assignments. Arrival of the 25th and 26th Fighter Squadrons in October reunited the 51st Group. Chennault was then able to put fighters on a string of fields from Heng-yang to Kweilin in the Hsiang valley. Some missions were on occasion staged through newer fields 200 miles east of Kweilin. Sixteen P-51's, battered but still flyable, joined Chennault. Because his air-raid net and newly formed radio intelligence teams were working better than ever, Chennault found his fighter pilots spending more and more time over the Japanese bases in central China. Air superiority was changing hands, and perhaps, not too late in the day.²⁸

Thanks to the arrival of B-25 pilots well schooled in skip-bombing tactics (first publicly demonstrated in the Battle of the Bismarck Sea, 2-6 March 1943) and the wide dissemination of the technique among Chennault's crews, the 11th Bombardment Squadron (M) and the 2d Bombardment Squadron (Chinese-American Composite Wing) intensified the antishipping campaign. During October, the Fourteenth Air Force sank about 5,000 tons, and 17,372

²⁷ *Stilwell's Mission to China*, Ch. IX.

²⁸ (1) *Stilwell's Mission to China*, Chart 6. (2) Lt Gen Albert C. Wedemeyer's Data Book, Item 8. OPD Copy, OCMH. (3) Ralph G. Hoxie, Frederick Ericson, and Robert T. Finney, *History of the Fourteenth Air Force*, MS. (Hereafter, *Fourteenth AF History*.) USAF Hist Div.

tons in November. Simultaneously, the Japanese stirrings in northeast Burma that preceded the enemy drive on India gave the 308th Bombardment Group (H) a chance to drop bombs on Burmese targets while it engaged in its routine ferrying of supplies.²⁹

The Fourteenth Air Force was now just able to reach beyond China's borders for a few blows at Japan or Formosa. Heavy bombers and long-range fighters were on hand. Staging fields near the coast were ready, and one of them, Suichuan, was stocked to permit a mission or two to be flown from it against Kyushu or Formosa. On 31 October a photographic reconnaissance aircraft from Suichuan photographed a major Japanese shipping concentration in the Sasebo-Nagasaki area. Chennault at once asked Stilwell for permission to strike it, and Stilwell as promptly relayed the question to Gen. Henry H. Arnold, Commanding General, Army Air Forces.³⁰ Arnold congratulated Chennault on his aggressive spirit, but forbade attacks on Japan. Presumably, he did not desire to alert the Japanese home defenses by a few sporadic attacks when the B-29's were being prepared for a sustained effort.³¹

Though greatly disappointed because it was ordered to avoid Japan, and by implication also ordered to omit Phase III of the Chennault Plan, the Fourteenth Air Force immediately settled on Shinchiku, Formosa, site of a bomber-modification factory and a combat training center, as an alternate target. On Thanksgiving Day, in a meticulously planned, precisely executed tactical demonstration that lasted twelve minutes, 8 P-51A's, 12 B-25's, and 8 P-38's scored 42 Japanese aircraft in one pass over the target. Exploiting the Japanese embarrassment, B-25's, working in pairs, employed their skip-bombing tactics to account for several cargo ships in the Formosa Strait during the next fortnight.³²

By November the concentration of aircraft strength in east China brought into sharp focus the long-neglected line of communications from Kunming eastward to the Hsiang valley fields and beyond. November saw the Fourteenth Air Force receive tonnage at a level (4,700 tons) that Chennault had hoped to see achieved six months before. But tonnage at Kunming was just the beginning. The line of communications from Kunming to Chennault's forward fields, the eastern line of communications (known in CBI as the ELOC), was

²⁹ (1) Fourteenth AF History. (2) Wesley Frank Craven and James Lea Cate, eds., *The Army Air Forces in World War II: IV. The Pacific: Guadalcanal to Saipan. August 1942 to July 1944* (Chicago, 1950), Ch. 16, pp. 529-32. (3) Japanese Studies in World War II (hereafter, Japanese Study --), 116, The Imperial Japanese Navy in World War II, 1941-1945. OCMH. (See Bibliographical Note.)

³⁰ (1) Fourteenth AF History. (2) Rad M 18NE, Chennault to Stilwell and Arnold, 4 Nov 43. Item 1181, Bk 4, JWS Personal File. (3) CM-IN 1668, Stilwell to Arnold, 3 Nov 43.

³¹ (1) CM-OUT 1413, Arnold to Stilwell for Chennault, 4 Nov 43. (2) Compare the British revelation of the tank in World War I by its use in penny packets in the Somme fighting; the comparable German blunder of introducing gas on a small scale. The combination of surprise and mass can be overwhelming, where the introduction of a new tactic or a new weapon in a small way merely warns the enemy to prepare countermeasures.

³² (1) Fourteenth AF History. (2) Japanese Study 116.

a bottleneck. Currently operated by the Chinese—for it will be recalled the Generalissimo was Supreme Commander, China Theater, and U.S. resources in China were limited to what came over the Hump—the ELOC's estimated capacity of 1,500 tons a month barely supported two fighter squadrons in east China from May 1943 on. Now, with three more fighter and two medium bomber squadrons in east China, the ELOC had to increase its capacity, and Chennault commenced to stress its problems.³³

Chennault's attack on Formosa had been made while several staff officers from *China Expeditionary Army*, Lt. Gen. Shunroku Hata commanding, had been visiting *Imperial General Headquarters* to prepare and co-ordinate future plans. With the campaign in the Solomons and New Guinea running against the Japanese, *Imperial General Headquarters* had rejected a plan to destroy the Generalissimo's government that General Hata had proposed. Instead it had told his representative about 17 October that beginning in December 1943 the Japanese *3d, 13th, 32d, 22d, 35th, and 36th Divisions* would be sent from China to face the Americans in the Pacific, and that in the spring and summer of 1944 five more of Hata's divisions would assemble in their present occupational areas to form *Imperial General Headquarters'* general reserve. Hata, as of 1 August 1943, had 620,000 men, formed into 1 armored and 25 infantry divisions, plus 12 brigades (of five infantry battalions each). Of the 25 infantry divisions, 5 were Class A, with three battalions of artillery (36 cannon), 5 were Class B, with two battalions of artillery (24 cannon), and the remaining 15 divisions had no artillery. The projected transfers would take away 4 of Hata's Class A divisions, 1 Class B division, and 1 Class C division. This would cut deeply into Hata's strength, for the replacements would be raw troops that he would have to organize and train as units. So the mission Hata was now given probably reflected an appraisal of his current situation. He was ordered in October 1943 ". . . to maintain security in the occupied areas. Enemy air forces were to be attacked at all times in order to prevent their making raids on the Japanese mainland."

In November, Hata's liaison officers were told, by the Chief of the General Staff among others, that the Allied air force in China was disturbing Japanese sea communications and had to be neutralized or destroyed. Then came Chennault's Thanksgiving Day attack on Formosa. A staff officer of *China Expeditionary Army*, returning to his post in China 3 December 1943, told Hata that *Imperial General Headquarters* was "very disturbed" by the attack on Formosa and had begun to study the advisability of destroying the Allied airfields in east China and reopening the Canton-Hankow railway.³⁴

Imperial General Headquarters soon decided to call a halt to the current Japanese operations in China, which had been launched early in October. A few

³³ (1) A full treatment of the ELOC is in Bykofsky MS. (2) Ltr, Chennault to Wedemeyer, 6 Jul 45. WDCSA 091 China, 15 Aug 45.

³⁴ (1) Japanese Study 129, pp. 2, 11-13, 12, 17-18. (2) Ltr, Col Preston J. C. Murphy to Ward, 22 Oct 52. OCMH.

weeks before the attack on Formosa the Japanese *11th Army* had been moving across the Tung-ting Lake area toward Chang-te. Its ostensible mission was to disrupt Chinese troop concentrations in the VI and IX War Areas and to divert Chinese forces from Yunnan, but the primary objective was to seize rice. Under cover of bad weather, the *11th Army* had completed its approach while the Fourteenth Air Force was forced to remain on the ground. When the weather cleared at the end of November, fighter squadrons at Heng-yang and Ling-ling had been on constant call to support the Chinese divisions defending Chang-te. On 4 December Chang-te fell, but apart from its value as a rice center the town held no further attraction for *11th Army*. Once the VI and IX War Areas had been shaken up, the *11th Army* withdrew. *Imperial General Headquarters* had a more important mission for it and wanted the *11th* to take its place in the mass of maneuver Tokyo now decided to assemble.

As the last shots were being fired around Chang-te, the highest officers in *Imperial General Headquarters*, the *War Ministry*, and the *Naval General Staff* were watching or actively participating in far-reaching map maneuvers, bearing the code name *TORA*. *TORA* was planned to test current hypotheses on the intentions and capabilities of Japan's enemies, to suggest a strategy with which to counter American plans in the Pacific, and to examine "the merits, the planning, and the military strength" involved in taking Kweilin and Liuchow in east China. When *TORA* ended it was agreed to take the east China air bases and thereby "check" Allied air attacks from China. Plans and preparations were soon under way.³⁵

The battles around Chang-te were most significant in the Fourteenth Air Force's analysis of its position in China. Operations over Burma in 1942 convinced the Fourteenth Air Force in May that air power had kept the Japanese from crossing the Salween. It further believed that its later sweeps over Burma had so disrupted their supply system that the Japanese were unable to prepare an offensive across the Salween. However, the Japanese had not contemplated crossing the Salween. In May 1943 the Fourteenth Air Force had supported the Chinese troops along the I-chang Gorge. The Japanese had fallen back from their most advanced positions, and Chennault had claimed a decisive victory. Again, the Fourteenth Air Force's intelligence had misread the Japanese plans. Now, after Chang-te, the Fourteenth Air Force believed that it had created a successful technique for tactical air support of Gen. Hsueh Yueh's IX War Area troops. Close co-operation between the Fourteenth Air Force and General Hsueh was important because his war area guarded the northern ap-

³⁵ (1) Statement of Col Takushiro Hattori, 21 Jul 49, in *Statements of Japanese Officials in World War II*, Vol. I, pp. 370-72. OCMH. (2) *Japanese Studies* 77, 78, 129. (3) *Imperial General Headquarters Army Order* 921, 24 Jan 44 (hereafter, *IGH Army Order* --), GHQ, Far East Comd, Mil History Div, *Imperial General Headquarters Army Orders*, Vol. II. OCMH. (See Bibliographical Note.) (4) Statement of Marshal Shunroku Hata, Aug 52, in *Japanese Officers' Comments* (hereafter, *Japanese Officers' Comments*), Incl 2. OCMH. (See Bibliographical Note.)

proaches to Chennault's fields. The seeming success of combined Sino-American operations before Chang-te moved the Chinese to permit the Fourteenth Air Force to expand its radio and intelligence net within the IX War Area.³⁶

Chennault's Proposals for 1944

Chennault had been present in October 1943 when Mountbatten, Stilwell, and the Generalissimo discussed the QUADRANT decisions on breaking the blockade of China. It appeared to him that "no definite decisions had been reached with respect to the Burma campaign." Such a campaign would, he thought, make it very difficult to launch his 1944 China offensive and so he again hastened to present his case to his Army superiors before, in his opinion, the United Nations were firmly committed to the Burma campaign. Chennault also appealed to the President, telling him that it had been impossible for the Fourteenth Air Force to launch an effective air offensive in 1943. Only now were his reinforcements coming forward.³⁷

The Chennault proposals of October 1943 were basically similar to those of the previous April, but there was one interesting addition.³⁸ If the Generalissimo was prepared to contemplate an offensive by the Chinese Army against Hankow or Canton, the necessary tactical air support operations could be meshed into the over-all plan. Where the April proposals had of necessity been hastily drafted by Chennault en route to the TRIDENT Conference, those of October showed a good deal of careful preliminary staff work. It was most notable that the line of communications to the Fourteenth Air Force's fields had been carefully studied, and that detailed suggestions for its improvement were included. In April, this aspect had been omitted.

For operational purposes, Chennault divided China into eastern and western areas, on the line of the 108th meridian. Weather phases in the two areas are markedly different and influence the timing of operations. From January to June, weather is good in the west, then grows steadily worse in summer. In the east, flying weather is good from July to December. Therefore, from January to June, Chennault proposed to fly most of his missions in west China in support of the Burma campaign and in defense of the Hump airfields. From July to December he would concentrate on the goals he had so often set forth,

³⁶ (1) See *Stilwell's Mission to China*, Chs. VIII and IX. (2) See Ch. X, below. (3) Claire L. Chennault, *Way of a Fighter* (New York, 1949), pp. 256-64. (4) Japanese Study 77. (5) Chennault thought the Japanese retreat proved his contention that "existing Chinese forces with adequate air support can stop any Japanese advance which is not so great as to weaken their defense elsewhere." Ltr, Chennault to Hopkins, 27 Dec 43, Bk VII, Hopkins Papers.

³⁷ (1) For a discussion of Chennault's corresponding directly with the President, see *Stilwell's Mission to China*, Chs. IX and X. (2) Ltr, Chennault to Roosevelt, 28 Oct 43, Bk VII, Hopkins Papers. Two days later, the Chinese Army in India engaged the Japanese *18th Division*, opening the North Burma Campaign. (3) Memo, Wedemeyer for Mountbatten, 10 Nov 43, sub: Chennault Plan for Air Offensive From China. Attached is Chennault's plan, dated 17 October 1943. Folder, Chennault Air Plan, CT 39, Dr 1, KCRC.

³⁸ Chennault's April 1943 proposals are in *Stilwell's Mission to China*, Ch. IX.

destruction of Japanese air power and merchant shipping. Perhaps, in these provisions, Chennault was offering a compromise to Stilwell, in line with the promise he made in October to support Stilwell's plans.

To supply his 1944 operations, Chennault asked for:

	<i>Eastern Area</i> (Tons)	<i>Western Area</i> (Tons)
January	1900	6900
February	2100	6900
March	2300	6900
April	2700	5400
May	4500	3400
June	6200	2700

In addition, Chennault wanted a reserve of 20,000 tons accumulated in east China before his operations opened up in full scale, which was to be in July. To acquire these supplies, Hump tonnage would have to average 12,000 tons in the first six months of 1944, and the Fourteenth Air Force receive every pound of it. The plan stressed the importance of insuring delivery of supplies to the east China bases and gave a carefully worked out plan to insure this. Improvement of the eastern line of communications was estimated to require an initial 4,000 tons over the Hump in January 1944 plus 500 tons a month for the rest of the year. For aircraft, Chennault wanted by fall of 1944 to have 6 fighter groups, 2 medium bomber groups, and 3 heavy bomber groups.³⁹

Chennault dismissed the possibility of a Japanese ground attack on his air bases:

6. Previous proposals for a China Air Offensive have been objected to, on the grounds that "in CHINA the Japanese can go anywhere and take any objective they want," and can therefore capture and destroy our airbases. This theory is not founded on fact, for the following reasons:

A. The proponents of the theory think exclusively in terms of a time when the Japanese domination of the air was rarely challenged by a single Chinese aircraft. In the event that plans for a China Air Offensive are approved, the Allied armies will have air supremacy on their side. Chinese troops have shown that with the encouragement of even a modicum of air support, they are far better able to withstand the Japanese. It may be presumed that Japanese troops, suddenly confronted with the transfer of air supremacy to their enemies, will also fight less well.

B. The proponents of the theory also forget that in the whole course of the war in CHINA, the Japanese Armies have never successfully penetrated more than 100 miles beyond their major supply lines. In the CHEKIANG campaign in the winter [*sic*] of 1942, air bases were in fact captured. But the campaign was long, employed very considerable forces, and was fought by the Japanese with the double advantage of complete domination of the air and proximity to their supplies. Weakness of enemy supply enabled unaided Chinese troops, fighting without air support, to frustrate no less than five attempts to capture the line of railroad which formerly connected CANTON and HANKOW. Two of these attempts were made from the South and three from the North; all were in substantial and at least two were in great force.

³⁹ (1) *Stilwell's Mission to China*, Ch. X. (2) Plan cited n. 37(3).

C. Establishment of air supremacy by a China Air Offensive will further increase the Japanese weakness of supply. More than 95 per cent of the supplies of the Japanese Armies in China from the YANGTZE RIVER region Southward are carried inland on small, slow commonly unarmed river craft. As an experiment, traffic on the YANGTZE RIVER has been almost totally interrupted for a period of a week with a force numbering not more than two score aircraft. With sufficient forces, adequately supplied, this interruption can be consistently maintained, on other waterways as easily as on the YANGTZE. The enemy has no practicable substitute supply lines for operations on any scale.

Thus is it seen that a major enemy effort, both on the ground and in the air, would be necessary to attempt to interrupt a China based Air Offensive. Ships carrying personnel and equipment for such an effort into CHINA would be exposed to our land based bombardment. And to make such an effort, the Japanese would be forced to abandon essential commitments elsewhere.⁴⁰

There were several mentions in the plan of possible ground operations by the Chinese to reoccupy portions of China. It was suggested that in the last six months of 1944 support might be given to Chinese troops in operations against the Canton-Hong Kong and I-chang-Hankow-Nanchang areas. After remarking tersely that "adequate Chinese ground forces must of course be maintained in the airbase areas" the plan went on to state that in the last half of 1944 "enemy garrisons in CHINA . . . will be gravely weakened" by air attacks on Japanese supply lines in China. If the Generalissimo thought Chinese ground forces "available" the Japanese garrisons in China might be attacked. If any such operations were to be undertaken, then the Chinese should be given "certain key items of equipment which the Chinese Ground Forces now lack."⁴¹

No document has been found to give Stilwell's reactions to Chennault's October 1943 proposals. However, at the time he summarized his impressions of the "net worth" of Chennault's 1943 efforts as "a few Jap planes knocked down [but] Japs are still in China."⁴²

Appraising the plan for Admiral Mountbatten, Maj. Gen. Albert C. Wedemeyer, as SEAC's deputy chief of staff, commented that it was "essentially the same as one previously submitted by General Chennault several months ago." Wedemeyer noted that the Chennault October 1943 proposals did not allot any Hump tonnage for equipment of the Chinese armies that were to protect the east China air bases. Wedemeyer believed that Chennault greatly underestimated the tonnage he would need for his operations and that his actual requirements were in excess of the "Air Transport Command capacity with resources now in sight." In his conclusions, Wedemeyer advised Mountbatten that a "practicable" increase of the Fourteenth Air Force was highly desirable and should be supported after it had been weighed in connection with other demands. He warned that "the ASSAM line of communications and the Air Transport Command cannot support the air force visualized in the Chennault

⁴⁰ Plan cited n. 37(3).

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² *Stilwell's Mission to China*, p. 384.

plan and concurrently supplies for the rehabilitation of Chinese internal lines of communication and for the Chinese ground forces." In Wedemeyer's opinion, the fastest way to begin intensive air operations in China was to open a "land and/or sea route" to the Chinese airfields.⁴³

What must be taken as the CBI Theater decision on Chennault's October 1943 proposals was the response of General Stratemeyer's headquarters, Army Air Forces, India-Burma Sector, on 16 November 1943. Though he liked the careful phrasing of Chennault's plan, Stratemeyer in effect rejected it with the remark that "we are not yet in a position logistically to support this plan at *this time* [Stratemeyer's italics] from a stores or a POL [petrol, oil, lubricants] standpoint." Stratemeyer raised two points which he believed would determine the scope of Chennault's operations in 1944. Aware that Chennault's Hump priority expired 31 October, Stratemeyer told the Fourteenth Air Force commander that he could not have the Hump tonnages he wanted, and that Stilwell was contemplating a division of Hump tonnage that would provide more for the Chinese Army. Stratemeyer's second point reflected the implications of bringing the B-29's to CBI, and practically assigned second priority in air operations to the Fourteenth Air Force.

The President has indicated that the TWILIGHT plan will be carried out and has cabled Chiang Kai-shek to give it his fullest support. It is believed, therefore, that the greatest good for the War effort could be obtained if our entire resources were thrown in gear to supplement the TWILIGHT plan (including increased weather service in China) and, in addition, keep your operations rate in China against enemy shipping, defense of the air terminals and support of the Chinese ground forces at the highest rate possible under these logistical restrictions.⁴⁴

Stilwell in September had wanted to readjust Hump priorities to give Chennault a flat 40 percent of Hump deliveries but Marshall had warned him to beware of the political implications of such an act.⁴⁵ Now, a few weeks later, Stratemeyer signaled the end of Chennault's priorities by merely stating that Stilwell "desires" to readjust Hump priorities without explaining whether this was an order of the theater commander or had War Department sanction.⁴⁶ The records available reveal no protest from Chennault or attempt to have Stratemeyer overruled by higher authority. There had been significant changes in the identity and status of those who supported Chennault's views, and the airman may have considered that without support from T. V. Soong and Madame Chiang Kai-shek he could not hope to repeat the coup of the TRIDENT Conference.⁴⁷

⁴³ Memo cited n. 37(3).

⁴⁴ Memo, Stratemeyer for Chennault, 16 Nov 43, sub: Operational Plan for Air Offensive in China, 1 Jan-31 Dec 44. Ltr cited n. 33(2), App. II, Item 21.

⁴⁵ (1) CM-IN 17227, Stilwell to Marshall, 24 Sep 43. (2) CM-OUT 12455, Marshall to Stilwell, 27 Sep 43.

⁴⁶ Memo cited n. 44.

⁴⁷ *Stilwell's Mission to China*, Ch. X.

Building an East China Army

No less than Chennault, Stilwell had a program for east China, and their competing claims on Hump tonnage did much to explain the acrimony between the two men. Like Chennault's, Stilwell's program was begun in 1942, to carry out his War Department orders to improve the combat efficiency of the Chinese Army. As part of his over-all program to rebuild the Chinese Army, Stilwell in early 1943 suggested to the Generalissimo that thirty reorganized and re-equipped Chinese divisions should be placed in east China. Stilwell received War Department support for the project, and lend-lease for the thirty divisions in east China (the "Second Thirty" they were sometimes called to distinguish them from the "First Thirty" of the Thirty Division Program or the Y-Force in Yunnan plus the Chinese Army in India). But the Chinese waited many months, in fact until after the QUADRANT Conference (August 1943), before they would consider the project.⁴⁸

On 1 September, General Ho, the Chinese Army's Chief of Staff, startled Stilwell by proposing a tentative list of forty-five divisions, thinly spread from the Yellow River to the Indochinese border, from which a "C-Force" (later called ZEBRA Force) could be equipped, trained, and then shaped into a useful force. Stilwell was jubilant, and wrote: "VICTORY! That commits them to the training scheme. Subject to change, of course, but what a struggle that has been. . . . If the Japs let us alone, we may put it over!" Stilwell saw the missions of ZEBRA Force as: (1) to defend the east China airfields; (2) to drive the Japanese from the Yangtze valley; (3) to co-operate in any Allied plans to land on the China coast.⁴⁹

Attempts to create the ZEBRA Force quickly revealed basic differences between the Chinese and American approaches to the problem of creating a force in east China. The Americans wanted to bring the chosen divisions up to strength, weed out incompetent officers, train the soldiers, and then issue shining new lend-lease equipment. The Chinese wanted to receive the equipment, then talk about training and reorganization. To Stilwell, this attitude toward ZEBRA Force was exactly like that the Chinese had taken toward the Yunnan divisions or Y-Force. Nevertheless, after the Generalissimo appeared more interested in Army reform and more co-operative in October 1943, Stilwell was able to send Brig. Gen. Thomas S. Arms, of the Y-Force Infantry Training Center, to establish a similar training center at Kweilin in east China. To assist in training and liaison, 2,213 officers and enlisted men were sent to CBI.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ *Stilwell's Mission to China*, Chs. VII and X.

⁴⁹ (1) Z-Force Order of Battle, 30 Aug 43. AG (Z-FOS) 381, KCRC. (2) Theodore H. White, ed., *The Stilwell Papers* (New York: William Sloane Associates, Inc., 1948), p. 219. (3) CM-IN 6110, Stilwell to Marshall, 2 Sep 43. (4) CM-IN 2881, Stilwell to Marshall, 5 Nov 43.

⁵⁰ (1) History of Z-FOS, 1 Jan-31 Oct 1944. OCMH. (2) Ltr, Stilwell to Arms, 8 Nov 43, sub: Activation of ITC at Kweilin. AG (Z-FOS) 320.2, KCRC. (3) History of India-Burma Theater, 1944-1945, I, 55. OCMH.



THE KWEILIN INFANTRY TRAINING CENTER

At the time, Stilwell asked the War Department to review its 8 July 1943 program for Chinese lend-lease (as distinct from the 1944 supply program). The July program assigned lend-lease to the First Thirty, but only 10 percent of the equipment needed by the ZEBRA Force, which token shipments were to be used for instructional purposes. Stilwell wanted a firm War Department commitment to arm the ZEBRA Force in full. Faced with this request, the War Department studied it in the light of the QUADRANT decisions, the limitations on the capacity of the Assam line of communications and the Hump airlift, and the emerging strategic concepts for the conduct of the war against Japan, which were beginning to set a lower value on China's co-operation. After studying the problem, the War Department decided that it would review its policy in the light of the degree of co-operation Stilwell might in the future receive from the Chinese, and reaffirmed its policy of confining its logistical support of ZEBRA Force to the 10 percent figure.⁵¹

In November and December 1943 the Chinese gave evidence of being genuinely interested in the ZEBRA Force project. The Kweilin Infantry Training Center was opened, with the Generalissimo and Gen. Pai Chung-hsi of the National Military Council as its honorary commanders. The instruction,

⁵¹ Memo for record, 30 Oct 43; Memo, Hull for ACoS, G-4, WDGS, 15 Nov 43, sub: Establishment of Policy of Supply of Combat Type of Lend-Lease Materials to China. OPD 400 CTO, A47-30.

which followed a course approved by the Chinese, was carried on by 107 U.S. officers and 71 enlisted men. Several buildings were turned over to the training center by the Chinese, and the Americans contracted for many more.

Though infantry and artillery training was stressed, engineering, veterinary, medical, and signal courses were offered. Training equipment, initially flown from Kunming, was furnished by the U.S. Army. The infantry course lasted six weeks, of which the first three stressed weapons instruction and target practice. The last half of the course was devoted to tactics, taking the individual officer progressively to the regimental level. Eighty-nine interpreters gave invaluable aid. The student officers were placed in training regiments, each with twelve companies of 100 students per company.

After the first infantry class graduated on 15 December 1943, General Arms estimated that by 1 May 1944, 4,800 infantry officers and 2,730 officers and men from other arms and services would have graduated. Manifestly, this figure would depend upon the continued willingness of the Chinese to send students to the training center, a willingness that might not survive the War Department decision to keep equipment for ZEBRA Force at the 10 percent level.⁵²

The Allied Command Structure in North Burma

Improvements in the Assam line of communications, the decision to place a force of B-29's in CBI, and attempts to strengthen the Allied position in east China, were, as it developed, both background and accompaniment to the premature and unscheduled opening of combat in north Burma. Certainly, the line of communications had to be renovated before the Allies could be sure of themselves, while the presence of the B-29's affected the course of things in China, but the principal event in fall 1943 was the opening of the North Burma Campaign. What had been contemplated were roughly simultaneous attacks from India and China into Burma but this was not to be.

The Allied forces in north Burma operated under a very complicated system of command. North Burma was within SEAC's boundaries, and therefore the chain of command began with the Supreme Allied Commander, Admiral Mountbatten. As acting Deputy Supreme Allied Commander, Stilwell was second man in SEAC, but as Commanding General, Chinese Army in India, he commanded a pair of Chinese divisions which had to be fitted into the organization. Normally, as a corps commander Stilwell would have been in the chain of command which ran from Admiral Mountbatten to Gen. Sir George Giffard (General Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Eleventh Army Group) to General Slim (General Officer Commanding, Fourteenth Army) to Stilwell. (*See Chart 1.*) Though Stilwell's initial reaction to Mountbatten was very favorable, he had no confidence in General Giffard and refused to occupy any place in the command structure that might permit Giffard to exercise control over his opera-

⁵² (1) History cited n. 50(1). (2) Z-Force Journal. KCRC.

tions. Instead, Stilwell offered to serve as a corps commander under General Slim, for whom he had the greatest faith and respect.

Stilwell's service under Slim was to continue until Stilwell's forces reached the Kamaing area, at which point he was to regain independence of action. It was assumed that when Stilwell's Chinese from Ledo reached Kamaing they would be near a juncture with Chinese troops from Yunnan Province. On joining, the two Chinese forces would be under Stilwell, who in turn would be directly under Mountbatten with no intervening echelons of command.

Informed a few weeks later of Stilwell's agreeing to forego rank and serve under a junior he admired, General Marshall offered an interesting appraisal of Stilwell on the eve of the latter's greatest triumphs as a field commander. Marshall wrote Mountbatten:

You will find, if you get below the surface, that he wants merely to get things done without delays and will ignore considerations of his own personal prestige or position so long as drive and imagination are being given to plans, preparations and operations.

Frankly, I have found him uniformly through long years of personal command relations, irritating and intolerant of slow motion, excessive caution, and cut-and-dried procedure. On the other hand, he will provide tremendous energy, courage and unlimited ingenuity and imagination to any aggressive proposals or operations. His mind is far more alert than almost any of our generals and his training and understanding are on an unusually high level. Impatience with conservatism and slow motion is his weakness—but a damned good one in this emergency.⁵³

Stilwell's command relation to the Generalissimo in north Burma was obscure. In 1942 the Generalissimo's attitude had suggested that Stilwell would command the Chinese Army in India only until operations began. By September 1943 the most probable Chinese commander was Lt. Gen. Chen Tung-kuo, commanding the New First Army headquarters, of whom a memorandum in Stilwell's personal file stated: "This officer may be capable, but he has not yet demonstrated the fact . . . no concern about the basic needs of training, which he does not understand. He is not interested to learn from the bottom up. . . . As a matter of fact, there is no need whatever for *any* army staff, as long as the Chih Hui Pu exists. . . ." ⁵⁴ The Chinese 38th, 22d, and 30th Divisions were under the New First Army, but since that headquarters was regarded as superfluous by the Americans, Stilwell sought to have it removed from the scene. (*Chart 3*)

The headquarters of the Chinese Army in India was potentially Stilwell's field headquarters, though Brig. Gen. Haydon L. Boatner, chief of staff and deputy commander of the Chinese Army in India, was in charge. The staff was

⁵³ (1) Opn Instr 1, Eleventh Army Group to Comdr, Fourteenth Army, sub: Opns in Burma, 1943-44. SEAC Info Bk, OCMH. (2) Rad CHC 1111, Stilwell to Maj Gen Daniel I. Sultan, 27 May 44; Rad RE 89, Sultan to Stilwell, 15 Jan 44. Items 188, 17, Bk 6A, JWS Personal File. (3) Ltr, Mountbatten to Marshall, 16 Jan 44; Quotation in Ltr, Marshall to Mountbatten, 26 Jan 44. Case 297, OPD 381 Security, A47-30.

⁵⁴ Memo [Brig Gen Haydon L. Boatner?], 24 Sep 43, sub: Personnel. Stilwell Numbered File [SNF] 16. (See Bibliographical Note.)

American, but the headquarters was regarded legally and diplomatically as Chinese. All orders to Chinese units initially went on Chih Hui Pu letterheads, validated by Stilwell's chop at the bottom as commanding general. When the 38th Division moved up to the Ledo area in April 1943, Chih Hui Pu split into a forward and rear echelon. The Forward Echelon was under General Boatner, who relieved General Wheeler and the Services of Supply (SOS) of responsibility for the forward area. Brig. Gen. William E. Bergin took charge of the Rear Echelon.⁵⁵

Before General Boatner could play his part in the forthcoming campaign, he had to survive a Chinese attempt in September to remove him, and a suggestion that Lt. Gen. Sun Li-jen, commanding the Chinese 38th Division, have a free hand in the approaching operations. Whatever the abstract merit of having General Sun—one of the few Allied commanders to emerge from the First Burma Campaign with enhanced reputation—practically in command of the North Burma Campaign, General Sun's hint that he should take over was cast in a form that made it unacceptable. Sun's letter to Stilwell took so dismal a view of the campaign, referred with such gloomy relish to the Japanese strength and the difficulties of the terrain, as to suggest he approached the fight with extreme reluctance. Stilwell could hardly have entrusted the campaign to a man who had gone on record as having very little faith in it. But Sun had the backing of the Generalissimo, at least for Sun's wish that Boatner go, and the Generalissimo ordered Stilwell to relieve Boatner. Stilwell replied that the commander's deputy, Boatner, must be able to command both the Chinese and the U.S. service troops who would be supporting the drive. Stilwell knew of no Chinese officer able to fill that role. If the Generalissimo did, let the officer be named and a simple, practical test be given to determine the question. The issue was dropped and Boatner kept his post.⁵⁶

The American personnel of Chih Hui Pu were concurrently 5303d Headquarters and Headquarters Company (Provisional) Combat Troops. They functioned as an American headquarters for the American service and medical units in the Chinese Army, which had few such units.⁵⁷ As American, British, and Indian combat and service units entered north Burma, they were attached or assigned to the 5303d and its successor headquarters, with the exception of Stilwell's regiment of U.S. jungle-trained infantry (code name GALAHAD) which on arrival was attached to the Chinese Army in India and later to the American headquarters.⁵⁸ There was no boundary between the communications and the

⁵⁵ (1) *Ramgarh: Now It Can Be Told* (Ranchi, India, 1945), p. 14. (2) Ltr, Stilwell to Boatner and Wheeler, 6 Apr 43. Item 214, Bk 3, JWS Personal File.

⁵⁶ (1) *Stilwell's Mission to China*, Ch. X. (2) Ltr, Sun to Stilwell, 17 Aug 43, quoted in Dr. Ho Yung-chi, *The Big Circle* (New York: The Exposition Press, 1948), p. 64. (3) Memo, Stilwell for Generalissimo, 27 Sep 43, Item 233, Bk 3, JWS Personal File. (4) Rad BURSAM OT-11, Stilwell to Boatner, 21 Sep 43. Item 1027, Bk 4, JWS Personal File. Stilwell suggests that the whole thing is an attempt to remove him from the campaign via Boatner.

⁵⁷ *Ramgarh: Now It Can Be Told*.

⁵⁸ (1) GOs 11, 12, 14, Hq Rr Ech USAF CBI, 29 Jan, 5 Feb 44. (2) GO 74, Hq USAF CBI, 17 Jul 44.

combat zones, with the result that SOS in the forward zone was duplicating the work of the combat troops in supporting the Chinese.⁵⁹ An important member of Chih Hui Pu was Capt. C. E. Darlington, who before the war had been district commissioner of the Hukawng Valley for the Government of Burma. Darlington was completely familiar with that section of north Burma, had the loyalty and respect of the Kachin tribesmen who inhabited it, and was an un-failing source of advice and information.⁶⁰

The Chinese Forces

The Chinese 38th and 22d Divisions were commanded by General Sun and Lt. Gen. Liao Yao-hsiang respectively. General Sun, a graduate of the Virginia Military Institute, was appraised as: "A good field soldier, courageous and determined. Argumentative, insistent on doing things his way; but much concerned over the well-being of his unit. A capable commander." General Liao, a graduate of St. Cyr in France, was judged: "A good field soldier, courageous and determined. He has faithfully complied with all training directives, and as a result his division is now fully as good as the 38th, which had a long start ahead of him. A capable commander."⁶¹

When the 22d and 38th completed their training at Ramgarh, the 38th numbered 946 officers and 11,388 enlisted men, and the 22d, 857 officers and 10,439 men. (See *Chart 3.*) With service and army troops, the Chinese Army in India totaled 2,626 officers and 29,667 enlisted men. Replacements were provided and the two divisions were actually slightly larger at the end of 1943. The army and service troops included an "excellent" antiaircraft battalion, a motor regiment which worked in the Ledo area, an engineer regiment which built most of the Shingbwiang airstrip, an animal transport regiment, and two porter units to carry stretcher cases.⁶²

The work horse of the campaign was the infantry regiment, with 129 officers and 2,642 enlisted men at Table of Organization (T/O) strength. It had three battalions, each with three rifle companies and one machine gun company. The battalion had 27 Bren guns, 51 submachine guns, and 18 60-mm. mortars.⁶³ The machine gun company had 8 heavy .30-caliber machine guns. In the regiment for fire support were a mortar company with 12 81-mm. mortars and an antitank company with 8 37-mm. antitank pieces. There were two trans-

⁵⁹ Ltr, Hq 5303d (Prov) Combat Trs to CG, Fwd Ech USAF CBI, 2 Dec 43, sub: Responsibility of Comd and Opns Within Combat Zone. AG (NCAC) 323.3, NCAC Files, KCRC.

⁶⁰ Wkly G-2 Rpt, App., Hq 5303d Combat Trs; Ltr, Maj J. W. Leedham, Hq Combat Trs. NCAC Files, KCRC.

⁶¹ Memo cited n. 54.

⁶² (1) Strength Rpt, G-1, Per Rpt, Hq Chih Hui Pu, 20 Jan 44. NCAC Files, KCRC. (2) Opn Rpt, 22d Div (Chinese), 8 Jan 44. ALBACORE Hist File, KCRC.

⁶³ Thanks to the initiative of Dr. Lauchlin Currie, administrative assistant to President Roosevelt, and to the generosity of Canada, the Chinese received from Canadian Mutual Aid programs Bren guns, Boys antitank rifles, Bren gun carriers, and other British-type ordnance. See *Stilwell's Mission to China*, Ch. I.

portation companies (one a pack transport), a signal platoon, a special service platoon, and medical and veterinary personnel. There were fourteen radios and plenty of wire equipment.⁶⁴ Division artillery was on the modest side because of terrain conditions and was attached to regiments as the situation required. As the campaign progressed, the demand for artillery support grew. As a result, by June 1944, one battery of 155-mm. howitzers and one of 105-mm. howitzers were firing in general support. Support by medium and fighter bombers was available on an increasing scale. Allied air superiority in north Burma was complete.

Because of the extremely difficult nature of the terrain in north Burma, extensive reliance was necessarily placed on animal transport, such as mules, horses, and Indian ponies. Each division had about 1,000 animals. Forage for the animals was regularly supplied by air.⁶⁵

A solution to the replacement problem had been arranged in that the Chinese Government had promised to supply replacements; the success of Stilwell in holding the Chinese to the promise would have a great deal to do with the progress of the campaign. Stilwell's staff believed that much of what they took to be the undue caution of Chinese commanders in the conduct of operations arose from the lack of a functioning replacement system. The Americans believed that the Chinese commander whose force took casualties in battle suffered a proportionate loss of power and influence. Consequently, the Chinese appeared reluctant to embark on combat operations. A steady flow of replacements from China would do a great deal to ensure aggressiveness by Sun and Liao.⁶⁶

To exercise command, Stilwell drew on his 1942 experiences and organized an American liaison net down to and including the Chinese battalions. Each Chinese division had a small staff of U.S. advisers, including supply, signal, medical, motor, and veterinary officers, under a colonel, who kept in touch with Chih Hui Pu through a division radio platoon and three radio teams. Chinese regiments had a liaison officer of field grade, with radio team; each battalion had a major or senior captain with radio team.

It speaks well for both Americans and Chinese that over a period of months a *modus vivendi* was established, for liaison personnel were in a delicate situation. They had no powers of command, and their attempts at persuasion and advice often jarred Chinese notions of face. Further, they were working with good Chinese troops under commanders who had had experience of fighting in Burma. It often must have been hard for young Americans on their first campaign to offer suggestions to seasoned veterans. Interpretation of Chih Hui Pu's

⁶⁴ T/O&E, Chinese Inf Regt, 16 Mar 43. AG (NCAC) 320.3, KCRC.

⁶⁵ (1) G-3 Rpt, Chih Hui Pu, 27 Jun 44. KCRC. (2) Capt. Edward Fisher, History of the Northern Combat Area Command (NCAC), CBI Theater and IB Theater, MS (hereafter NCAC History), App. 6, History of Air Dropping. OCMH.

⁶⁶ (1) Ltr, Col Hill to Ward, 2 Sep 52. (2) For examples of Stilwell's efforts to obtain replacements, see Items 1601, 1619, Bk 5, JWS Personal File.

orders was a source of potential difficulty, not only interpretation in the narrow sense but in that of conveying the spirit as well. Important clauses, in translation from English to Chinese, were always reinforced with parallel constructions, so that one clause at least might be understood. Though no worse than what other Americans faced in the Southwest Pacific and a little better than what the Chinese bore with cheerful fortitude, conditions in the field for the liaison personnel were still hard and were a strain on those Americans who bore them. There was lacking the sense of fraternity with and close support by one's own people, supplies sometimes vanished, and hostile Chinese officers could make life most unpleasant.⁶⁷

The American Force

For the projected Burma operations, the War Department had at last supplied some U.S. infantry troops, though originally they were not intended to operate under Stilwell's command, and in number were far from the corps of which Stilwell had always dreamed. On 1 September 1943 General Marshall had directed shipment of about 3,000 volunteers to Asia to form three long-range penetration groups on the model of those commanded by Brigadier Orde Charles Wingate. The project was given the code name GALAHAD. Organization of GALAHAD began on 5 September and was complete on 20 September. Given the designation of 5307th Composite Unit (Provisional), the unit was formed of volunteers from the continental United States, the 33d Infantry Regiment on Trinidad, British West Indies, and from the Southwest Pacific.

The War Department did not think that GALAHAD could be restored after action by receiving replacements. The War Department told theater headquarters its conception was that the unit was provided for one major mission of three months' duration, whose close might find the unit so exhausted and depleted that its survivors would require three months' hospitalization and rest. Through rumor, this idea was conveyed to GALAHAD personnel in the somewhat different form that after three months' combat duty they would be relieved.⁶⁸

After disembarking at Bombay between 29 and 31 October 1943, GALAHAD passed under SEAC's operational control, and SEAC began to train the men according to Wingate's doctrines. This arrangement caused some protest from CBI Theater staff officers, who thought it might be taken as an admission that

⁶⁷ (1) History of CBI, Sec. II, Ch. I, pp. 8-11. (2) Ltr, Lt Col Trevor N. Dupuy to Ward, 12 Sep 52. OCMH. (3) Records of incidents involving Chinese and Americans are to be found in NCAC Files, KCRC.

⁶⁸ (1) Memo, Marshall for Dill, 26 Sep 43. WDOSA (China), A45-466. (2) Rad WAR 3495, Marshall to Stilwell, 2 Oct 43. Item 1056, Bk 4, JWS Personal File. (3) Ltr, Office IG CBI to CG USAF CBI, 12 Jul 44, sub: Investigation Re 5307th Prov Unit. AG 333, NCAC Files, KCRC. (4) Min, JCS 107th Mtg, 18 Aug 43, Item 2. (5) Ltr, with Incl, Col Charles N. Hunter to Ward, 14 Aug 51. OCMH. Colonel Hunter's personal correspondence file was attached to his letter. (6) Notes by Hunter on draft MS. (Hereafter, Hunter Notes.) OCMH. (7) Ltr, Lt Col George A. McGee, Jr., to Ward, 1 Sep 51. OCMH. (8) Notes by McGee on draft MS. OCMH.

Americans did not know jungle fighting. But General Marshall's answer to this and other arguments of like tenor was the simple statement that all hands would have to eat some crow if Japan was to be beaten.⁶⁹ It may be surmised that the Chief of Staff believed no coalition could endure if one partner always prevailed.

That GALAHAD was under SEAC's operational control, rather than under CBI Theater directly, caused administrative difficulties, for there was no prior decision as to which headquarters would exercise administrative responsibilities. Nor was GALAHAD even activated as a unit until several months had passed. Initially, OPD had ordered Lt. Col. Charles N. Hunter, as "Commanding Officer all Casual Detachments, shipment 1688," to prepare GALAHAD's personnel for their future duties.⁷⁰ On 13 November CBI Theater headquarters ordered Col. Francis G. Brink to be "officer-in-charge of training, GALAHAD project." Brink was ordered to deal directly with Rear Echelon headquarters at New Delhi on "all matters pertaining to administration and supply."⁷¹ But this letter did not activate the unit nor did it make Brink commanding officer. As best he could under those uncertain conditions, Hunter discharged the duties of commanding officer, while Brink and he trained the men under Wingate's general supervision. As it developed, circumstances permitted two months in which to weld the GALAHAD volunteers into a homogeneous force.

In October, theater headquarters listed a block of numbers from which a unit designation might be taken. Finally, in late December, Hunter cut the administrative tangle by activating the 5307th Regiment (Provisional), using one of the block of numbers supplied by CBI Theater headquarters.⁷²

As the unit took shape in India, it comprised three battalions, the 1st, commanded by Lt. Col. William L. Osborne, the 2d, by Lt. Col. George A. McGee, Jr., and the 3d, by Lt. Col. Charles E. Beach. Each battalion was broken down into two combat teams of 16 officers and 456 enlisted men. The combat team had a rifle company of three rifle platoons and a heavy weapons section, a heavy weapons platoon to support the rifle company, a pioneer and demolition platoon, a reconnaissance platoon (I & R platoon), and a medical detachment. The combat team had 306 M1 rifles, 52 submachine guns, 86 carbines, 4 81-mm. mortars, 4 60-mm. mortars, 2 heavy machine guns, 2 light machine guns, and 3 2.56-inch rocket launchers.

Pack transport was provided for mobility in jungle and over rough terrain. GALAHAD began its campaign with an animal strength of 700.⁷³

⁶⁹ Rad AMMDEL 1850, Ferris to Stilwell, 20 Oct 43; Rad WAR 3837, Marshall to Stilwell, Ferris, and Wedemeyer, 13 Nov 43. Items 1097, 1257, Bk 4, JWS Personal File.

⁷⁰ Ltr, Gen Hull to Hunter, 10 Sep 43, sub: Ltr of Instr. OPD 370.5 CTO (10 Sep 43), A47-30.

⁷¹ Ltr, Hq Rr Ech USAF CBI to Brink, 13 Nov 43, sub: Outline of Duties. Correspondence file cited n. 68(5).

⁷² History of CBI, Sec. II, Ch. XIV, GALAHAD, pp. 5-7. (Hereafter this section of History of CBI will be cited as GALAHAD.)

⁷³ GALAHAD, p. 8.

The ultimate source of GALAHAD's strategic mobility, its contemplated ability to operate against the flanks and rear of the Japanese, was to be air supply. So that there might be the highest degree of integration and co-ordination, the unit had its own air supply section under Maj. Edward T. Hancock. Its duties were to include preplanning airdrops, ready response to requisitions from the field, packaging supplies in a manner to permit the safest delivery and quickest use, and accurate and speedy delivery of supplies to the point prearranged.⁷⁴

There was a certain amount of debate on the proper use of long-range penetration groups. At the Quebec Conference, General Brooke, Chief of the Imperial General Staff, had expressed the thought that the long-range penetration groups should be worked in close co-operation with the units in contact with the principal Japanese forces, rather than for dramatic penetrations deep into Burma. There was some comment that the long-range penetration groups were really wasted in milling about the interior of Burma, that their proper use, given the circumstances of jungle terrain and air supply, was for short envelopments.⁷⁵ As events proved, this was Stilwell's idea too. But what use Stilwell might make of GALAHAD was still in the future, in October and November 1943, and under Brink's and Hunter's guidance GALAHAD was busy rounding itself into shape for the events to come.

The Kachin Rangers

Most powerful of the Burman peoples in the path of the projected North Burma Campaign were the Kachins. They are a great fighting stock who have cut their way into Burma from the mountains to the north. Expert woodsmen, and uncannily adept at invoking the nats, or minor deities, of the surrounding hills, the Kachins reminded some of those Americans who worked with them of the American Indian in his greatest days. They had a trait that sometimes amused and sometimes touched the Americans who sought to enlist them against the Japanese: their culture did not recognize deceit in personal relations. "The Japanese have sent me to spy on you," said the Kachin as he entered the camp. "Please, how do I begin?" The Kachins' potentialities as scouts, guides, and irregulars were obvious, and so Detachment 101 of the Office of Strategic Services was organized in 1942. The force thus formed was known as the Kachin Rangers.

Detachment 101 performed a variety of missions, using a mixed personnel of Kachins, Burmese, and Americans. An intelligence net was set up in the Japanese communications zone in north Burma. Guerrilla forces were organized around a cadre of trained Americans and Kachins to attack Japanese lines of communications, working parties, and patrols, and to identify targets for Eastern Air Command.

⁷⁴ GALAHAD, p. 12n, and App. 3.

⁷⁵ Min, CCS 107th Mtg, 14 Aug 43.



A SQUAD OF KACHIN RANGERS *prepares for inspection.*

Late in 1942 a training school for Detachment 101 was organized at Nazira, Assam, under Capt. William R. Peers. By the middle of 1943, the school was able to accommodate 150 students. The training included techniques of espionage and counterespionage, communications, weapons, woodcraft, and Japanese organizations, methods, and order of battle.

After being trained, Burmese and Kachin agents and U.S. officers were flown into north Burma behind the Japanese lines, where they proceeded to recruit, train, and equip bands of Kachin warriors. Silver rupees, cloth, raw opium, and medicines were used as payment. When the time for opening the campaign drew near, Detachment 101 had an intelligence net established behind the Japanese lines, had numerous parties of armed and warlike Kachins totaling several hundred, and was steadily expanding its operations.⁷⁶

The Battleground

Separated from India, China, and Tibet by an inverted U-shaped bend of great mountains, the Himalayas and their giant spurs, north Burma is divided

⁷⁶ (1) Intervs with Lt Col William R. Peers and Capt James L. Tilly. OCMH. (2) NCAC History, App. 8, Brief Sketch of Detachment 101 in the NCAC Campaign.

by the Kumon Range into two compartments.⁷⁷ (*Map 2*) West of the Kumon Range, the headwaters of the mighty Chindwin River, flowing north, carved out the Hukawng Valley. Directly south of the Hukawng Valley is the ridge of Jambu Bum, which separates the watershed of the Chindwin from that of the Irrawaddy, Burma's greatest river. South of Jambu Bum lies the long narrow Mogaung River valley, a natural avenue of approach to the great valley of the Irrawaddy, which to its inhabitants is Burma proper. East of the Kumon Range a tributary stream of the Irrawaddy points a long slim finger north from Myitkyina to the Himalayas; at the head of this valley is Fort Hertz, whose airstrip and garrison were the last Allied foothold in Burma in 1942 and which had been held by the Allies ever since.

On the western mountain slopes of Burma are tropical rain forests. In the Hukawng Valley proper the trees are smaller than the mountain giants, with thick, hobbling underbrush about their feet. The occasional clearings more likely than not were filled with elephant or *kunai* grass, tall as a man, and with an edge like a samurai sword. Crossing bamboo clumps often involved cutting a tunnelloike path through the rank growth. The bush was not the tropical forest of legend, with rich and exotic fruit growing in profusion. Little to eat could be found, while the local people raised only enough rice for their own needs.

The winter in north Burma is decidedly chill and a distinct ground mist often cuts visibility sharply. Noontime is pleasant; then the night air brings cold winds with it. The monsoon can come any time after April, and with it, floods. The dry-weather road running from north to south down the Hukawng and Mogaung valleys has several stretches which are submerged during the rains. After February the temperature begins to rise. March is hot and humid, and the weather grows progressively worse until the monsoon breaks, usually in late May or early June.

The place names on the map of north Burma might signify as many as a hundred bamboo huts, surrounded by a stockade, or might be just a clearing in the jungle, like Inkangahtawng, scene of a sharp engagement in the campaign. Myitkyina, the metropolis, had about 8,000 people.

Insect life of a most unpleasant sort is abundant in north Burma. Three varieties of leeches lie in wait for their warm-blooded victims, animal and human. Some drop from trees when their prey passes below; others, on the trailside vegetation, brush off on skin or clothing. There are small black flies whose bite is poison, and clouds of buffalo flies that can penetrate any net. The ubiquitous malaria-bearing *Anopheles* mosquito lies in wait, and in the grassy clearings lurks a deadly variety of typhus, at that time largely unknown to scientist and soldier alike.

⁷⁷ This section is based on *Merrill's Marauders* (Washington, 1945). This popular account is one of the AMERICAN FORCES IN ACTION series originally prepared for distribution in hospitals.

Planning the North Burma Campaign

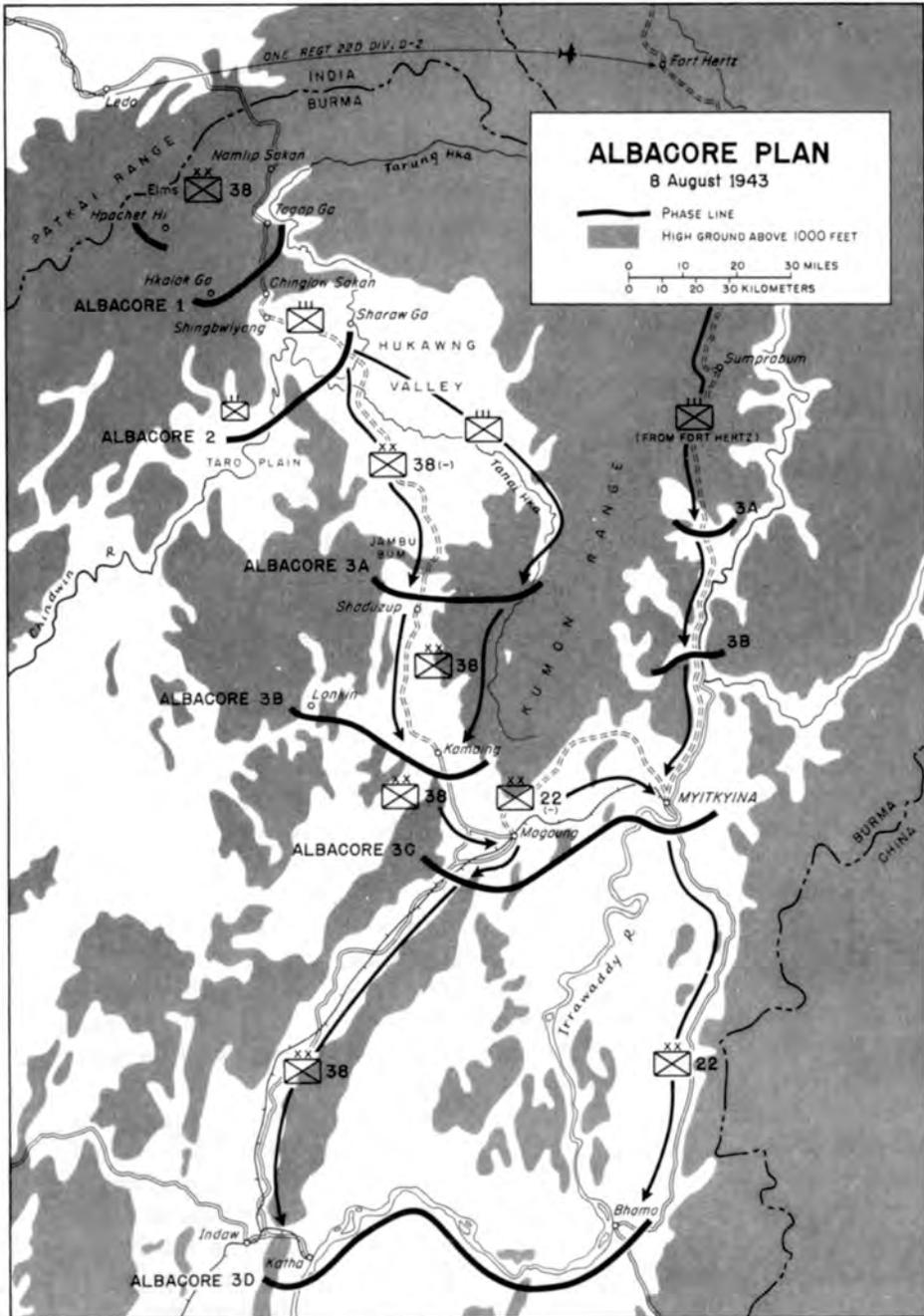
Planning the Chinese Army in India's (CAI) share in the occupation of the northern part of Burma was eased because of the great distance between the CAI and the principal British concentration which was opposite central Burma. The two campaigns would be far enough apart to permit the two commanders considerable freedom even though the operations were ultimately interdependent. Stilwell's New Delhi headquarters began to plan a north Burma campaign in 1942, assuming use of an army corps. After the TRIDENT Conference, May 1943, and in compliance with its directive to reoccupy north Burma, General Boatner, then commanding the Combat Troops, Ledo Sector, ordered his G-3, Col. Robert M. Cannon, to prepare appropriate staff studies.

Colonel Cannon was directed to prepare a plan to accomplish the current mission of protecting Ledo and the Ledo Road project, and the future one of clearing the Japanese from North Burma. Boatner desired to make increased use of aviation for tactical support and supply, to move the troops by successive advances from one dominant terrain feature to another, and to use airborne and parachute troops.

Boatner's directive focused staff attention on the Hukawng Valley, and its adjacent terrain compartment, the Taro Plain. After crossing the Patkai Range, the Ledo Road emerged from the mountains at Shingbwiayang, at the north-western corner of the Hukawng Valley. About ten miles south of Shingbwiayang is the Tanai Hka, whose course, though winding snakelike, still follows a definite direction from southeast to northwest. So the road's trace would initially run roughly parallel with the Tanai. The traveler who wishes to cross the Tanai near Shingbwiayang does so at the Kantau ford. Since at the head of the Hukawng Valley the Ledo Road would run roughly parallel with the Tanai, the latter's tributaries would offer the first water obstacle to the road's progress. The first tributary the road builders would meet would be the Tarung Hka.

The western wall of the Hukawng Valley is the Wantuk Bum. Over the eons of geologic time, the Tanai has broken through the Wantuk Bum south of Shingbwiayang. The river bends sharply, flowing almost due south as it enters the small valley of the Taro Plain. The Taro Plain, therefore, is like a small closet adjacent to the long narrow room of the Hukawng and Mogaung valleys. He who wishes to enter the long narrow room from its northern door must be sure that no one is lurking in the closet.

Colonel Cannon complied with Boatner's directive by preparing a three-phase plan calling for seizure of the line of the Tarung Hka from Sharaw Ga (*ga* indicates village) to the confluence of the Tarung Hka and Tanai Hka. The advance would begin either when the roadhead reached the village of Namlip Sakan or when ordered. The 38th Division, supplied by airdrop which would be supplemented by pack train and porter, would be used. When the roadhead reached Chinglow Sakan, assumed to be 1 January 1944, the next phase would



MAP 3

C.A. Frost

begin, seizure of the Jambu Bum ridge line, which, running east and west, separated the Hukawng and Mogaung valleys. The 22d Division would join the 38th Division. To carry the advance beyond the Jambu Bum, Colonel Cannon suggested using Chinese airborne troops against either Myitkyina or Kamaing and urged that all supply be by air.⁷⁸ Approved by Stilwell, these preliminary studies incorporated the elements of air supply and advance from terrain feature to terrain feature that marked the final plan.⁷⁹

For the drive on Myitkyina, Stilwell's planners drafted ALBACORE, a development and refinement of the earlier Cannon suggestions. (*Map 3*) ALBACORE ONE and ALBACORE TWO provided for protecting the Ledo base and securing the Shingbwiayang area on D minus 15, in that order. ALBACORE THREE unfolded in four phases, 3A, 3B, 3C, and 3D. Phase 3A was to seize the Jambu Bum; 3B, the Lonkin-Kamaing line; 3C, Mogaung and Myitkyina; 3D, Katha and Bhamo. Phase 3A called for the 38th Division to advance from the Tarung Hka line on D Day, or on 1 December 1943 if D Day had not been announced by then. One regiment was to drive up the Tanai valley, adjacent to and east of the Hukawng Valley, another was to take the line of the Nambyu River and go south and occupy the Jambu Bum. The third regiment was held in reserve.

When the 38th was near the Jambu Bum, the 22d Division would move into the Shingbwiayang area. One of its regiments would protect the 38th Division's right flank, the other would fly to Fort Hertz. This latter move bore the waggish code name LEDO STRIPTease. Phase 3B called for the 38th Division to advance from a line just below the Jambu Bum in two columns (one up the Tanai Hka valley, the other along the dirt road to Kamaing). The 22d Division would be in forward reserve.

In phase 3C the 38th Division would take Mogaung. The 22d Division would follow in column until Mogaung was taken, then swing around the Kumon Range to attack Myitkyina from the south while the regiment earlier sent to Fort Hertz closed in from the north. In Phase 3D the 38th Division would take Katha, the 22d Division, Bhamo. ALBACORE assumed the Japanese were not in strength north of Kamaing.⁸⁰

Stilwell, surveying the field as his staff put the final touches on the Chinese and American share of the campaign, was quietly confident in a personal radio to Marshall. Stilwell was satisfied with the Chinese Army in India, which was well trained and in good condition. If the Japanese did not reinforce materially

⁷⁸ (1) Draft Plan, sgd Col Robert M. Cannon, ACofS, G-3 [probably May 43], sub: Plans for Offensive Opns Employing Para and Airborne Trs. NCAC Files, KCRC. (2) See Ch. III, below.

⁷⁹ Memo, CG, Combat Trs, Ledo Sector, for ACofS, G-3, 26 May 43, sub: Tactical Plans; Ltr, Cannon to CO, Base Sec No. 3, 12 Jun 43, sub: Tactical Plans. NCAC Files, KCRC.

⁸⁰ (1) Opn Plan ALBACORE, 8 Aug 43. Folder, ALBACORE, LEDO STRIPTease, NCAC Files, KCRC. (2) Growth, Development and Operating Procedures of Air Supply and Evacuation System, NCAC Comd Front, Burma Campaign, 1943-45, prep by U.S. Mil Observers' Gp, New Delhi, India, MS (hereafter, NCAC Air Supply), p. 8-I. The authors' pagination form has been retained in citations of this manuscript throughout the present volume. OCMH.

in the Myitkyina–Pao-shan area, the operation had a good chance of success, and if 4 Corps did its share by driving into Burma from Manipur State, the Japanese could not reinforce. He planned to take Shingbwiayang and build an airstrip there from which to supply one division to push toward Mogaung. When the Ledo Road reached Shingbwiayang, two divisions driving south could be supplied by air. With any luck, Stilwell expected that the Ledo Road would reach Shingbwiayang by 31 December.⁸¹

Underlying these plans and hopes was Chih Hui Pu's estimate of Japanese strength and dispositions. Chih Hui Pu believed that the Japanese in Burma were commanded by Headquarters, *Burma Area Army*, at Rangoon, with field command by Headquarters, *15th Army*, at Maymyo, Burma. Under *15th Army* were four divisions, the *18th* (Mandalay), *33d* (Monywa), *55th* (Akyab), and *56th* (Lashio). Four Thai divisions were thought to be in the Shan States of Burma. There were reports, as yet unverified, that four more Japanese divisions, identified as the *14th*, *16th*, *23d*, and *21st* were in Burma. As of 30 October 1943, G-2 of Chih Hui Pu wrote: "There is no evidence of any enemy in strength north of the fortified area of Kamaing nor is there any indication of such a move in prospect. There are however troops available south of Kamaing which can be moved up when and if needed." Adding faith to this estimate were the circumstances of complete U.S. air superiority over the Hukawng–Mogaung valleys, which permitted unrestricted aerial reconnaissance, and the host of friendly Kachin informants.⁸²

Actually, Chih Hui Pu erred. The Japanese *Burma Area Army* had six divisions, the *18th*, *31st*, *33d*, *54th*, *55th*, and *56th*, of which the *31st* and *54th* arrived in 1943, and the *24th Independent Mixed Brigade*, then being organized. The *54th Division* went to garrison the Arakan region against the feared amphibious descent by SEAC; the *31st Division*, to central Burma opposite Manipur State in India.⁸³ (*Chart 4*) The Thai divisions may be disregarded for they never met SEAC troops in battle and did not free any Japanese garrison troops for service elsewhere, as the Japanese in Burma were not faced with civil unrest. And the Japanese were north of Kamaing.

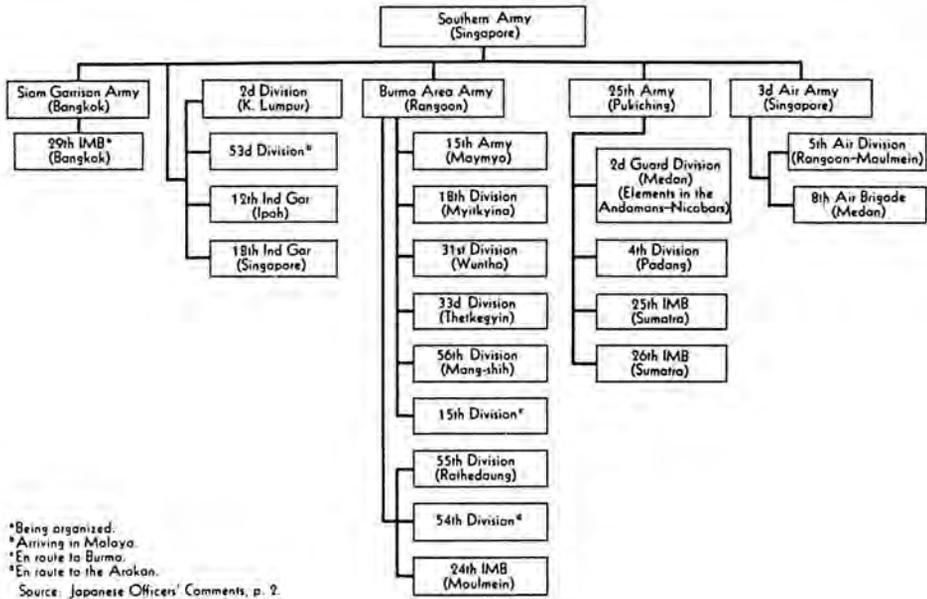
Appraising ALBACORE, General Boatner thought the scheme had flaws. Though he knew of no Japanese north of Kamaing, he feared that a forward displacement to the line of the Tanai followed by a pause might well attract the Japanese, so he suggested holding the advance well north of Shingbwiayang until 15 November and then going all out for the Jambu Bum. Stilwell agreed and was willing to hold the advance until the 15th.

⁸¹ Rad CK 36, Stilwell to Marshall, 30 Aug 43. Item 769, Bk 2, JWS Personal File.

⁸² (1) Wkly G-2 Rpt, Hq Chih Hui Pu, 30 Oct 43. KCRC. (2) Japanese Officers' Comments, Incl 4. OCMH. Lt. Gen. Shinichi Tanaka states that the Japanese order of battle did not include a *14th*, *16th*, or *23d Division*. (3) A Japanese area army may be considered the equivalent of an American army and a Japanese army the equivalent of an American army corps. Therefore on the maps the symbols used for enemy units are those of the American equivalents.

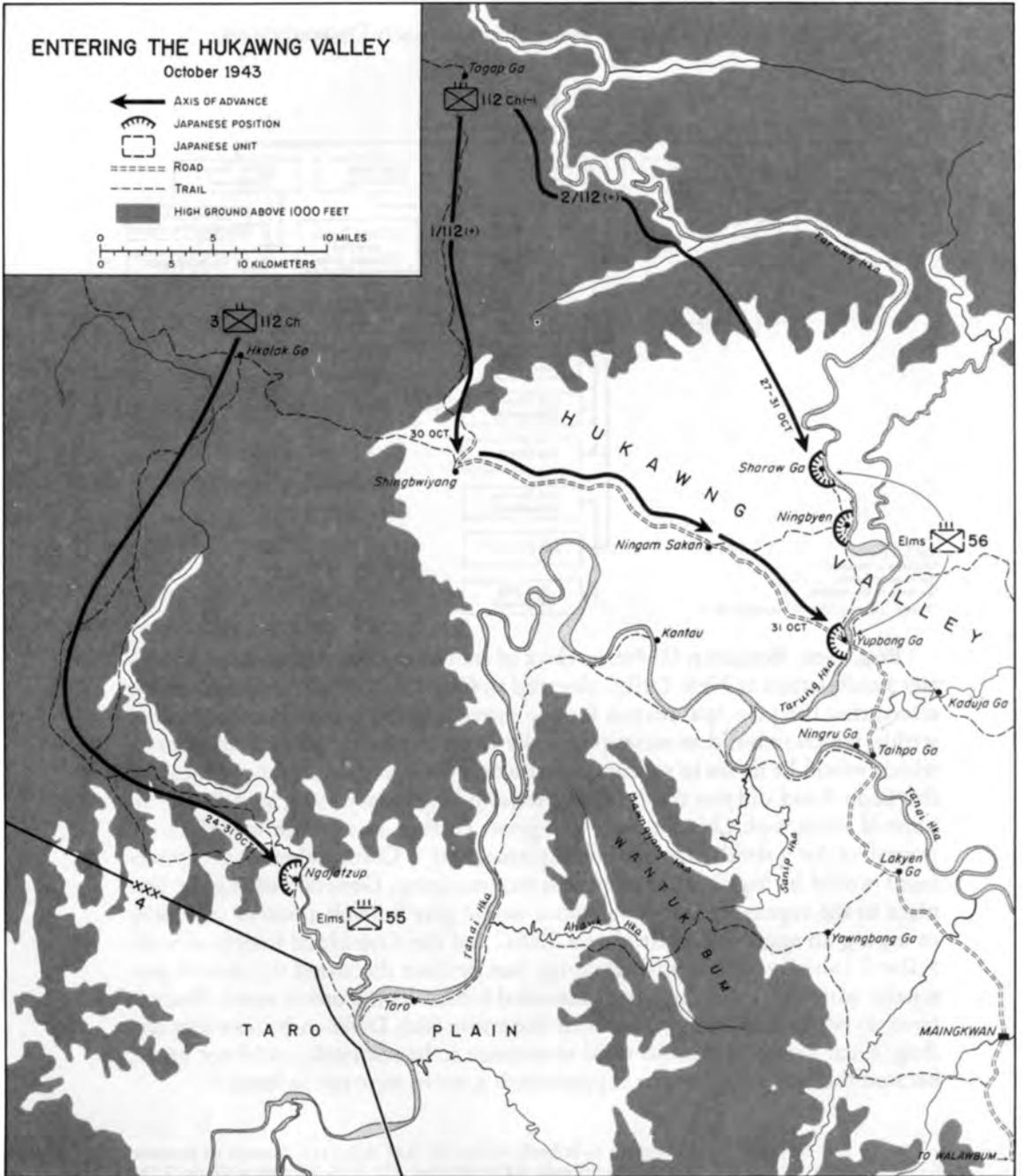
⁸³ (1) Japanese Study 89, pp. 9-10, 30. (2) Japanese Officers' Comments, pp. 2-3. OCMH.

CHART 4—JAPANESE ORGANIZATION AND DISPOSITIONS:
NOVEMBER 1943



Brig. Gen. Benjamin G. Ferris, chief of staff of Stilwell's Rear Echelon theater headquarters at New Delhi, objected to General Boatner's proposal. Ferris stated that the principal reason for the move forward was to occupy ground within which to build an airstrip in order to receive road-building machinery, which would be flown in to start construction back to the current roadhead. If the Ledo Road did not reach Shingbwiayang by January 1944, said Ferris, all hope of a link with China in 1944 was gone. Further, an advance would set the precedent for a similar forward displacement by 4 Corps, whereas postponement would be highly contagious. In summarizing, General Ferris gave first place to the argument that the advance would give Stilwell a potent argument in urging an aggressive attitude on SEAC and the Combined Chiefs of Staff. Stilwell initially agreed with Boatner, but he then discussed the matter personally with Ferris and the latter persuaded him to let the orders stand. Boatner fared no better with a suggestion that the entire 38th Division be sent forward. Brig. Gen. Frank D. Merrill tried to arrange it, but Stilwell could not agree, because the supply aircraft to support such a move were not at hand.⁸⁴

⁸⁴ (1) Rad RELOT G 240, Boatner to Stilwell, 4 Oct 43; Rad AD 2213, Stilwell to Boatner, 6 Oct 43; Rad AMMDEL 1728, Ferris to Stilwell, 6 Oct 43; Rad AD 2223, Stilwell to Ferris, 7 Oct 43; Rad B 134, Stilwell to Boatner, 6 Oct 43. Items 1062, 1060, 1064, 1065, 1063, Bk 4, JWS Personal File. (2) Ltr, Frank [Merrill] to Haydon [Boatner], recd 4 Sep 43. Folder, Combat Rpts FE and Ln O's, ALBACORE Hist File, NCAC Files, KCRC.



MAP 4

C.A. Frost

The Campaign Begins

ALBACORE TWO called for a forward displacement of one regiment of the Chinese 38th Division to cover the onward movement of the Ledo Road and to reach the Tarung, which was the line of departure for the projected North Burma Campaign. (*Map 4*) D Day, if previously unannounced, was to be 1 December 1943. The orders as received by General Sun for his 38th Division left him very little scope for his own initiative. He was directed to send the 112th Regiment forward to shield the advancing road builders. The 2/112th was to occupy the Tarung Hka villages of Sharaw Ga and Ningbyen, the 1/112th to occupy Yupbang Ga, also on the Tarung, and the 3/112th, Ngajat-zup at the northern edge of the Taro Plain.⁸⁵ This deployment, which dispersed the regiment, was designed to hold the line of the Tarung and the Tanai by controlling the fords, and to bar Japanese excursions from the Taro Plain. Chih Hui Pu expected that the 112th could readily brush aside the maximum expected resistance which was assessed as scattered parties of Burmans under Japanese leadership.⁸⁶

General Sun received his orders on 5 October but hesitated over moving forward. Boatner saw no good reason for Sun to delay, saying that air support, both tactical and supply, was ample, and enemy opposition "certainly insignificant."⁸⁷ Finally, the Chinese battalions began to move out. As they trudged ahead, they passed over portions of the trail by which the pathetic refugees of 1942 had fled Burma. The path was a ghastly sight; skeletons were seen about every water hole and at the beginning of every slope. Huddled groups of bones showed where small refugee camps had perished en masse. On his way back to Burma, Dr. Gordon S. Seagrave, the Burma Surgeon of the first campaign, saw "hundreds and hundreds" of skeletons as his colleague, Col. John M. Tamraz, the SOS surgeon, had eight months before.⁸⁸

Ordered by Chih Hui Pu to occupy Sharaw Ga and Ningbyen, the 2/112th, 38th Division, was a little task force as it moved deeper into Burma. It was reinforced and supported by the 5th Company of the 114th Regiment, a Seagrave hospital unit, engineer, and quartermaster troops.⁸⁹ Two miles north of

⁸⁵ For economy of space and simplicity, a battalion is sometimes identified by giving first its numerical designation, followed by a slash, and then the name or the number of the parent regiment, as in the example above, the 2/112th, or the 2d Battalion of the 112th Regiment.

⁸⁶ (1) NCAC History, pp. 25-28. (2) Lt Col Thomas F. Van Natta, History of the 38th Div, CAI, 1 Oct 43-31 Aug 45, MS. NCAC Files, KCRC. (3) Ltr, Boatner to Stilwell, 29 Nov 43. Folder, Combat Rpts FE and Ln O's ALBACORE Hist File, NCAC Files, KCRC.

⁸⁷ Rad RELOT G 257, Boatner to Stilwell, 15 Oct 43. Item 1085, Bk 4, JWS Personal File.

⁸⁸ (1) Tamraz Diary, 19 Feb 43. SGO Hist Div, Washington, D.C. (2) Dr. Gordon S. Seagrave, *Burma Surgeon Returns* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., Inc., 1946), pp. 27-28, 72-73, 60-63.

⁸⁹ Regimental designations of Chinese infantry divisions were obtained by multiplying the division's number by three. The product designates the last regiment of the division. Thus, the three regiments of the 38th Division were the 112th, 113th, and 114th; of the 22d Division, the 64th, 65th, and 66th Regiments.

Sharaw Ga and many weeks before D Day, the Chinese at about 1200, 30 October 1943, met an enemy outpost. The outpost was driven back, and the advance guard moved on to the Sharaw Ga clearing, where mortar and machine gun fire held it until dark. On the next day the remainder of the battalion came up, and the Chinese tried to take the village, which lay between two hills.

The hill to the north was lightly held. The Chinese quickly overran it, then came under such heavy fire from the second hill that they had 116 casualties. On 1, 2, and 3 November the Chinese attacked, achieving nothing and losing fifty more men. Then they went on the defensive and dug in, but managed to patrol and keep in touch with the regimental command post at Ningam Sakan. The 1st Battalion had much the same experience at Yupbang Ga. Encountering a well-entrenched and well-led force, it dug in and was quickly isolated by a roadblock placed between Sharaw Ga and Ningbyen. (*Map 1*) That left the 3d Battalion, which was similarly stalemated on the northern edge of the Taro Plain.⁹⁰ This well-led, well-entrenched enemy was not the expected rabble of Burman levies, but elements of the Japanese *56th Regiment, 18th Division*, under Lt. Gen. Shinichi Tanaka.

The surprise caused by the presence of these excellent veteran troops was complete. G-2 reports had given no hint that Japanese forces were in the area. Compounding the intelligence and reconnaissance failure was the reluctance of Chih Hui Pu to admit that the enemy was present in strength. As late as 20 November the weekly G-2 report dismissed the Japanese as having seventy-five to one hundred men at Yupbang Ga, with one hundred more pocketed between Sharaw Ga and Ningbyen, and added that judging by road traffic a battalion was moving up to reinforce.⁹¹

Drawn from the island of Kyushu, the men of the *18th Division* considered themselves authentic heirs of the martial traditions of the hot-blooded Kyushu clans. A diploma of honor had been given them for their pre-eminent share in storming the island of Singapore. Their commander, General Tanaka, had been chief of operations of *Staff Headquarters* in Tokyo and had gone from there to join the staff of *Southern Army*. From *Southern Army* he had taken command of the *18th Division* when Lt. Gen. Renya Mutaguchi moved up to command of the *15th Army*.

The *18th Division* had moved forward to carry out its mission of garrisoning north Burma, to which was added in September that of supporting a planned attack on India. Anxious to prevent interference with its offensive, the Japanese headquarters in Burma, *Burma Area Army*, was improving its positions all around the perimeter of Burma. The *56th Division* in October 1943 eliminated a Chinese bridgehead over the Salween, north of Teng-chung. In late September, *15th Army* in anticipation of the dry season ordered *18th Division* to carry out, with its main force, a delaying action in the Hukawng Valley

⁹⁰ (1) Map Overlay, Hq 5303d (Prov) Combat Trs, 13 Nov 43. NCAC Files, KCRC. (2) NCAC History, pp. 25-28.

⁹¹ Wkly G-2 Rpts, Hq 5303d Combat Trs, Oct-Nov 43; Numbered Int Sums, summer and early fall 1943, Hq Combat Trs, Folder, Int Sums, NCAC Files, KCRC.

against the expected Allied thrust from Ledo. Myitkyina was to be strongly held to block any attack from China.

About 24 October a company of the *2/56th, 18th Division*, had arrived in the Tarung-Tanai area on reconnaissance. Not finding any Chinese immediately to the north of them, they constructed defensive posts in and around Ningbyen. Probably at the first clash the Japanese outposts appealed for help. A Japanese concentration of unknown size was at Maingkwan and the remainder of the *2/56th* was sent forward from there "in the earliest part of November." The rest of the *18th Division* was "a month's march" away, General Tanaka recalled in 1948.⁹² It may be assumed that the *18th Division* was reinforced as quickly as possible and was soon present in a strength well able to meet the 112th Regiment's three scattered battalions on more than even terms, especially since at first the Japanese tactics were to place blocks across the trails and force the Chinese to attack them.

The Tarung, which flows south through this area to enter the Tanai, is a respectable river, two hundred yards wide in the dry season and much wider during the rains. Firmly entrenched at Sharaw Ga and Yupbang Ga, the Japanese were holding the river crossings and thus the springboards for the offensive General Tanaka was speedily planning.⁹³

Tanaka personally reconnoitered the area in early November. He decided to adopt a plan which he described long after as being "to move the main strength of the division from Ningbyen toward Shingbwiyang and the exit of the mountain road on the India-Burma border to attack and destroy the American and Chinese forces which would advance in a long column through the tortuous Ledo Road in India." The operation was to begin on 15 December 1943.⁹⁴

As the Japanese grew in strength, they became more aggressive, and the 112th Regiment, 38th Division, had a series of misfortunes in November. One of its companies was annihilated on 2 November. The regimental command post was overrun on the 3d as its guard was digging in for the night. The regimental commander, a Colonel Chen, and the junior U.S. liaison officer, Maj. George T. Laughlin, escaped, but the chief liaison officer, Lt. Col. Douglas G. Gilbert, was captured. A company of the 1/114th, rushed up to aid by reopening the trail to the 1/112th near Yupbang Ga, was halted by the Japanese well short of its goal. Air supply brought rations to the besieged 150 survivors of the 1/112th, but the acute water supply problem had to be met in part by tapping jungle vines. A great banyan tree was ingeniously made into a fort defend-

⁹² (1) Rpts cited n. 91, above. (2) Interrog, Gen Tanaka, 13 Jan 48. OCMH. (3) SEATIC Bull 244, 3 Oct 46, sub: History of Japanese *33d Army*, pp. 11-12. MID Library. (4) The diary of a Japanese officer indicates that he was in Taihpa Ga with his unit before 24 October 1943. He recorded that incoming soldiers were digging defensive positions, presumably on 25 or 26 October. General Tanaka thought that the Japanese arrived about 26 October. Folder, Misc Work Sheets of Captured Japanese Docs-1944; Int Sum 111, 6 Nov 43, Hq 5303d (Prov) Combat Trs. Folder Int Sums, NCAC Files, KCRC. (5) Japanese Officers' Comments, p. 5. OCMH.

⁹³ Interrog cited n. 92(2).

⁹⁴ Japanese Officers' Comments, Incl 4. OCMH.

ing the west end of the dropping field and garrisoned by two squads with heavy machine guns who put themselves in, around, and under the mighty tree.⁹⁵

The 38th's failure to advance brought vigorous exchanges between Generals Sun and Boatner. Boatner believed there was only one Japanese battalion at hand, that by passivity and bad tactics the Chinese had let themselves be surrounded and then proceeded to waste their ammunition. Sun thought the whole *56th Regiment* faced him along the Tarung and wanted reinforcements. On 26 November Boatner told Maj. Gen. Thomas G. Hearn, Chief of Staff, U.S. Army Forces, CBI, that the situation was "critical," that Sun wanted to retreat, and asked if General Hearn could intervene. Since Stilwell was absent on a highly secret and most important mission, Hearn had to handle the problem, which he did by telling Boatner to act strongly in Stilwell's name.⁹⁶

One possible difficulty lay in the fact that Chih Hui Pu's orders to Sun had, as noted before, allowed him very little initiative and even prescribed the location of his several battalions. Moreover, he had not been free to reinforce without Chih Hui Pu's approval. The situation slowly improved when Chih Hui Pu began reinforcing the 112th Regiment, 38th Division. The 114th arrived at the front in mid-November, and the remainder of the division was on the way.⁹⁷

Summary

As the campaigning season of 1943-44 began, the most important activity took place on the lower levels of the theater. The problem of improving the Assam line of communications to an acceptable standard was approached with determination and vigor. In far-off Washington, the President introduced a new element by his decision to send the B-29's to CBI. Then came the encounter between Chinese and Japanese in the Hukawng Valley which upset the timetable for the campaign. D Day was to have been in December, leaving time for SEAC to settle on a plan for the campaign which would provide a directive to the Chinese in north Burma and the British forces in Manipur and the Arakan. In accord with that concept, the Chinese in north Burma moved forward to screen the advance of the Ledo Road, well before D Day. They stumbled on a strong force of Japanese, and on 30 October 1943 the fight began with both sides reinforcing. The Burma campaign was under way though the detailed plan for it was not yet approved by the CCS and the basic preparation, improvement of the Assam line of communications, had just begun.

⁹⁵ Comments by Col Dupuy on NCAC History, I, 29. (Hereafter Dupuy Comments.) OCMH. Colonel Dupuy was present throughout the North Burma Campaign and kept extensive notes. In writing this section, the authors are greatly indebted to him and Lt Col George T. Laughlin.

⁹⁶ Rad RELOT G 323, Boatner to Hearn, 26 Nov 43; Rad RELOT G 322, Boatner to Hearn, 26 Nov 43; Rad OT 56, Hearn to Boatner, 30 Nov 43. Items 1286, 1285, 1290, Bk 5, JWS Personal File.

⁹⁷ (1) Map Overlay cited n. 90(1). (2) Map Overlay, Hq 5303d (Prov) Combat Trs, 4 Dec 43. NCAC Files, KCRC.

CHAPTER II

SEXTANT: The Watershed

At the Casablanca, TRIDENT, and QUADRANT Conferences a strategy whose successful execution would break the blockade of China had been roughly shaped. Pledges had been given to the Chinese, notably that of TRIDENT: "No limits, except those imposed by time and circumstance, will be placed on the above operations, which have for their object the relief of the siege of China." This statement had followed on a Chinese threat to seek a separate peace. There was another question: how long could China survive blockade? Stilwell, Chennault, the President, the Prime Minister, all agreed at TRIDENT that China must have aid soon. Another powerful influence in shaping Allied strategy had been the President's wish that China be treated as a Great Power, that it join in the councils of the Great Powers as an equal.

To complete Allied plans for the relief of China, the President arranged for the Generalissimo to meet with him and Mr. Churchill at Cairo in November 1943. Then and there the threads would be drawn together. The Generalissimo would confer with his colleagues; the final details would be added to the plan for China's relief; the dignitaries would approve it; and a CCS directive to SEAC would be issued. The Cairo Conference was the high point, the watershed, that divided Sino-American relations. After Cairo, the currents flowed in a very different direction.

Drafting SEAC's Proposals

When Admiral Mountbatten on 1 November 1943 formally opened his headquarters as Supreme Allied Commander, Southeast Asia Command, one of his first tasks was to prepare a plan to submit to his superiors, who if approving it would provide the necessary additional resources, landing craft, principally. To play his part in this planning was Stilwell's first duty on leaving Chungking for India in October 1943. Independently, Mountbatten and Stilwell had come to similar conclusions on the preliminary studies prepared by General Headquarters (India) in the last phases of that body's concern with Burma operations. When General Auchinleck in September 1943 proffered a plan calling for the now-familiar converging attacks on Burma from Yunnan, Ledo, Assam, and the Arakan, Stilwell had been critical. The scheduling of the proposed several drives upset him, for he found them so separate in time as to open the prospect

of the Allies' being defeated in detail. And he added: "I understood the orders to call for 'vigorous and aggressive action' and I don't find a hell of a lot of it in the plan. However, we will proceed as indicated and perhaps our doubts will be resolved when Admiral Mountbatten arrives."¹

After examining the same plans Mountbatten, too, was critical, but where Stilwell was characteristically blunt, Mountbatten was urbane: "There is also no doubt that the climate and the antiquated and close methods used in India have their effect on the keenness of officers after a year or two and so I have found that the plans made by the Indian Staff are somewhat pessimistic and unenterprising."²

When the work of preparing SEAC's proposals to the CCS, the President, the Prime Minister, and the Generalissimo began, Stilwell submitted his views as did General Headquarters (India) and the local combined planners.³

The proposals and decisions that began to form fell into two categories, those for the first phases which SEAC could execute with its own resources, and those which needed approval and support by higher authority. Almost immediately Stilwell received his orders and approval of the opening phases of ALBACORE THREE, which called for him to establish a bridgehead over the Tanai. As for the Arakan, the SEAC minutes state that General Giffard was not satisfied with the safety of Chittagong while his troops held their current positions, so he proposed that they make a twenty-mile advance to secure the Buthidaung-Maungdaw road. (*See Map 1—inside back cover.*)

Neither Admiral Mountbatten nor General Slim was content with this modest contribution. General Giffard according to the minutes "agreed that it was mainly a defensive move." So Giffard's orders were changed to call for the exploitation of any success, with Akyab the objective. It was further agreed in SEAC that whatever the ultimate objective in Burma, 4 Corps, on the central front, at some time would be obliged to advance through the noxious and malarial Kabaw Valley. The Arakan advance might begin the second week of January 1944; 4 Corps and the Chinese forces in Yunnan (Y-Force) would move out in early March; and any airborne operation would be in mid-March.⁴ It is notable that Stilwell was thus directed to advance into hostile territory as part of a larger operation whose objectives had not been defined and whose resources were not at hand. However, none doubted that all would be provided in due time.

Of the three courses seen as open to 4 Corps and the air-supplied light infantry of the British Long-Range Penetration Groups (LRPG's or Chindits),

¹ (1) Ltr, Auchinleck to Stilwell, 7 Sep 43; Quotation from Ltr, Stilwell to Auchinleck, 16 Sep 43. Item 226, Bk 3, JWS Personal File. (2) Mountbatten Report, Pt. A, par. 7.

² Extract, SAC's Personal Diary, 30 Oct 43. SEAC War Diary.

³ Stilwell's plan has not been found. Probably it is reflected in the views expressed in the memorandum cited in note 7, below.

⁴ (1) SEAC Plan, SAC (43) 2, 28 Oct 43; Min, SAC's Mtg, 31 Oct 43; Rad 7, SEACOS to COS, 31 Oct 43. SEAC War Diary. (2) Rad AMMDEL 1963, Merrill to Stilwell, 3 Nov 43. Item 1162, Bk 4, JWS Personal File.

the SEAC planners under General Wedemeyer, SEAC's deputy chief of staff, preferred TOREADOR, an airborne landing by two divisions in central Burma. If successful in the operation's first phases, the divisions would exploit toward Mandalay. The other alternatives considered were: (1) an overland advance toward Ye-u; (2) TARZAN, an airborne landing at Indaw on the railway to Myitkyina, a drive by the Ledo force on Myitkyina, and a bridgehead over the Chindwin to be established by 4 Corps.

Observing the drift of the planning, Stilwell grew concerned and prepared a critique on 27 October 1943 which he submitted on 3 November.⁵ The critique stated that all SEAC plans to date had been closely based on estimates of the logistic situation, that they had been "permeated by fear of failure or reluctance to take the bold course." Singling out TARZAN, which Mountbatten appeared to prefer, Stilwell remarked (giving an incorrect figure) that the operation comprised 80,000 troops in the Arakan,⁶ limited to advancing on Akyab, with nothing further contemplated; an advance from Imphal to the Chindwin River; placing a division on the railway to Myitkyina and leaving it there; an amphibious operation against the Andaman Islands, which he thought had "no immediate bearing on the main problem"; Stilwell's Chinese forces, "left to their own resources to effect a junction and open the Burma Road."

Stilwell believed that if Akyab was taken, this victory should be exploited by a series of amphibious hooks down the coast aimed at the port of Bassein. Success would give bases from which to dominate Japanese aviation in south Burma. In central Burma, he suggested a two-pronged operation aimed at Mandalay. "The Indaw operations should be cancelled." His Chinese forces would do their best in conjunction with the above. Stilwell stated:

With the large air and naval units to be committed, nothing less than the above is justified. Nothing less than this is either bold or aggressive. Nothing less takes complete advantage of our position for concentric attacks. Nothing less threatens the enemy with serious loss.

I take exception to any trend in the planning which fails to use to advantage our overwhelming strength, to any tendency towards vagueness in objectives, to any move which does not absolutely require a strong enemy reaction to check it.

Under present plans, Burma *could* [Stilwell's italics] be ready to fall to a vigorous attack, and for lack of trying, we might not even find this out. In other words, we are not even making a reconnaissance in force, let alone a serious attack.⁷

TARZAN, the plan for SEAC's share in the campaign, was nevertheless adopted by SEAC on 7 November. Behind the decision lay Mountbatten's announced desire for a guaranteed victory, his admission that he would choose the less desirable course if it promised success. TARZAN was urged by General Headquarters (India) and by Mountbatten's three commanders in chief, General Giffard, Admiral Sir James Somerville, and Air Chief Marshal Sir

⁵ Stilwell Diary, 3 Nov 43. (See Bibliographical Note.)

⁶ Actually present were the 5th and 7th Indian Divisions with three brigades each, and the 81st West African Division with two brigades. Mountbatten Report, Pt. B, pars. 34-37.

⁷ Memo, Stilwell for SEAC, 27 Oct 43. SNF 215.

Richard Peirse. General Wedemeyer commented that TARZAN would not accomplish the objectives given to SEAC in its directive. Representatives of CBI Theater headquarters at SEAC were equally critical. Even if all went well, they remarked, the monsoon rains would find SEAC having only a bridgehead over the Chindwin and an airborne division mired on the railway to Myitkyina. This seemed little to show for a season's fighting. The only consolations were that the dropping of an airborne division in Burma might open opportunities and that SEAC agreed to study operations in Burma to follow TARZAN. From the discussions that accompanied the adoption of TARZAN, CBI Theater liaison personnel received the impression that Giffard, Somerville, and Peirse were not aggressively inclined, placed no value on operations in Burma, and had staffs who were too impressed by logistical difficulties and indifferent to what might be done to improve the logistical situation. But, TARZAN it was, and the SEAC secretariat began to prepare the papers on it and on the over-all plan for Burma, now called CHAMPION, for submission to the Combined Chiefs of Staff, the President, the Prime Minister, and the Generalissimo.⁸ (*See Map 2.*)

The United States Prepares for the SEXTANT Conference

The President's diplomatic preparations for a meeting with the Generalissimo, the Prime Minister, and the Combined Chiefs of Staff had been under way since the TRIDENT Conference in Washington, May 1943. In June Mr. Roosevelt told the Generalissimo of his anxiety to meet him, and a discussion of times and places followed at once. Originally, the meeting was to have been of just the two statesmen, and the Generalissimo suggested Alaska in August or September. The course of events made the President feel ever more strongly that he should meet with Marshal Joseph V. Stalin and, of course, Mr. Churchill, and so the President began to consider co-ordinating the two meetings.

The foreign ministers' conference at Moscow in October marked further progress toward the President's goal of having China accepted as a Great Power, for Great Britain and the Soviet Union agreed to China's signing a Four Power Declaration. This agreement greatly pleased Roosevelt, who told the Generalissimo that the ice had been broken, that he and the Chinese statesman had now established the principle of China's Great Power position. To arrange a meeting between the several statesmen remained, and from this innocent circumstance the Chinese insistence on making or keeping face under any and all conditions led to great consequences. In so many words, the Generalissimo insisted on seeing Mr. Roosevelt before the latter saw Marshal Stalin, or else postponing the meeting indefinitely. Roosevelt agreed, and Brig. Gen. Patrick

⁸ (1) Rad 22, Wedemeyer to Marshall for Maj Gen Thomas T. Handy, 6 Nov 43; Rad SEACOS 83834, Mountbatten to COS, 10 Nov 43; Extract, SAC's Personal Diary, 7 Nov 43. SEAC War Diary. (2) Rad AMMDEL 2008, Merrill to Stilwell, 8 Nov 43; Rad AMMDEL 2023, Merrill to Stilwell, 10 Nov 43; Rad AMMDEL 2036, Merrill to Stilwell 11 Nov 43. Items 1203, 1225, 1236, Bk 4, JWS Personal File.

J. Hurley, who acted as the President's personal representative in the Middle East, was sent to Chungking to arrange the details.⁹ Thus, the Generalissimo sacrificed the strategic advantage of having the last word with the President.

Even as the next meeting (SEXTANT) of the Allied statesmen was being convened, significant trends in U.S. strategy were depreciating China's importance as an ally against Japan. The increasing strength of the U.S. Navy's fast carrier task forces and the realization of the B-29's potentialities were leading the lower echelons of U.S. planners to an awareness that Japan could be defeated without a major U.S. land campaign in China. In summer 1943 the Joint Chiefs of Staff decided to use the fast carrier task forces and amphibious troops against the Japanese positions in the Gilbert and Marshall Islands. The Gilberts were to be attacked in November 1943, the Marshalls, in January 1944.¹⁰ The decision to initiate action in the Central Pacific did not, of course, by itself change China's role in the evolving strategy of the United States, but the more the fast carrier task forces prospered in their advance across the Pacific, the more islands that fell into U.S. possession, the less need there would be to seek the Generalissimo's co-operation. The means for a major thrust across the Central Pacific were coming to hand and so was the realization of China's diminishing strategic importance.

The Operations Division observed:

Despite the agreements that the United Nations should direct their principal offensive efforts against Germany and contain the Japanese by a series of relatively minor thrusts, it is becoming increasingly apparent that operations against the Japanese are approaching major proportions. Plans for the defeat of Japan are not yet firm. However, the degree of success enjoyed thus far is indicative of the need of a short-term plan for operations against Japan "upon Germany's defeat" with principal emphasis on approach from the Pacific rather than from the Asiatic mainland.¹¹

The QUADRANT Conference, Quebec, August 1943, ordered the combined staffs to prepare a "short plan for the defeat of Japan." The planners complied on 25 October 1943. They suggested four broad possible courses of action, all of them bypassing the mainland of China. For operations in China, the Combined (i. e., Anglo-American) Staff Planners suggested only an eventual limited B-29 offensive supported through north Burma by a line of communications that would also be called on to support the Fourteenth Air Force and the re-equipping of the Chinese Army.

Of the four proposed courses, the recommended one included taking

⁹ (1) Msg, Roosevelt to Chiang, 30 Jun 43; Ltr, Soong to Hopkins, 21 Jul 43. Bk IX, Hopkins Papers. (2) Memo, Hearn for Generalissimo, 1 Nov 43. Item 1139, Bk 4, JWS Personal File. (3) Incl to Memo, Somervell to Hopkins, 5 Nov 43. Bk VII, Hopkins Papers. (4) Robert E. Sherwood, Roosevelt and Hopkins, MS, IX-2-93. This manuscript quotes the President as aware of China's weakness but as desiring to be friendly with her 400,000,000 people and so wanting China to sign the Four Power Declaration.

¹⁰ Min, JCS 97th Mtg, 20 Jul 43.

¹¹ Compilation of Background Material for SEXTANT, Table 4g, prep by Strategy and Policy Gp, OPD. ABC 337 (18 Oct 43) Sec 5, A48-224.

Formosa in spring 1945, while retaining the option of taking Sumatra in spring or autumn 1945 if the Formosa operation had to be postponed. The planners concluded there was no prospect of defeating Japan by October 1945. The Central Pacific course of action included capture of the Marshall, Caroline (Truk area), Palau, and Mariana Islands. If Truk was bypassed, the advance might reach the Marianas in July 1944; Truk, in November 1944; and the Palaus, by early 1945. It was recognized that good bomber fields could be built in the Marianas.

The recommendation to the Combined Chiefs noted that in response to the Air Plan for the Defeat of Japan CBI Theater had suggested basing eight B-29 groups at Calcutta and staging them through Cheng-tu. The Combined Staff Planners had not weighed this proposal in detail but thought it might well be feasible. Their own plan called for sending 2,000 B-24's to India immediately after Germany's defeat and with them flying supplies to China to begin preparations for the reception of B-29's en masse.¹²

With the CCS advisers thinking of a major effort through the Pacific and of bypassing China, criticism of existing strategy for the mainland of Asia developed. As defined by the Strategy Section of the Operations Division (OPD), the current plan called for keeping China in the war as an effective ally in order to use Chinese bases to bomb the Japanese islands. A great converging attack from east and west was contemplated, to open the Hong Kong-Canton area as a base from which to launch a drive that would open a line of communications to the North China Plain. This strategy seemed defective because it was not co-ordinated with the major effort being planned for the Pacific, which included bombing Japan from the Mariana Islands in January 1945 and launching the final air and amphibious assault on the Japanese homeland not later than mid-1946. The plan of securing Chinese bases seemed too costly in men and matériel for the advantages it would yield, mainly, the chance to bomb Japan. Using Chinese bases to the fullest extent would probably require the conquest of all Burma in order to reopen the line of communications from Rangoon northward. The Strategy Section, OPD, considered that the situation in Asia, despite all earlier efforts, continued to be bad. China was still an ineffective ally, and Indian forces could not mount a major offensive. The Assam line of communications was still no better. Japan was improving her defensive position, while current U.S. strategy in Asia called for no effective blow at Japan proper before 1946.

Therefore, the Strategy Section of OPD recommended that the present approved undertakings to keep China in the war as an effective ally be fulfilled; that a limited bomber offensive from China be mounted as insurance for the Pacific effort; that no further commitments be made to CBI Theater; and that no more than thirty Chinese divisions be trained and equipped, plus three more divisional sets of equipment to be used in beginning the training of the Second

¹² CPS 86/2, 25 Oct 43, sub: Defeat of Japan Within Twelve Months After Defeat of Germany.

Thirty Divisions in east China. The report was innocent of diplomatic considerations; its thought was that the goal of the Pacific war was the military defeat of Japan.¹³

The next voices raised were those of the members of the Joint Strategic Survey Committee (JSSC), placing their views before the JCS on the eve of SEXTANT. A small group of distinguished senior officers, taking the broad detached view, they spoke with the weight of long experience. Though they were in general agreement with the QUADRANT decisions, they did think these should be reappraised in the light of the recent studies of the problem of speeding Japan's defeat, which had shown the great importance of taking the Marianas as bases for the B-29's. The JSSC stated:

We feel that without depreciating the importance of the effort against Japan by way of China, the key to the early defeat of Japan lies in all-out operations through the Central Pacific with supporting operations on the Northern and Southern flanks, using all forces, naval, air, and ground, that can be maintained and employed profitably in these areas. We believe that this principle and the related principle that operations from the West (via Singapore) would be of a diversionary nature have not been sufficiently recognized and emphasized.¹⁴

Therefore, by the time the SEXTANT Conference met, important agencies among the United States' planners were counseling a reappraisal of the United States strategy. Had the Chinese been zealous and industrious in preparations for a campaign in Burma, had they accepted and carried out Stilwell's suggestions for a potent Chinese Army of sixty divisions, and had the Generalissimo in March 1943, against whatever odds, crossed the Salween River into Burma, the United States would have been morally obligated to support the Chinese in projects it had persuaded them to undertake. Nor could India Command have held back if Chinese troops tried to liberate a major portion of the Commonwealth. But the Chinese had not thought in those terms, the months had gone past, and now American planners were beginning to conclude that they could defeat Japan without Chinese bases and without a rejuvenated Chinese Army. The recommendations which the Strategy Section of OPD made to arm thirty-three Chinese divisions, in November 1943, complemented the conclusions that Stilwell had reached one month before. Stilwell's superiors were quietly discarding the mission they had given him in February 1942, "to assist in improving the combat efficiency of the Chinese Army"; by implication, other tasks would be forthcoming.¹⁵

The U.S. advance across the Central Pacific began 20 November when U.S. forces landed in the Gilberts group. After seventy-two hours of fighting, some of it of the most desperate nature, the Marines had their objective. American sea power had taken a giant stride closer toward Japan.

¹³ Memo, Col Joseph J. Billo, Chief, Strategy Sec OPD, for Chief, Strategy and Policy Gp OPD, 4 Nov 43, sub: Reanalysis of Our Strategic Position in Asia. ABC 337 (18 Oct 43) Sec 5, A48-224.

¹⁴ JCS 533/5, 8 Nov 43, sub: Recommended Line of Action at Next U.S.-British Stf Conf.

¹⁵ *Stilwell's Mission to China*, Chs. II and X.

The Chinese Prepare for SEXTANT

Having expressed his opinions on the proposed plan for SEAC's share in Burma operations, Stilwell left his liaison personnel to participate in the final discussions and returned to Chungking to inform the Generalissimo of the trend of SEAC's thinking and to prepare with him for the forthcoming meeting between the President and the Generalissimo. The Generalissimo was markedly pleasant and co-operative. After the events of October Stilwell was extremely skeptical of the Generalissimo's sincerity, but work must be done before the forthcoming conference, and Stilwell applied himself to it.¹⁶

At the suggestion of his friends, Mesdames Chiang Kai-shek and H. H. Kung, Stilwell, as Joint Chief of Staff, China Theater, on 5 November 1943 prepared and submitted a report to the Generalissimo on SEAC planning and Y-Force's progress in its preparations to attack from Yunnan. Telling the Generalissimo that no final SEAC plans had been made, Stilwell pointed out that "it is certain" the Chinese would be expected to make a converging attack from Assam and Yunnan into north Burma. "If for any reason the Y-force does not attack, the British [military] will have an excellent argument for giving up any plans for reopening communications with China. They have contended that the Chinese army is incapable of fighting and that there is no use in trying to build it up; failure to fight now will tend to prove them right. . . ." Then Stilwell explained why the Y-Force was not ready:

3 (A) The long delay in furnishing replacements has left all divisions far below strength. . . .

(B) The training has not yet reached the bulk of the men. . . .

(C) The equipment brought in from India has not been distributed. There has been trouble in getting the Chinese supply agencies to take this equipment, and unusual delay in getting it into the hands of the troops. Some divisions are so weak that they cannot take care of their quota.

(D) The majority of the men are physically incapable of sustaining prolonged hardship. . . .

(E) The high-ranking officers generally have no offensive spirit. . . .

(F) Insufficient trucks and animals have been provided. [Stilwell asked that the Generalissimo issue the necessary corrective orders in the most forceful manner, and closed by warning that] It is too late already for half measures, or further delays; where a few months ago corrective measures could have been taken in an orderly manner, it is now too late for any but the most drastic and thorough-going action.¹⁷

The Generalissimo took this candor in good part. He promised 50,000 replacements to bring the Y-Force up to strength, plus extra rations to meet the problem of malnutrition. The Chinese leader's cordiality was marked.¹⁸ It

¹⁶ (1) *Stilwell's Mission to China*, Ch. X. (2) *The Stilwell Papers*, pp. 237-38. (3) In his Black Book, 6 November 1943, Stilwell wrote: "Is this real cooperation, or am I going goofy? . . . The catch is probably that *he's* willing but the blocking backs in the War Ministry will throw us for a loss. But just now, we are all honey and sweetness."

¹⁷ Memo, Stilwell for Generalissimo, 5 Nov 43. Stilwell Documents, Hoover Library.

¹⁸ *The Stilwell Papers*, pp. 237-38.

extended to Stilwell's suggestions for the Chinese proposals to be offered at SEXTANT. Possibly Stilwell hoped that if the Chinese leader offered such a program to the President and the Prime Minister, the Generalissimo himself would be obliged to adhere to it. And, faithful to the "bargaining" policy that he always wanted to follow, Stilwell spelled out what China should expect of her Allies if she did her part.

MEMORANDUM: His Excellency, Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek

PROPOSALS FOR COMING CONFERENCE

The Generalissimo's program is to bring up to effective strength, equip, and train 90 combat divisions, in 3 groups of thirty each, and 1 or 2 armored divisions.

1. The first group consists of the divisions in India, and those assigned to the Y-force in Yunnan Province. These divisions should be at full strength by January 1, and by that date satisfactorily equipped. . . .

2. The second group of thirty divisions has been designated [note that these are suggested proposals to be adopted by the Generalissimo, not a recital of accomplished facts] and a school has been set up. . . . With a road to India open, [the second thirty divisions] should be re-equipped and ready for the field in August of 1944.

3. A similar process will be followed with the third group of 30 divisions with target date of January 1, 1945. After the reopening of communications through Burma, 1 or 2 armored divisions will be organized.

4. All resources available in China will be used to produce effective combat units. Trained men of existing units will be made available as fillers.

5. China will participate according to the agreed plan in the recapture of Burma by attacks from Ledo with the X-force [Ledo force] and from Paoshan with the Yunnan force. This operation will be supported by naval action in the Bay of Bengal. Before the operation, British naval forces should be concentrated in time and fully prepared for action.

6. The training program will be followed and intensified.

7. Necessary airfields will be built and maintained.

8. In the event that communications are reopened through Burma and necessary equipment is supplied, an operation will be conducted to seize the Canton-Hongkong area and open communication by sea.

The Generalissimo expects that:

1. Before the 1944 rainy season an all-out effort will be made by the Allies to re-open communications through Burma to China, using land, air, and naval forces.

2. The U.S.A. will supply the equipment for the three groups of 30 divisions, and the armored divisions.

3. The Fourteenth U.S. Air Force will be maintained as agreed and supplied sufficiently to allow of sustained operations.

4. The Chinese Air Force will be built up promptly to 2 groups of fighters, 1 group of medium bombers, 1 reconnaissance squadron, and 1 transport squadron, and maintained at that strength. By August of 1944 a third group of fighters, and a group of heavy bombardment will be added and maintained thereafter.

5. Following the seizure of the Canton-Hongkong area, the U.S. will put 10 infantry divisions, 3 armored divisions and appropriate auxiliary units into South China for operations against Central and North China. Contingent upon this allocation of troops, the Generalissimo will appoint American command of those units of the combined U.S. Chinese [*sic*] forces which are designated in the order of battle, under his general direction.

6. The U.S. will, at the earliest practicable time, put long-range bombing units in China to operate against the Japanese mainland.
7. The ferry route will be maintained at a capacity of at least 10,000 tons a month.
8. Training personnel will be supplied as required.
9. Medical personnel will be supplied for the second and third groups of divisions.

For the Generalissimo,

JOSEPH W. STILWELL,
*Joint Chief of Staff for Generalissimo.*¹⁹

Stilwell thus proposed that the Generalissimo ask the United States to train and equip no less than ninety Chinese divisions. So imposing a force would dominate Asia south of the Amur River. Only the Red Army in Siberia could have faced it, and even then, the issue would have been uncertain. The Generalissimo was apparently favorably impressed by Stilwell's suggestions, for many of them were offered on behalf of China at the SEXTANT Conference.²⁰

Confirming the Generalissimo's cordiality, Madame Chiang telephoned Stilwell that night. She told the American general that the Generalissimo was "not only pleased but happy," over his conference with Stilwell.²¹ On 7 November Stilwell saw the Chinese Chief of Staff, Gen. Ho Ying-chin, who was not encouraging about replacements, but presumably General Ho had not yet received orders from the Generalissimo.²²

Four days later, on 11 November, General Stilwell, General Hearn, and Col. John E. McCammon, G-3, Chungking, met with General Ho and two of his staff at the Chinese National Military Council to receive the Generalissimo's formal answer to Stilwell's 5 November memorandum. The National Military Council agreed to a converging attack on Burma by British and Chinese troops but desired to hold their own advance until the British were actually attacking Kalewa in Burma. On replacements, the Chinese said that 35,000 were en route to Yunnan. In addition, 54,000 more men would be sent. To move them, the Chinese would need motor fuel, which Stilwell promptly undertook to furnish. The Chinese agreed to provide more food for the Y-Force. Their medical needs were presented. The questions of interpreters, spare parts, artillery horses, and 7.92-mm. ammunition were all presented affirmatively and solutions speedily agreed on by both sides.²³ Simultaneously with these conferences on military matters Stilwell found time to talk with General Hurley, now in Chungking on behalf of the President to arrange for the Generalissimo's visit to Cairo. General Hurley made an excellent impression on Stilwell, who enjoyed Hurley's anecdotes and his comments on Allied powers and personages. For his part,

¹⁹ Stilwell Documents, Hoover Library.

²⁰ That the Generalissimo returned a written answer is implied in *The Stilwell Papers*, p. 240. However, the authors have not been able to find it.

²¹ *The Stilwell Papers*, p. 236.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 238.

²³ Notes, Conf, NMC, 11 Nov 43. Marginal notes show action directed for Americans. Stilwell Documents, Hoover Library.

Hurley liked the outspoken, acidly witty Stilwell, and the two men got on very well.²⁴ In speaking to the Generalissimo, Hurley gave a brief review of U.S. policy, which included "belief" in a "free, strong, democratic China, predominant in Asia."²⁵

Thus, on the eve of SEXTANT the opportunity of creating an effective Sino-American effort in Asia seemed to exist. In October Stilwell's diaries showed the utmost skepticism about the Generalissimo's desire to reform his Army and use it aggressively against the Japanese. But now the Generalissimo was again receiving Stilwell's views, he was considering them favorably, and he was overruling his subordinates and ordering them to take action, a changed attitude which can be seen in the great difference of General Ho's expressions of 7 November from those of 11 November. For his part, as the marginal notes on the 11 November minutes show, Stilwell was meeting every Chinese proposal and promise with appropriate orders to his own people. If this atmosphere persisted, Stilwell and the War Department might be moved to re-examine their conclusions of October and November 1943.

The issue of Sino-American relations was about to move out of Stilwell's hands into those of his superiors, the President, the Prime Minister, and the Generalissimo. At SEXTANT it would be up to the United States and the British Commonwealth to abide by the pledge of TRIDENT that nothing would be left undone to relieve the siege of China. If the President and the Prime Minister made good on the plans for a major Allied operation in Burma, Sino-American co-operation could flourish. If, however, the Generalissimo was given reason to be dissatisfied with what he received from the President and the Prime Minister, then Stilwell's position would be compromised. If the bases of Sino-American co-operation were not present, Stilwell's personal efforts could do little to remedy the situation.

Presenting CHAMPION at Cairo

With General Hurley in Chungking, the myriad details attendant on the flight to Cairo of the Generalissimo, Madame Chiang, and their entourage were speedily worked out. It was agreed among the powers that Mr. Roosevelt and Mr. Churchill would meet the Chinese leader in late November and then confer with Marshal Stalin in Tehran, Iran. The Combined Chiefs of Staff would be present and so would Admiral Mountbatten and Generals Stilwell, Chennault, and Wedemeyer.

Stilwell arrived at Cairo on 20 November. The following day he was able to see General Marshall in company with General Hurley and General Somer-

²⁴ The Stilwell diaries of this period have several appreciative comments on General Hurley. Hurley's recollections of his first meetings with General Stilwell were given to the authors. Intervs with Gen Hurley, Jan 49, Feb 50.

²⁵ *The Stilwell Papers*, pp. 238-40.



CAIRO CONFERENCE participants were, left to right front, Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek, President Roosevelt, Prime Minister Churchill, and Madame Chiang, and, standing left to right, Gen. Shang Chen, Lt. Gen. Lin Wei, General Somervell, General Stilwell, General Arnold, Field Marshall Sir John Dill, Admiral Mountbatten, and Maj. Gen. Adrian Carton de Wiart.

vell of Army Service Forces. Stilwell was anxious to raise many points with Marshall, presumably before the conferences began. His notebook records them:

Min[ister] of War. (replace [Gen Ho Ying-chin]). U.S. command after Pacific port [is opened]. 90 divisions. Offensive-defensive alliance. SEAC ambitions [to absorb CBI Theater]. Mountbatten wants me out. U.S. command of U.S. units. After CHAMPION? Future [of] CBI.

Louis [Mountbatten]: (1) Wants authority over ATC so as to "protect" it; (2) Wants China air plans for '44 and '45; (3) Wants responsibility for operation of Burma Road; (4) Liaison with Miles [U.S. Naval Observer Group in China]; (5) De Wiart [British liaison to Generalissimo] in our hqs; (6) Liaison offs [officers] with Chinese [divisions]; (7) Wants to absorb Rear Echelon; (8) Squadron of Spitfires to China; (9) Air staff mission; (10) Medical mission.

Claims GCM [Marshall] and Arnold told him to integrate [the Anglo-American air forces in India].

The plan for CHAMPION: Piece meal; indefinite objective; Indaw abortion. No problem.

UTOPIA [seizure of Andaman Islands] abortion, no bearing; leaves Chinese to hold sack; no British troops—unreliable Indian troops.²⁶

Whether Stilwell presented these points at one session, or how Marshall reacted to them, is unknown. In his talk with Marshall, Hurley, and Somervell, Stilwell was warned that the President highly disapproved of his disrespectful references to the Generalissimo.²⁷

The first plenary session of SEXTANT was set for 1100, 23 November 1943. The Joint Chiefs of Staff met briefly with Stilwell and Wedemeyer before the plenary session to receive their comments on CHAMPION, SEAC's plan for Burma. No attempt was made to weigh the plan of CHAMPION, which had been adopted over Stilwell's objections. Of the airborne operation, he remarked that he saw no point in cutting Hump tonnage just to drop a division in the jungle during the rains. Stilwell did not think the Japanese line of communications to Myitkyina a vital one and did not want it blocked at the expense of Hump tonnage (which would embarrass his relations with the Generalissimo and Chennault). However, Stilwell pledged that once CHAMPION began, he would do his best to carry it out. Wedemeyer commented that while CHAMPION did provide attacks on all key points, he did not particularly care for the Arakan situation, in which two divisions plus two brigades were given only the most limited objectives, for he mistakenly believed they faced but two Japanese regiments. Actually, the Japanese *54th Division* was then moving up to join the *55th* in the Arakan.

Stilwell's comments prefaced his presentation to the Joint Chiefs of Staff of the Generalissimo's and his proposals for China Theater, based on Stilwell's paper, *Proposals for the Coming Conference*. The Generalissimo called for occupation of north Burma, intensive training of the Chinese Army, and improvement of the line of communications to China. He desired B-29 operations from China Theater in early 1944, air attacks in the Formosa-Luzon area in October 1944 to support U.S. naval operations in that area, the taking of Canton and Hong Kong in November 1944–May 1945, and an attack on Formosa from Chinese ports, if required. The paper was most significant because it had the Generalissimo's approval. This was, so Marshall said, the first time since the war began that the Generalissimo had shown an active interest in the improvement and employment of his Army. General Marshall and Admiral Ernest J. King, U.S. Chief of Naval Operations, thought this attitude extremely important and not to be discouraged if at all possible.²⁸ After this session

²⁶ (1) These jottings are from one of Stilwell's notebooks of the type in which he kept his diary. This one is labeled Data, and is hereafter cited as Data Notebook. At the top of the page on which these entries begin, Stilwell wrote "GCM" in bold letters. (2) Stilwell's fears about Mountbatten's attempts to whittle away his authority in India and China are also expressed in Rad AGWAR 863, Stilwell to Marshall, 11 Nov 43. Item 1234, Bk 4, JWS Personal File.

²⁷ *The Stilwell Papers*, p. 245.

²⁸ (1) See pp. 57–58, above. (2) Min, JCS 128th Mtg, 23 Nov 43, Item 2. (3) CCS 405, 22 Nov 43, sub: Role of China in Defeat of Japan. (4) Japanese Study 89.

closed, the American service chiefs joined their colleagues and superiors for the plenary session.

Admiral Mountbatten had expected CHAMPION to be first presented to the British Chiefs of Staff by himself, and to the Joint Chiefs of Staff by General Wedemeyer. On their approving it, CHAMPION would go to the Combined Chiefs of Staff, and if they concurred, be presented to the Generalissimo, the President, and the Prime Minister as an agreed-on CCS proposal. This was the usual practice in such cases, but at SEXTANT it was reversed. The Generalissimo was present, though unfortunately for security reasons his arrival was not announced in advance, so neither the President nor the Prime Minister had been at the airport to greet him and Madame Chiang. This was a blow to Chinese pride.

Because the Generalissimo was at hand, and because Roosevelt and Churchill wanted him to enter immediately into military discussions, the SEAC plan was laid before the Generalissimo at once, and therefore without its having been considered by the CCS. Thus, the Generalissimo was being asked to approve CHAMPION in advance of its approval by the Allies.

As presented formally to the three Allied statesmen, to Harry L. Hopkins, Madame Chiang, and the highest service advisers, CHAMPION's first phase called for the advance of the Chinese 22d and 38th Divisions from Ledo, an operation then under way. In mid-January 1944, 15 Corps would move forward in the Arakan to take up an improved line, and would exploit any success that might be gained. At the same time 4 Corps would advance on Mawlaik, Minthami, and Sittaung, driving southeast as far as possible. In February 1944 three long-range penetration groups would attack. Paratroops would seize Indaw in mid-March after which the 26th Indian Division would fly in to hold it.²⁹ A major amphibious operation would be staged in the Bay of Bengal. For security reasons, the amphibious operation was not further described to the Chinese. As for weather, Mountbatten hoped to end his advance by early April when the monsoon rains would break. During the monsoon, the long-range penetration groups would operate, and if the CCS gave the needed resources, the advance would resume after the monsoon's end. The rains were expected to prevent a Japanese reaction.³⁰

The Chinese, apprised of CHAMPION weeks before by Stilwell, were immediately critical. The Generalissimo did not believe that 15 and 4 Corps were intended to advance far enough into Burma; he wanted them to drive on Mandalay. He insisted that the advance must be synchronized with a naval operation. But the Generalissimo's argument for a naval operation was now affected by a sovereign fact which he disregarded. The Japanese were known by the SEXTANT conferees to have completed a railway from Thailand to Burma which

²⁹ (1) SEAC War Diary, 23 Nov 43. (2) Min, SEXTANT Conf, First Plenary Mtg, Villa Kirk, 23 Nov 43. (3) Henry H. Arnold, *Global Mission* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1949), p. 460.

³⁰ (1) Min, CCS 129th Mtg, 24 Nov 43, Item 5. (2) CCS Info Memo 166, 18 Dec 43.

made them independent of imports through Rangoon. The Generalissimo also insisted that whatever the demands of Burma operations the Hump lift must not fall below 10,000 tons a month. A day later Chennault gave the monthly requirements of the Chinese Air Force and the Fourteenth Air Force, 10,000 tons a month. Asked by General Arnold what that would leave for the Chinese Army in China, which had a major role to play in the reconquest of Burma, General Chennault simply replied that 10,000 tons was what he needed.³¹

Trying To Reach Agreement

These viewpoints having all been expressed, the conferees had two delicate tasks to handle simultaneously: to settle on a plan and to secure the Generalissimo's assent to it. Reversing the usual process by which plans were approved, in order to spare the Generalissimo's feelings, was leading into ever more tangled thickets. Mountbatten was sent to the Generalissimo's villa to explain that if the offensive toward Mandalay which the Chinese leader desired was carried out, it would entail diversion of all Hump tonnage. "Welcome change from telling me to fix it up," wrote Stilwell.³²

As Admiral Mountbatten tried to explain the situation, the Generalissimo grew enthusiastic and announced he would press for both an airborne assault on Mandalay and 10,000 tons a month over the Hump, which would require an added 535 transports sent to India. Mountbatten finally escaped by saying that he would lay the Generalissimo's wishes before the CCS to see if they could find the 535 transports, which Mountbatten knew were nowhere to be had. The CCS formally stated that the 535 aircraft could not be found, and in view of the uncertainty surrounding the Generalissimo's attitude, Mountbatten was asked to obtain his formal agreement to go back into Burma.³³

While Mountbatten, aided by Churchill, was essaying this task, Stilwell went with Marshall on 25 November to confer with the President. Before the interview Stilwell noted what he wanted to say to the President about the problems that faced him in China: "Ask FDR: Field chief of staff [to Generalissimo], can [have]: (1) Man power; (2) Executive authority; (3) U.S. troops; (4) Chinese-American command. Keep X-force, add one corps [as a force directly under Stilwell's command]"³⁴

Preparing for his interview with the President, Stilwell sketched a point he wanted to make:

³¹ (1) Min cited n. 29(2). (2) Min, CCS 129th Mtg, 24 Nov 43, Item 7.

³² (1) *The Stilwell Papers*, p. 246. (2) SEAC War Diary, 24 Nov 43.

³³ (1) SEAC War Diary, 24 Nov 43. (2) Min, CCS 130th Mtg, 25 Nov 43, Item 1.

³⁴ Data Notebook. A little earlier in the Data Notebook, in the first version of his notes for the conference with the President, Stilwell put it: "FDR. Recommendations. Private army of one corps. Keep X-Force and add one in China. Recommend to Peanut more power for me. Field Chief of Staff. Oust running dog. FDR. My mission complicated by not knowing what direct messages [from Roosevelt to Chiang] contain. No bargaining power. (TWILIGHT)."

No matter what Peanut agrees to, if something is not done about the Chinese high command the effort is wasted. I suggest stipulation of U.S. command, with real executive authority. If impossible over large group, then over composite Chinese-American corps. Lack of real power and control of Gmo. He will order. *Kan pu* will block. Suggest new Minister of War or thorough re-organization of [Chinese] War Department. Or *American take over the first 30 complete and operate them* [Stilwell's italics].³⁵

Stilwell and Marshall entered the President's room, and Stilwell began his presentation. The President seemed to hear him with "little attention" and in the middle of Stilwell's report broke in to talk about the Andaman Islands, on which he wanted to put some heavy bombers. Trying to bring the discussion back to China's problems, Stilwell pled for some U.S. combat troops in CBI. In reply, the President offered to put a brigade of U.S. Marines in Chungking. "Marines are well known," said the President. "They've been all over China, to Peking and Shanghai and everywhere. The Army has only been in Tientsin."

Stilwell told the President that the Chinese had reneged on their agreements, that to carry out his mission he needed more power and executive authority over Chinese troops. Stilwell also dwelt on the "basic factors of our presence" in China, that is, the Chinese were to supply the men while the Americans supplied weapons and training. The President, though promising to speak to the Generalissimo at once on these points, seemed to show little interest.³⁶

The President's attitude depressed Stilwell, but the conference was not all negative. Mr. Roosevelt stated that the Generalissimo had agreed to CHAMPION.³⁷ Then came bigger news. An American corps was out of the question, but the Chinese could have equipment for ninety divisions and could help occupy Japan. At the JCS meeting that day General Marshall had remarked that there was pressure on the President to give the Generalissimo something to show as a result of his trip, that the President had been spoken to about arming the third thirty divisions but had postponed any definite commitment, though Roosevelt had made it clear the United States intended eventually to equip ninety Chinese divisions.³⁸ Now the President told the Generalissimo's joint chief of staff of the ninety-division intention, and Stilwell duly listed it among the "Cairo results."³⁹

Returning to his quarters, Stilwell took the notes he had prepared for his

³⁵ Data Notebook.

³⁶ (1) Handwritten pages headed Story of J. Peene, Sr. (Hereafter, Story of J. Peene, Sr.) Stilwell Documents, Hoover Library. (2) Joseph Peene was General Stilwell's maternal grandfather. Mr. Peene was famous in family tradition for paying his employees in gold pieces. Because the Generalissimo later asked the President for \$1,000,000,000 gold the event may have reminded the sometimes waggish Stilwell of this episode from the days of the gold standard. See letter, Mrs. Winifred A. Stilwell to Sunderland, 4 August 1952. OCMH. (3) *The Stilwell Papers*, p. 246.

³⁷ *The Stilwell Papers*, p. 246.

³⁸ (1) Story of J. Peene, Sr. The exact wording is: "What shall we give the Chinese? Equip. for 90 XX [divisions]. But the American Corps is out, and we give them Japan. What a laugh for the Japs." (2) Min, JCS 130th Mtg, 25 Nov 43, Item 6.

³⁹ Data Notebook.

talk with the President, drew a line diagonally across the page and wrote above them: "NB: FDR is not interested."⁴⁰

While Stilwell was preparing to meet with the President, Mountbatten and the Prime Minister attempted to secure a firm assent from the Generalissimo to CHAMPION. Initially, as the President told Stilwell, they succeeded. On the early afternoon of 25 November the Generalissimo agreed to go into Burma on two conditions: that the Royal Navy's Eastern Fleet command the Bay of Bengal, and that an amphibious operation be mounted there. That evening the Generalissimo met again with the President and reversed himself on every point.

Mountbatten was again sent into action to restore the situation but found the Generalissimo obdurate. So Mountbatten turned to Churchill, had lunch with him, and the Prime Minister agreed that he with the President and Madame Chiang would try to bring the Generalissimo round. The Allied leaders met the afternoon of the 26th at tea, unfortunately with neither secretaries nor minutes. After tea the Prime Minister and Madame Chiang separately told Mountbatten that the Generalissimo had agreed on every point. Such was the situation when Churchill and Roosevelt with their key advisers departed for Tehran, and the Generalissimo prepared to go to Chungking. For the first time in the war, the Prime Minister, the President, and the CCS had met the Generalissimo and endeavored to secure a binding agreement from him. "They have been driven absolutely mad," wrote Admiral Mountbatten, "and I shall certainly get far more sympathy from the former in the future."⁴¹

With the dignitaries out of the way, Admiral Mountbatten called a meeting of the SEAC delegation on 27 November to clear up the loose ends. He felt "staggered" when Stilwell came in to tell him that just before departing that morning the Generalissimo had reversed himself again, rejected all his previous agreements, and ordered Stilwell as the latter put it, to "stay and protest. I am to stick out for TOREADOR [the airborne assault on Mandalay] and 10,000 tons [a month over the Hump]."⁴² Mountbatten thought quickly. He had arranged to inspect the Ramgarh Training Center together with the Generalissimo in a few days and believed that if he had the elusive Chinese leader to himself for a few minutes he might succeed in getting a binding agreement from him. So he became diplomatically deaf, told Stilwell he had not understood him, and asked that a radio be sent to him at New Delhi.⁴³

Summing up the SEXTANT Conference at that point, Stilwell asked himself: "So where are we? TARZAN? Tonnage? Command? Sure on equipment for 90 divisions. . . ." ⁴⁴

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ (1) Extracts, SAC's Personal Diary, 25, 26, 27 Nov 43; quotation from Extract, 27 Nov 43. SEAC War Diary. (2) *The Stilwell Papers*, p. 246.

⁴² (1) SEAC War Diary, 27 Nov 43. (2) Stilwell Diary, 27 Nov 43.

⁴³ SEAC War Diary, 27 Nov 43.

⁴⁴ Stilwell Diary, 27 Nov 43.

Thus, of the two delicate and simultaneous operations, the agreement and the plan, one had not been brought off. Nor was there agreement between the President, the Prime Minister, the CCS, and the JCS on future operations in SEAC. Churchill early indicated his attitude by telling Admiral Mountbatten on 21 November that he meant to have a landing on Sumatra or nothing, that if there was no such operation, he would take away SEAC's landing craft for an operation against the island of Rhodes in the Mediterranean.⁴⁵ A few days later Marshall remarked that Roosevelt had expressed his opposition to any diversion of Royal Navy landing craft from BUCCANEER (now the code name for the Andamans operation which was to meet the Generalissimo's long-standing demand for an amphibious operation). This expression also was the view of the Joint Chiefs, who were strong for BUCCANEER. In a conference at Tehran between the President and the JCS, it was observed that the British would do all they could to cancel BUCCANEER for an operation against Rhodes. The President quickly replied that the Allies were obligated to the Chinese to stage BUCCANEER, an attitude which suggests that he was unaware of the Generalissimo's final reversal. However, at the first CCS session at Tehran the British Chiefs of Staff urged the abandonment of BUCCANEER, and it remained to be seen whose view would prevail.⁴⁶

While the President was at Tehran, the Cairo Declaration was issued by the President and the Prime Minister as a joint pronouncement of the United States, the British Commonwealth, and China. In sharp contrast to the actual course of events at SEXTANT, the declaration read: "The several military missions have agreed upon future military operations against Japan. The Three Great Allies expressed their resolve to bring unrelenting pressure against their brutal enemies by land, and sea. This pressure is already rising." The declaration went on to pledge the return of Manchuria, Formosa, and the Pescadores to China, and that Korea should be free and independent. It then concluded: "With these objects in view, the three Allies, in harmony with those of the United Nations at war with Japan, will continue to persevere in the serious and prolonged operations necessary to procure the unconditional surrender of Japan."⁴⁷

While the President and Prime Minister were meeting with Marshal Stalin at Tehran, the Generalissimo again changed his mind about Burma operations. While inspecting the Chinese New First Army at Ramgarh on 30 November, he again agreed to join in CHAMPION. He confirmed his resolve in a speech to the Chinese soldiers, placing them under Mountbatten and Stilwell for the coming operations.

⁴⁵ SEAC War Diary, 21 Nov 43.

⁴⁶ (1) Min, JCS 131st Mtg, 26 Nov 43, Item 3. (2) Min, Mtg of President and JCS, American Legation, 28 Nov 43. (3) Min, CCS 131st Mtg, 26 Nov 43, Item 4. (4) Min, CCS 132d Mtg, 30 Nov 43.

⁴⁷ U.S. Department of State, *United States Relations With China* (Washington, 1949) p. 519.



CHIANG KAI-SHEK AT RAMGARH. *Accompanied by Madame Chiang and Admiral Mountbatten the Generalissimo inspects the Chinese New First Army.*

I feel greatly inspired today as I am here with you, officers and men, at this post. Being able to speak to you in a friendly land, is indeed, a rare opportunity. You must pay full attention to every word I say and bear it firmly in your mind. It shall serve as a moral encouragement for your endeavor to glorify our nation by adding a glorious page to the history of our national army. Now that our National Army is enabled to come over to India as a combined combat strength with our worthy allies, [it?] has already registered an illustrious page in our national annals.

It is also your good fortune that you are placed under the joint command of Admiral Lord Louis Mountbatten and General Joseph W. Stilwell, respectively supreme commander and deputy supreme commander of S.E. Asia Command. My expectation of the New First Army is for you to accomplish this worthy mission. My meeting with you here today is just like a family reunion which imparts profound attachment to both father and sons. It is therefore your duty to listen to my words as follows [here, the Generalissimo encouraged his troops to fight well for China]. I exhort you to keep my words. Unitedly under the joint command of Admiral Lord Mountbatten and General Stilwell you shall destroy the enemy. . . .⁴⁸

Over the Watershed: The Changed Attitude Toward China

At Tehran the President met Marshal Stalin for the first time. Explaining his China strategy, the President spoke of converging attacks on north Burma,

⁴⁸ Address, Generalissimo to Chinese New First Army in India, 30 Nov 43. JWS Misc Papers, 1943. (See Bibliographical Note.)

and of amphibious operations in the Bay of Bengal. The goal was to open the road to China and supply China so that it would stay in the war and, also, to put the Allies in a position to bomb Japan from Chinese bases. Marshal Stalin expressed no opposition to this, and, indeed, repeated his earlier promises to enter the war against Japan.⁴⁹

After meeting and conferring with Marshal Stalin, the President, in the opinion of Robert E. Sherwood, arrived at certain conclusions with regard to the Soviet Union and its leader:

Roosevelt now felt sure that, to use his own term, Stalin was "getatable," despite his bludgeoning tactics and his attitude of cynicism toward such matters as the rights of small nations, and that when Russia could be convinced that her legitimate claims and requirements—such as the right to access to warm water ports—were to be given full recognition, she would prove tractable and co-operative in maintaining the peace of the postwar world.

If, therefore, good relations could be established with the Soviet Union, all the pieces of the postwar puzzle would fall into place. In the immediate present there was no doubt of what the Soviet Union wanted—a cross-Channel assault (OVERLORD) and a landing on the coast of southern France (ANVIL) as soon as possible and on as big a scale as possible.⁵⁰ The President, therefore, would weigh operations in Southeast Asia in an atmosphere very different from that of the first conferences in Cairo a few days before. Such was the situation when the President, the Prime Minister, and the Combined Chiefs of Staff finished at Tehran and returned to Cairo.

Mr. Churchill and the British Chiefs of Staff immediately attacked BUCANEER. Churchill took the Stalin promise to enter the war with Japan as a stunning surprise that changed the whole strategic picture. He called it a decisive event. Soviet entry in the Pacific war would give the Allies better bases than China ever could. In the light of Stalin's promise, operations in Southeast Asia lost much of their value. In this connection, he was astounded by SEAC's requirements for BUCCANEER, which he understood to be 58,000 men to oppose 5,000 Japanese. The other decisive event, said Churchill, was setting the date for OVERLORD. Nothing anywhere should interfere with that great operation. The proper course, the Prime Minister argued, was to cancel BUCANEER and use its landing craft to reinforce the amphibious assault on southern France, ANVIL.⁵¹

The Prime Minister's pleased surprise at Marshal Stalin's promise to enter the Pacific war and his argument that because of it the strategic picture in the Pacific had changed since the first Cairo meetings were difficult to reconcile with the circumstance that the Soviet Union originally promised to enter the

⁴⁹ (1) Robert E. Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins: An Intimate History* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1948) pp. 778–79. (2) CM-IN 1946, Ambassador W. Averell Harriman to Marshall, 4 Nov 43.

⁵⁰ Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins*, pp. 788, 798–99.

⁵¹ Min, SEXTANT Conf, Third Plenary Mtg, Villa Kirk, 4 Dec 43.

Pacific war in October 1943 at the Moscow Conference and repeated its promises in November.⁵²

At some point during these post-Tehran discussions of BUCCANEER, a radio from General Boatner in north Burma to theater headquarters in New Delhi, detailing at length the command problems he had met with the Chinese, arrived at Cairo. By mischance, it had been so forwarded, and was then delivered to the SEAC delegation. Circulated as an admission by Stilwell's own headquarters that even U.S.-trained Chinese troops were unreliable the radio was a telling argument against any campaign that depended on the Chinese in any capacity.⁵³

Mr. Roosevelt with Admiral King and Admiral William D. Leahy, the President's Chief of Staff, held that there was a definite commitment to the Generalissimo, and that a whole train of unhappy consequences might follow if China's allies broke their promise. He had a moral obligation to the Chinese, Roosevelt remarked, and could not forego the operation without a great and readily apparent reason. There the 4 December session ended, with a directive from the President and Prime Minister to the Combined Chiefs to try to find agreement on that basis.⁵⁴ The JCS met at 0900 on 5 December and found themselves still in accord on the need to execute BUCCANEER.

The Combined Chiefs met at 1030. General Marshall drew attention to a new strategic factor which had arisen since TRIDENT. The blast of world-wide publicity following SEAC's creation had attracted heavy Japanese reinforcements to Burma which would seize the initiative unless the Allies struck first. Marshall feared that such a Japanese offensive would imperil the Hump route. If it would be possible to abandon BUCCANEER and still carry out the North Burma Campaign, Marshall would not be seriously disturbed, but he did not think there would be a Burma campaign unless there was an amphibious operation. Admiral Leahy remarked briefly that canceling the amphibious operation meant either the failure or the abandonment of the Burma campaign.

The Chief of the Imperial General Staff, General Brooke, and Air Chief Marshal Sir Charles Portal repeated the arguments that BUCCANEER was a diversion from the main effort in Europe and that the Chinese contribution was a negligible factor. They also noted that the main effort against Japan was now to be made in the Pacific, which was inconsistent with a heavy allocation of resources to Burma. The meeting ended with a decision to present the various points in dispute to the President and the Prime Minister.⁵⁵

Mr. Roosevelt opened the plenary session by pointing out that BUCCANEER was the dividing issue between the staffs. He acknowledged that the Gen-

⁵² The original statement was made by Soviet Foreign Minister Vyacheslav M. Molotov to Cordell Hull at Moscow and confirmed shortly after by Molotov to Harriman, who promptly relayed it to General Marshall. (1) Cordell Hull, *The Memoirs of Cordell Hull* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1948) II, 1309. (2) Rad cited n. 49(2).

⁵³ (1) Story of J. Peene, Sr. (2) Ltr, Hill to Ward, 2 Sep 52. OCMH.

⁵⁴ (1) Min cited n. 51. (2) Min, CCS 134th Mtg, 4 Dec 43, Item 4.

⁵⁵ Min, CCS 135th Mtg, 5 Dec 43.

eralissimo had left Cairo believing an amphibious operation would be carried out with TARZAN, the India-based portion of CHAMPION. The President was dubious about staking everything on Russian good will, for he feared that the Allies might sacrifice the esteem of the Chinese without later securing the aid of the Russians. Admiral King rebutted the argument that BUCCANEER had to be canceled to secure landing craft for ANVIL by stating that a two-division lift for ANVIL was in sight and might even be improved upon. This, he went on, would entail keeping back four months' production from the Pacific.

Though the intimate connection between BUCCANEER and Chinese participation in Burma operations was admitted by all, it was quite clear that many of those present hoped the Generalissimo would perform his share of the bargain even though his Allies reneged on theirs. The British were adamant in opposing BUCCANEER as a diversion from OVERLORD, and Churchill made it clear that he felt no obligations to the Chinese. The meeting ended with an agreement to inquire of SEAC what it could do if the bulk of its landing craft were taken away.⁵⁶

So questioned, SEAC quickly replied that canceling BUCCANEER would, in the light of the Generalissimo's known attitude, lead to the collapse of TARZAN. In its stead SEAC suggested overland operations from Imphal toward Kalewa and Kalemyo in Burma (which if successful would be a long step toward Mandalay), continuation of the advance from Ledo, continuation of the current operations in the Arakan, and an assault by the long-range penetration groups at the proper time. SEAC acknowledged that this operation would not open the land route to China.⁵⁷ Admiral Leahy described SEAC's estimate of 50,000 men for BUCCANEER as excessive, but General Wedemeyer replied that a smashing victory was needed to restore the morale of SEAC's troops and added that all the resources needed for BUCCANEER, except an added 120 carrier-based fighters, were in sight. Admiral King immediately said that he might find four or six escort carriers to fill the gap. But there was still no agreement on BUCCANEER, and the case went back to the President and the Prime Minister.⁵⁸

On the night of 5 December Mr. Roosevelt accepted Mr. Churchill's arguments and withdrew his support from BUCCANEER. In abandoning BUCCANEER, the President overrode the very strongest protests of his service advisers. In his memoirs, Admiral Leahy wrote:

I felt that we were taking a grave risk. Chiang might drop out of the war. He never had indicated much faith in British intentions, but had relied on the United States. If the Chinese quit, the tasks of MacArthur and Nimitz in the Pacific, already difficult, would be much harder. Japanese man power in great numbers would be released to oppose our advance toward the mainland of Japan. Fortunately for us, the courageous Chinese stayed in the fight.

⁵⁶ Min, SEXTANT Conf, Fifth Plenary Mtg, Villa Kirk, 5 Dec 43.

⁵⁷ Rad SEACOS 38, 6 Dec 43. Min, SEXTANT Conf, p. 312.

⁵⁸ Min, CCS 136th Mtg, 5 Dec 43, Item 1.

After the war, in writing his memoirs, Admiral King remarked that he had been "distressed" by the breach of the long-standing promise to the Chinese, and added that in his opinion this was the only time during the war when the President had overruled the Joint Chiefs.⁵⁹

After agreeing to cancel BUCCANEER, the President and Hopkins drafted a radio to the Generalissimo telling him the bad news. The message was based on SEAC's estimate that there could be no major amphibious operation if BUCCANEER was canceled. The estimate was in error, as SEAC soon discovered, but the two U.S. leaders naturally accepted it, and, consulting Churchill but not the CCS, told the Generalissimo there could be no successful amphibious operation simultaneously with TARZAN. They asked him if he would go ahead without the amphibious operation (it will be recalled that the Chinese had never been told exactly what sort of operation was contemplated), or would he wait until November 1944 when there might be a major seaborne landing? In the meantime, the President suggested, all air transport would be concentrated on increasing the tonnage flown to China. Roosevelt and Hopkins held out the "fair prospect of terminating the war with Germany by the end of summer of 1944," which would release great resources for the Far East. (on the night of 6 December a poll of the CCS revealed that the earliest date any of them would set for the end of the war in Europe was February 1945, with half of them guessing it would be spring 1945).⁶⁰

Stilwell's Search for Guidance

On 6 December Stilwell and his political adviser, John P. Davies, Jr., met with the President and Hopkins. Stilwell had heard of unfavorable developments and was anxious to know what effect they would have on U.S. policy in China. Thanks to the *rapprochement* with the Generalissimo in October, the American soldier was still joint chief of staff for China Theater, was commanding two divisions of Chinese troops in India and Burma (one of them engaged in combat), and was commanding general of the U.S. China, Burma and India Theater. The President's radio could be expected to shock the Generalissimo, and guidance for Stilwell in the radically changed situation was essential.

For two years the President's declared policy had been to treat China as a Great Power and make of her a partner in a coalition with Britain, Russia, and the United States. In the course of this period the President had deferred continually to the Generalissimo's wishes, sometimes against the advice of his

⁵⁹ (1) William D. Leahy, *I Was There: The Personal Story of the Chief of Staff to Presidents Roosevelt and Truman Based on His Notes and Diaries Made at the Time* (New York: Whittlesey House, McGraw Hill Book Company, Inc., 1950) pp. 213-14. (2) Ernest J. King and Walter Muir Whitehill, *Fleet Admiral King: A Naval Record* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1952), p. 525. (3) Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins*, p. 800.

⁶⁰ (1) Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins*, pp. 800-801; quotation, p. 801. (2) Arnold, *Global Mission*, p. 473.

service chiefs. Thus, in March 1943, and again in May 1943, he had overruled them to back General Chennault, explaining his decision by the desperate urgency of China's need, and the necessity of acknowledging the wishes of the Generalissimo as Supreme Commander, China Theater.

The President had insisted on China's joining in the diplomatic councils of the Great Powers and had carried his point just ten weeks before at Moscow. In the course of the previous two years the United States had made a number of commitments to China, of which the chief was that of TRIDENT, to break the blockade of China at the earliest moment. Roosevelt had been a driving force in these developments and had often expressed his appreciation of the urgent character of China's needs.

Casablanca, TRIDENT, QUADRANT, had erected an imposing structure of plans and decisions; an entire new Allied theater, SEAC, under an aggressive commander, had been created. All these efforts had seemed to be building to a grand climax, CHAMPION, the culmination of these diplomatic and strategic efforts. CHAMPION would break the blockade of China, with all the momentous ensuing consequences.

Now, the situation was changed, in a dramatic reversal, and it was essential that Stilwell know how the President wanted to meet the situation. The President explained that the conference had come to an impasse and could not be permitted to end in disagreement. Therefore, he would yield to the British point of view. The United States and Russia had insisted on OVERLORD, and so, said the President, Churchill had insisted on giving up TARZAN.⁶¹

So much was clear, and Stilwell asked: "I am interested to know how this affects our policy in China." The President's reply was most indefinite. In retrospect, it appears that he had not decided what to do about China, and so Stilwell could not keep the conversation away from Roosevelt family history, the postwar development of China, and the new, postwar Asia. Stilwell and Davies prepared minutes of the conversation, and from them, Stilwell tried to puzzle out just what the President wanted him to do.⁶²

Stilwell concluded that the President's policy was: "Keep China in the war. We must retain our flank position [vis-à-vis Japan]. If CKS flops, back somebody else."⁶³

But how was all this to be done in the face of BUCCANEER's cancellation and the inevitable compromising of Stilwell's position? "Only remarks pertinent to question," wrote Stilwell, were "If TARZAN is out, we can boost the [Hump] tonnage. VLR bombers [B-29's] can bomb Japan."⁶⁴ Several months later

⁶¹ See Story of J. Peene, Sr., atchd illustration.

⁶² *The Stilwell Papers*, page 251, has the text of the conversation.

⁶³ (1) Story of J. Peene, Sr. (2) Elsewhere, Stilwell gives his impression of the President's wishes as: "Policy: 'We want to help China.'—Period." Stilwell Undated Paper (SUP) 65. (See Bibliographical Note.)

⁶⁴ Story of J. Peene, Sr.

Stilwell told Marshall that he had sought guidance at Cairo but had found none.⁶⁵ Marshall did not challenge this statement.

Indeed, the President's remarks raised more questions than they answered. If, under Japanese attack, or economic distress, the Nationalist regime began to crumble, then, according to the President, the United States would "look for some other man or group of men, to carry on."⁶⁶ Whom did the President have in mind, a dissident war lord like Marshal Li Chi-shen or the Communists? At what point was Stilwell to begin dealing with such people?

Knowing that Stilwell's position in China would be almost impossible after SEXTANT, Marshall offered him a high post in another theater. Stilwell declined it.⁶⁷ Talking with Marshall the day after his interview with the President, Stilwell learned: "George hopeful about Germany. 'Hang on and keep going.' Nothing else he could tell me. Everything dangling."⁶⁸

One thing, arms for ninety divisions, might have kept the Generalissimo from regarding SEXTANT as an utter disappointment. On 10 December Stilwell attended a meeting to discuss the project.⁶⁹ Three weeks later, after Stilwell returned to CBI, Marshall was told by OPD: "The commitment regarding the Lend-Lease equipping of Chinese divisions the President actually made at SEXTANT is not known. We are proceeding on the assumption the President made no commitment on the timing of the flow of equipment."⁷⁰ Stilwell was informed accordingly. As for the landing craft that on Churchill's insistence were taken from SEAC to reinforce ANVIL, several weeks later the British Chiefs of Staff, supported by the Prime Minister, made the first of several attempts to have ANVIL canceled for operations elsewhere in the Mediterranean.⁷¹

The Generalissimo's answer to the President's radio telling him of BUCCANEER's cancellation was awaited anxiously, for SEAC could have no CCS directive on amphibious operations until it was known how the Chinese would react to the disappointment. Discussion of future operations continued while the CCS awaited his reply. General Marshall suggested that the land operations outlined by SEAC might well be undertaken by the Chinese advancing from Yunnan and screened by the U.S. long-range penetration groups directed at Quebec, with some of the troops released by BUCCANEER forming a reserve. The Chief of the Imperial General Staff countered with the proposal that Mountbatten's new mission should be to guard Assam by active offensive operations.⁷²

⁶⁵ CM-IN 4651, Stilwell to Marshall, 7 Mar 44.

⁶⁶ *The Stilwell Papers*, p. 252, quoting Roosevelt.

⁶⁷ Interv with Marshall, 6 Jul 49.

⁶⁸ Stilwell Diary, 7 Dec 43.

⁶⁹ Stilwell Diary, 10 Dec 43.

⁷⁰ Memo, Handy for Marshall, 31 Dec 43, sub: Equipping Chinese Divs, sent as CM-OUT 11706, Marshall to Sultan for Stilwell, 31 Dec 43.

⁷¹ Ltr, Lt Gen Frederick E. Morgan, COSSAC, to Secy, COS, 6 Jan 44. COSSAC (44) 5, AFHQ G-3 File, OCMH. Also published as CCS 446/1, 8 Jan 44, sub: Three Div Lift for ANVIL. ABC 384 (Europe) 1 Mar 43, Sec 2A, A48-224.

⁷² Min, CCS 138th Mtg, 7 Dec 43.

Meanwhile, Stilwell sent a radio to General Hearn in Chungking, ordering Hearn to see the Generalissimo and urge him to go ahead with his share of the campaign, regardless of BUCCANEER's cancellation.⁷³ This action was consistent with Stilwell's often expressed view that seizure of the Andaman Islands contributed nothing to operations in Burma. His reasoning was supported by the facts that the Japanese had opened a railway to Thailand, so that they no longer depended on the port of Rangoon, and that airfields on the Andamans were only 100 miles closer to Rangoon than those already in Allied hands, so that their possession would not be decisive in air operations against Rangoon, even if such were of vital importance.

When the Generalissimo's answer to the President arrived at Cairo on 9 December, it spoke in ominous tones:

I have received your telegram of December Sixth. Upon my return I asked Madame Chiang to inform you of the gratifying effect the communique of the Cairo Conference has had on the Chinese army and people in uplifting their morale to continue active resistance against Japan. This letter is on the way and is being brought to you by the pilot, Captain Shelton.

First, prior to the Cairo Conference there had been disturbing elements voicing their discontent and uncertainty of America and Great Britain's attitude in waging a global war and at the same time leaving China to shift as best she could against our common enemy. At one stroke the Cairo communique decisively swept away this suspicion in that we three had jointly and publicly pledged to launch a joint all-out offensive in the Pacific.

Second, if it should now be known to the Chinese army and people that a radical change of policy and strategy is being contemplated, the repercussions would be so disheartening that I fear of the consequences of China's inability to hold out much longer.

Third, I am aware and appreciate your being influenced by the probable tremendous advantages to be reaped by China as well as by the United Nations as a whole in speedily defeating Germany first. For the victory of one theater of war necessarily affects all other theaters; on the other hand, the collapse of the China theater would have equally grave consequences on the global war. I have therefore come to this conclusion that in order to save this grave situation, I am inclined to accept your recommendation. You will doubtless realize that in so doing my task in rallying the nation to continue resistance is being made infinitely more difficult.

(1) Because the danger to the China theater lies not only in the inferiority of our military strength, but also, and more especially, in our critical economic condition which may seriously affect the morale of the army and people, and cause at any moment a sudden collapse of the entire front. Judging from the present critical situation, military as well as economic, it would be impossible for us to hold on for six months, and *a fortiori* to wait till November 1944. In my last conversation with you I stated that China's economic situation was more critical than the military. The only seeming solution is to assure the Chinese people and army of your sincere concern in the China theater of war by assisting China to hold on with a billion gold dollar loan to strengthen her economic front and relieve her dire economic needs. Simultaneously, in order to prove our resolute determination to bring relentless pressure on Japan, the Chinese air force and the American air force stationed in China should be increased, as from next spring, by at least double the number of aircraft already agreed upon, and the total of air transportation should be increased, as from February of next year, to at least 20,000 tons a month to make effective the operation of the additional planes.

⁷³ Rad AMSME 1720, Stilwell to Hearn, 7 Dec 43. Item 1502, Bk 5, JWS Personal File.

(2) In this way it might be possible to bring relief to our economic condition for the coming year, and to maintain the morale of the army and the people who would be greatly encouraged by America's timely assistance. What I have suggested is, I believe, the only way of remedying the drawbacks of the strategy concerning the China and Pacific theaters. I am sure you will appreciate my difficult position and give me the necessary assistance. I have instructed General Stilwell to return immediately to Chungking and I shall discuss with him regarding the details of the proposed changed plan and shall let you know of my decision as to which one of your suggestions is the more feasible.

From the declaration of the Teheran Conference Japan will rightly deduce that practically the entire weight of the United Nations' forces will be applied to the European front thus abandoning the China theater to the mercy of Japan's mechanized air and land forces. It would be strategic on Japan's part to (3) liquidate the China Affair during the coming year. It may therefore be expected that the Japanese will before long launch an all-out offensive against China so as to remove the threat to their rear, and thus re-capture the militarists' waning popularity and bolster their fighting morale in the Pacific. This is the problem which I have to face. Knowing that you are a realist, and as your loyal colleague, I feel constrained to acquaint you with the above facts. Awaiting an early reply,

Chiang Kai-shek⁷⁴

The Generalissimo's requests were not enough to bring agreement on a new directive to SEAC for a major amphibious operation. For the time being SEAC and Stilwell would have to be governed by the SEXTANT decisions, which were sufficiently explicit. These ordered the occupation of upper Burma in spring 1944 (1) to improve the air route and (2) to open land communications with China. An amphibious operation at the same time was approved. TWILIGHT, the B-29 project, was also approved, and the Fourteenth Air Force, the Chinese Army, and the Chinese Air Force would be improved for intensified operations in and from China. The general concept of the SEXTANT decisions on the Pacific and Asia was that "the main effort against Japan should be made in the Pacific." What was attempted elsewhere in Asia would be in support of that main effort. There would be first priority for ANVIL and OVERLORD, the supreme operations for 1944.⁷⁵

SEAC Tries To Salvage Burma Operations

Admiral Mountbatten was an aggressive commander, of proven desire to close with the enemy. Moreover, he and his subordinates, of whom Stilwell was one, were bound by the SEXTANT decision to clear north Burma. Lastly, fighting in the Arakan and in north Burma had been under way for weeks, with both sides reinforcing. BUCCANEER's demise left SEAC the alternatives of postponing an attempt at a major co-ordinated offensive for another year, which would probably mean the end of operations to clear north Burma, or of staging an amphibious operation smaller than BUCCANEER, with the hope that it would

⁷⁴ Rad AGWAR 919, Chiang to Roosevelt, 9 Dec 43. Item 1505A, Bk 5, JWS Personal File.

⁷⁵ (1) CCS 417, 2 Dec 43, sub: Plan for Defeat of Japan. (2) CCS 426/1, 6 Dec 43, sub: Rpt to President and Prime Minister. (3) CCS 397 (rev), 3 Dec 43, sub: Specific Opns for Defeat of Japan.

still be enough to meet the Generalissimo's stipulation for such an operation in the Bay of Bengal, and so lead him to take active part in the Burma fighting.

Mountbatten's first reaction was hesitant, because the shipping requirement would be the same if the attempt was large or small, and because no worthwhile objective could be seized with what shipping was at hand. When an amphibious assault on the Arakan coast was first proposed, he did not see how it could be presented as that previously promised the Generalissimo or how it alone could fulfill SEAC's basic directive. However, since such would be a starting point for the future, would enable the long-range penetration groups to do their work, and would not commit him to an offensive in central Burma, he directed his staff to study it.⁷⁶

Since the amphibious operation promised the Generalissimo had never been defined to him, and since his stipulation had been for a major one, if the SEAC planners could somehow evolve a major amphibious effort the question of Allied good faith would be answered, even if belatedly, and attention would be focused on the Generalissimo's reaction. By adjusting the delicate balances for a plan that might be imposing enough to satisfy the Generalissimo yet still fit within SEAC resources, SEAC's planners evolved PIGSTICK. PIGSTICK called for an assault on the Mayu peninsula aimed at Akyab. Two divisions plus two brigades would be used in a southward advance down the peninsula and one division in an amphibious assault aimed at surrounding and destroying not less than 20,000 Japanese. One more landing like PIGSTICK, perhaps in the Ramree-Cheduba area, could take staging areas that would put 15 Corps within reach of Rangoon.⁷⁷ TARZAN was modified into GRIPFAST, an attack on north and central Burma with an airborne landing at Indaw on the Japanese line of communications to Myitkyina.

In the initial negotiations between Mountbatten and the Chinese on the commitment to battle of the U.S.-sponsored Chinese divisions in Yunnan (Y-Force) Stilwell entered enthusiastically. SEAC's new plan, thought Stilwell, was almost the same as TOREADOR (the airborne landing in central Burma), which had so appealed to the Generalissimo at SEXTANT.⁷⁸ Mandalay itself was now the objective of SEAC's efforts, while the amphibious operations were enlarged.⁷⁹

For whatever reasons, the Generalissimo was unimpressed with SEAC's attempt to meet his demands for an amphibious operation before he would move. Like a wary customer, he questioned the value of the substitute that SEAC was offering. Since even in the genial atmosphere of Cairo he had been conspicuously unwilling to commit himself, it was apparent that he would drive a hard bargain, particularly since the President's radio from Cairo had offered him an alibi. His final reply to the President's radio on 17 December

⁷⁶ (1) See Ch. I, above. (2) Rad, CCS to Mountbatten, 5 Dec 43; Rad, Wedemeyer to Mountbatten, 6 Dec 43; Rad, Mountbatten to COS, 11 Dec 43. SEAC War Diary.

⁷⁷ Rad, SEAC (RL) 19, 19 Dec 43. ABC 384 (Burma) 8-25-42, Sec IV, A48-224.

⁷⁸ Stilwell Black Book, 19 Dec 43.

⁷⁹ Memo, Stilwell for Generalissimo, 19 Dec 43. Item 1533, Bk 5, JWS Personal File.

stressed his need for money and air power but implied that a large enough amphibious operation might even yet secure his co-operation.

My telegram of December 10th must have reached you by this time. I have discussed with General Stilwell the proposed change in the plan of campaign and have come to the following conclusions:

In case the original plan of concentrating warships and transports for landing troops cannot be completely carried out, it would be better to defer the amphibious all-out offensive till November next as you suggested so that the enemy in Burma may be annihilated once and for all. In the meantime preparations for an offensive against Burma next spring should proceed at full speed as originally planned, thus enabling us to launch an attack on land at any moment which is deemed favorable, or at any time before next autumn if a sufficient number of warships and transports can be concentrated to effect a grand scale landing on the enemy's flanks, without waiting till the autumn of next year.

In this way the Burma front might be liquidated sooner than one could anticipate. I have decided to accept your suggestion that the general offensive against Burma should be postponed to November next or sooner if the original amphibious operation could be launched. At the same time I cannot but reiterate that in the intervening period of one year during which there will be little hope of re-opening the Burma Road, the China theater of war will be in a most critical situation. I therefore earnestly ask you to do all in your power to accede to my request for financial assistance and for an increase of air force and air transportation as stated in my telegram of December 10th, in the hope that the danger to the China theater may be removed and the drawbacks in the strategy against Japan remedied in accordance with your consistent friendly policy of rendering assistance to China. Awaiting an early reply.

Chiang Kai-shek⁸⁰

Doing his best to meet the Generalissimo's requirements, Mountbatten gave Stilwell for a further "talking point" information that the Chindit forces in the proposed Burma operations would total 20,000 men, approximately half of whom would be assisting the Chinese advance.⁸¹

In talks with the Generalissimo and Madame Chiang, Stilwell learned that the Chinese expected the United States to pay the entire cost of constructing the B-29 fields at Cheng-tu. The Generalissimo's request for a loan of one billion dollars gold, the Chinese insistence on setting an official exchange rate of 20 to 1 between their currency and the U.S. dollar when the black market rate was 240 to 1, and rising rapidly, and now the President's alleged promise to pay the whole cost of the B-29 fields introduced a new factor of importance, the sheer monetary cost of attempting operations in China.

The Generalissimo estimated that the Cheng-tu fields would cost two to three billion dollars of Chinese currency. "At 20 to 1, at least 100 million gold, of which one-half will be squeeze. Appalling," wrote Stilwell. Stilwell protested that his understanding was the United States would "help" with the project. No, retorted Madame Chiang, the President had promised to pay for everything. Disgusted by what to him seemed a naive softness, Stilwell wrote: "One more example of the stupid spirit of *concession* that proves to them that we are suckers. 'We'll put in VLR bombers' (no bargaining). Then, 'we'll pay for the

⁸⁰ Rad AGWAR 941, Chiang to Roosevelt, 17 Dec 43. Item 1529, Bk 5, JWS Personal File.

⁸¹ Rad COPIR 10, Mountbatten to Stilwell, 20 Dec 43. Item 1541, Bk 5, JWS Personal File.

fields' (no bargaining). Same on air freight—promise without bargain. Same on equipment for army—promise without bargain. Same on Chinese Air Force. Same on 14th Air Force. Same on everything.”⁸²

When the discussion came around to the current operations in Burma, the Generalissimo's actions on 18 and 19 December baffled Stilwell. On the 18th the Generalissimo gave Stilwell full command of the Chinese forces in India and those now fighting in the Hukawng Valley. The next day he rejected Mountbatten's proposals for a major attack on Burma, which made Stilwell write: “[The Generalissimo] is afraid that even concerted attack by all available forces has only one chance in a hundred and yet he'll sit back and let a small force take on the Japs alone.”⁸³ With the Generalissimo's promise in hand, Stilwell prepared to leave to take command of the Hukawng Valley operations. He believed that with the Ledo Force there was just a chance he might be able to link with the Chinese Yunnan divisions somewhere near Myitkyina.⁸⁴

Stilwell's decision to assume active command of the forces in north Burma is not discussed or analyzed in his private or official papers. In the light of his habit of analyzing every major step this circumstance suggests he thought the move an obvious one. By December 1943 the post of chief of staff to the Supreme Commander, China Theater, was simply a paper one, without staff, directives, or duties. The Chinese had never agreed to set up the Sino-American staff through which Stilwell was to have functioned as Joint Chief of Staff, China Theater. After the Three Demands crisis of June 1942 the Generalissimo had largely ignored both him and his suggestions. Therefore, Stilwell's post of chief of staff to the Generalissimo would not require his presence in China.

There was Stilwell's still-existing mission of improving the combat efficiency of the Chinese Army, but his superiors had not objected to his conclusion that because Chinese delay had wasted two years there was little more he could do, and were themselves coming to the very similar conclusion that little more should be attempted than that which Stilwell had already begun, and which his subordinates in China could carry out as a matter of routine.

Since October 1943 the only major development had been the SEXTANT Conference, which had so obviously compromised Stilwell's position in China that Marshall had asked him if he wanted to be recalled. Mountbatten, Stilwell's superior, was actively soliciting the Generalissimo's aid in Burma operations, thus relieving Stilwell of responsibility for that task.

There remained the operations in Burma, which had been under way since 30 October 1943. For two months the American officers of Chih Hui Pu had been trying to achieve a satisfactory solution, but without success. General Boatner, Stilwell's deputy in north Burma, who had been actively exercising field command, was now a victim of pneumonia.⁸⁵ General Sun, who might

⁸² Stilwell Black Book, 18 Dec 43.

⁸³ (1) Stilwell Diary, 18 Dec 43. (2) Stilwell Black Book, 19 Dec 43. (3) Quotation from *The Stilwell Papers*, p. 265.

⁸⁴ *The Stilwell Papers*, p. 266.

⁸⁵ Stilwell Diary, 21 Dec 43.

have commanded, had made it very plain that he wanted to retreat. The Chinese were now heavily engaged, and the situation had been described to Stilwell as critical. So Stilwell prepared to go to north Burma and assume command in the jungle. He was then sixty years of age.⁸⁶

The conduct of American military-diplomatic relations with China was tacitly assumed by the President. In 1942 and 1943 Stilwell had presented many memorandums to the Generalissimo, to which the Chinese had rarely replied. In 1944, the President sent one message after another to the Generalissimo on military matters, and these the Generalissimo could not ignore. As will be seen, the role of CBI Theater headquarters in these exchanges was the humble and mechanical one of delivering the text of these presidential proddings to the Generalissimo.

A Changing U.S. Attitude

Once again in the history of the U.S. effort in China, Burma, and India, the issues were about to be placed before the President, this time by Stilwell at Madame Chiang's suggestion. Stilwell was not hopeful of the President's willingness to intercede, but he adopted the suggestion.⁸⁷ Manifestly, Stilwell did not feel that the action of the President and the Prime Minister in renegeing at Cairo on the long-promised amphibious operation made it unnecessary or inadvisable for the Generalissimo to take action in Burma or that it made ungraceful any criticism of the Generalissimo's reluctance from within those powers that had broken their pledges to him. So, Stilwell told Marshall that the SEAC plan was now virtually what CBI Theater had been urging all along, that if the President would exhort the Generalissimo to cross the Salween River when his allies attacked Burma, the Chinese leader might play his part.⁸⁸ If the Generalissimo knew of this move, he could have reflected that his own message to the President two days before had accepted one of the two choices the President had offered, and that in the past the President had extended credits, lend-lease, and air support without asking anything in return.

Drafted by the War Department, the President's reply indicated that Roosevelt had moved away from the Generalissimo's and Chennault's views and was a great deal closer to Stilwell's. The President returned a qualified negative to the Generalissimo's requests. Describing himself as fully aware of the military and economic situation in China, the President said that the best the United States could do was to aid in the immediate opening of a land line of communications to China. The military actions involved in so doing would afford greater protection to the Hump air route. Roosevelt told the Generalissimo of Mountbatten's planning the largest possible operation to retake Burma and expressed his hope that the Generalissimo would do everything he

⁸⁶ *The Stilwell Papers*, p. 285. Stilwell's sixty-first birthday was on 20 March 1944.

⁸⁷ (1) Stilwell Black Book, 19 Dec 43. (2) *The Stilwell Papers*, p. 263.

⁸⁸ Rad AGWAR 947, Stilwell to Marshall, 19 Dec 43. Item 1537, Bk 5, JWS Personal File.

could to carry out the part reserved for China. Nothing whatever was said about postponing active operations until November 1944. Roosevelt discounted what could be done by more air power in China until the line of communications had been improved. The Chinese might find comfort in the President's assurance that plans to increase Hump capacity to 12,000 tons a month were well advanced, provided an advance by the Allied ground forces forestalled a Japanese attempt to interrupt the airline. The message closed with the brief comment that the Treasury Department was weighing China's request for a billion-dollar (U.S.) loan.⁸⁹

Thus, the President was suggesting that China act and was stressing action on the ground rather than in the air. The Generalissimo had accepted one of the alternate courses offered by the President, waiting until November 1944 to advance into Burma, only to find that the President had quietly abandoned it. Did the Generalissimo's linking the cancellation of BUCCANEER with a request for one billion dollars anger the President? Whatever the reason, the changed tone and shifts in emphasis of the President's reply, the ever stronger and more demanding nature of its successors, suggest that the President had made up his mind about China. At Cairo Roosevelt had been uncertain and unable to guide Stilwell; after Cairo and a few weeks of consideration, the President was striking out along the line of insisting that China take the offensive in return for the lend-lease she had received.

Despite the President's urgings, the Generalissimo's reply was negative. It even had overtones of the sardonic. He agreed to leave the Ledo forces at Mountbatten's disposal but stated that the Y-Force would move only if the Allies took the Andaman Islands, Rangoon, or Moulmein. If they succeeded in taking Mandalay or Lashio, he would order his armies into Burma even if there was no amphibious operation.⁹⁰

General Hearn, to whom Stilwell had entrusted the American share of negotiations with the Generalissimo, did not believe the Generalissimo's reply was final but thought rather that he was bargaining for a bigger amphibious operation or a pledge that the Burma campaign would definitely include capture of Rangoon. Nor did he believe the Generalissimo was aware of the size of the effort that Mountbatten might be able to make. If the Generalissimo agreed to commit Y-Force, 325,000 Allied combat troops would be involved in the Burma operation.⁹¹

Though urged by Hearn and Stilwell to accept the Generalissimo's Mandalay-Lashio offer, this was further than Mountbatten would go. Indeed, a certain asperity was entering his references to the Chinese. Asking that the

⁸⁹ (1) Item 58, OPD Exec 10. (2) Rad WAR 4092, Roosevelt to Chiang, 20 Dec 43. Item 1546, Bk 5, JWS Personal File.

⁹⁰ (1) Rad, Lt Gen Sir Adrian Carton de Wiart, Prime Minister's and SAC's Personal Representative to Chungking, to Mountbatten, 23 Dec 43. SEAC War Diary. (2) Rad AM 2934, Hearn to Merrill, 28 Dec 43; Rad AM 2372, Sultan to Stilwell, 30 Dec 43. Items 1571, 1587, Bk 5 JWS Personal File. (3) CM-IN 1161, Hearn to Marshall, Handy, and Maj Gen Joseph T. McNarney, 2 Jan 44.

⁹¹ CM-IN 14577, Hearn to Stilwell and Marshall, 23 Dec 43.

United States put pressure on the Generalissimo, Mountbatten remarked: "I do not see why we should continue to supply him with munitions if they are to be used solely for internal political purposes."⁹²

Still determined on an offensive, Admiral Mountbatten went on with preparations for PIGSTICK, the assault on the Mayu peninsula. He told the British Chiefs of Staff that while PIGSTICK was within SEAC's capabilities, "if any further resources are taken from me . . . I shall have to cancel the operation."⁹³

That the British Chiefs of Staff did not favor PIGSTICK became apparent when they suggested to the CCS that if PIGSTICK was canceled three fast LST's (landing ship, tank) and other landing craft could be released for a landing at Anzio, Italy. After examining the landing craft situation in the Mediterranean and considering the old promise to the Generalissimo to make an amphibious operation, the Joint Chiefs of Staff urged that plans and preparations for PIGSTICK continue with no further withdrawal of landing craft from SEAC. Moreover, Stilwell's initial attempts to advance in north Burma were meeting with success and an operation to the south would divert some Japanese from him.

While these discussions between the Joint and British Chiefs of Staff were under way, the British Chiefs of Staff told Mountbatten that they did not think PIGSTICK could be carried out, and, although there was still no decision by the CCS, ordered him to return the landing craft in question to the Mediterranean. The departure of the craft, together with the warning by his commanders in chief that they could not carry out PIGSTICK during the favorable weather period of February 1944 unless it was ordered by 30 December at the latest, forced Mountbatten to cancel the operation without awaiting CCS approval.⁹⁴

Admiral Mountbatten canceled PIGSTICK with reluctance, for the action meant to him the probability of no worthwhile offensive against the Japanese for at least a year after SEAC's formation and would have an adverse effect on morale. In a last attempt at an amphibious operation, Mountbatten ordered preparations for BULLDOZER, a much smaller amphibious operation in the Arakan. A message from Mr. Churchill to "mark time for a day or two till we get matters cleaned up" was enough to end it, for even a day's delay would affect the time to mount it before rough weather began in the Bay of Bengal. Thus, the last hope of meeting the Generalissimo's demand for an amphibious operation was gone.

These events were enough to dampen even the buoyant Mountbatten's enthusiasm for a Burma campaign. Where a week before he had said: "I have no intention of allowing operations in Northern Burma to fade on account of abandonment of proposed operations elsewhere," he now told his staff: "The

⁹² Rad SEACOS 53, Mountbatten to COS, 24 Dec 43. SEAC War Diary.

⁹³ Rad SEACOS 54, Mountbatten to COS, 27 Dec 43; Min, SAC's 37th Mtg, 27 Dec 43. SEAC War Diary.

⁹⁴ (1) CCS 452, 30 Dec 43, sub: Cancellation of Opn PIGSTICK. (2) CCS 452/2, 6 Jan 44, sub: Cancellation of Opn PIGSTICK. (3) Rad, COS to Mountbatten, 29 Dec 43; Rad, Mountbatten to CCS, 6 Jan 44. SEAC War Diary.

quickest and most efficient way of taking supplies on a large scale into China is through a port rather than by a long and uncertain land route."⁹⁵

Reflecting the strategic developments of SEXTANT and the Generalissimo's reluctance to engage in Burma operations, the Strategy and Policy Group, OPD, on 8 January 1944 submitted its comments on the "future military value of China Theater." The planners stated that since the main effort in the Pacific would be made in the central and southwest areas of that great expanse, the mission of Stilwell's CBI Theater should be to give air support to the main effort. The bases from which this support was to come should be in areas already secure, because to acquire any more territory would require of the Chinese Army an efficiency not likely to be attained before 1946-47. No further effort should be made, the paper went on, to equip Chinese ground forces beyond enabling them to control areas they already had. Therefore, all available Hump airlift capacity should be devoted to building up air power in China, which was believed to be the best way of preventing China's collapse, as well as of aiding Pacific operations. Offensive operations in Burma to thwart a Japanese threat to the existing India-China air line of communications were still thought necessary.⁹⁶

Summary

Before the SEXTANT Conference, the United States placed great emphasis on major operations in Southeast Asia to break the blockade of China and divert Japanese strength from the Southwest Pacific. President Roosevelt had been most interested in the implications of this policy as it applied to Asia. At SEXTANT his attitude changed; the amphibious operation demanded by the Generalissimo as the price of his co-operation in Burma was canceled, and for a time it seemed the President was willing to postpone Burma operations until November 1944. The Generalissimo asked for a billion U.S. dollars and heavy air reinforcements so that China might withstand another year's blockade. He was not willing himself to make a major effort to break it. The President's reply was drafted by the War Department and moved toward full support of Stilwell. During these discussions, the British Chiefs of Staff withdrew certain essential landing craft from Mountbatten, in effect ending his hopes of a major amphibious operation. December ended with Stilwell taking his post in north Burma to command the now heavily engaged Chinese New First Army, with the President urging China to play a more active part in the war, and with OPD suggesting that the mission of CBI Theater should be to give air support to Allied operations in the Pacific.

⁹⁵ (1) Rad, Churchill to Mountbatten, 7 Jan 44; Extract, SAC's Personal Diary, 28 Dec 43; Quotation from Min, SAC's Fifth Stf Mtg, 6 Jan 44. SEAC War Diary. (2) JPS 346, 2 Jan 44, sub: Cancellation of Opn PIGSTICK. (3) Notes by Brig. Gen. Frank N. Roberts on draft manuscript of this chapter. OCMH.

⁹⁶ Memo, Gen Roberts, Chief, Strategy and Policy Gp, OPD, for ACofS OPD, 8 Jan 44, sub: Future Mil Value of China Theater; Memo, Billo for Roberts, 13 Jan 44, sub: Future Mil Value of China Theater. OPD 201 (Wedemeyer, A. C.), A47-30.

CHAPTER III

The India-Based Air Effort

On 21 December 1943, Stilwell arrived at Ledo to take over the North Burma Campaign, "under better auspices than last time."¹ No student of classic antiquity, Stilwell probably did not have in mind the full definition: "aus'pice. . . . 1. A sign, . . . used in augury, as the flight of birds, . . . or phenomena in the sky." But if the omens were better in December 1943 than they had been in March 1942, it was largely because of happenings in the skies over India and Burma. Anglo-American air power, based on India, was approaching giant maturity, and was about to make possible a campaign of a type never seen before, a campaign in which the customary Japanese tactic of encirclement was turned against its authors with devastating results. To understand the differences between the campaigns of 1942 and 1943-44, one must understand techniques of air support and air supply evolved between March 1942 and December 1943, and the extent of Allied air superiority in Burma.

Command and Administration of the Air Forces

After SEXTANT, Mountbatten reached a firm decision that his command must include an integrated (i.e., Anglo-American) air force. His earlier hints of such a move to Marshall, Arnold, and the Generalissimo had been well received. He had been impressed by the work of an integrated air force in North Africa, and felt he could not "accept a state of affairs where a subordinate Commander in my theatre had independent responsibilities for combat air operations." On learning of the project, Stilwell and General Stratemeyer, commanding the Army Air Forces, India-Burma Sector, objected, for they believed that if there was to be no operation for retaking all Burma, and at this time none seemed very likely, there was no need of an integrated air force. In a way, this was a reversal by Stratemeyer, who had first rather liked the idea, then had changed his mind after Mountbatten's October visit to Chungking.

Despite the opposition of the two senior U.S. commanders in SEAC, Mountbatten thought it time to establish his authority in the theater and felt sure that the CCS would not reverse him. Marshall approved, though he re-

¹ *The Stilwell Papers*, p. 267.

mindful Mountbatten of the U.S. commitments to China and warned that the time would come when the U.S. would have to move part of the Tenth Air Force to China.²

On 12 December the Tenth Air Force and the Royal Air Force (RAF) Bengal Command joined their combat strength to become the Eastern Air Command (EAC), though preserving their administrative entities. Stratemeyer assumed command 15 December. He had the Strategic Air Force under operational control of Brig. Gen. Howard C. Davidson, the Tenth Air Force's commander; the Third Tactical Air Force under operational control of Air Marshal Sir John Baldwin of Bengal Command; the Troop Carrier Command under operational control of Brig. Gen. William D. Old, and the Photographic Reconnaissance Group under Group Captain S. C. Wise. Third Tactical Air Force was in turn composed of Northern Sector Air Force (AAF) in north Burma, 221 Group (RAF) in Manipur, and 224 Group (RAF) in the Arakan. Naming Stratemeyer to command was a graceful gesture by Mountbatten, for the bulk of EAC's aircraft, especially fighters, were British. Eastern Air Command began operations in January 1944 with 576 fighters (141 AAF), 79 heavy bombers (48 AAF), 70 medium bombers (37 AAF), 10 AAF reconnaissance aircraft, and 84 transports (51 AAF).³ This strength was cut a fortnight later when the 341st Bombardment Group (M), less the 490th Squadron, was assigned to the Fourteenth Air Force in China.

In June 1944 the combat strength of the Tenth Air Force was reconstituted as a tactical air force of two fighter groups and one troop carrier group plus administrative and service elements to support the North Burma Campaign. Experience had demonstrated that the North Burma Campaign was tactically independent of operations in Manipur State and the Arakan and that operations in the three sectors did not require central direction of tactical air support. Troop Carrier Command was eliminated and its units split between Tenth Air Force and Third Tactical Air Force. This then gave EAC five subordinate air commands: Strategic Air Force (still an integrated Anglo-American force); Third Tactical Air Force (mostly RAF plus the 12th Bombardment Group [M] and the 459th Fighter Squadron); the Photographic Reconnaissance Group (Anglo-American); the Tenth Air Force; and 293 Wing RAF, charged with defense of the Calcutta industrial area.⁴

² (1) Quotation from Extract, SAC's Personal Diary, 11 Dec 43. SEAC War Diary. (2) *Stilwell's Mission to China*, Ch. VIII. (3) Ltr, Mountbatten to Arnold, 27 Nov 43; Ltr, Marshall to Mountbatten, 4 Jan 44. Item 676, Msg Bk 18, OPD Exec 9.

³ Lt. Gen. George E. Stratemeyer, Despatch on Air Operations in Eastern Air Command (SEA) Covering the Period 15 December 1943 to 1 June 1945, MS (hereafter EAC Despatch), App. 16, Incls 1, 2. OCMH. The heavy bombers were B-24's and Wellingtons with a few Lancasters and Halifaxes; the mediums were B-25's; the fighters were mostly Hurricane IIc's, II'd's, and P-40's. Five squadrons were so fortunate as to have Spitfires, while two others had P-38's and P-51's. The Vultee Vengeance dive bomber was used by five squadrons, Burma being one of the few areas in which it was to be found. The versatile and successful Beaufighters acted as night fighters and light bombers.

⁴ EAC Despatch, pp. 44, 7-8.

The Japanese Air Effort in Burma

The senior headquarters for the Japanese Army air force in Southeast Asia was *3d Air Army* at Singapore. The defense of Burma was still charged to the *5th Air Division*, veterans of the First Burma Campaign. Under *5th Air Division*, in late November 1943, were the *4th Air Brigade*, with the *8th* (light bomber), *34th* (light bomber), *77th* (fighter), and the *50th* (fighter) *Air Regiments*; and the *7th Air Brigade*, with the *12th* ("heavy" bomber), *98th* ("heavy" bomber), and *64th* (fighter) *Air Regiments*. Also under *5th Air Division* were the *21st*, *33d*, *77th*, and *204th Air Regiments* (fighter), and the *81st Air Regiment* (reconnaissance). After the war, the Japanese estimated this force comprised about 129 fighters, 30 "heavy" bombers, 47 light bombers, and 15 reconnaissance aircraft. The Japanese naval air force was also represented. It had been drained by the fighting in the Southwest Pacific, but at least its *28th Air Regiment* was present in October 1943, with 30 fighters and 9 bombers.⁵

Eastern Air Command estimated Japanese strength at 277 aircraft, including reconnaissance craft. Though outnumbered by EAC, *5th Air Division* had a few counterbalancing advantages. Its rear areas were well out of the reach of all but the heavy bombers, which were too few to neutralize Japanese bases. The *5th Air Division* had scores of forward airstrips so that it could prepare its operations in the rear areas, stage them through any of the forward strips, then quickly disperse on returning. Pilots and aircrews were good; their equipment, adequate.⁶

Not waiting for their opponents, the Japanese airmen undertook to cripple the anticipated Allied attack on Burma by genuine strategic bombing, a series of attacks on Calcutta. The fanfare attendant on SEAC's creation, the appointment of an admiral as Supreme Allied Commander, and signs of Allied preparations around Ledo, Imphal, and Calcutta convinced the Japanese that a major operation against Burma was imminent.⁷

Neutralization of Calcutta seemed advisable. Preparations began in October 1943. The *4th Air Brigade* attacked RAF fields about Imphal in November to divert attention and resources from the Calcutta area. Calcutta itself was attacked on 5 December by the *7th Air Brigade*, with 94 fighters and 18 heavy bombers from six air regiments, and 8 reconnaissance aircraft, plus 30 fighters and 9 bombers of the *Imperial Navy's 28th Air Regiment*. "Considerable damage

⁵ (1) The Japanese fighters were mostly single-engined 1941 model Oscars, with two 12.7-mm. guns and with a top speed of 334 mph at 16,400 feet, and twin-engined two-seated 1942-model Nicks, with three 12.7-mm. and one 20-mm. guns and with a top speed of 340 mph at 13,000 feet. The light bomber was the Lily, with a 57-foot wingspread and a 1,100-pound bomb load. The "heavy" bombers were Sallys, with a maximum bomb load of 2,200 lbs. and with a wingspread of 70 feet. The Sally was a 1937 model; the Lily was a 1939 model. TM-E 30-480, Handbook on Japanese Military Forces, 15 September 1944, pp. 58-75. Japanese Officers' Comments, p. 8. (2) Japanese Study 94. (3) SEATIC Bull 248, 22 Apr 47, pp. 24-25. MID Library.

⁶ EAC Despatch, pp. 12-13.

⁷ (1) Japanese Studies 89 and 94. (2) SEATIC Bull 242, 7 Aug 46, p. 12; SEATIC Bull 247, 22 Apr 47, pp. 110-11. MID Library.

was done to dock area," Eastern Air Command admitted later, and its dispatch adds: "The Japanese Air Force, in fact, controlled the air over Burma and, while maintaining a constant threat against the vital air route to China, was harassing Allied ground and air installations in the Assam valley, the Arakan, and Bengal."⁸

Though a second attempt at the strategic bombardment of India was thus launched by the Japanese, and though this initial attempt was followed by a Christmas Day attack on Chitagong by about fifty aircraft, nothing more was done, and again the Japanese laid down a weapon to which northeast India and the Assam line of communications were most vulnerable. After the war, the Japanese explained that though they had fully appreciated the importance of bombing Calcutta, they were handicapped by the lack of bombers. Of the four Japanese bomber units in Burma, two were transferred to New Guinea in late January 1944, leaving only fifteen light and nine heavy bombers. With the bomber units went three fighter regiments. What remained was not enough for sustained and effective operations.⁹

The interval before preparations began to stage for the proposed Japanese offensive against India was used by the Japanese airmen for attacks on the Hump airfields and on the transports themselves. Tinsukia airfield was attacked by about fifty fighters and eighteen bombers on 8 December, and Kunming on the 18th and 22d of December. Beginning mid-January 1944, Japanese pilots made an effort to attack ATC transports as they were spotted by Japanese observers in and around Sumprabum in north Burma. The effort seemed "a serious threat" to EAC, but it was short-lived because in May the Japanese lost the Myitkyina airstrip from which the attacks had been made.¹⁰

When the third phase of the Japanese offensive began with a diversionary attack in the Arakan, the *12th*, *64th*, and *204th Air Regiments* co-operated by making sweeps over the battlefields.¹¹ Where classic air doctrine called for attacks on the hostile airfields and forces until air superiority had been attained, the Japanese interpreted air-ground co-operation in the most literal sense by ignoring the airfields in order to engage in fighter sweeps over the battlefields. When the sound of the engines died away, the battle resumed as though the Oscars had never passed above. "The period in which we [Japanese] held control of the air [the EAC] avoided us and after we had returned to our base would appear in the air over the battlefields. As a result, they disrupted the attacks of our ground army. Taking advantage of the unfavorable conditions existing when we attacked the ground with our fighters, they would challenge

⁸ (1) Japanese Study 94. (2) EAC Despatch, p. 11. (3) Japanese Officers' Comments, p. 8.

⁹ (1) Bull cited n. 5(3). (2) USSBS, *Japanese Air Power* (Washington, 1946), p. 20. (3) Japanese Study 94. (4) *Stilwell's Mission to China*, Ch. IX. (5) Japanese Officers' Comments, p. 9.

¹⁰ (1) Japanese Study 94. (2) EAC Despatch, p. 17. (3) Japanese Officers' Comments, p. 10.

¹¹ It will be recalled that the first phase was the elimination of the Chinese bridgehead across the Salween River in October 1943 and the second phase was the attempt by the *18th Division* to occupy the upper Hukawng Valley. The purpose of these moves was to secure the flanks and rear of the Japanese forces making the main effort. See *Stilwell's Mission to China*, pp. 353-54.

us to an air battle. Thus, with the passing of time, battle became more difficult.”¹² For February 1944, EAC claimed only 15 Japanese aircraft certainly destroyed and 6 probably so, as against 25 of its own lost, but the Japanese attempt was a failure for day after day the transport aircraft flew in supplies for the divisions trapped by the Japanese thrust.¹³ And, when the British commanders had stopped the Japanese offensive in the Arakan, they were able to disengage the 5th and 7th Indian Divisions from the Arakan and rush them north by rail and air to meet the next phase in the Japanese offensive. Thus, air transport gave Generals Giffard and Slim an advantage in strategic mobility which the Japanese could not match, and which the two British commanders exploited to the utmost.¹⁴

The *5th Air Division's* support of the main Japanese thrust on Imphal was more skillfully handled. On 12, 15, 16, and 17 March, the Japanese attacked the airfields from which EAC was supporting 4 Corps on the Imphal front. They bombed the airstrips used for the flying in of an ambitious attempt by Maj. Gen. Orde C. Wingate's Long-Range Penetration Groups on 10, 13, 16, 17, and 18 March. These operations were mixed with attacks on fields in the Arakan, at Tinsukia, and at Ledo. March cost EAC fifty-seven aircraft destroyed and missing. Eastern Air Command headquarters believed the Japanese lost fifty-nine in the air and fifty-eight on the ground. The Japanese account is incomplete but suggests that EAC claims are exaggerated.

However, one Japanese operation was an utter fiasco and minor disaster. The *62d Air Regiment*, nine heavy bombers, was brought to Burma to attack the Ledo area. With an escort of about sixty fighters, the *62d Air Regiment* made its attempt on 27 March 1944. Lacking radar bombsights, the Japanese loosed their bombs at random through a heavy overcast. EAC fighters attacked the force on its way home when it was low on fuel. Eight of the bombers were shot down and the ninth made a forced landing.

Though the Japanese at the end of March had failed to prevent EAC from maintaining whole divisions by air supply, a feat impossible against a foe that has air superiority, they were still very much in the fight against an Allied opponent that, during March, had a daily operational average of 582 fighters. The Japanese aircraft replacement system worked well from January to June 1944, giving *3d Air Army* from 100 to 150 aircraft a month, most of which went to Burma. The trained aircrews were not replaced.¹⁵

If the Japanese in March did feel a certain satisfaction at having held their own against very heavy odds, their complacence must have been short-lived, for in March EAC was only beginning to hit its stride. After March, the balance tilted in its favor ever more rapidly. Eastern Air Command dispatched 8,353 sorties in January 1944 and 18,109 in March. By May the figure was up

¹² Japanese Study 94, p. 58.

¹³ EAC Despatch, p. 18.

¹⁴ Mountbatten Report, Pt. B, pars. 99, 106.

¹⁵ (1) Japanese Study 94. (2) EAC Despatch, App. 1. (3) Bull cited n. 5(3).

to 23,490. EAC dropped a modest 1,513.4 tons of bombs in January 1944, 3,189 tons in March and 4,073.7 tons in May. American components of EAC expended 279,000 rounds of 50-caliber ammunition in January, 675,000 in March, 1,280,000 in April, and 867,989 in May. The RAF was proportionately active.

This steady acceleration of effort, reflecting among other things an increase in the AAF components of the EAC from 297 aircraft in April to 444 in May, weighed ever more heavily on the Japanese. After June their losses in fighters forced them to cease attempts to intercept EAC's attacks, an admission of defeat. After the war, the Japanese considered that "well-planned aerial combat tactics and superior planes always gave the enemy an upper hand in the engagements." Japanese sorties in support of the attack on Imphal, and against Wingate's Chindits, which had reached a peak of 570 sorties in April, fell to 423 in May, and plummeted to 115 in June.¹⁶

The drop in Japanese sorties was much sharper than that which the monsoon forced on EAC. Whatever the exact count of sorties made by the Japanese, their effort during the crucial month of their attack on India was but a fraction of EAC's, and there was not a chance of their attaining the air superiority they held so often in 1941 and 1942. Indeed, EAC controlled the air space over the battlefield, which meant that the Japanese could no longer match the Allied ground forces in strategic mobility, nor was the most important Japanese tactic in jungle warfare, encirclement, the menace it had once been. Now, thanks to EAC's air superiority, the Allies could fly whole divisions to the scene of action, while the Japanese struggled to bring troops forward over bomb-damaged rail lines or on foot over muddy trails. On the battlefield itself, the Japanese could surround Allied units still, for they had all their old skill and aggressiveness in maneuver, but the success was an empty one, for the air transports could always deliver supplies to the surrounded unit. This was a grim omen, for when the Allies were on the offensive, air supply meant that Chinese, Indians, British, and Americans could operate independently of ground lines of communications, could move freely past the Japanese flanks into the Japanese rear areas, and there block the roads that fed the Japanese. When this happened the Japanese would have to cut their way out or starve, for EAC's fighters and bombers would see to it that no Japanese transports appeared over the battlefield.

Support of Ground Forces

In the difficult terrain of Burma, where artillery was hard to bring forward and tended to lessen the mobility of Allied units, EAC's fighters, fighter bomb-

¹⁶ (1) EAC Despatch, Apps. 3-7. (2) Japanese Study 94, p. 67, Table, pp. 62-65. Japanese statistics give the number of aircraft dispatched by day. The 8th, 50th, 64th, and 204th Air Regiments supported the Japanese in north Burma, with about fifty-five fighters at the beginning of March 1944, dropping to about thirty-two planes at the end. The table suggests each fighter averaged 4.2 sorties. That month EAC fighters averaged 21, over the whole of Burma. Even if the Japanese fighters are credited with sorties along the Salween, and over Myitkyina and Ledo, 10 sorties a month would be a generous estimate, for in none of these other areas was 5th Air Division an active factor. Very probably the Japanese were greatly handicapped by maintenance problems.

ers, and bombers of all types acted as substitutes. Suitable targets, according to current local practice, were troop concentrations, bunkers, machine gun nests, artillery, towns and villages sheltering the Japanese, and supply convoys. The choice among types of bombs and ammunition was governed by the nature of the target. Where possible, cover was used in the approach, and attacks were made from medium or low altitude. Despite the seemingly obvious worth of close tactical air support, it was not common or particularly effective before the spring of 1944. Earlier, the priority demands for bombing transport, factories, and air installations had absorbed most air resources. There had also been the belief that fighter aircraft should confine themselves to missions of escort and interception. Last of all, there had been no effective mechanism whereby the ground forces could obtain air support on call.

By May 1944, Northern Sector Air Force, the AAF component of the Third Tactical Air Force, had worked out a technique for air support in siege or mobile warfare. For the former, A-2 and A-3 were responsible for joint planning with the task force G-2 and G-3. The latter two chose the targets, while the air staff "planned the attack, determined the number and type of aircraft to be used, the types of bombs, the techniques of attack, the selection of the units . . . and the briefing of the crews." For mobile warfare, Northern Sector Air Force provided the "air party":

Personnel of an air party consisted of a team of one or two officers with six to eight enlisted men. Their station was with an advanced brigade at the front. . . . They were in [radio communication] with the air office, giving immediate information on targets selected by the army and approved by the air party. They also served as guides to aircraft which were making the air strikes. Sometimes, when it was impossible to observe the tactical situation from the position of the air party, an L-5 was used for strike observation, which worked through the air party.¹⁷

Radio and photography were vital in the air-ground support mechanism. Of the several air elements in Burma, the Tenth Air Force reached the highest point in air-ground radio communication, using high-frequency SCR-117 or -118 for point-to-point transmission linking the air party with the air force's signal center, and very high frequency radio for communication with the aircraft making the attack. "In cases of emergency, it took about twenty minutes for communications to be sent from the air party to fighter group headquarters. In some cases aircraft were over the target thirty minutes after the original request." The Tenth Air Force also made complete use of photographic facilities. Low-level verticals, reconnaissance strips, obliques, and pinpoint shots were used. Both air and ground personnel used photographs for target designation, briefing, and aerial identification of targets.

Of equal importance in target designation were the efforts of the Kachins, Burmese, and Americans working for the Office of Strategic Services in Detachment 101. Operating behind the Japanese lines, and well equipped with

¹⁷ EAC Despatch, pp. 72, 79-80, 81; quotation on p. 82.

radios, these daring men sent a steady flow of data on the location of supply dumps, rest areas, billets, command posts, and the like.¹⁸

About one third of the fighter sorties were in direct support of the infantry. This meant 221 Group flew 9,000 such sorties between March and July 1944, while their colleagues of 224 Group flew about 5,000. During siege operations in north Burma, Northern Sector Air Force and successor commands averaged thirty-three fighter sorties a day, a rather deceptive figure, for these sorties were flown in monsoon weather so that good flying days saw many times the thirty-three figure flown. The RAF expended 25,000 rounds of 40-mm. ammunition in ground support during the first six months of 1944. In the same period the fighters dropped 9,327 tons of bombs.¹⁹

Air-ground co-operation was most marked in its effect on the Japanese *15th Army's* attack on India in spring 1944. To obtain surprise, the Japanese deliberately omitted much necessary preliminary engineer work on the dirt trails from the Chindwin River forward that were to sustain their three divisions in battle. The Japanese planned on a grand rush that would carry them over the British supply dumps in a matter of weeks. The opening phases went well; then the battle settled down to hard pounding. At this point the 4 Corps at Imphal depended on air supply, 33 Corps driving to relieve it depended on the Bengal and Assam Railway and Dimapur road, and *15th Army* on the jungle trails.

Allied fighters swarmed over the dirt trails all day long, bombing and strafing. Japanese supplies could be moved only at night, a task fantastically complicated when the monsoon rains began. As a result of the constriction of the roads, from May 1944 on *15th Army* quite literally starved. Looking back on their experiences at Imphal, the Japanese commanders and staffs approached eloquence in dilating on the importance of air-ground co-operation: "With a good signals system and air supplies, the Allies were able to carry out their operations freely and unhindered whereas the Japanese without air supplies and with their only means of supply—ground transport—cut off, were in a paralyzed state. . . . The difference in ground-air cooperation between the Japanese Army and the Allies was the difference between victory and defeat." To this comment by Lt. Col. Iwaichi Fujiwara, sometime G-2 and G-3 of *15th Army*, could be added similar ones by Lt. Gen. Takazo Numata, Chief of Staff, Headquarters, *Southern Army*.²⁰

A form of air support most highly valued by the infantryman was the air evacuation of ground casualties on the grand scale. Where previously the wounded, in default of other means of transport, had jolted and swayed for agonizing days in litters, ambulances, and trains on the long trip back to hos-

¹⁸ (1) For a more detailed account of Detachment 101, see Chapter I, above. (2) NCAC History, App. 8, Brief Sketch of Detachment 101 in the NCAC Campaign.

¹⁹ EAC Despatch, pp. 84-86, 87-88; Apps. 5, 6.

²⁰ Col Fujiwara, SEATIC Bull 240, 9 Jul 46, pp. 23-24, 51; SEATIC Bull 242, 7 Aug 46, pp. 31-32; SEATIC Bull 247, 22 Apr 47, p. 25. MID Library.

pital, now small liaison aircraft could land on a rough airstrip immediately behind the lines, pick up the soldier, and fly him to a collecting point. There an air transport with a flight nurse would receive him and fly him back to hospital. The worst part of the journey would be that to the first airstrip for if the soldier was wounded in the hills it might take the litter bearers several days to cover the seven or eight miles to the nearest airstrip. If the soldier in north Burma happened to be wounded near the combat supply road which ran south and east through the Hukawng and Mogaung Valleys, he could be taken by ambulance to the clearing company, and by ambulance again to the American field hospital. Evacuation of British and Indian units followed a similar pattern; the same facilities served all Allied troops. Between December 1943 and August 1944, 18,256 casualties were evacuated from north Burma by air. From Burma as a whole, EAC in sixteen months evacuated more than 106,000 casualties.²¹

Strategic Bombing

As noted before in this history, Burma is not an ideal subject for the demonstration of strategic bombardment, for it is very large, and predominantly agricultural. The Japanese Army depended on the Burmese economy for food, oil, some clothing, and a few simple munitions and spare parts. After October 1943 and the opening of the Burma-Siam Railway almost everything else came in by train. Of the targets found in Burma, the oil fields, the supply dumps, and the rail lines seemed the most promising. The Japanese Army depended on its infantry, so its oil needs were modest, and even sharp reductions in the capacity of the Yenangyaung oil installations seem not to have hurt *Burma Area Army's* supply position. Japanese dumps closer to the front suffered heavily in the all-important Manipur area, but not elsewhere in spring 1944. The railroads, to Allied target analysts, seemed clearly indicated as the most promising target, though not an easy or fragile one. Against these several classes of targets for strategic bombing, Strategic Air Force in January 1944 could pit 61 B-24's, 25 Wellingtons, and 32 B-25's. In June, the command had 53 B-24's, 13 Wellingtons, and 69 B-25's. Such was not an imposing force with which to attack an area the size of Germany.²²

"The main purpose of the Strategic Air Force . . . was to disrupt the enemy's entire transportation system in the India-Burma Theater. . . ." The initial EAC directives gave first priority to hostile air force installations, but in practice this mission fell to the Tactical Air Force. Shipping was given second priority, for its highly mobile nature made it a target of opportunity. The railroads were always present, and they had third priority. After the opening of the

²¹ (1) EAC Despatch, p. 90. (2) NCAC Air Supply, Vol. I, App. 4.

²² EAC Despatch, App. 2. These are daily operational averages. The RAF seems to have had maintenance problems. Rarely was more than 50 percent of its contribution operational.

Burma-Siam Railway Japanese shipping disappeared from the Rangoon area and sea sweeps were not profitable. As of 31 March 1944 the 7th Bombardment Group (H) had dropped only nineteen tons of bombs on shipping in the Rangoon area. In practice, then, until June 1944 the railroads were the number one target for Strategic Air Force. Then Operational Directive 10 gave first priority to support of Fourteenth Army (the British formation on the Manipur front) and second to attacks on shipping and railways.²³

The Fourteenth Air Force was not an appreciable factor in isolating Burma through destruction of Japanese shipping. On the other hand, its operations did introduce the element of delay and uncertainty into the southward movement of Japanese supplies by sea. Eastern Air Command's antishipping operations by bomb and mine made the Japanese happy to leave the task of supplying the *Burma Area Army* to the Burma-Siam Railway. Up to spring 1944 the Japanese maintained a limited traffic in small wooden ships between Singapore and Rangoon. Then the increasing efficiency of the Allied bombers restricted them to night operations along the coast line, and finally toward the war's end reduced them to using luggers and farmers' skiffs ("country boats") between Moulmein and Rangoon.²⁴

In attacking land communications, Strategic Air Force followed four principles: (1) to attack railways as the most important such target within reach, (2) to pick bridges as the most vulnerable point on the railway, (3) to isolate segments of line and destroy rolling stock and engines trapped therein, and (4) to use diversity of attack to confuse the enemy.

Bombing the railways did not bring major results in the 1943-44 campaign because the means at the airmen's disposal were inadequate, though they attacked with devotion and skill. On New Year's Day, 1944, B-25's blew out 140 feet of the 400-foot Mu River span, vital for carrying supplies toward the Chindwin area. The weather turned bad in January and 50 percent of the missions were canceled. The 7th Bombardment Group was withdrawn for special training in February. Its return in March, plus the addition of the 12th Bombardment Group, made for a greater weight of attack. The 1,650-foot Sittang Bridge, site of the 1942 tragedy, was crippled in April 1944 as soon as the Japanese repaired it after months of effort. The 700-foot bridge just north of Mandalay on the line to Myitkyina was successfully attacked. With these bridges went more than a score of others. When the Japanese moved against India, the bombers switched their attention to the roads west from Ye-u and Wuntho and pounded them daily. Attacks were also made on the Yenangyaung oil fields.²⁵

The 7,348.3 tons of bombs dropped by the Strategic Air Force up to 30 June

²³ (1) Activities of the 7th Bomb Gp (H), Tenth Air Force, 1 Feb 43-31 Mar 44, MS, p. 1. KCRC. (2) EAC Despatch, pp. 47-48.

²⁴ (1) For an analysis of Fourteenth Air Force claims see *Stilwell's Mission to China*, Chart 8. (2) Japanese Study 116. (3) SEATIC Bull 247, p. 28. MID Library. (4) EAC Despatch, pp. 53-58.

²⁵ EAC Despatch, pp. 58, 60-63.



BOMBING OF BRIDGES such as this *Mu River bypass bridge* slowed the movement of Japanese supplies to the *Chindwin* area.

1944 did not affect the campaign because they did not disrupt Japanese rail traffic. Makeshift repairs and gangs of coolies could always carry supplies over breaks in the lines. The four main sectors on which the Japanese fought in Burma shared one common peculiarity in that each was separated from the railhead by many miles of unimproved road. In the case of the *18th Division* in the Hukawng Valley 140 miles lay between it and the railway. The *15th Army* left its railhead even farther behind when it attacked toward Imphal, and further complicated its supply problems by crossing a major river and a mountain range. When *15th Army* failed to take the British supply dumps in the first rush it simply thrust its head into a noose. The *28th Army* in the Arakan depended on a combination of dirt trails and coastal waterways. Only the *56th Division* on the Salween front had a good supply situation and it was significantly near the Lashio railhead. Until the 3d Indian Division was dropped astride the railway to Myitkyina that line had no trouble in bringing supplies to the *18th Division's* railhead.

The ultimately crippling Japanese supply problems on the Arakan, Manipur, and north Burma fronts began at railhead, with the inherent limitations of a dirt road many times compounded by a steadily worsening truck shortage,

TABLE 1—TONNAGES SHIPPED TO BURMA OVER BURMA-SIAM RAILWAY:
NOVEMBER 1943—AUGUST 1945

Year and month	Short tons	Year and month	Short tons
Total.....	228, 550	September.....	18, 050
1943		October.....	19, 500
November.....	7, 600	November.....	20, 400
December.....	9, 500	December.....	21, 850
1944		1945	
January.....	11, 400	January.....	11, 400
February.....	12, 350	February.....	5, 200
March.....	12, 350	March.....	5, 300
April.....	10, 150	April.....	3, 900
May.....	11, 250	May.....	1, 200
June.....	12, 700	June.....	1, 000
July.....	15, 650	July.....	500
August.....	17, 100	August.....	200

Source: SEATIC Bull 246, Burma-Siam Ry, 3 Oct 45. MID Library.

monsoon rains, and the constant attacks of Allied fighters and bombers.²⁶ Japan's principal supply route to Burma, the Burma-Siam Railway, was not affected by air bombing in the first six months of 1944. Traffic over it increased steadily. Allied prisoners of war later reported that on occasion they saw as many as ten trains a day moving in each direction. After the war, the Japanese claimed that traffic on the Burma-Siam Railway increased from a daily average of one train in December 1943 to three trains in June 1944.²⁷ (Table 1)

The coming of the monsoon rains and the diversion of some of the U.S. B-24's to air cargo operations brought a sharp reduction in strategic bombing. Tonnage dropped from the 2,069 mark of May to 285 in July and 206 in

²⁶ In the peak year, 1942, Japanese truck production was but 35,386 units. The shortage of trucks was general in the Japanese Army. At the end of the war, the Army in the home islands had but 8,900 trucks. USSBS, *The Effects of Strategic Bombing on Japan's War Economy*, pp. 65, 220. App. Table C-158.

²⁷ Three sources were drawn on for the above appraisal. (1) Interrogations of Japanese senior officers conducted immediately after the war by SEATIC are in Bulletins 246 and 247, Military Intelligence Division Library. Among the officers questioned were: Lt. Gen. Masaki Honda, Commanding General, 33d Army; Lt. Col. Masayuki Taguchi, 56th Division staff; and General Tanaka, Commanding General, 18th Division. (2) Questionnaires, prepared by the authors, were answered by the above Japanese officers in 1948, plus Lt. Gen. Kunomura Momoyo, 15th Army staff; Lt. Gen. Eitaro Naka, Chief of Staff, Burma Area Army; Lt. Gen. Tadashi Katakura, Chief of Staff, 33d Army; Col. Fujio Kawamichi, Chief of Staff, 56th Division; Maj. Iwao Takahashi, 15th Army staff; and Lt. Col. Shinroku Iwakoshi, Chief, Imperial Headquarters Supply Section. All replies are in OCMH Files. (3) SEATIC Bull 246 has a wealth of information from prisoner-of-war and Japanese sources.

August, rising thereafter to 416 in September. Tonnages did not hit the 1,000 mark for the rest of the year.²⁸

Because the U.S. combat effort in Burma was primarily in the air, an appraisal of air operations cannot be omitted in a theater history. Not until the fall of 1944 were there two U.S. regimental combat teams in Burma, while in the air the United States contributed two air forces, the B-29's, and the tremendous Air Transport Command effort. It is notable that an enormous disparity of strength in the air could not prevent the Japanese from advancing at will in the Arakan and Manipur sectors until they reached the point at which the Indians and British planned to hold and fight it out.

When the battle on the ground was fairly joined, air supply, which is possible only if the air space over the battlefield is controlled by friendly hands, prevented the Japanese encircling tactic from defeating the Allies once more. Allied control of the air permitted continual attacks on the roads supplying the Japanese, thus making their supply situation on the Imphal front ultimately impossible. In north Burma, the encircling tactics that Stilwell used against the Japanese forced them, in the absence of their own air supply, to fight a series of retreating actions with heavy losses in equipment and supplies, further complicated by the deficiencies of their primitive line of communications.

It is noteworthy that the heaviest Japanese rail traffic coincided with the heaviest EAC bombing effort, then fell off sharply in October 1944 when but 500 tons of bombs were dropped. (*Table 2*) The decline immediately followed the monsoon rains in which bombing had been light and sporadic. The great slump in Japanese rail traffic in Burma did not come until January 1945, when tactical aviation was able to cover the rail net as in spring 1944 it had interdicted the jungle trails, when Allied troops were progressively overrunning the railways, and when the Japanese shipping situation was approaching the catastrophic. The contrast between the relative futility of the strategic bombing effort in the 1943-44 campaign and the success of air supply, indicates that air supply, made possible by air superiority, is the key to Allied victory in Burma.²⁹

Air Supply

The nature of Burma's terrain and climate and the Japanese military system, which had taken such clever advantage of them in the 1942-43 campaigns,

²⁸ EAC Despatch, App. 4. The B-24's carried 2,621 tons of cargo in September 1944.

²⁹ (1) Bull cited n. 27(3). USSBS, *The Effect of Air Action on Japanese Ground Army Logistics* (Washington, 1947), p. 57. The tonnage chart on the page cited was drawn by a Japanese officer in 1946. Page 32 in the text says that the decline in traffic is attributable to the monsoon's washing away the makeshift bridges which replaced those damaged by bombing. The chart shows in 1944 and, significantly, 1943 a sharp drop beginning in July-August, or one or two months after the monsoon began. The chart shows this seasonal dip to be an annual feature, falling to the same level every year. Whereas traffic in 1943 recovered sharply, it plummeted in 1944, for late in that year large segments of the rail net came under Allied control.

TABLE 2—AVERAGE DAILY TRAFFIC AT TERMINALS OF PRINCIPAL BRANCH
LINES OF JAPANESE-OPERATED RAILWAYS IN BURMA:
JANUARY 1943–AUGUST 1945
[Number of Railroad Cars]

Year and month	Total	Mar- taban	Man- dalay	Mying- yan	Prome	Lashio	Myit- kyina	Burma- Siam ^a
1943								
January.....	337	0	161	76	40	25	35	0
February.....	229	0	109	58	25	17	20	0
March.....	241	15	102	63	29	20	12	0
April.....	240	11	136	49	21	15	8	0
May.....	229	8	128	51	19	12	11	0
June.....	351	21	169	65	58	14	24	0
July.....	347	27	183	47	58	15	17	0
August.....	335	29	174	53	54	13	12	0
September.....	180	13	98	42	21	6	(^b)	0
October.....	202	16	86	38	27	15	20	0
November.....	197	25	66	47	29	14	16	0
December.....	218	39	61	54	23	19	18	4
1944								
January.....	250	34	133	26	26	17	8	6
February.....	213	13	102	33	28	19	4	14
March.....	233	27	73	40	35	19	17	22
April.....	202	36	100	17	29	12	8	(^b)
May.....	237	39	102	19	31	14	5	27
June.....	245	32	128	33	27	11	2	12
July.....	227	38	136	16	22	14	1	(^b)
August.....	222	45	124	24	22	6	1	(^b)
September.....	220	41	117	13	23	7	1	18
October.....	191	25	97	12	16	6	2	33
November.....	216	24	72	22	19	6	1	72
December.....	189	32	65	19	18	15	0	40
1945								
January.....	113	36	43	12	16	6	0	(^b)
February.....	149	35	34	16	8	5	0	51
March.....	71	11	18	20	14	0	0	8
April.....	15	5	6	0	0	0	0	4
May.....	32	25	0	0	0	0	0	7
June.....	28	13	0	0	0	0	0	15
July.....	21	13	0	0	0	0	0	8
August.....	19	13	0	0	0	0	0	6

^a Estimates of *Burma Area Army*, which did not control traffic on Burma-Siam line.

^b Figures not available.

Source: USSBS, Atchd Sheet 1, 64g (8). National Archives. Daily average data based on records of *Burma Area Army*.

impressed themselves strongly on the senior Allied ground force officers in India and Burma. The geographic factors of heavily wooded jungle, rough terrain, and monsoon climate greatly aggravated the problems of moving supplies on the ground. Roads, when made, had to be maintained, and a great deal of the road's capacity was consumed by maintenance, thus reducing its payload. A more economical system for the supply of forward elements was needed. In the light of these factors, by summer 1943 the American members of the staff of the Chinese Army in India explicitly accepted the principle that when the North Burma Campaign began, troops in the forward area would be supplied by air.³⁰

The experiments that finally led to this conclusion began with the airdrops made to refugees fleeing Burma in May, June, and July 1942. That summer, General Wingate organized his first Long-Range Penetration Group to operate solely on air supply. Concurrently, a small unit of Australian troops, retreating from the Japanese across New Guinea's Owen Stanley Mountains, was supplied by air. When Allied strength in New Guinea permitted a counteroffensive, the 2d Battalion, 126th U.S. Infantry, was supplied by air on its way back over the mountains. Wingate's February 1943 expedition was supplied by air.³¹

With these experiences in mind, Stilwell in late February 1943 resolved that isolated troops in the Naga Hills, such as air-warning stations and Chinese outposts guarding the Ledo Road, should be supplied by air. Details came from laundry and ordnance personnel, the 51st Fighter Group supplied containers and parachutes, the Ferry Command at Chabua assigned some C-47's, and a junior officer, 1st Lt. Frederick L. Wood, Jr., of Ordnance, was put in charge.

The experiment worked so well that at the end of the year permanent organization seemed advisable. This covered simply the warehousing, packing, dropping, and receipt of supplies. By September 1943, the air supply of combat in north Burma was accepted as a matter of course. G-4 of the Combat Troops, Ledo Sector, was responsible for target designation and proper delivery. SOS stored and packed. The air forces delivered. No one organization was charged with sole responsibility. This division promised future administrative difficulties.

When the Chinese Army in India opened the North Burma Campaign in October 1943, the air supply resources committed to the effort were: 1st and 2d Troop Carrier Squadrons; 518th Quartermaster Battalion (Mobile), charged with procuring, warehousing, packing, and dropping; the 3841st QM Truck Company, which did the hazardous and responsible work of kicking supplies from the transports on schedule; and the 3304th QM Truck Company, which received and distributed. These units were under Base Transportation Section,

³⁰ (1) Opn Plan ALBACORE, 8 Aug 43. Folder, ALBACORE, LEDO STRIPTEASE, NCAC Files, KCRC. (2) NCAC Air Supply, pp. 8-1 to 16-1.

³¹ (1) Frank Owen, *The Campaign in Burma* (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1946), p 45. (2) Rpt, G-3 Section During Papuan, New Guinea Campaign, 2 Oct 42-24 Jan 43. AG 332-333.4. (3) *Stilwell's Mission to China*, Ch. VIII.



KICKERS PREPARE TO DROP SUPPLIES *in north Burma.*

Base Section No. 3. The problems involved rapidly passed beyond its scope and in October the base section S-4 took over.³²

Allocation of Transport Aircraft

By the end of December 1943, air deliveries had increased from the 199 net tons of April 1943 to 1,391 tons. In percentage the increase was great, but the greatest development lay in the future. As part of the integration of the air forces, Troop Carrier Command was activated 15 December 1943 under General Old, with headquarters at Comilla. Under him were the 1st and 2d Troop Carrier Squadrons listed above, plus the 27th and 315th Troop Carrier Squadrons, and 31, 62, 117, and 194 Squadrons of the RAF.³³

Mountbatten was fully aware of the possibilities of airborne operations, while his headquarters was coming to appreciate what might be done by stand-

³² NCAC Air Supply, pp. 35-III, 5-III, 7-III, 10-III. Though the kickers shared every hazard of the aircrew, they long performed their dangerous duties without Air Medals, Distinguished Flying Crosses, flight pay, a fixed number of missions, or any of the recognition and perquisites given Air Forces personnel. Many kickers had more than 1,400 flying hours, while a considerable number had more than 1,000 hours.

³³ NCAC Air Supply, p. 11-III.

ard infantry divisions on air supply. He sought energetically to increase the allotment of transports for SEAC and saw the ATC as a source of aircraft for the proposal to drop a division on the rail line to Myitkyina. The initial agreement was that Mountbatten could divert the equivalent of 1,100 tons a month from the ATC to furnish air supply to his campaign. Later, the Joint Chiefs of Staff suggested that while the CCS should recognize that SEAC must have resources adequate to its tasks it was also necessary to have a firm commitment to China over the next six months for ATC tonnage. Specifically, the JCS proposed that SEAC's transport allotment be increased from 11 C-47's or 8 C-46's in February 1944 to 188 C-47's or 126 C-46's in the following month, when major offensive operations were to take place. The CCS approved, but since the expected major operations vanished when the Generalissimo refused to cross the Salween, there were only seventy-six transports on hand for SEAC when March began.³⁴

Mountbatten did not regard seventy-six planes as adequate, and his representatives in Washington were asked to press for more, on the grounds that his resources would not permit him to take and hold the Myitkyina area as the JCS desired. He told them:

After seeing the performance of Stilwell's Chinese forces and hearing of the wonderful show which Wingate and Cochran's No. 1 Air Commando have put up I am becoming convinced that Allied Forces could march all over Burma provided they have adequate air supply and air support and I hope that you will do all you can to emphasize the need for more transport aircraft and yet more transport aircraft and the rapid formation of further Air Commandos on Cochran's style both in England and America.³⁵

To Mountbatten's request, thus relayed, General Arnold replied that he was forming four transport groups totaling 400 aircraft. The first 100 planes went to SEAC in May 1944. Thus SEAC began to acquire the great fleets of air transports which so changed the nature of war in Burma. The difficulty in the way of Mountbatten's having the full complement that he requested lay in his omitting to support his request with detailed plans for future aggressive operations. The Joint Planners, in default of such data, preferred to recommend that SEAC have but 200 transports and Gen. Douglas MacArthur in the Pacific, the balance.³⁶

As for the type of transport aircraft used, the C-47 had qualities of stability that resulted in its being assigned almost all airdropping missions. It was easy to load and balance the C-47 so long as cargo was tied down as far forward as possible. When the aircraft was in flight, cargo could be dragged to the door

³⁴ (1) CCS 411/1, 26 Nov 43, sub: Opns in SEAC. (2) Rad SEACOS 89245, 1 Dec 43. ABC 384 (Burma) 8-25-42, Sec IV, A48-224. (3) Min, CCS 138th Mtg, 7 Dec 43, Item 8. (4) CCS 411/5, 7 Dec 43, sub: Opns in SEAC. (5) Rad RE-240, Brig Gen Vernon Evans, DCofS, USAF CBI, to Stilwell, 11 Feb 44. Bk 6A, JWS Personal File.

³⁵ (1) Mountbatten Report, Pt. B, p. 73, par. 138. (2) Quotation from Minute SC4/440/W, SAC for Wedemeyer, 16 Mar 44. SEAC War Diary.

³⁶ (1) Min, CCS 151st Mtg, 24 Mar 44, Item 3. (2) JCS Memo for Info 302, 11 Sep 44, Incl C, par. 5.

and kicked out without upsetting the transport's balance. In the case of the C-46, cargo had to be arranged in the fuselage literally with slide rule precision lest the craft's flying qualities be adversely affected. Nor could cargo be shifted readily when the aircraft was in flight, for the same reason. Therefore the C-46 and the four-engined C-54 were most useful on the Hump, while the stable, sturdy, and dependable C-47 was excellently adapted to dropping supplies from low altitudes.³⁷

Administrative Problems

In north Burma, the SOS continually altered and enlarged its organization to keep pace with the expanding needs of the combat troops for air supply. Base Section No. 3, under Colonel Pick, recognized that air supply had outgrown the stage at which a quartermaster battalion could meet the responsibility, and decided to activate a packing and airdropping unit on an *ad hoc* basis. The 3962d and 3964th QM Truck Companies, of the 518th QM Battalion (Mobile), plus kicking crews from the 3841st QM Truck Company began operations on 1 December 1943 from the Sookerating Tea Factory, Sookerating, Assam, near the airfield of that name. (See *Map 1*.) It is worthy of note that all air-delivery equipment used in the CBI Theater was of British or Indian origin. Not until GALAHAD's air-supply personnel arrived at Dinjan airfield in late January 1944 did the air-supply personnel have a chance to examine U.S.-made airdrop equipment.³⁸ At the front, matters were simplified by a decision to drop directly to the troops, relieving the quartermaster personnel drawn from the 3304th QM Truck Company of their mission of receiving and distributing. In February 1944, Base Section No. 3 set up an airdropping section under its S-4 to perform its share of the administrative work of air supply.

Within EAC, the mechanism initially set up by Troop Carrier Command to apportion aircraft among the several fronts did not work well. Aircraft were allocated on the basis of advance estimates of a month's requirements in terms of air-supply tonnage. In practice, it proved impossible for any commander to estimate the urgency of his needs fifteen to forty-five days in advance. The result was an inflexibility wasteful of aircraft. G-4 of the Sino-American combat troops in north Burma had to be forever appealing to Troop Carrier Command to alter its schedules on the basis of a changed tactical situation, while simultaneously informing SOS of the degree of priority attached to each mission.³⁹

The rigidity of this system of aircraft allocation was no doubt a partial cause of the shortage of aircraft supporting the North Burma Campaign. Even the

³⁷ Notes of Joseph Bykofsky, Transportation Section, OCMH, on draft manuscript of this chapter. Mr. Bykofsky was in an air supply organization during the later phases of the North Burma Campaign.

³⁸ NCAC Air Supply, pp. 7-III to 10-III.

³⁹ NCAC Air Supply, pp. 6-III to 13-III, 17-III to 20-III.

opening of a subdepot at Shingbwiyang airstrip in the Hukawng Valley, January 1944, though it shortened turnaround time, did not relieve the problem. General Boatner requested Base Section No. 3 to build the supply levels in the forward area up to the required point. That his request, with its implied demand on aircraft, went to SOS, implies the threefold nature of the air-supply mechanism at that time. A fortnight later Boatner wrote to theater headquarters, pointing out that he had 14,000 men in advance of the roadhead and all dependent on air supply, and that a regiment, a tank group, and a British brigade had been moved into his area with no increase in his air resources. This recourse yielded nothing, and so finally Boatner wrote directly to Stilwell.

The theater commander promptly interceded with Stratemeyer and Old. On 11 February Stilwell told Stratemeyer that the next few weeks would be critical, after which, progress on the Ledo Road would ease the supply situation. Stilwell understood that troop-carrier aircraft had been diverted, tonnage into Fort Hertz increased without his consent, and aircraft diverted from air-supply missions for secret tasks without prior notice. Over a six-day period his headquarters had asked for 158 planeloads and received only 98. Not intending to be deprived of his resources, Stilwell was depending on Stratemeyer to see that a failure in air supply did not interfere with his operations.⁴⁰

The experience with this transport shortage, and the obvious effort to find a responsible agency, were probably among the reasons for the decision to reconstitute the Tenth Air Force as the organization supporting Stilwell's campaign. No criticism of the air forces was implied in Boatner's letters, for it was recognized that the energy, skill, and valor of the pilots and crews in delivering supplies through all sorts of weather, and meeting the demands of units that were at times improvident in their use of air supply, often made good the errors of the other agencies. It was an experimental period.

From January to May 1944, the combat headquarters in north Burma, the SOS, and Troop Carrier Command argued among themselves over the administration of air supply to Stilwell's forces. Each had good reason for its claim to be the co-ordinating agency. SOS could contend that supply of the troops was its normal mission. The airmen considered that their possession of the means made them logically responsible for delivery at the right time and place, that SOS could well surrender the related ground operations. Stilwell's field headquarters was not so active on its own behalf for it did not desire to be responsible for SOS and AAF activities but it did insist on the needs of the ultimate consumers. The solution finally settled on in May 1944 was that G-4 of Stilwell's field headquarters, Chih Hui Pu (later Northern Combat Area Command) should institute and operate a system of priorities.⁴¹

⁴⁰ (1) NCAC Air Supply, pp. 13-III to 18-III. (2) File 97-1597, 11 Feb 44. Folder, Chinese 38th Div Rads-In, NCAC Files, KCRC.

⁴¹ NCAC Air Supply, pp. 17-III to 20-III.

Matched with the reactivation of Tenth Air Force, 20 June 1944, as Stratemeyer's Tactical Air Force supporting the North Burma Campaign, the decision to give Stilwell's G-4 control over air-supply priorities meant that Stilwell controlled his tactical air support and was free to use his air-ground team as the needs of the campaign might suggest.⁴² There was the utmost flexibility in the allocation of aircraft to meet G-4's priorities, and the requirements of the ground forces in general. Thus, the 3d Combat Cargo Group, AAF, which arrived in India 30 May, was attached to the Tactical Air Force by the order of 20 June 1944, but supported both the 4 Corps at Imphal and the Chinese troops in north Burma with impartiality. The group's arrival lifted the total of AAF transports on hand from 112 to 191. It was an experimental unit with 150 aircrews, some of them veteran ATC personnel.⁴³

Techniques

The techniques worked out by trial and error began to yield remarkable results by July 1944. Matters did not of course always run smoothly, either before or after the priority system was set up. On 7 June 1944, the American liaison officer with the Chinese 38th Division reported that unit had actually received only twenty-five supply drops of the sixty that G-4 claimed were delivered. The liaison officer was beginning to be annoyed. Willing though he was to go hungry, he was profoundly irritated at being assured supplies had been delivered when he was exceedingly well aware they had not. In November, his successor radioed that if the complete failure of the Chinese medical supply system was his fault to let him know, but if, in fact, there was no medical supply system, would G-4 please create one. The soldiers at the front were using parachutes for dressing wounds, and there were practically no drugs left in the former hospital which was now but a rest camp.⁴⁴ But if the machine of air supply was not foolproof, it did ultimately feed, clothe, and arm five Chinese divisions, one British division, an American brigade, and a host of service troops.

G-4 of Stilwell's field headquarters changed its former Air Dropping Section to an Air Control Section to inaugurate the priorities system in late June. Ninety percent of all requests from units in the field were marked "urgent" by the submitting unit; they were of course reviewed and reclassified as "urgent," "first priority," or "second priority," by the airstrip or target designation of the point to which delivery was requested, and by the air base whence the load was to originate.

The priorities sheet was teletyped early at night to all interested agencies

⁴² EAC Despatch, App. 17a.

⁴³ EAC Despatch, pp. 123-24.

⁴⁴ (1) Rad, Col Thomas F. Van Natta, III, U.S. Ln Off, 38th Div, to Cannon, 7 Jun 44. MTF Msg Bk, NCAC Files, KCRC. (2) Rad 260-3155, 9 Nov 44. Folder, Chinese 38th Div Rads-In, NCAC Files, KCRC.



PACKING SUPPLIES FOR AIRDROP. Drums of gasoline are prepared (above), and eggs are packed by the "country basket" method (below).



and was used as the daily operational orders on the basis of which SOS assembled and packed the loads, and the Air Forces delivered. G-4 kept complete data on the supply status of all units supported, so as to equate it with the progress of operations as reported by G-3. The priorities once set were then followed up by G-4 to see that deliveries were made or to investigate failures if any occurred. The priorities sheet in turn permitted operational economies. Aircraft were loaded at night to be ready for a dawn take-off. Knowing what loads were available at each field made it possible for aircraft that finished one mission to go to a near-by field, pick up another load, and make another delivery before returning to the base. Operation of the priority system brought an immediate 50 percent increase in tonnage delivered without need for added facilities.

SOS through study and experiment steadily improved its own methods of loading aircraft and packing supplies. Generally, they reflected the adoption of American industrial techniques familiar to many Army personnel through their civilian experiences. Standardized loads, production line techniques in packaging, prepacking of loads, plant layout designed to speed the flow of material, simultaneous loading, fueling, and crew briefing, round-the-clock operation of facilities, all were adopted. Suggestions for improvement in this application of advanced industrial techniques to jungle warfare came from all ranks, a full 50 percent of whom were Negro troops. In emergencies, air-supply personnel worked twenty-four hours a day without sleep to get the loads out on time.

There were three methods of delivering supplies—by landing the cargo aircraft at a forward strip, by parachuting supplies through the door of the aircraft, and by “free-dropping,” as the method of dropping supplies packed simply in sacks came to be called. (*Table 3*) The simplest and most economical procedure, given the existence of a safe and suitably located airstrip, was to deliver supplies direct from the transport. When that method was possible, its economy and convenience made it preferable. When airstrips were not available or practical, then free-dropping and parachuting were used, to which the items most in demand—rations, forage, fuel, and ammunition—were well adapted. Oil and gasoline were dropped in 55-gallon drums, protected by sacks of rice husks as bumpers, and suspended from multiple parachutes.

Dropping supplies from the aircraft to the ground raised major problems of packaging. Since air-supply techniques were being worked out on a local basis in CBI, and no equipment came from the United States before late in 1943, Indian material had to be used, and proved extremely practicable. A container that could withstand the impact of the ground—a considerable force even when parachutes were used—was found in the “country basket.” This was a woven bamboo frame, covered tightly by hessian cloth, with a cradle of heavy $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch rope fastened to the parachute. Experience revealed that the baskets should not be too large, so that a number of them could be kicked out of the aircraft on one flight over the drop zone. The basket proved so sturdy

TABLE 3—TONNAGE DELIVERED TO NORTHERN COMBAT AREA COMMAND BY AIR:
APRIL 1943—MARCH 1945 ^a

Year and month	Sorties	Number of short tons			
		Total	Landed	Free-dropped	Parachuted
Total	58,710	152,828	89,914	33,136	29,778
1943	1,623	4,920	0	2,676	2,244
April	66	199	0	109	90
May	116	348	0	190	158
June	53	160	0	88	72
July	194	583	0	321	262
August	85	255	0	142	113
September	103	308	0	139	169
October	177	532	0	293	239
November	381	1,144	0	629	515
December	448	1,391	0	765	626
1944	38,897	101,874	60,713	22,826	18,335
January	863	2,589	0	1,424	1,165
February	941	2,823	0	1,831	992
March	1,555	4,648	698	1,022	2,928
April	2,290	5,913	2,011	2,543	1,359
May	1,614	4,408	1,895	1,542	971
June	1,616	4,004	1,773	1,305	926
July	3,606	9,456	6,151	1,938	1,367
August	4,974	12,748	9,094	1,749	1,905
September	4,328	11,188	8,711	1,584	893
October	5,481	14,360	10,598	2,370	1,392
November	6,041	15,894	10,206	3,294	2,394
December	5,588	13,843	9,576	2,224	2,043
1945	18,190	46,034	29,201	7,634	9,199
January	6,370	16,215	8,985	3,024	4,206
February	5,829	14,716	9,545	2,312	2,859
March	5,991	15,103	10,671	2,298	2,134

^a Excludes air supply to GALAHAD.

Source: NCAC History, App. 6, pp. 16-17.

and resilient that there was no need to pack rice husks or sawdust round its contents. Made by Indian contractors, the country basket was a most useful tool, and was used in great quantity. Parachutes, too, were of Indian manufacture.

Because parachutes and containers were relatively expensive and scarce, free-dropping was used when possible. Rice, salt, animal forage, and various ration items for Indian troops lent themselves well to being packed in 35-pound burlap sacks which in turn were put into larger sacks. Once labeled with a code symbol to indicate the contents, the sack was ready for dropping.

By ingenuity it was found possible to deliver items that would seem most unlikely candidates for airdropping. Chinese units received live poultry and pigs as rewards for distinguished action or to mark feast days. Eggs were safely dropped. Radios, radio parts, high explosives, field ranges and small carts were able, when carefully packed, to survive dropping.⁴⁵

Initial operation of the priorities system tended to overload communications facilities. In July 1944, the theater signal officer joined with the G-4 of Stilwell's field headquarters to obtain better co-ordination of commercial, SOS, and AAF lines. "Top priority for their use after 1500 hours was given to air control." Code machines were obtained and used to send messages in the clear. The form of messages was also improved. Initially, Signal Corps insisted on use of its own style in the arranging of messages, with numbers spelled out and the whole text given as one big paragraph with no indentations for numbered subheads. As a result, messages on receipt had to be retyped to make them usable. Repeated protests finally brought agreement to sending radios in any logical readable form.⁴⁶

Problems of Air Supply

The greater number by far of the troops supplied by air in north Burma were Chinese, and Chinese cultural traits in contact with the latest Western gadgets produced results which ranged from the sidesplitting to the tragic. Americans and Chinese might not always agree on what was humorous and what was not, but contacts between the two peoples produced a wealth of anecdotes and a number of problems. On one occasion, a Chinese unit was first at the drop field when some blood plasma was delivered. The plasma disappeared, and only later was it learned that the Chinese had made their pack horses drink it. "But why?" they were asked. "Weren't your horses well?" "Perhaps so," the Chinese admitted, "but the medicine made them better!"

Chinese troops were far easier to supply by air than were U.S. or British soldiers. The individual Chinese required but three pounds of rations a day as against the American's five pounds. He did not ask the variety in his diet that the American demanded. The Chinese was not only extremely careful of his possessions, in contrast to the habitually wasteful American soldier, but Chinese units had a way of acquiring more, and more, and still more equipment, while American units could be trailed by what they discarded. Conse-

⁴⁵ NCAC History, App. 6, pp. 11-22.

⁴⁶ NCAC Air Supply, pp. 21-III to 31-III.

quently, "once Chinese Units were fully equipped little was ever heard from them except requests for ammunition, rations, medical supplies and certain short-lived items of equipment."

But the Chinese had their failings. Every Chinese unit of any size had its liaison unit of an American officer or two and some enlisted men. These received their own rations, mail, and supplies by airdrop through the Chinese division G-4. Somewhere between the Chinese staff officer and the liaison team, American mail, packages, and supplies tended to vanish. In the classic Chinese fashion, rations and ammunition were overordered on the grand scale. Thus in December 1943, the Chinese 38th Division's requisitions were 280 percent in excess of its strength.

Naturally, there were times when even the extraordinary carrying powers of the Chinese could not cope with this manna raining down. Supply dumps and less formal caches were left behind, and there was great barter with the Burmese. When the Yunnan border was approached, pack trains began to carry American lend-lease to the Yunnan bazaars, as in the days when the Burma Road was hailed as "China's life line."

Many American service units such as hospitals were attached to Chinese units and shared the same dropping fields and airstrips. Sincerely grateful as the Chinese were for the medical care they received, many Chinese failed to see any connection between it and the food that was dropped for hospital personnel. Consequently, the medicos had to be vigilant, quick, and strong, to claim their rations on the instant.

The Chinese seemed to find it hard to mark dropping fields correctly, and having once marked a field were reluctant to mark it again, feeling that every pilot in north Burma would know the spot once supplies had been dropped on it. Occasionally, Chinese fired on transports coming in for a supply drop, and were extremely careless about putting mortar or artillery fire through the air space in which transports were flying. For their part the transport crews sometimes carried small arms and grenades and would use both against areas which they believed held Japanese. They were sometimes mistaken in their beliefs.

Nor did the Chinese ever seem to realize that there was genuine danger in the falling packages. The Chinese "stood on the field or rushed out from the sidelines to catch parachuted supplies as they floated like manna from the skies. Many of these were killed by free dropped rice bags, some crushed and not a few actually beheaded."⁴⁷

The basic cause of much of the Chinese soldiers' behavior probably lay in a fear that some day this wonderful and incomprehensible flow would end, a fear reawakened whenever supplies failed to arrive on time. No Chinese general had ever been so mad as to pour out goods and wealth like this! Surely even the American barbarians would someday realize that one did not use good iron

⁴⁷ (1) NCAC Air Supply, pp. 57-III to 63-III; quotation on pp. 61, 62. (2) Ltr, Dupuy to Ward, 12 Sep 52. OCMH.

to make a nail or a good man to make a soldier. But though the supply machine sometimes faltered, it never failed, and the Chinese soldier continued his patient, valorous, enduring advance.⁴⁸

Equipment for airdropping was sometimes in very short supply. During November and December 1943 it was necessary to fly supplies of rope and hessian cloth from Calcutta to Assam since fresh stocks were not forthcoming through regular channels. Investigation revealed that supplies which had been dispatched some weeks before had been sent by river barges. These in turn had been stranded during a period of low water. After this experience supplies were sent by rail all the way. Parachute stocks on occasion fell so low as to cause concern. Such emergencies were met by applying "extreme pressure" on the troops to collect, preserve, and return parachutes, for normally no parachutes were ever returned from the front.

Because delivery of the desired items to the proper point depended on adequate information, quick and accurate communications between the central control point for air supply at Ledo and the airfields was necessary. One reason lay in the fact that sometimes it was necessary to change the destination of a plane while it was in the air. For another, a steady flow of data as to the requirements of troops was necessary for effective preplanning. Until a teletype system was installed in May 1944, a telephone was used, and, because of inherent deficiencies in the Indian system of that date, was unsatisfactory.⁴⁹

The supply effort was not without its price. From January to August 1944 inclusive, the AAF lost 32 transports destroyed or missing, and had 24 damaged.⁵⁰ The dollar cost was high, for air supply is an expensive operation, whose economy is found in its speeding of victory. Even using equipment that was of Indian manufacture and so less expensive, SOS estimated the cost of air supply as:

\$1,909.65 per ton parachuted
 \$ 94.07 per ton free-dropped
 \$ 49.61 per ton landed⁵¹

The cost of parachuting supplies reflects the price of the parachute. To drop a ton of supplies using American parachutes called for, among other things, fourteen 24-foot parachutes at \$72.00 each, a total of \$1,012.00. Free-dropping a ton of supplies called for \$14.75 of drawstring bags and stencil equipment. Expenses could have been sharply reduced if troops and commanders had cooperated in salvaging parachutes, but less than 1 percent was ever reclaimed. Parachutes were a great aid in softening some of the miseries of war in the jungle, doing service as objects of barter with the Burmese, foxhole lining, "tentage, bandages, target panels, towels, handkerchiefs, sheets, and pajamas."

⁴⁸ NCAC Air Supply, pp. 57-III to 63-III.

⁴⁹ NCAC History, App. 6, pp. 25-26.

⁵⁰ EAC Despatch, App. 10.

⁵¹ NCAC Air Supply, p. 1-VII



PARACHUTE-COVERED FOXHOLE *in the Burmese jungle.*

On its own initiative a drop team of the Chinese 50th Division salvaged 998 British and U.S. parachutes. The saving of \$38,000.00 drew a letter of appreciation from the commanding general to the division commander and his drop crew.

The cost to the Air Forces of one sortie was about \$1,285.00. Total expense of delivering 18,300 tons in one month was \$12,688,742.25. The major item was operating the aircraft, \$7,760.00. Next was the expense of parachuting 2,394 tons, or \$4,571,000.00. Landing 10,206 tons cost but \$47,049.66, which points an obvious moral, since dollars are the bookkeeping symbol for the expenditure of a given amount of energy, skill, and raw material by the economy at a time of great strain.⁵²

The B-29 Command Problem

The decision to place B-29's in China, Burma, and India injected yet another command problem into an already tangled situation. Chennault and Mountbatten both wanted to command the B-29's, confronting Stilwell with

⁵² NCAC Air Supply, pp. 1-VIIIff.

a delicate problem of intratheater relationships. Brig. Gen. Edgar E. Glenn, Chennault's chief of staff, told General Hearn, his opposite number in Stilwell's headquarters, that it was a "well known fact that the Chinese have applied for and have been refused representation on the Joint Chiefs of Staff [sic], the reasons being that the sphere of influence of the JCoS [sic] did not include China." Because Glenn understood that the JCS were retaining ultimate control of the B-29's, he felt that under the circumstances the command arrangement would anger the Chinese. He further claimed it was unjust that Chennault should not be given command of the B-29's and informed Hearn that the proposed operations "demand a complete unification of command for proper co-ordination." Glenn demanded as well that that the B-29 project be completely divorced from SEAC.⁵³

Hoping to receive command of the B-29's and approval of his strategic views by a presidential order overruling the Joint and Combined Chiefs of Staff, Chennault in late January 1944 put his case before the President through direct correspondence.⁵⁴ He may have believed that events had provided the answer to the objections Stratemyer had raised to his plans in October 1943. After *SEXTANT*, the Generalissimo had been offered the opportunity of delaying his portion of the Burma campaign until November 1944. This offer could be taken as reason to divert Hump tonnage from the Chinese ground forces to the Fourteenth Air Force. In December 1943, Hump tonnage had jumped from the 7,300 tons of November to 13,450 tons as the *TRIDENT* decisions finally bore fruit.

Basically, Chennault's memorandum and letter to the President were the familiar Chennault Plan, but with considerable attention to the command problem posed by the B-29's. Chennault recommended that the B-29's under his command should attack Japanese industrial targets after air supremacy in China had been won and Japanese ocean shipping decimated. Fourth priority should go to attacks on Japanese Army installations in China proper, Formosa, and Hainan. The Fourteenth Air Force's commander stated that if the Chinese Army attacked the Japanese positions on the Yangtze River after the Fourteenth Air Force had vigorously bombed them and injured the Japanese line of communications the Japanese would soon begin to withdraw. Consistent with his earlier proposals, though he stressed the need for improving the line of communications to his airfields and estimated the needs of that project in terms of Hump tonnage, Chennault would provide no Hump tonnage for the Chinese Army. Accordingly he wrote:

8. The objection, that the Japanese ground forces can capture and destroy the East China air bases, has always been made to previous proposals for a China air offensive of this type. This objection is founded, however, on experience in a period when the Chinese armies were entirely without air support. It also ignores the most striking fact of the war in China, that

⁵³ Rad M 27 JB, Glenn to Hearn, 8 Jan 44. Item 1606, Bk 5, JWS Personal File.

⁵⁴ Ltr, Chennault to President, 26 Jan 44. Hopkins Papers.

Japanese forces have never succeeded in penetrating Chinese territory to a distance of more than about 100 miles from a major supply line. This was so even when the Japanese enjoyed air supremacy in China. The situation has now been radically changed by the transfer of air superiority to the Chinese side. In the first place, as has been noted already, traffic on the major Japanese supply line within China, the Yangtze River, has actually been interdicted experimentally for a short period of time. Almost all Japanese supply lines within China are water borne, and can no longer be considered dependable. In the second place, the recent battle of Changteh, the first in which Chinese troops have had well organized air support, showed that with this assistance the Chinese armies are quite capable of resisting and throwing back a serious Japanese advance.

9. It is not denied that the Japanese might perhaps capture certain of the East China air bases if they organized a major offensive, employing large numbers of first class troops and an overwhelming strength in the air. But organizing such an offensive would be self-defeating. By concentrating their effort in China, the Japanese would inevitably risk rapid loss of their new empire in Southeast Asia and the Southwest Pacific.⁵⁵

Chennault also pressed his claims with Arnold. He told Arnold that the cost of B-29 operations from the Cheng-tu area would be prohibitive because of radar-directed Japanese fighters. Again, Chennault insisted that "the commander of the air forces in China must be given complete command and control of all such air forces and supporting services as are based in or are operating from China."⁵⁶ Whatever Arnold's views on command may have been, he was wholeheartedly behind MATTERHORN, the plan for basing B-29's in India, staging them through China, and using them to cripple Japan's steel industry. This was apparent in his comments on a letter from Wedemeyer which questioned the possibility of a major bombing offensive from China. Wedemeyer urged that all Hump tonnage go to the Fourteenth Air Force. On receiving Wedemeyer's views, Arnold promptly passed them on to Marshall with the remark that they were just another attempt to discourage the long-range bombing of Japan, and reminded Marshall that not long before efforts had been made to discourage "our" flying 10,000 tons a month over the Hump.⁵⁷

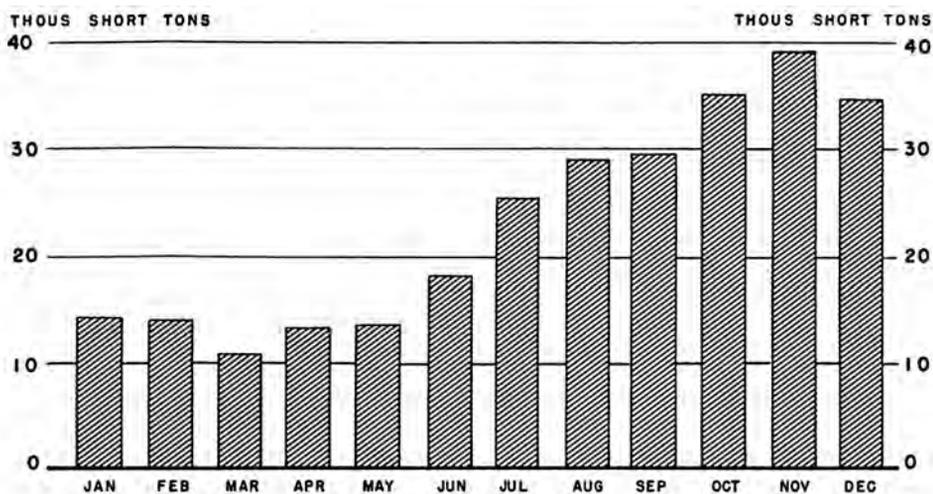
It is not known whether the President replied directly to Chennault's January 1944 proposals. However, one may surmise that many things had happened since May 1943 to change Chennault's position vis-à-vis the President. At the time of the TRIDENT Conference, May 1943, the President had been paying much attention to China. China was an issue in American domestic politics, as speeches in the Senate made clear. Now, in 1944, American attention was increasingly drawn towards Europe. Everyone in high position knew that the cross-Channel assault was scheduled for spring and that the whole war would revolve on it. Against this tremendous fact, even the colorful and dynamic Chennault could not compete. Since the President's personal attention

⁵⁵ Plan of Air Operations in China, 1 Jul-Dec 44. Folder, Chennault Air Plan, CT 39, Dr 1, KCRC.

⁵⁶ Ltr, Chennault to Arnold, 26 Jan 44, sub: MATTERHORN Project. Bk IX, Hopkins Papers.

⁵⁷ Memo, Lt Col George C. Cox for Col Frank McCarthy, 28 Jan 44; Memo, Arnold for Marshall, 29 Jan 44, sub: Bombing of Japan. Case 282, OPD 381 China, A47-30.

CHART 5—TONNAGE SHIPPED FROM INDIA TO CHINA BY AIR: 1944



SOURCE: SOS OF IBT, VOL I, CHART FACING p. 317. OCMH FILES.

was being given to pending operations in Europe, he was no longer desiring to set Hump priorities.

What attention Roosevelt did spare to air matters in China went to the B-29 project. By an irony of history, Chennault and his friends now occupied the spot Stilwell and Marshall had filled in May 1943—that of arguing against a project close to the President's heart.

Therefore, the whole of Chennault's October-January proposals for 1944 was not approved. It remained politic to give the Fourteenth Air Force approximately half of the Hump tonnage being received in China. (*Chart 5*) The careful studies of the line of communications to the east China bases, made by the Fourteenth Air Force and the SOS, bore fruit in a series of theater projects to improve the eastern line of communications.⁵⁸ Theater headquarters approved Chennault's proposals for the organization of the reinforcements arriving for him. In late December 1943, the 68th Composite Wing under Col. Clinton D. Vincent was set up for operations in east China; the 69th Composite Wing under Col. John Kennedy, for operations in the west. In January, eighteen P-40's and thirty-three B-25's arrived to reinforce, but bad weather limited operations.⁵⁹

Admiral Mountbatten was also concerned over the place of the B-29's in the Allied command structure in Asia. Since his arrival in Asia, Mountbatten

⁵⁸ Joseph Bykofsky, *The History of Transportation Service in China, Burma, and India, in World War II* (Bykofsky MS). OCMH.

⁵⁹ Organizational structure of the Fourteenth Air Force is explained in *Fourteenth AF History*.

had been confronted with delicate and involved command problems. There was the problem of Mountbatten's relations with his three British commanders in chief, one of whom had been almost openly hostile; there had been the problem of Mountbatten's relation to Stilwell, who was extremely sensitive and highly suspicious of Mountbatten; there had been the problem of integrating the air forces into EAC. Mountbatten's remedy for this had been to blend tact with firmness. Where it seemed advisable he asserted his authority; on other fronts, he waited to see how the cards were falling.⁶⁰

Now came the proposal to place still another command within SEAC, one whose logistic needs would have to be met through the port of Calcutta on which Mountbatten depended. Support of the B-29's could well mean a diversion of his resources to achieve ends that would contribute nothing toward accomplishing his directives.⁶¹ Consequently, he objected to independent B-29 operations in his theater and offered suggestions to the CCS, which if accepted would have placed the B-29's at his disposal. Agreeing that the B-29's should operate under the general direction of the JCS, he suggested that missions be assigned by the chiefs of staff organization responsible for the theater in which the B-29's were based (for SEAC, the British Chiefs of Staff were responsible). Orders from these would go to the commander of the B-29's and to the theater commanders in whose areas the missions would be executed. The B-29 commander would be required to co-ordinate each mission with each theater commander concerned. In effect, under such an arrangement, each B-29 mission would require the JCS's obtaining the previous assent of the British Chiefs of Staff, Mountbatten, and the Generalissimo. Mountbatten saw the justification for these suggestions in the probable clash in priorities between MATTERHORN and other projects in his theater.⁶²

The initial CBI Theater orders setting the place of the B-29's in the theater command structure directed that XX Bomber Command be placed under the command and control of Stilwell, who in turn was designating Stratemyer to exercise it on his behalf.⁶³ Stilwell did not want Chennault to command the B-29's for fear he would base them at Kweilin and the other east China airfields to raid Japanese shipping. Stilwell believed such a move would provoke an immediate Japanese reaction and feared the Chinese could not defend the airfields. A successful defense, he now estimated, would call for fifty rebuilt Chinese divisions, which were not at hand.⁶⁴

⁶⁰ (1) Extracts, SAC's Personal Diary, 12, 22 Dec 43, 1 Jan, 16 Feb 44. SEAC War Diary. (2) Ltr, Mountbatten to Field Marshal Sir John Dill, 26 Jun 44; Ltr, Wedemeyer to Marshall, 9 Jul 44. Item 70, Folder 57, OPD Exec 10.

⁶¹ Rad RE-338, Egan to Stilwell, 24 Feb 44. Item 48, Bk 6A, JWS Personal File.

⁶² Rad DIAL 29, SEACOS, 25 Feb 44. SEAC War Diary.

⁶³ GO 13, Hq USAF CBI, 30 Jan 44.

⁶⁴ (1) CM-IN 8578, Stratemyer to Arnold, 14 Jan 44. (2) Rad AQUILA 31, Stilwell to Marshall, 23 Jan 44. Item 1670, Bk 5, JWS Personal File. (3) Memo, Timberman for ACofS OPD, 2 Nov 43, sub: Bomber Offensive from China. Case 192, OPD 381 CTO, A47-30.

Eleven days after Stilwell put the B-29's under Stratemeyer, Brig. Gen. Kenneth B. Wolfe, commanding the XX Bomber Command, called on Stilwell to discuss the command problem. The two men agreed that command of the B-29's should be kept from both Chennault and Mountbatten. Stilwell believed that Stratemeyer, because of the integrated nature of EAC, was vulnerable to pressure from Mountbatten, and even more, feared that Stratemeyer contemplated arrangements which would give Chennault practical control of the XX Bomber Command. Therefore, with General Wolfe's concurrence and in accord with a suggestion from Marshall, Stilwell set up a new command structure on February 15, 1944.⁶⁵

The order Stilwell issued stated that "following general directives from the United States Joint Chiefs of Staff" the XX Bomber Command would be under Stilwell's "direct command and control." Logistical support, so far as it lay within the capabilities of the local air force commanders, was split between Stratemeyer and Chennault on a geographic basis, the former in India, the latter in China. Where B-29 operations in Southeast Asia and China were concerned, Stratemeyer was to consult with Wolfe, then offer his recommendations to Stilwell. Chennault was to do the same for B-29 operations from bases in China. In effect, this meant that Wolfe would direct the XX Bomber Command in operations along the lines laid down by general directives from the JCS.

The manner in which these orders had been framed is most indicative of the personal relations that obtained among several of the China-Burma-India Theater commanders on the eve of the theater's most intense activity, and so was significant. But on 28 March the JCS brushed aside the contentions of the local commanders and decided that the China-based B-29's would be commanded from AAF headquarters in Washington. In effect, they would be commanded like a fleet at sea which might base now at this island, and now at that, but would not be tied to any one theater.⁶⁶ Stilwell and Chennault, therefore, had their authority circumscribed in that this great new engine of war would draw on their reserves, would affect events in their theater, for which they would later be held responsible, but would not be at their disposal.

Logistical Problems of the B-29's

In retrospect, Maj. Gen. Vernon Evans, who had a wide and varied experience in CBI as Deputy Chief of Staff, Rear Echelon (the New Delhi headquarters), and later Chief of Staff and Theater Commander, India-Burma Theater, remarked that the support of XX Bomber Command was among the major logistical problems of CBI Theater.⁶⁷ Since CBI Theater had built roads and

⁶⁵ (1) Stilwell Diary, 11 Feb 44. (2) Note, Stilwell's hand, titled Black Book, SUP 55.

⁶⁶ Wesley Frank Craven and James Lea Cate, eds., *The Army Air Forces in World War II: V, The Pacific: MATTERHORN to Nagasaki, June 1944 to August 1945* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1953), pp. 45-52.

⁶⁷ Interv with Gen Evans, Jul 46.

pipelines across the jungle and the mountains, had equipped and supplied Chinese troops, and nurtured two air forces, it is plain that General Evans was comparing preparations for and support of the XX Bomber Command with logistical problems of the first magnitude.

CBI Theater had to build five airfields in India for the B-29's, complete with facilities, and link them to the oil tanker terminals by a pipeline; arrange for the building of airfields in China; supply common-user and Air Forces items, both in India and in China; furnish higher echelon maintenance; fly gasoline and supplies over the Hump to Cheng-tu. The last was a tender point. Though MATTERHORN was supposed to be fully self-supporting, from February to October 1944 ATC had to fly 17,931 tons over the Hump to Cheng-tu. This tonnage was a very heavy drain on the meager resources available for U.S. operations in China, and equal to the tonnage flown into China for the Chinese Army from May 1942 to October 1944.⁶⁸

CBI began its share in B-29 airfield construction in India by supplying trucks and heavy equipment from other projects to supplement the Indian forces extending the existing runways. The U.S. engineer battalions allotted to the task were slow in arriving and it was necessary to divert two aviation engineer battalions from the Ledo Road. By 18 March, SOS, CBI, could report that the fields at Kharagpur and Chakulia were "barely operational" and on schedule. On 30 June four fields were ready, with the fifth, Kalaikundah, delayed because an engineer aviation battalion was diverted for forward airstrip building.⁶⁹ Because oil supply by tank car would have sorely strained transport, it was decided to lay pipelines from the oil terminal at Budge-Budge to the fields. (*See Map 1.*) By 23 February 1944, Indians and Americans working together strung 100 miles of pipe, and by 13 March pumping to the storage tanks at Kharagpur and Chakulia could begin.⁷⁰

In China, after initial difficulties over finance were overcome, the Chinese Government went forward with a tremendous airfield construction program. About 200,000 peasants were mobilized, some of them volunteers, most conscripted. To these were later added 100,000 more, plus 75,000 contract laborers. American and Chinese engineers laid out the runway extensions, for as in India the Cheng-tu B-29 fields were existing fields, extended and improved. Using hand implements and pulling rollers by sheer muscle power, the peasants finished four B-29 fields and three fighter strips by 1 May 1944. The Chinese War Area Service Corps furnished housing and food, for XX Bomber Command tried to keep the number of Americans at Cheng-tu to a minimum to lessen the burden on the Chinese economy.⁷¹

⁶⁸ History of CBI, Sec II, Ch. VIe. (2) Briefing Data Prepared for Maj. Gen. Patrick J. Hurley. Hurley Papers. (See Bibliographical Note).

⁶⁹ Rpts, Gen Covell, CG, SOS USAF CBI, to Somervell, 4, 21 Jan, 23 Feb, 18 Mar, 17 Apr, 21 Jun, 19 Jul 44. OCMH.

⁷⁰ SOS in CBI, pp. 459-60.

⁷¹ History of CBI, Sec. II, Ch. VIe.

Summary

When Stilwell entered the field in December 1943, an important prerequisite of victory was at hand—control of the air. With care and foresight, he had armed and trained two Chinese divisions, was preparing a third, and had secured solemn guarantees of untrammelled command. The rapid growth of U.S. air power, the increasing knowledge of what air power could do, gave Stilwell by December 1943 an advantage that his adversary, General Tanaka, could not hope to match. Hundreds of miles ahead of Stilwell the bombers ranged, harassing Tanaka's supply lines. Unrestrained, the reconnaissance planes peered up and down the valleys. The fighters came on call to blast machine gun nests and entrenchments. Endlessly, the transports sailed overhead, cascading rice, bullets, and bandages to Stilwell's Chinese. Liaison planes now evacuated the wounded from the jungle, where once their injuries would have meant slow death.

In only one way did the new strength and potentialities of U.S. air power positively handicap Stilwell and CBI Theater in the campaigns of 1943-44. The XX Bomber Command's B-29's, with their demands on Hump tonnage and theater facilities, conflicted directly with Stilwell's still unrepealed though practically abandoned mission of reforming the Chinese Army. That the B-29's were flying from China would be to the Japanese one more reason for a major effort there, yet B-29 demands on Hump tonnage made it even more unlikely that anything effective would be done to stop the Japanese once they moved.

With the conclusion of this period of planning and preparation, which may be taken as roughly October-December 1943, the Allied war in China, Burma, and India proceeded by force of geographic circumstance in two very distinct compartments. On the India-Burma side of the Hump, Stilwell was fighting his own campaign, to break the blockade of China. For many months, events in Burma and India proceeded without affecting those in China, and Stilwell left the conduct of the war in China Theater to its Supreme Commander, Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek. As the campaign in Burma moved to its climax, the center of interest shifted to China, where events began to crowd ever faster on one another. But the two campaigns moved separately, on either side of a gigantic mountain range. Though they affected one another, they were related only at the highest level; the daily ebb and flow of battle might have been in two separate wars. The campaign in Burma was the first to reach the critical point.

PART TWO

THE NORTH BURMA CAMPAIGN
DECEMBER 1943–AUGUST 1944

CHAPTER IV

Breaking the Stalemate in North Burma

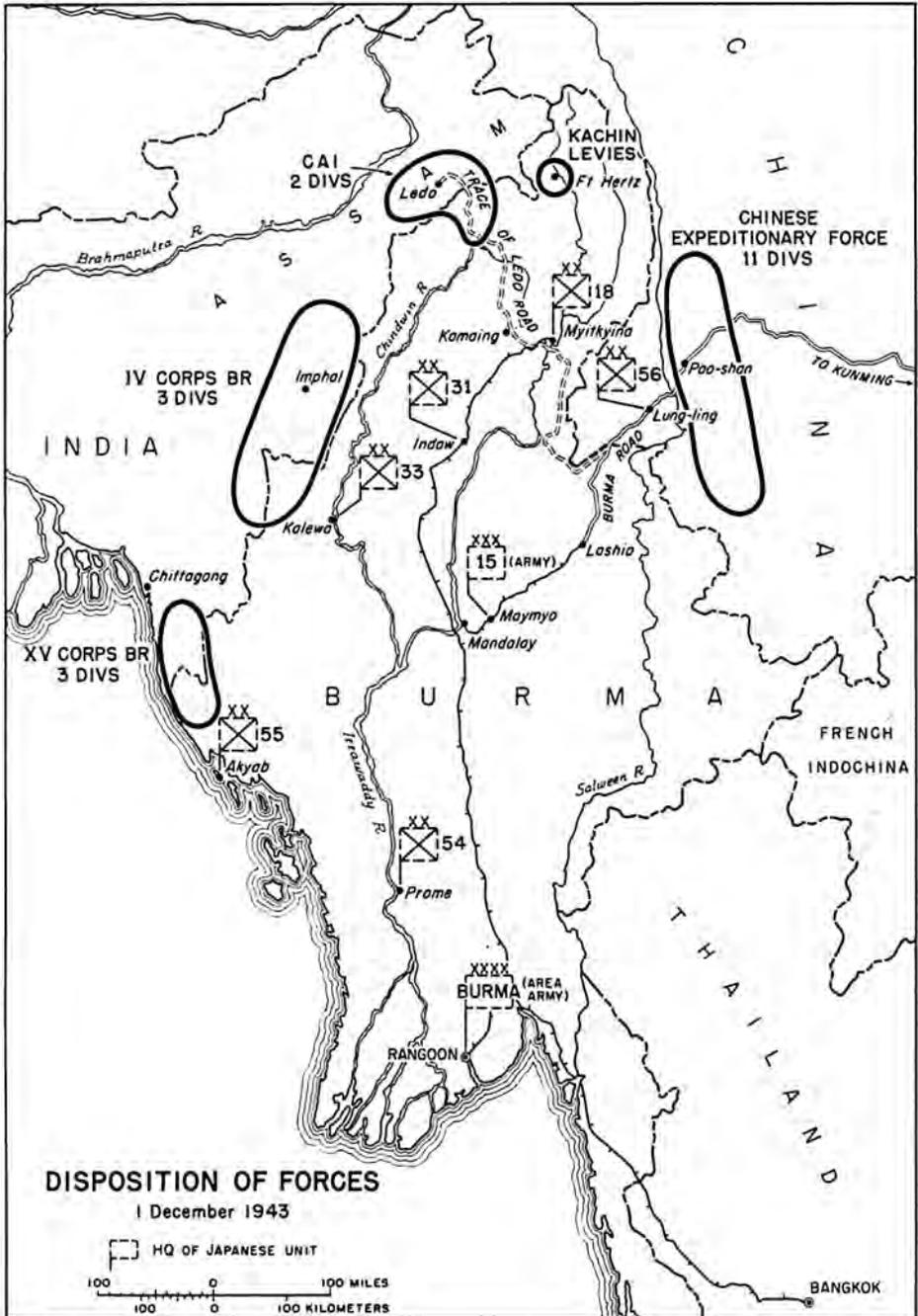
A great semicircle of Allied forces stood around Burma in December 1943. With the exception of Stilwell's forces, which had breached the mountain barriers in north Burma, Allied forces were in positions that roughly conformed to the natural defenses that ring Burma in a long Gothic arch with its apex toward the north. The forces on the west or Indian side were under SEAC and Mountbatten; those to the east or Chinese side, under the Chinese Expeditionary Force, Gen. Wei Li-huang commanding. In the southwest, in the Arakan area along the Bay of Bengal, was the British 15 Corps (5th and 7th Indian Divisions and 81st West African Division). Since November 1943 they had been driving in the forward positions of the Japanese *55th Division* in order to seize an area from which, with amphibious support, they might take the airfields and the port of Akyab on the Arakan coast. (*Map 5**)

About 300 miles to the north, SEAC had its 4 Corps (17th, 20th, and 23d Indian Divisions). Here there was only patrol activity, but in early 1944 the corps was scheduled to take the offensive into Burma to keep Japanese forces from moving north to stop Stilwell. 4 Corps faced the Japanese *33d* and *31st Divisions*.

In the Hukawng Valley, Stilwell had the Chinese 38th Division, with elements of the 22d Division coming forward. They were fighting the Japanese *55th* and *56th Regiments*, *18th Division*, and were driving across north Burma to break the blockade of China.

On the China side, on the long Salween River front, were the eleven divisions of the Chinese Expeditionary Force. Opposite them the Japanese had

*For explanation of enemy unit symbols, see note 82(3), page 42, above.



H. Damon

MAP 5

their *56th Division*. The Japanese deployment left one Japanese division in reserve, the *54th*.¹

The terrain feature on which the campaign, seen in its largest sense, currently focused was the town of Myitkyina. Lying in the center of north Burma, at the southern tip of the mountain range or Hump over which the transports flew to China, and possessed of road and rail links with the rest of Burma and with China, Myitkyina had strategic advantages to which the Joint and Combined Chiefs attached great importance. Were Myitkyina and its airfields in Allied hands, the transports of the ATC could fly a lower, broader route to China. Were Myitkyina in Allied hands, the Ledo Road and its companion pipelines could link with the prewar communications net of North Burma, Myitkyina would become a great supply center, and the end of China's blockade would be at hand.

In their current position around the obscure wrecked villages of Yupbang Ga, Sharaw Ga, and Ningbyen, Stilwell's Chinese were on the Burman side of the mountains that separate Burma and India. They were at the north end of the long corridor of the Hukawng and Mogaung valleys whose southern exit is within easy march of Myitkyina, and the Irrawaddy valley that forms so much of central Burma. The principal barrier between Stilwell and Myitkyina was the three regiments of the Japanese *18th Division*. These skilled veterans under the competent leadership of General Tanaka could be counted on to make good use of the several dominant terrain features that lay between Stilwell's troops and the streets, houses, bazaars, and temples of Myitkyina.

The SEXTANT decisions of the Combined Chiefs of Staff in December 1943 required that Stilwell occupy upper Burma in spring 1944. To carry out this order Stilwell would have to break the stalemate that had developed in the northern end of the Hukawng Valley. These were the elements of the stalemate: The three battalions of the 112th Regiment, Chinese 38th Division, had been sent forward into the north end of the Hukawng Valley to hold the line of the

¹ (1) The strength of the Japanese forces during the winter of 1943-44 caused discussion among Allied leaders at the time, a discussion reflected in some postwar accounts. The Japanese took Burma with four divisions, the *18th*, *33d*, *55th*, and *56th*. In summer 1943 they added a fifth, the *31st Division*. In December 1943, while trying to persuade the Chinese to attack across the Salween into Burma, Stilwell used the estimate of five Japanese divisions. He erred, in that the *54th Division* had entered Burma in fall 1943, but had not yet been identified. The Generalissimo in December told Stilwell that there were eight Japanese divisions present. As noted in Chapter I, above, reports were circulating in October 1943 that the original Japanese force of four divisions had been reinforced by four more; the Generalissimo's estimate may have reflected these reports. During the months of January and February 1944, the *2d Division* entered Burma by rail, while the *15th Division* arrived during the three-month period of January-March, moving by foot and truck over the Kengtung-Takaw road. This made a total of eight Japanese divisions in Burma by March 1944. The statement in the Mountbatten Report, Part B, paragraph 66, that "by January"—presumably by 1 January 1944—the Japanese forces in Burma had been increased to eight divisions cannot be reconciled with the information in the SEATIC bulletins and Japanese studies. If one allows for the period of many weeks needed for a Japanese division to close at its Burmese station, the Mountbatten Report necessarily implies that leading elements of the *2d* and *15th Divisions* entered Burma in October and November 1943. Statements to that effect do not appear in the Japanese sources used by the authors, Japanese Studies 89, 133, and 134. (2) SEATIC Bull 240. (3) Mountbatten Report, Pt. B, pars. 32-53.

Tarung Hka and Tanai Hka. The Tarung, flowing from north to south, enters the westward-flowing Tanai about six miles southwest of the village of Yupbang Ga. The rivers lay in the path of the engineers building the Ledo Road; it was essential to hold their crossings. Moving forward on this mission, the battalions of the 112th had met the outposts of the Japanese, elements of the *55th* and *56th Regiments, 18th Division*.

The Chinese battalions were soon cut off as the Japanese used their customary device of encirclement. The 1st Battalion at Yupbang Ga, the 2d Battalion in the Sharaw Ga area (both on the Tarung), and the 3d Battalion at Ngajatzup, about twenty-five miles southwest of Yupbang Ga in the Taro Plain, were all surrounded, relying on air supply, and apparently powerless to cut their way out. Nor had the initial attempts to relieve them been successful. The commander of the 38th Division, General Sun Li-jen, had tried unsuccessfully in mid-December to relieve the 1st Battalion at Yupbang Ga. He used reinforcements for whose presence he was in considerable measure indebted to a visit by the Generalissimo and Madame Chiang two weeks earlier.²

The Chiangs Visit Their Troops

On 30 November 1943 the headquarters of the Chinese Army in India was visited by Generalissimo and Madame Chiang on their way back from Cairo; they still believed the Allies were in accord on Burma operations. While the Generalissimo spoke with Generals Sun and Liao, Madame Chiang asked General Boatner if the Chinese troops had not failed to bypass the Japanese and go ahead. Boatner shared her impressions. Asked by Madame Chiang to explain, Sun replied that he had no reserves available at the front. On Boatner's asking if the arrival of these reserves would set him to enveloping the Japanese, Sun concurred. Madame Chiang again raised the issue, and again Sun said yes.

Then the Generalissimo called Boatner before him to receive his views, Madame Chiang interpreting. The Generalissimo asked that his expressions be passed on to Stilwell. Boatner reported the Generalissimo as saying:

. . . our forces were at a big disadvantage, that supply was most difficult, that no road was available for rapid troop movements and the Japanese had every advantage to include large forces in our immediate front. He stated that we should not provoke a large-scale battle with the Japanese and we should not cross the Tarung-Tanai River until February, because at that time the British would move to the South and the Chinese would move from Yunnan. He stated that the Chinese force used to hold the present river line should not exceed one regiment. He explained that this force was desirable because we had only six regiments and if two were cut off by the enemy we would have only four regiments left.³

General Boatner replied that at most two Japanese battalions faced the 38th

² Overlay, Hq 5303d (Prov) Combat Trs, 13 Nov 43; Overlay, 4 Dec 43. NCAC Files, KCRC.

³ Memo, Boatner for Stilwell, 2 Dec 43, sub: Rpt on Conf with Generalissimo and Mme. Chiang, 30 Nov 43. Stilwell Documents, Hoover Library.

Division, that air supply kept the Chinese well fed and well armed, that the movement forward was, properly speaking, not an offensive at all but made necessary by the progress of the Ledo Road. Boatner also explained the system of liaison and command—that he, Boatner, simply passed on Stilwell's orders. Then the gathering paused for dinner.

The minutes of the conference suggest that in the light of the First Burma Campaign's experiences Boatner was alarmed by the Generalissimo's statements before Sun and Liao that the defensive should be adhered to and only one regiment risked. As soon as the Generalissimo's party sat down to dinner, the Generalissimo again stated that in his opinion only one regiment should defend the river line. Asked what would happen if that regiment were not enough, the Generalissimo replied: "Well, of course you will have to think up a method (Hsiang I Ko Pan Fa)." Boatner acted at once, and:

. . . immediately told Madame Chiang that I considered the Generalissimo's statement in reference to using only one regiment of the utmost importance; that if he told his division commanders that only one regiment would be used and if thereupon he, the Generalissimo, left the area, the situation might change abruptly and a catastrophe result before he could make necessary changes in orders. I quickly added, again to Madame Chiang, that this was of utmost importance and the Generalissimo must realize that many of his officers took his views and wishes as explicit orders, and that such would severely handicap future operations in this sector. Upon receiving Madame Chiang's interpretation, the Generalissimo quickly replied that these were not orders, only his views, and that you [Stilwell] had complete authority. I then asked Madame Chiang if she would make certain that the Generalissimo would make this crystal clear to Generals Sun and Liao. The Generalissimo agreed.

After dinner the Generalissimo told Sun and Liao in a very formal manner that his remarks on operations were simply his personal views and that Stilwell's orders were to be carried out in full. The meeting had been friendly and cordial throughout, thought General Boatner, and he so reported.⁴

On learning of this conference, Stilwell told Madame Chiang that the stalemate had been caused by General Sun's failure to maneuver aggressively. (It will be recalled that the tendency was to underestimate the number of Japanese then present around Yupbang Ga.) The discussion, partly personal and partly by radio, ended with Stilwell's assurance that reinforcements were coming, and Sun's solemn promise to Madame Chiang that he would indeed bypass the entrenched Japanese when his reinforcements arrived. Stilwell capped the episode by writing a letter to Sun asking him to make his promise to Madame Chiang a matter of record.⁵

Stilwell then told Boatner that Sun was free to use the whole 38th Division and could move up a regiment of the 22d Division to a reserve position if he

⁴ Memo cited n. 3.

⁵ Ltr, Stilwell to Sun, 11 Dec 43, sub: Unsatisfactory Methods Employed During Present Opns; Ltr, Stilwell to Sun, 9 Dec 43, sub: Accomplishment of Promise Made to Mme. Chiang 30 Nov 43. Folder, Combat Rpt Fwd Ech and Ln O's, ALBACORE Hist Files, NCAC Files, KCRC.

wished; the latter request Boatner had earlier refused because he wanted to train the 22d Division for a few months more.⁶

Almost immediately, General Sun tried to relieve the beleaguered 1/112th at Yupbang Ga. On 15 December the 1/114th, supported by the 6th Battery, 38th Division Artillery, attacked. Firing the first preparation of the campaign, the battery was thought to have driven away the crews of three of the four Japanese machine gun positions separating the two battalions. The Chinese waited ten minutes, then gingerly probed the Japanese positions with a small patrol. Fired on by the remaining machine gun, the Chinese withdrew to their own lines. The Japanese then reoccupied and strengthened their positions so that later attacks found them much more formidable.⁷

Yupbang Ga

Taking up his duties as Commanding General, Chinese Army in India, Stilwell arrived at Shingbwiang, in the Hukawng Valley, on 21 December. That day and the next he spent with General Sun and the several staffs in examining the local situation. In the Yupbang Ga-Sharaw Ga-Ningbyen area, the serpentine Tanai Hka, flowing roughly from southeast to northwest, most shapes the local topography. Almost immediately south and southwest of the Tanai is the hill mass of the Wantuk Bum. Flowing almost due south until it meets the Tanai is the Tarung. The two rivers thus form the eastern and southern boundaries of a small terrain compartment. The traveler or the army that wants to leave the compartment on the south must use the Kantau ford; the eastern exits are the fords at Yupbang Ga and Ningbyen. To get his campaign under way, Stilwell would have to pry the Japanese grip from the Chinese units at the Tarung Hka crossings at Yupbang Ga and Ningbyen. Fortunately for him, the Japanese had omitted to guard the Kantau ford, so that the exit to the south across the Tanai was open. (*See Map 4.*)

The Japanese positions seemed to Stilwell and his staff to be along the Tarung Hka with their left flank resting somewhere near the hills of the Wantuk Bum. Thus, their line ran north and south, roughly parallel to the Tarung, and the unguarded Kantau ford seemed to open an obvious opportunity to attempt an envelopment of their left or southern flank. If the Chinese could move a force across the Tanai at Kantau, then send it moving eastward along the Tanai's southern bank, they might well succeed in placing themselves in the Japanese rear and cutting off Tanaka's force north of the Tanai. Such a stroke might well result in disaster for Tanaka's 55th and 56th Regiments and decide the campaign in its first months.

⁶ Sun had complained to Stilwell that the orders he received even specified the units he was to use. Rad, Stilwell to Boatner, 14 Dec 43; Rad RELOT G 335, Boatner to Ferris and Hearn, 6 Dec 43. Items 1518, 1504, Bk 5, JWS Personal File.

⁷ Comments by Col Dupuy on NCAC History, 1, 29 (hereafter Dupuy Comments); Notes by Col Dupuy on draft MS (hereafter, Dupuy Notes); Ltr, Dupuy to Ward, 24 Sep 51. OCMH.

Sun's initial proposals were to send the 3/114th, 38th Division, south across the Tanai at Kantau ford to cut around the Japanese left, while two additional companies tried to swing around the northern end of the Japanese line by crossing the Tarung north of Sharaw Ga. Stilwell objected that the proposed forces were too small. In lieu of the attempted envelopment of the Japanese northern flank by two companies, he substituted a strong attack toward Yupbang Ga, which, after breaking the Japanese center and relieving the 1/112th, would hook north and envelop the northern fragment of the Japanese line. The force sent to move around the Japanese left was finally set at a regiment.⁸

The commander of the Chinese 114th Regiment was put in command of the operations around Yupbang Ga, since his unit had been chosen to make the effort, with the 112th Regiment co-operating as best it could. Supported by the 5th and 6th Batteries, the 1/114th deployed with companies in line. Four Japanese strongpoints in a rough square barred them from the 1/112th.⁹

Preceding the attack, which was launched on 24 December, another artillery preparation was fired, with great accuracy, for only thirty yards separated the two forces at some points. When the Chinese went in at 1000, the Japanese held stoutly, because this time there was no element of surprise. The Chinese had waited five minutes after the fire lifted before attacking and had blown a bugle in the accepted Chinese practice. The Japanese fought with their accustomed stubbornness and counterattacked thirty minutes after the Chinese companies in the attack at last made contact with each other at 1300 in the Japanese position. Small parties of Japanese held out in foxholes and dugouts.

At 1500 the Chinese battalion commander, Maj. Peng Ke-li, enveloped the Japanese right flank, and at 1515 another element made contact with the besieged battalion, which had remained in its lines during the fight. By dark the smallest Japanese pocket had been surrounded, and it was wiped out the next morning though one dogged machine gunner was still firing at 1000. The survivors of the other pocket fought their way clear during the night. The enemy's defense had been active. Every night patrols were out raiding, and the Japanese still held the west bank of the stream.

This little battle, bitterly fought at close quarters, made a great impression on the men of the 38th Division. Many of them were new, had heard stories of the 38th Division's successes in the First Burma Campaign, and now felt that they too could beat the Japanese. The Chinese soldiers talked of it over and over again during the rest of the drive on Myitkyina; the first victory is never forgotten.¹⁰

⁸ Note in Stilwell's hand, written between 8 and 11 January 1944. JWS Misc Papers.

⁹ (1) Dupuy Comments. (2) *The Stilwell Papers*, pp. 273-74. (3) Stilwell Sketch, NCAC History, I, 30B. (4) Dupuy Notes.

¹⁰ (1) Photostat 203, Stilwell Documents, Hoover Library. (2) Stilwell Sketch, NCAC History, I, 30B. (3) Dupuy Comments. (4) Major Peng received the Silver Star for this action. GO 46, Hq USAF CBI, 15 May 44.

Yupbang. 1st phase - 12/24 = 12/25 1943

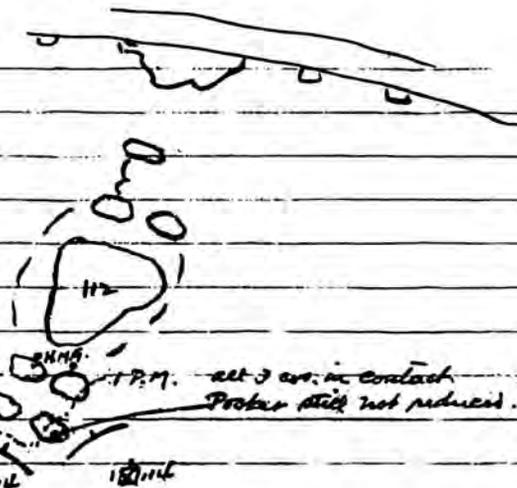
Jump-off 10 AM.

1 P.M.

20114

350114

180114



1 P.M. all 3 are in contact
Prober still not reduced.

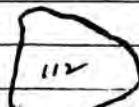
3 P.M. 244

OUT 3 P.M.

30114

30114

OUT 5 P.M.



CONTACT 3:15 P.M.

JAP COUNTER-ATTACK
REPULSED - 3:45 P.M.

2x help from 112

TENG TOOK A
DET. TO FLANK AT 3 P.M.
LAST PICKET SURROUNDED
AT DARK - 6 P.M.

25th 9 a.m. Last pocket wiped out.
Navy at X still being worked on. Out at 10:00
1 jpf. maj., 1 capt., 2 lie. killed. Return at very close
quarters. (30.40 yds.)

ATTACK ON YUPBANG GA. Reproduction of original sketch by General Stilwell.

The Japanese, too, were impressed by Yupbang Ga: ". . . the unexpected stubbornness of the Chinese troops in the fighting around Yupbang Ga led the Japanese to believe that troops that faced them were far superior in both the quality of their fighting and in their equipment to the Chinese troops they had been fighting in China for years. Too, after witnessing a spectacular [supply] airdrop of Allied forces the Japanese realized that the fighting power of the American-Chinese forces was not to be underestimated."¹¹

The success pleased Stilwell, but a warning of a major Japanese threat may have spoiled his Christmas Day. Accepting at face value intelligence that he was to be attacked by the Japanese *18th* and *31st Divisions*, he called General Sun into conference and told the Chinese commander of his plans to meet so grave a threat. Stilwell planned to seize Taihpa Ga with the 38th Division, then fortify it, while the 22d Division did the same in the Taro Plain. Chih Hui Pu was to speed the arrival of the 65th Regiment, 22d Division. Thus, for the next few days Stilwell's intent was to seize good defense positions, "then let Japs attack."¹²

The initial success at Christmas did not take Yupbang Ga from the agenda. The Japanese between the 1/112th and the river still held, blocking the crossing. Three battalions were to be used in driving them out, the 1/114th, 2/114th, and 1/112th, supported by the 5th and 6th Batteries. Facing them were at least the *4th* and *6th Companies*, *2/55th*, with machine guns attached, holding three strongpoints some 300 yards northwest of the river, and three more along its bank.

Attacking from the north, the three Chinese battalions began the operation at 1000, 28 December. By 1430 the 1/112th on the right flank had swept in behind the three outer strongpoints to take one of those along the river. The position forming the left flank of the Japanese outer defenses fell at 1400; then the Chinese found that this point and its immediate neighbor were linked by tunnels through which the Japanese freely moved. Little progress was made until the Chinese who had assaulted these defenses bypassed the Japanese supporting position and went on to the river. This stroke seemed to force the Japanese from the three outer positions. In the meantime the 1/114th broke the resistance at one of the points on the river, which had been somewhat isolated from the other Japanese positions. A counterattack that night from one of the two remaining strongpoints failed, and the point itself was wiped out the next morning.

The survivors of the Japanese companies split into small groups which held out for several days. There was a fluid situation, with "firing all around." The last Japanese strongpoint, in a sort of anticlimax, held out till 13 January.

¹¹ Tanaka, Japanese Comments, Sec. II. Draft chapters on the north Burma fighting were sent to General Headquarters, Far East Command, to obtain Japanese comments. (See Bibliographical Note.) The comments were returned in a manuscript, hereafter cited as Japanese Comments, which is in OCMH.

¹² Stilwell Diary, 25 Dec 43.

In the first attempt to clear it on 5 January, the Chinese met land mines, which inflicted forty casualties. On the next day an attempt with three companies following an artillery preparation failed when one company commander attacked ahead of time. The position was penetrated but the Chinese suffered such losses that they had to fall back. By good fortune, the last attack was made as the Japanese were finally pulling back across the river and yielded an unexpectedly large dividend of casualties.

The Chinese units trapped to the north, in the Sharaw Ga area, were relieved by elements of the 113th Regiment on 31 December 1943, for with the Chinese successes around Yupbang Ga the Japanese position to the north was plainly untenable. The line of the Tarung Hka was now firmly in Chinese hands.

At the south end of the line, in the area where the Tarung flows into the Tanai, and where Sun planned to envelop the Japanese left, the envelopment had not progressed with the speed Stilwell desired. The 3d Battalion of the 114th, later followed by the 2d Battalion, marched south to the Kantau ford and crossed the Tanai in the second week of December, moving in column of companies. Its 8th Company stayed at the Kantau ford; the 7th Company halted at the second bend of the river from Kantau and dug in. To the very skeptical Stilwell, Sun claimed that he had ordered the 6th Company to proceed and cut off the retreat of the two Japanese regiments to the north. The 6th Company stayed where it was until 9 January 1944.¹³

Unknown to Sun and Stilwell the Chinese in the Kantau area faced a Japanese raiding force of about forty men which Tanaka had sent to swing wide round his left in order to cut behind the Chinese front-line positions and attack the truck parks, supply dumps, and command posts around Ningbyen and Shingbwiyang. The *18th Division* had not expected to meet the Chinese. These latter posed so grave a threat to Tanaka's flank that their subsequent passivity puzzled their opponents as much as it gratified them.¹⁴

The fighting had by the end of 1943 cost the 38th Division 17 officers and 298 enlisted men killed, and 20 officers and 409 enlisted men wounded. The bulk of the casualties were suffered by the 112th Regiment, and 356 replacements for it left Ledo on 3 January 1944.¹⁵

Stilwell's role had not been easy. Analyzing the operation in his usual fashion, he noted grave Chinese errors: "Dissipation of force. . . . Piece-meal action. . . . Extreme caution and extreme slowness of movement. . . . Fear of imaginary terrors. . . . Bad recon and security. . . . Fear of going around. . . .

¹³ (1) Note cited n. 8. Stilwell doubted Sun's aggressiveness. (2) NCAC History, I, 31A. (3) G-3 Per Rpts, Hq 5303d (Prov) Combat Trs, 4 Jan, 11 Jan 44; Sketch of Sharaw, Hq Fwd Ech, 5303d (Prov) Combat Trs, 28 Dec 43. NCAC Files, KCRC.

¹⁴ (1) Tanaka, Japanese Comments, Sec. II. (2) Japanese Officers' Comments, Incl 4, Tanaka.

¹⁵ (1) Stilwell Sketch. Photostat 209, Stilwell Documents, Hoover Library. (2) Overlay and sketches, NCAC History, I, 30-32. (3) Dupuy Comments. (4) Overlay, Hq 5303d (Prov) Combat Trs, 28 Dec 43; Sketch, Disposition of Units of 1st Bn, 113th Regt as of 8 Jan 44, signed Capt N. R. Lester. Folder, Overlays, ALBACORE Opns, Sitreps Hist, etc., 11 Jan 44, NCAC Files, KCRC.



JAPANESE FIFTEENTH ARMY COMMANDER AND STAFF. *Seen left to right, front row, are Lt. Gen. Genzo Yanagida, Commander, 33d Division, General Tanaka, Commander, 18th Division, General Mutaguchi, Commander, Fifteenth Army, Lt. Gen. Sukezo Matsuyama, Commander, 56th Division, and Lt. Gen. Kotoku Sato, Commander, 31st Division.*

Result—Loss of men. Loss of chance to bag Japs.”¹⁶ He felt that the 3/114th was not pushing its envelopment, that it could have slipped up behind the Japanese from the south. Stilwell found it difficult to get an accurate idea of Japanese strength. One trusted staff officer thought them “awfully strong” across the Tarung; another, that there were only 400 Japanese facing the 38th Division. But his major problem was trying to make the Chinese more aggressive.¹⁷

The Opponents Shape Their Plans

The warning of a Japanese offensive that had clouded Stilwell’s enjoyment of Christmas was an exaggeration but not an error, for General Tanaka had had no intention of remaining on the defensive. He had planned to attack with his

¹⁶ Handwritten note, 1943. JWS Misc Papers.

¹⁷ (1) Stilwell Diary, 26–30 Dec 43. (2) Tanaka gives his strength in the engagement as 600 men. Japanese Officers’ Comments, Incl 4, Tanaka.

55th and *56th Regiments*, leaving the *114th Regiment* to garrison Myitkyina, but had been overruled in mid-December 1943 by General Mutaguchi of the *15th Army*. Since preparations were then actively under way for an attack on Imphal, Mutaguchi believed he could not spare additional motor transport units to give the necessary logistical support to the *18th Division*. Tanaka therefore received orders that severely restricted him. The *18th's* commander was told that any movement of reinforcements north of the Tanai must have Mutaguchi's personal approval. The *18th* could counterattack in the area around Maingkwang, near the south end of the Hukawng Valley; at the very least, it must hold Kamaing, just south of the ridge line that separated the Hukawng and Mogaung valleys. Weighing his orders, Tanaka began to plan with the hope that by the time the monsoon rains fell in May or June he would have created a stalemate somewhere near the ridge line.¹⁸

Therefore General Tanaka planned a delaying action down the Hukawng Valley, for which he had several advantages. The terrain was admirably suited to such an attempt, and the Japanese had complete and detailed knowledge of the Chinese order of battle. Moreover, the Japanese infantry were now supported by the *18th Field Mountain Artillery Regiment* with twelve 75-mm. mountain guns and four 150-mm. howitzers. Transport difficulties made it necessary to leave the remainder of the regiment in the rear. The engineers of the *18th Division* were also present. After the war, Tanaka estimated his strength in the Hukawng Valley at 6,300 men. These plus the *114th Regiment* stood between Stilwell and Myitkyina.¹⁹

Stilwell's plans immediately after the successful action at Yupbang Ga remained fluid. Probably he still feared that attack by the *18th* and *31st Divisions* of which he had been warned. Since his plans to meet that menace called for moving ahead to the line of the Tanai, and since General Sun was contemplating an envelopment to trap the Japanese north of the Tanai, the operations immediately under way could go on as Stilwell shaped his next move and prodded Sun to move faster. To encourage the latter, and applying his bargaining technique of dealing with the Chinese, Stilwell told Sun on 3 January that the 3/112th would be released from army control if Sun took the little settlement of Taihpa Ga on the Tanai in two days. Looking farther ahead, Stilwell also asked General Wingate to move the U.S. long-range penetration group (GALAHAD) up to the Hukawng Valley. Wingate agreed.²⁰

With the Generalissimo's refusal to cross the Salween, GALAHAD lost the

¹⁸ Japanese Comments, Sec. I.

¹⁹ (1) Statement of Gen Tanaka, 5 Oct 51, Japanese Comments, Sec. I. (2) The Japanese strength estimate by Theodore H. White of 40,000 to 60,000 Japanese troops in the Hukawng and Mogaung valleys cannot be reconciled with what is known of the Japanese order of battle. *The Stilwell Papers*, p. 269. (3) Tanaka Interrog. OCMH. (4) Wkly G-2 Rpt, Hq 5303d (Prov) Combat Trs, 12 Jan 44. NCAC Files, KCRC. The *55th Regiment* was on the south of a boundary line roughly Ningam Sakan-Yupbang Ga (both in the *55th Regiment* sector); the *56th Regiment* was on the north. *Headquarters, 18th Division*, was at Shingban.

²⁰ Stilwell Diary, 3 Jan 44.

mission for which it had originally been intended and was available for others. On 6 January, General Merrill was assigned to command the regiment, vice Colonel Hunter, who became second in command. GALAHAD's designation reverted to *unit*, perhaps because it would have been incongruous to have a general officer command a regiment.²¹

Mountbatten offered British troops to spearhead the Chinese, but Stilwell preferred GALAHAD because both it and the Chinese had been trained in the American system of tactics.²² Stilwell's request, though later yielding major results in combat, placed a logistic burden on the Advance Section and the combat zone for which no preparations had been made, because GALAHAD was to have operated under SEAC and Stilwell's decision reflected a last-minute inspiration two months after the campaign began. There was no replacement of convalescent system for the American combat troops (since GALAHAD had been provided by the War Department for one mission of three months' duration), while air support, both tactical and supply, had not previously been allocated with a view to support of U.S. infantry in north Burma. Arrangements by Stilwell's combat headquarters to support GALAHAD were therefore improvisations and many of them failed in combat.²³

Seeking to give weight to the campaign from another direction, Stilwell sent a radio to Marshall asking that pressure be put on the Generalissimo to turn the Y-Force loose. Stilwell argued that the Generalissimo's inactivity would give to SEAC "the very reason they wanted to give up the attack on Burma." And he feared that if the Burma campaign was allowed to die away the Japanese would then be free to strike at Kunming either via Pao-shan or from Hanoi and French Indochina.²⁴

Enveloping the Japanese Left Flank

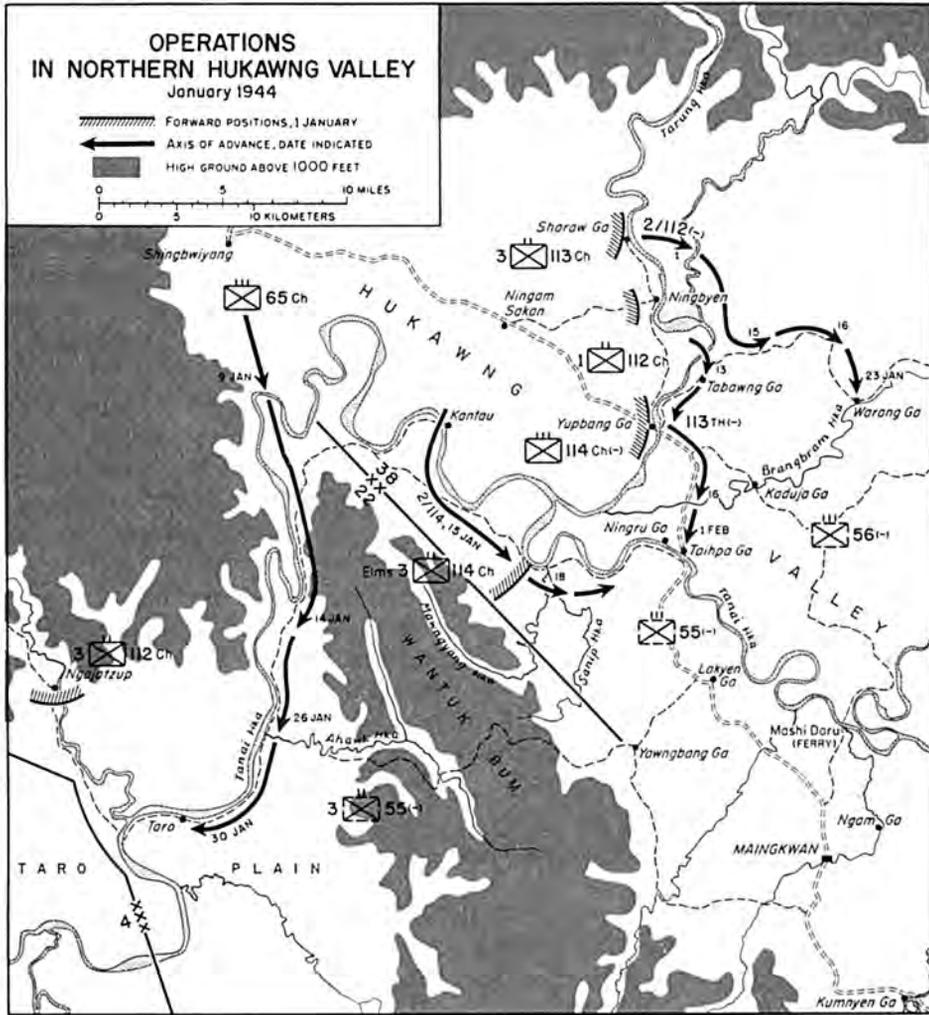
General Sun's plan, as he finally settled on it after many talks with Stilwell, called for a regimental combat team to continue the wide swing around Tanaka's left flank while the rest of Sun's division attacked Tanaka's front. The enveloping force, the 114th Regiment of the 38th Division plus the 6th Battery, was sent circling south to cross the Tanai at Kantau while the 113th Regiment and the 2/112th in the center would wheel to the south, coming down from Yupbang Ga and reaching the Tanai, in the vicinity of Taihpa Ga. To the extreme north the 1/112th would march eastward across the Tarung, then turn south. The 4th and 5th Batteries would support the 113th Regiment. Far to the west the 65th Regiment, 22d Division, was sent into the Taro Plain on a wide envelopment calculated to cut into the Hukawng Valley well behind the

²¹ (1) GALAHAD, pp. 5-7. (2) Rad CHC 1241, Stilwell to Marshall, 3 Jul 44. SNF 131.

²² Ltr, Mountbatten to Marshall, 16 Jan 44. Case 297, OPD 381 Security, A47-30.

²³ Notes by Gen Boatner on draft MS. (Hereafter, Boatner Notes.) OCMH.

²⁴ Rad, Stilwell to Marshall, 9 Jan 44. Folder, Rads, Stilwell to Marshall, Oct 43 to 25 Mar 44, NCAC Files, KCRC.



MAP 6

18th Division. This wide swing was Stilwell's touch, the hallmark of a battle fought Stilwell's way.²⁵

Attempting to envelop Tanaka's left, the 3/114th had crossed the Tanai at Kantau in the second week of December. It then encountered the Japanese along two small creeks, the Sanip Hka and Mawngyang Hka. (*Map 6*) The jungle made it hard for the Chinese to organize; the supporting 6th Battery

²⁵ (1) "The 65th made a good river crossing," noted Stilwell in his diary. ". . . good discipline and no grenade fishing." Its colonel, Fu, swore he would get after the Japanese. It was the "first time in his life," added Stilwell, "Fu ever saw a real envelopment." Stilwell Diary, 6 Jan 44. (2) G-3 Per Rpt, Hq 5303d (Prov) Combat Trs, 11 Jan 44. NCAC Files, KCRC.

could not fire until fields of fire were cut, and while this was being done, infiltrating parties of Japanese surrounded the battery. Fighting for their guns and their lives from 9 to 11 January, the Chinese cannoneers saved both. This Japanese attempt was greatly aided by the faulty disposition of the 3/114th, split into four fragments, no two of them in contact. Its commander stayed in his rear command post.²⁶

The regimental commander, Col. Li Hung, now arrived and quickly restored the situation. The several portions of the 3/114th began to attack, thrust the Japanese out from among themselves, and after the 2/114th arrived on 15 January the revitalized 3d Battalion was able to force the Sanip crossing on 16 January. This effort pushed a group of Japanese back into the first bend of the Tanai east of its meeting with the Tarung. The 2/114th was now on the right flank, where it faced perhaps one of the two Japanese companies present.²⁷

Here the Chinese halted for a week, and when the 1/114th arrived General Sun on 29 January sent the 3/114th back to rest and put the 1st Battalion to the slow job of digging the Japanese from their holes in the river bank.

Stilwell thought this close to disobedience of orders, for he wanted Sun to move quickly and cut behind the *18th Division*. On 13 January he had spoken very bluntly to Sun, asking him what orders he gave the 114th Regiment and if there had been any word from Chungking to slow the operation. Stilwell pointed out that Sun's 38th Division had gotten weapons, supplies, medicine as no Chinese unit ever had before; Stilwell was going to bring up tanks, 4.2-inch mortars, U.S. infantry, and flame throwers, but before (underlined in Stilwell's draft) Stilwell put them in, he wanted to know whether Sun would obey orders.

Stilwell told Sun that if he (Stilwell) could not exercise the command that the Generalissimo had given him, he would resign and report the whole affair to the U.S. Government. "Regardless of what anyone else may say, I assure you that my report will be fully believed in Washington." General Sun was confronted with the prospect that Chinese lethargy in north Burma might mean withdrawal of all U.S. help from China. Stilwell, Sun was told, had been alone in his fight to convince the United States that the Chinese Army was worth helping. "If I am double-crossed by the people I am trying to help I am through for good and I will recommend very radical measures." Stilwell closed by saying that he had done his part; would Sun reciprocate?²⁸ But despite Stilwell's arguments and threats, General Sun did not meet Stilwell's ideas of how a dynamic field commander should conduct himself.

For his part, Sun in late January told an American liaison officer with the

²⁶ (1) Dupuy Comments. (2) Stilwell Sketch. Photostat 215, Stilwell Documents, Hoover Library. (3) Overlay, Ln O, 38th Div, sub: Situation as of 8:00 PM, 16 Jan. Folder, Overlays, ALBACORE Opns, Sitreps, Hist, etc., 11 Jan 44, NCAC Files, KCRC.

²⁷ (1) Stilwell Sketch. Photostat 214, Stilwell Documents, Hoover Library. (2) Overlay cited n. 26(3).

²⁸ Memo, Stilwell for Sun at Ningam Sakan, Jan 44. SUP 7.

38th that he had never had a failure in his life, and did not propose to have one now. His listener gathered that Sun would proceed with caution to avoid defeat, rather than accept risks to gain a victory.²⁹

The 114th Regiment plugged away at its own pace, taking care to leave no Japanese pockets behind, despite the obvious chance to clamp a roadblock across the road which led from Kamaing to the Japanese positions between the Tarung and the Tanai.³⁰

At this point the 66th Regiment, 22d Division, was sent into action on the right of the 114th Regiment. Finding no enemy, it began to make its way toward the Kamaing Road. This action again opened the prospect of enveloping the Japanese. The regiment's move to the front had been delayed because of a missed ration drop, which had brought the columns to a standstill and greatly worried General Liao, who was having his first experiences with air supply in combat.³¹

The Capture of Taihpa Ga

While the 114th Regiment was creeping through the jungle south of the Tanai, the 112th and 113th Regiments converged on Taihpa Ga from the north. The 1/113th crossed the Tarung near Yupbang Ga and sent patrols north to occupy Tabawng Ga on 13 January, then moved southeast to reach Kaduja Ga on the 15th. The 3/113th followed while the 2d Battalion stayed at Yupbang Ga in reserve. The regiment went southeast and lost two days "probing" at a Japanese delaying position. Then it bypassed on 17 January, left a company to contain the Japanese, and headed for Taihpa. Its pace was perhaps 150-200 yards a day. Patrols from another unit, reconnoitering the banks of the Tarung to its junction with the Tanai, and then swinging east along the Tanai almost to Taihpa Ga, did not meet any Japanese in the area through which the 113th Regiment was moving so cautiously.³²

The battered 112th Regiment swung wide to the north and east to Warang Ga, then halted and patrolled to the north, east, and south. The 113th Regiment at about this time (mid-January) extended its right until the 3/113th closed in on the Japanese positions on the Tanai bank. Clearing the Japanese from their footholds north of the Brangbram Hka and west of the Kamaing Road, on 21 January it reached Ningru Ga, less than a mile downstream from Taihpa Ga.³³

²⁹ (1) Dupuy Notes. (2) Ltr, Dupuy to Ward, 12 Sep 52. OCMH.

³⁰ Stilwell Sketches, NCAC History, I, 34A-34D.

³¹ Rad Y-23, Boatner to Col John P. Willey, 12 Jan 44. Fwd Ech CP Rads Out, NCAC File, KCRC.

³² (1) Notes by Col Rothwell H. Brown on draft MS. (Hereafter, Brown Notes.) OCMH. (2) Ltr, with Incl, Brown to Ward, 25 Aug 51.

³³ (1) Stilwell Sketches. Photostats 212, 213, 218, 220-23, Stilwell Documents, Hoover Library. (2) Van Natta MS. (3) G-2, G-3 Overlays, 38th Div, 27 Jan 44; Overlay, 15 Jan 44, ALBACORE Opns, Sitreps; Rads 16-781, 21 Jan 44; Rads 14-77, 38th Div. NCAC Files, KCRC.



GENERAL STILWELL AND GENERAL SUN are shown in conference at General Sun's headquarters. Col. Edward J. McNally, liaison officer with General Sun's troops, is seated at left.

The 1/113th fought to within 1,500 yards of Taihpa Ga, then was ordered back to counter an expected Japanese flanking movement. This gave it the chance to clear a Japanese pocket previously contained along the Brangbram Hka. Artillery support, the 4th and 5th Batteries, was then brought up. The next 1,000 yards between the 1/113th and Taihpa Ga took two days to cross; then the 113th spent a week in what it called "preparations for attack." General Sun's men were now approaching the Japanese strongpoint in the area, and Japanese resistance was more freely offered, with heavy shelling by 75- and 150-mm. pieces.

At Taihpa Ga, the Kamaing Road crossed the Tanai on a long gravel bar which bullock carts could use quite well. At this point was the village itself, a humble collection of *bashas*, long since burnt out. About 800 yards upstream was a ferry across a stretch of fairly deep water. The Japanese used this ferry to bring supplies across the Tanai, rather than the vulnerable and easily spotted gravel bar. Here they had their strongpoint, well prepared and stubbornly defended.

The 3/113th was reinforced for the attack on the strongpoint. It moved

through Taihpa Ga over 30 January–1 February and went on to attack the strongpoint. The 2/112th came back into action to remove a Japanese pocket on a line with, and three miles east of, Taihpa Ga, the advance bringing it up level with the 113th Regiment. Now back to full strength, the 112th Regiment gave security to the north, east, and west. The Japanese held stubbornly for several days and then quietly withdrew about 4 or 5 February. While the drive on Taihpa Ga had been under way, other Chinese units had been clearing the Japanese from the Taro Plain on Tanaka's left, and the obvious threat to his communications dictated his withdrawal, even though the Chinese did not emerge from the Taro Plain beyond his flank for another fortnight. When the Japanese yielded the north bank of the Tanai, a 4,500-foot airstrip was begun at Taihpa Ga, though Japanese shelling initially made the engineers abandon their work and their camp (to the delight of Chinese who promptly added to their stores of lend-lease equipment).³⁴

Clearing the Taro Plain

The Hukawng Valley is a corridor leading from north to south, and the Taro Plain has been compared above to a closet opening off the corridor, just inside the northern door. The Taro Plain is formed by the drainage system of the Hukawng Valley which tilts to the northwest and toward the Chindwin, as the Tanai is known in its southern stretches. About eight miles south of the Kantau ford, the hill line that forms the western boundary for the Hukawng Valley parts, and there the Tanai cuts a narrow, north-south gorge through the hills, a gorge that widens abruptly into the circular Taro Plain, with the village of Taro in its center.

Given the mission in October 1943 of clearing the Taro Plain of Japanese so that the Ledo Road might safely pass to the east of it, the 3d Battalion, 112th Regiment, and its commander, Major Chen, had never left Ngajatzup on the extreme north edge of the plain. Stilwell's comment was:

Sorry performance. Arrived about November 1. Sent one company forward. Pulled it back again. Thereafter did nothing. Maj. Ch'en covered in dug-out. Terrific waste of ammunition. Told Sun to have him move or I would shoot or court-martial Maj. Ch'en. Sun sent [name illegible] to investigate. Ch'en killed by British grenade in his dug-out on December 27. (Report was during Japanese attack. There was none).³⁵

Unknown to Stilwell's headquarters, Tanaka was making a real effort to stop the unhappy Chen's battalion. When the 3d Battalion entered the Taro Plain, Tanaka rushed the *3d Battalion, 55th Regiment*, to reinforce the Japanese "Pacification Unit" of eighty men stationed there. This battalion "made no

³⁴ (1) G-2, G-3 Overlays, 38th Div, 20 Feb 44; G-2, G-3 Overlays, Hq Fwd Ech (Prov) Combat Trs, 24 Feb 44; G-3 Per Rpts, 31 Jan 44, 8 Feb 44, 20 Feb 44. NCAC Files, KCRC. (2) NCAC History, I, 35–38. (3) Dupuy Notes. (4) Brown Notes. (5) Tanaka, Japanese Comments, Sec. II.

³⁵ Stilwell Sketch. Photostat 210, Stilwell Documents, Hoover Library.

headway" so Tanaka then sent a Colonel Yamasaki and the headquarters of the 55th, divisional units, and a second infantry battalion. Such a force was too much for the 3d Battalion, 112th, to handle.³⁶

After Chen's death, the 3d Battalion was sent back to rejoin the 38th Division; and the 65th Regiment, 22d Division, plus attached Chinese engineers and the U.S. 46th Portable Surgical Hospital, was given the task of clearing the Taro Plain, with the extremely important added mission of cutting back eastward into the Hukawng Valley to threaten Tanaka's flank. On reaching the exit of the Hukawng Valley, the 65th's commander, despite means more than ample for his mission, contracted the same lethargy that had hastened Chen's demise. Stilwell was in no mood to delay a few more weeks with Colonel Fu, and ordered Liao to relieve him. Stilwell's diary hints that his rhetoric rose to the occasion for he recorded: "Told Liao this included division commanders unless they watched their step. Also that Fu really should be shot. Liao took it OK though it shook him up."³⁷

On 22 January General Sun was told about this affair, the news softened somewhat by presentation of a silk banner for the victory at Yupbang Ga, a dramatic contrast of the respective awards for lethargy and vigor. Having made his point, and hoping that he had given the Chinese a healthy shock, Stilwell restored Fu to his command by 26 January. Fu's later performance in combat was rated as excellent.³⁸

The 65th Regiment moved forward immediately after Fu was relieved of command. Some U.S. observers believed that the 22d Division, from Liao down, looked upon itself as somewhat of a rival of the 38th, and wanted to show itself to advantage. The 65th's progress was aided by that of the 38th Division in the Hukawng Valley, for Tanaka was so concerned over his reverses there that he withdrew the major portion of the 55th Regiment, leaving behind only the badly weakened and poorly supplied 3d Battalion of the 55th. These Japanese indulged in an ultimately fatal passivity which permitted the 65th to encircle them completely between the 23d and 25th of January. When the last shot was fired, the American liaison officers counted 323 enemy dead in a small area about halfway down the gorge through which the Tanai enters the Taro Plain.³⁹

The next feature of importance was the Ahawk Hka, on whose far side was a trail, the Ahawk Trail, which was the shortest route from Taro back into the

³⁶ Tanaka, Japanese Comments, Sec II.

³⁷ (1) Stilwell Diary, 20 Jan 44. The entry for the 19th makes it clear that Stilwell was angered because the 65th Regiment was still "stalled," the attack was a "fizzle," and Fu was "petering out." (2) Memo, Liao for Stilwell, 21 Jan 44, sub: Relief of Col Fu, 65th Regt. Item 266, Bk 3, JWS Personal File.

³⁸ (1) Stilwell Diary, 22, 26 Jan 44. (2) Boatner Notes.

³⁹ (1) Capt. Roy R. Van Dusen, Operations of the 2d Bn and 3d Bn, 65th Regt (22d Chinese Div), in the Battle for Taro, 29 Dec 1943-30 Jan 1944 (India-Burma Campaign). The Infantry School, Gen Sec, Mil History Committee, 1946-47. Captain Van Dusen's monograph has interesting tactical detail but says nothing of Fu's relief. (2) Notes by Col Van Natta on draft MS. (3) Tanaka, Japanese Comments, Sec. II.

Hukawng Valley—and to a point behind Tanaka's flank. The Ahawk Hka was reached on the 26th and crossed on the 28th. The 3d Battalion of the 65th put a block across the trail while the other two battalions went on to Taro. The 3d Battalion then went on down the trail toward the Hukawng Valley, pursuing the survivors of the Japanese Taro garrison, while its companions took Taro on 30 January.⁴⁰

After the war, Tanaka concluded that the loss of the Taro Plain meant "the failure of the whole division in its operations along the Tanai" and traced that loss in turn to his having had to withdraw the main strength of the 55th in an effort to redeem the situation around Kantau.⁴¹

The Allies Reorganize for the Next Effort

With the arrival in the battle area of Liao's 22d Division and the American infantry of the GALAHAD force it was necessary to make appropriate changes in the headquarters directing this enlarged force. The changes began on 29 January. Command of the service troops supporting the Chinese had been exercised heretofore by the 5303d Headquarters and Headquarters Company (Provisional) Combat Troops, whose members had been concurrently the staff of Chih Hui Pu. On the 29th the 5303d became an "area command" and on 1 February 1944 the name was changed again to Northern Combat Area Command, or NCAC as it was ever thereafter called. Use of the adjective *combat* was to insure its remaining under Stilwell, as by prior agreement line-of-communications areas in Burma were to be directly under SEAC.⁴²

General Boatner was appointed Commanding General, NCAC, and kept his old post as Chief of Staff, Chih Hui Pu. Under NCAC were: ". . . such special and service units as may be placed in the Northern Combat Area Command, except for SOS units specifically engaged in road construction and the auxiliary and service units necessary therefor. . . . Command of all combat troops in the Northern Combat Area Command remains as heretofore under the Commanding General, Chinese Army in India."

As American, British, and Indian combat units entered north Burma, they were attached or assigned to NCAC, with the exception of the American long-range penetration group, GALAHAD, which on arrival was attached to the Chinese Army in India and later assigned to NCAC.⁴³ This brief initial attachment brought into focus some of the problems that arise when troops of different nationalities work together. In north Burma, some officers of each

⁴⁰ (1) NCAC History, I, 34A-34D, 36. (2) G-3 Per Rpts, Hq 5303d (Prov) Combat Trs, 25, 26 Jan, 8, 15 Feb 44. NCAC Files, KCRC.

⁴¹ Tanaka, Japanese Comments, Sec. II.

⁴² Boatner Notes.

⁴³ (1) History Ramgarh Training Center, 30 Jun 42-15 May 45, MS, p. 14. OCMH. (2) GOS 11, 12, Hq USAF CBI, 29 Jan 44; GO 14, Hq Rr Ech USAF CBI, 5 Feb 44; GO 74, Hq USAF CBI, 17 Jul 44. (3) Memo, Stilwell for Wheeler and Boatner, 6 Apr 43. Item 214, Bk 3, JWS Personal File.

force tended to feel that their men were being discriminated against in favor of the others.⁴⁴ The British headquarters in north Burma, Fort Hertz Area, under Brigadier J. F. Bowerman, was attached to NCAC on 1 February.⁴⁵

CBI personnel entered NCAC's area at the Tirap River bridge, mile 5.75 on the Ledo Road. As of 2 December 1943 there had been no boundary between the communications and combat zones with the result that SOS in the forward zone was duplicating work of the troops under the 5303d in supporting the Chinese. Matters were arranged to keep Ledo, its installations, and the building of the Ledo Road under SOS while everything beyond the Tirap River went to NCAC.⁴⁶

Three motives underlay the publication of the orders activating NCAC: to show the Chinese Government in writing that Stilwell was directly and formally commanding the Chinese Army in India; to show General Headquarters (India) that the combat zone was well defined and commanded by Boatner and thus forestall any attempts to absorb it; to mark the zone of responsibility between SOS and combat troops, for it was considered "by all concerned that conditions make it impossible to establish the orthodox LOC Zone and Combat Zone."⁴⁷ To anticipate a later development, it may be observed that by April the principle had appeared of removing any possibility that the British and American combat units in north Burma might come under Gen. Cheng Tung-kuo, the newly appointed vice-commander of the Chinese Army in India, while on the other hand, it was desired to place absolute control of the pay and supplies of the Chinese Army in India in the hands of the Commanding General, NCAC. This was done by severing Ramgarh Training Center from NCAC.⁴⁸ As of 30 January there were 331 officers and 1,956 enlisted men of the U.S. Army in NCAC, and nine officers and 240 civilians who were British subjects.⁴⁹

Logistical Support

The engineers, the medics, and the supply men followed close on the heels of the fighters. A complex line of communications, with airstrips, hospitals, supply points, motor shops, ordnance repair plants, and gas stations, began to

⁴⁴ (1) Boatner Notes. (2) For charges that Stilwell discriminated against the Chinese, see Ho Yung-chi, *The Big Circle*. (3) For charges that Stilwell discriminated against the Americans, see letter from Colonel Hunter to General Ward, 14 August 1951. OCMH.

⁴⁵ Ltr, Hq 5303d (Prov) Combat Trs to Bowerman, 25 Jan 44, sub: Orders. AG 323.3, NCAC Files, KCRC.

⁴⁶ Ltr, Hq 5303d (Prov) Combat Trs to CG, Fwd Ech, USAF CBI, 2 Dec 43, sub: Responsibility of Comd and Opns Within Combat Zone. AG 323.3, NCAC Files, KCRC.

⁴⁷ Ltr, Hq 5303d (Prov) Combat Trs to CG, Hq Rr Ech USAF CBI, 20 Jan 44, sub: Organization, 5303d Area Comd. AG 323.3, NCAC Files, KCRC.

⁴⁸ (1) Ltr, Hq NCAC to Deputy Theater Comdr, USAF CBI, 13 Apr 44, sub: Responsibilities of CG, RTC, and CG, NCAC. AG 323.3, NCAC Files, KCRC. (2) Ramgarh Training Center prepared the Chinese Army in India for combat. The staff and instructors were American; logistical support was from the Government of India; unit administration, discipline, and replacements were the responsibilities of the Chinese Army.

⁴⁹ Strength Rpt, G-1 Per Rpt, Hq 5303d (Prov) Combat Trs, 30 Jan 44. NCAC Files, KCRC.



DRAINAGE CULVERTS *are installed on the Ledo Road.*

twist its way south through the Hukawng Valley. The Red Cross clubmobile scurrying down the road, the ambulance plane and its tragic cargo, the bulldozer driven by a Negro engineer masterfully thrusting aside the jungle, each at its appointed time passed the samurai blade rusting in the undergrowth.

On 1 February 1944, the engineers began work on permanent road construction in the Hukawng Valley, and on a combat road to support the Chinese divisions. The combat road, a hasty improvement of the existing Kamaing Road plus Kachin and Naga trails, ran through Shingbwiyang, Yupbang Ga, and Taihpa Ga, then south. The trace of the Ledo Road was moved to higher ground on the north. Forward construction units were rationed from combat supply points.

In building the Ledo Road, location parties up ahead cleared a trace the width of a bulldozer and put in the center-line stakes. The final clearing averaged 150 feet. The route of the Ledo Road in some cases followed existing roads, a circumstance that did not greatly diminish the amount of clearing needed. Most clearing was by bulldozer. Combat trails and access roads were cleared to the necessary minimum that would permit heavy equipment to use them. In the valleys, the road was generally built on embankments in order to lift it above flood level. In mountainous regions, side-hill cuts were used.



PIPELINE CROSSING A STREAM *by means of cable suspension.*

The road itself had about seven culverts to the mile in the mountains and five to the mile in the lowlands. These culverts were most necessary as the road was a barrier to the normal runoff of water. Surfacing was with stream-bed gravel in the valley sections and, so far as hauling permitted, natural gravel in the mountainous sections. Surfacing was about ten inches thick on the average, and from twenty to twenty-eight feet wide. Compaction was by the normal road traffic. Two regiments of Chinese engineers did pioneer construction work.⁵⁰

On 27 December 1943 Colonel Pick had opened a military road to Shingbwiyang and a convoy arrived that day. By 21 January 1944 General Covell saw more vehicles in Shingbwiyang than he could count. A subdepot was opened there in January with 21,600 cubic feet of storage space and facilities for bulk gasoline storage. An all-weather airstrip was built. Medical facilities were established.

Parallel with the road ran the pipelines. Generally they were in the right of way and close to the road, but in some mountainous sections there were short

⁵⁰ (1) Rpt, Maj Gen Lewis A. Pick, CG, Hq Adv Sec USF IBT, to Lt Gen Raymond A. Wheeler, CG, USF IBT, 9 Aug 45, pp. 22-35. OCMH. (2) For background on the Ledo Road project, see *Stilwell's Mission to China*.

cuts using cable suspension over deep ravines and paths through terrain unsuitable for road building. During the peak of construction on the pipelines 2,590 men from engineer petroleum distribution companies and 2,750 general engineers were at work on them.⁵¹

Medical reinforcements arrived in early 1944, the 42d, 43d, and 46th Portable Surgical Hospitals, the 13th Mountain Medical Battalion (less B and C Companies), and the 25th Field Hospital. The medical history of the campaign described the evacuation process of February 1944:

Casualties thus passed through the hands of Chinese battalion and regimental detachments to surgical teams, thence either to the Seagrave Hospital on the Brambrang Hka or to the 25th Field Hospital at Ningam Sakan. Seagrave evacuated seriously-wounded to the 25th Field Hospital on about a 10-day evacuation plan. Patients requiring general hospital treatment or who would require more than six weeks of care were evacuated from the 25th Field Hospital to Ledo through the air clearing station at Shingbwiayang.⁵²

Planning To Force a Decision

Given the fact that Stilwell's battle plans, as he strove with the *18th Division*, always included either a double or single envelopment, it seems possible to contend that Stilwell had in mind ending the campaign by a single decisive victory over the Japanese *18th Division*. A successful envelopment would have been the speediest way of ending this part of the North Burma Campaign, and of offering the Japanese commanders their choice of yielding north Burma or canceling operations elsewhere in order to reinforce.

Totaling his assets in January, Stilwell found he had immediately at hand the 38th Division, the 66th Regiment, 22d Division, and the Chinese 1st Provisional Tank Group (less the 2d Battalion), Col. Rothwell H. Brown, USA, commanding.⁵³ The Japanese he estimated as having a total of six divisions in Burma. He concluded that the *56th* and *55th Divisions* were tied down in the Salween and Arakan areas, respectively, that the *33d* and *31st* were contained by 4 Corps in the Imphal area, and that the *54th Division* was protecting Rangoon and the Irrawaddy Delta against an amphibious attack. That left the *18th Division* for him to deal with. Since that division's *55th Regiment* had been well worked over, it seemed unlikely the Japanese could muster more than five battalions to face his four regiments.

⁵¹ (1) Ltr, Covell to Somervell, 21 Jan 44. Somervell File, Vol IV, Hq ASF, Ts of Opns, CBI 1944, A46-257. (2) Pick Rpt, pp. 15, 48, 51-58, 90-94, cited n. 50.

⁵² U.S. Army Med Service in Combat in India and Burma, 1942-45, MS by 1st Lt. James H. Stone, Medical Historian, IBT (hereafter, Stone MS), I, 122, 126, OCMH.

⁵³ The 1st Provisional Tank Group was then the only Chinese Army unit, under Stilwell, commanded by an American. The group had an integrated Sino-American staff, a Chinese vice-commander (Col. Chao Chen-yu during most of the campaign), and an American medium tank platoon in support. The number of Americans, both officers and enlisted men, increased steadily from the initial component of 11 officers and 9 enlisted men, to a final peak strength of 29 officers and 222 enlisted men. Its equipment was American. See NCAC History, App. 5, First Prov Tank Gp, Chinese-American, 8 Aug 43-9 Mar 45. OCMH.

The initial solution Stilwell reached took shape on 21 January. His decision then was to thrust an armored spearhead straight down the Kamaing Road, with a sizable infantry force following close behind. He expected an attack on this axis of advance to take his troops diagonally across the Japanese rear areas.⁵⁴ One uncontrollable factor Stilwell did not list in his estimate—weather. Dry ground would be essential. Orders were issued over the 21st and 22d.

A few days passed, and it began to appear that the plan for an armored attack would have to be laid aside. January was all too plainly going to enter the records as a very rainy month, while Sun's attitude did not inspire Stilwell with confidence in his principal Chinese subordinate. A new plan would have to be made.⁵⁵ (*Map 7*)

In his usual manner, Stilwell carefully charted his new course:

February 4, 1944, it had become evident that the 38th Division could not be depended on for any further serious effort. The 112th had been scattered and cut up in November and replacements had arrived only at the end of January. The 114th, which had fought well, had lost about 60% of its company officers, and enlisted casualties had been fairly heavy. The 113th was the only unit ready for further serious work, its advance to the Tanai having been slow and cautious. The division commander was showing a strong inclination to delay operations interminably in the hope of avoiding more casualties; his failure to push the attack of the 114th was the cause of allowing the Japs an open route to the south which could easily have been closed. To operate seriously south of the Tanai it was necessary to establish a bridge-head, which the 38th Division commander obviously was reluctant to attempt. The plan had been to put the 1st Tank Battalion across the Tanai at night and jump off from the bridgehead at dawn, objective, Maingkwan. The 1/66th was attached to the tanks and the 113th was to follow down the road to take over successive positions. The 114th was to assemble at Taihpa in reserve and the 112th was to protect the flank east of the Tanai, advancing on Mashi Daru.

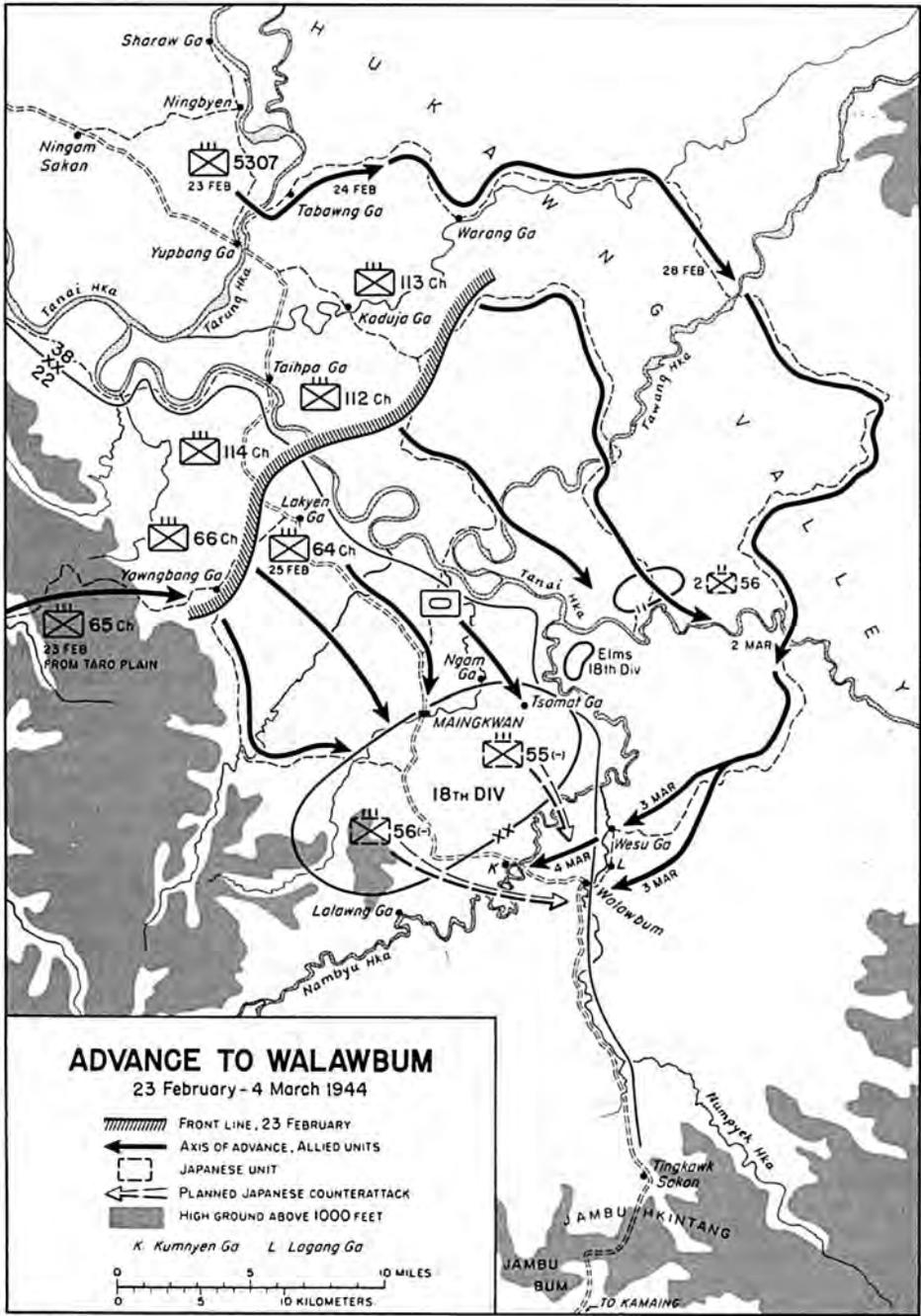
The plan was altered on February 4 as follows: 22d Division, using 65th less one battalion (Taro garrison) and 66th less one battalion (attached to tanks) was to seize and hold line Yawngbang-Lakye sending the 66th past the 114th, and the 65th over the Wantuk Bum. The 114th was to clean up south of the Tanai and the remainder of the 38th was to clear the area to the Tawang east of the Tanai. This was to be the first phase, followed as soon as possible by an advance to the south, using the tanks and the 65th and the 66th, in the hope of getting to Walawbum. By that time the 16th Brigade [of Wingate's Chindits] and the American brigade [GALAHAD] could make themselves felt at Lonkin and Shaduzup respectively. A plan was to be made to reduce Sumprabum and advance towards Nsozpup, and to edge towards Hrawgaw from Luhow [illegible].

Bad weather had retarded Road work and hampered supply. The change in plan should give us time to build up a reserve in Shingbwiyang and Ningam, make progress on the Road, and build a field at Taihpa. It was felt that even though the seizure of a bridgehead might be delayed a few days, it would be a much better one and that the delay might well be made up for by cutting out the projected stop at Maingkwan and pushing on to the limit of our resources. A slower start, but a better organized one, with fresh troops eager to make good, and chance to go much further in less time, and with the added threats of the American and British LRP's.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ (1) Stilwell Diary, 21 Jan 44. (2) Paper, sub: Estimate of Situation. JWS Misc Papers, 1944. (3) The Japanese *2d Division* was also now in south Burma. Japanese Officers' Comments, p. 12.

⁵⁵ Stilwell Diary, 21-30 Jan 44.

⁵⁶ (1) JWS Misc Papers, 1944. (2) Stilwell Diary, 4 Feb. 44.



MAP 7

"We can fight here instead of M[Maingkwan?] and can maybe get behind the Japs and clean up," wrote Stilwell in his diary for 4 February. So it was to be an attempt at a decision which if successful would mean that only Japanese stragglers and the *114th Regiment* would stand between two Chinese divisions and Myitkyina.

The first phase of the revised plan, the enveloping hook from the Taro Plain by the 22d Division, did not come off as planned. The 3/65th of the 22d Division had been pursuing the Japanese from Taro down the Ahawk Trail. The 2/65th was sent on from Taro to join it.⁵⁷ The rains were annoyingly heavy, but on the morning of 14 February Stilwell waited confidently for news that the 65th Regiment had joined with the 66th Regiment, which had been operating in the Hukawng Valley, and had taken Yawngbang Ga, thus completing its part of the envelopment. In twenty-four hours it was very clear something had gone wrong. A Chinese officer of the 38th Division reported seeing the 1/66th, which should have been five miles away from him. Stilwell spent all of 16 February waiting for news of what had happened: "Is the 66th in Yawngbang or lost?" One set of American liaison officers reported the 66th Regiment was in place; another, that the regiment was miles away from its proper course. By noon of the 17th it was plain that the 66th Regiment had taken the wrong trail and lost its way.

On the morning of 18 February Stilwell told General Liao that the 66th Regiment's performance had cost a chance to trap some Japanese, then went out personally to check on the regiment's location, with Liao accompanying him. The whole 66th plus the 3/65th were in the neighborhood of the 66th's command post. The main trail, Yawngbang Ga to Lakyen Ga, was found and so was a captured Japanese document giving the Japanese withdrawal order. It later appeared that the 66th Regiment had taken a nameless village on 16 February and thought it had taken Yawngbang Ga. The true Yawngbang Ga was occupied by the 65th and 66th jointly on 23 February.⁵⁸

"If the Chinese 65th and 66th Infantry Regiments operating in the vicinity of Yawngbang had been prompt in closing in on our left rear flank on the 15th or 16th, as predicted," wrote Tanaka in 1951, "the main force of the *18th Division* would have faced a grave crisis."⁵⁹

Summing up the results of the attempted first phase, Stilwell told Marshall that unseasonable rains and a mistake by the 66th Regiment, which had lost its way, cost a chance to catch some Japanese near Yawngbang. He felt that the 22d Division had done as well as the 38th Division and had been easier to command. Supply was improving with truck convoys coming down the Ledo

⁵⁷ G-3 Rpts, 29 Feb 44; G-2, G-3 Overlays, 25 Jan 44. Hq 5303d (Prov) Combat Trs. NCAC Files, KCRC.

⁵⁸ (1) Stilwell Diary, 9-18 Feb 44. (2) Overlays, Folder, X-RAY Force, NCAC Files, KCRC.

⁵⁹ Tanaka, Japanese Comments, Sec. II.

Road to Shingbwiyang and with transport aircraft using the Taihpa Ga airstrip. The Chinese enjoyed winning, and their morale was excellent.⁶⁰

U.S. Infantry for the Second Phase

Twice before Stilwell had tried to envelop the *18th Division*, once along the south bend of the Tanai and again at Yawngbang Ga–Lakye Ga. Both attempts had failed. Now, in accord with his plan of 4 February, he would try to put U.S. infantry across the Kamaing Road at Shaduzup, while the 22d and 38th Divisions plus the armor pushed down from the north.

When GALAHAD was released from SEAC's operational control, Stilwell ordered Merrill to "close in on Ledo by 7 February," not an easy task, for the 1,000-mile journey involved changes from a broad-gauge to a narrow-gauge railroad and from that to river steamer. The last echelon arrived at Margherita, near Ledo, on 9 February, and between 19 and 21 February the 5307th assembled at Ningbyen, near the front. Stilwell's foot cavalry was ready for its first mission. With it as far as Shingbwiyang went American newspapermen, who christened it "Merrill's Marauders."⁶¹

Stilwell's orders called for GALAHAD and the 113th Regiment 38th Division, to envelop the *18th Division's* east flank and block the Kamaing Road near Shaduzup. The two units did not have a common commander and so lacked something of being a task force. After the war, Merrill recalled that he and Sun would have appreciated some sort of formal working arrangement but that Chih Hui Pu had limited them to co-operation.

While the Americans and the 113th Regiment were cutting off the *18th Division* in the Shaduzup area, the remainder of Stilwell's force—the other two regiments of Sun's 38th Division, the 22d Division, and the 1st Provisional Tank Group (–)—was to seize Maingkwan. Maingkwan had been a respectable little town before the war with permanent buildings and several thousand people, and Tanaka might elect to fight for it. So the attack on Maingkwan was set up as a smaller-scale edition of the complete operation, in that it was to be an envelopment, with the armor swinging around the Japanese right flank. Tanaka was to be offered unpleasant alternatives, fighting for the Maingkwan area at the risk of being surrounded, or fighting his way out through GALAHAD and the 113th Regiment, and thus giving up the whole of the Hukawng Valley. The remainder of the 38th Division, the 1st Provisional Tank Group (–), and the 22d Division were to push down from the north. If successful, the operation would pen the Japanese on the Maingkwan plain, and might well destroy the *18th Division*, thus opening the way to Myitkyina.

For the operation, the boundary line between the 38th and 22d Divisions

⁶⁰ Rad 74, Stilwell to Marshall, 25 Feb 44. Folder, Rads, Stilwell to Marshall, Oct 43–25 Mar 44, NCAC Files, KCRC.

⁶¹ (1) The reference on page 276 of *The Stilwell Papers* is to the 16th Brigade of the 3d Indian Division, not to GALAHAD. Stilwell Diary, 9 Jan 44. (2) GALAHAD, pp. 1–8, 10, 16.

was changed. The line now followed the Tanai to the Nambyu Hka, thence straight south to the Kamaing Road, giving the 38th Division the area to the north and east.⁶²

Meanwhile, on the Japanese side there had been a growth of confidence. When the first shots were exchanged in October and November 1943, the Japanese had been almost contemptuous of the Chinese. Then in December they were sobered by contact with the material resources that the 22d and 38th Divisions commanded. But, as the fighting went on into February 1944, Tanaka several times saw a grave threat to his flank come to nothing because the Chinese moved so slowly. That the Chinese repeatedly moved as though to envelop, then let the opportunity slip because they did not exploit it, suggested to General Tanaka a way to defeat his powerful but lethargic opponents. Since Stilwell was spreading his forces wide in order to envelop, Tanaka consequently was operating on interior lines. He decided that "though threatened by enemy envelopment, we will exploit advantages of operations on interior lines, and, by utilizing every opportunity, defeat in detail the slow-moving Chinese forces without coordination on the exterior lines."⁶³

Thenceforth, Tanaka waited his opportunity, which would arise when Stilwell attempted his next envelopment. Tanaka's intentions and Stilwell's plans meshed perfectly; a major trial of strength was inevitable. The engagement resulting took place around the little settlement of Walawbum, a pathetic cluster of sagging uprights and fire scars where once a few Kachin families had pursued their simple, inoffensive lives.

Walawbum is in the southern end of the Hukawng Valley. It is on the road running through the Hukawng Valley south to Kamaing. Ten miles or so south of Walawbum the traveler becomes aware that the ground is rising, for he is approaching the Jambu Bum, the ridge line forming the southern end of the Hukawng Valley. From Walawbum to the crest of the Jambu Bum it is about 13.7 air miles. Seven miles to the west of the village site is the valley's western wall; the eastern boundary is from 10 to 14 miles away depending on the azimuth taken.

The road to Kamaing, or Kamaing Road, takes a fairly straight course to the south until it reaches a point opposite, and about 10,000 yards west of, Walawbum. At this point it makes a 90-degree turn to the east, and runs almost due east until it reaches Walawbum. Perhaps a little more than halfway to Walawbum on this easterly course the road crosses the Nambyu Hka, at Kumnyen. When it reaches Walawbum, the road makes another 90-degree turn, this time to the south, and resumes its southward route to Kamaing.

The visitor to Walawbum itself notices that as the Numpyek Hka passes to the east of the village, the ground to the east of the river is higher than on the

⁶² (1) G-3 Per Rpt, Hq CAI, 29 Feb 44; G-3 Per Rpt, Hq 5303d (Prov) Combat Trs, 7 Mar 44. NCAC Files, KCRC. (2) Notes by Gen Merrill on draft MS. (Hereafter, Merrill Notes.)

⁶³ Tanaka, Japanese Comments, Sec. II.

west. Thus a force in position just east of Walawbum has the advantage of high ground and river moat in facing an enemy to the west, while its guns command the Kamaing Road. All about the area, save for a clearing at Walawbum, are the familiar trees and thick undergrowth, confining large units to the trails.

Difficulties of terrain began to force alterations in Stilwell's plan even before it was fairly launched. The armored force was to have enveloped Maingkwan from the east but no suitable avenue of approach could be found so the tanks were ordered to move generally southeast on a course intended to clear Tanaka's eastern flank and permit them to join Merrill as an attached unit near Walawbum.

The Operation Begins

The Chinese-American tankers, supported by a battalion from the Chinese 65th Regiment, got under way the morning of 3 March, from positions about 5,000 yards north of Maingkwan. The first light contact with the Japanese was at 1300. By 1500 the tanks were about 5,000 yards northeast of Maingkwan, as they sought to flank to the east. In this area they received heavy Japanese fire, and Brown soon concluded that perhaps a regiment of Japanese faced him. Warning Stilwell of this potential threat to his (Stilwell's) left flank, Brown buttoned up for the night. During the darkness the Japanese made a number of attacks on the armor's perimeter, which were beaten off. Next morning, the Japanese were gone (for events near Walawbum were alarming them) and the tanks moved about three more miles southeast, which put them in line with Maingkwan. On 5 March, after a quiet night, they were ready to roll again, and to try to join GALAHAD near Walawbum.⁶⁴

The progress of Brown's tanks meant that one part of the ring Stilwell was trying to clamp on the 18th Division was moving into place. The adjacent segment of the ring's northern section, the 22d Division, was also moving ahead, and so far was in step with the tanks and GALAHAD. On 3 March, the 64th Regiment was near Ngam Ga, east of the Kamaing Road. The 66th to the west was in contact with the third regiment, the 65th, as it emerged from the Taro Plain. The 66th bypassed Maingkwan on the west, moved south, then sent its 3d Battalion cutting back north to enter Maingkwan from the south. The Japanese yielded it; Tanaka was not going to waste his strength fighting for real estate. For all that, capture of Maingkwan by the 66th on 5 March gave that regiment the distinction of liberating the first major settlement in north Burma to be reoccupied by the Allies. After taking Maingkwan, the 66th moved south down the Kamaing Road, and with two battalions of the 64th Regiment, began attacking a fortified Japanese position in the Kumnyen area, to the west of Walawbum. The 65th on 6 March was several miles southwest of Maingkwan, near the edge of the hills that mark the western boundary of the valley. Thus by the night of 5-6 March the 22d Division and Brown's

⁶⁴ Brown Notes.



GENERAL STILWELL AND GENERAL MERRILL *confer at Merrill's headquarters.*

tanks were drawn up on a gently curving arc that ran through Maingkwan and tilted toward the south and east.⁶⁵

Oral orders for the movement that was to put the rest of the trap in place were given Merrill on 22 February. He was ordered to cut the Japanese supply line, the Kamaing Road, well south of Walawbum, and to seek out and attack the *18th Division's* command post, which was thought to be near Walawbum. Except for orders to avoid unnecessary heavy combat, Merrill had great freedom of action. At his disposal were the three battalions of GALAHAD, each in turn broken down into two combat teams. The teams bore the code names Red and White (1st Battalion), Blue and Green (2d Battalion), Khaki and Orange (3d Battalion). Each team included a rifle company, heavy weapons platoon, pioneer and demolition platoon, reconnaissance platoon, and medical detachment, with a combined strength of sixteen officers and 456 enlisted men.

On receiving orders to move to his forward assembly area, Merrill sent his three intelligence and reconnaissance (I & R) platoons to check trails as far as the Tawang Hka, the first of the three considerable streams that crossed the line of march. At 0600, 24 February, the 5307th moved out, screened by the I & R platoons. Next day two of them clashed with Japanese patrols and the

⁶⁵ (1) Rpts cited n. 62(1). (2) Stilwell Diary, 5 Mar 44.

point of one platoon, Pvt. Robert W. Landis of Youngstown, Ohio, was killed.

The fortunes of war were with the Americans on this march, for radio communication between the *2d Battalion, 56th Infantry*, and *18th Division* headquarters broke down at this time, so that the *18th* was unaware that a semidetached American unit was operating off to its flank.

On the afternoon of 28 February a liaison aircraft brought orders to shift the roadblock site to Walawbum itself. When the 5307th crossed the Tanai, last of the three river barriers, it went into an assembly area on 2 March, and Merrill called his staff and commanders together to get Chih Hui Pu's orders. The orders called for cutting the road on either side of Walawbum, the 2d Battalion (Colonel McGee) to the west, the 3d Battalion (Colonel Beach) to the south, and the 1st Battalion (Colonel Osborne) to patrol along the Nambyu Hka north of the Kamaing Road. Positions near Walawbum would be held until the 38th Division relieved the 5307th. Merrill's own plans had been to put his battalions at the Nambyu Hka, but Stilwell now believed Brown's tanks could reach and hold the river line.⁶⁶

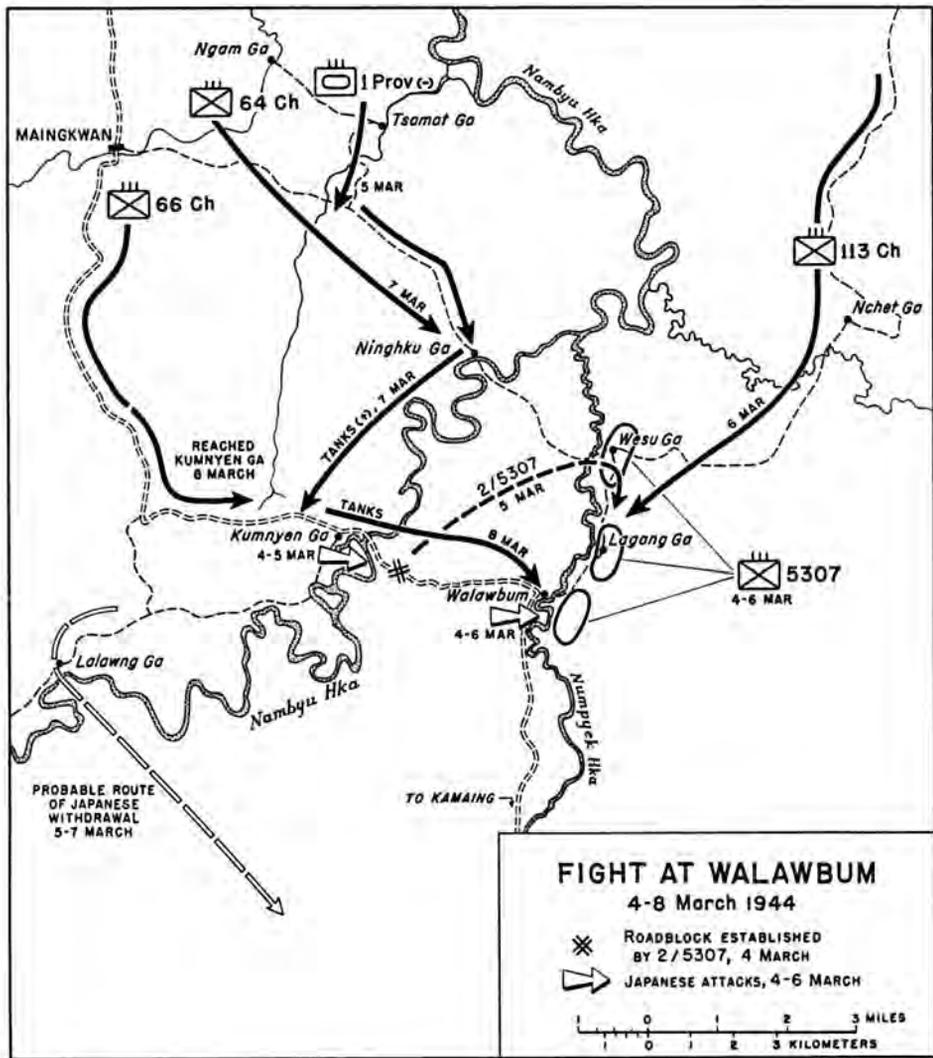
All battalions were away by dawn of 3 March. Patrols clashed with the enemy throughout the day, and the 3d Battalion had a sharp fight at Lagang Ga, killing thirty Japanese in seizing the area needed for the building of a drop field. One of the battalion's two combat teams, Khaki, stayed at Lagang Ga to build and protect the dropping zone. Orange Combat Team kept on to the high ground east of Walawbum and dug in, its heavy weapons commanding the Kamaing Road. During the day, 3 March, the 1st and 2d Battalions were still occupied in moving to their assigned positions. On 4 March the 2d Battalion put itself across the Kamaing Road west of Wesu Ga, making a roadblock. "This makes the net fairly good . . .," wrote Stilwell.

On 1 March General Tanaka had been told that the Americans were at Walawbum.⁶⁷ It was premature, but this was the chance Tanaka had awaited. Quickly analyzing his situation, he decided that the Chinese 22d and 38th Divisions were moving so slowly that he could contain them with a small rear guard while the main strength of the *18th Division* hurled itself on the Americans. On 2 March he made his decision, and the movement back began on 3 March. The Americans had cut behind the *55th Regiment* on Tanaka's east in order to place themselves across the Kamaing Road, so the *55th* in turn was to hit them on their northern flank while the *56th* drove for the place where the Kamaing Road crosses the Nambyu Hka.⁶⁸

⁶⁶ (1) GALAHAD, pp. 16-20. (2) Tanaka, Japanese Comments, Sec. II. (3) Ltr, Merrill to Sunderland, 10 Apr 48; Ltr, Merrill to Ward, 26 May 52. OCMH.

⁶⁷ (1) GALAHAD, pp. 21, 23. (2) Memo, Hunter for Kent R. Greenfield, Chief Historian, OCMH, 11 May 45, sub: Comments on "Merrill's Marauders." OCMH. (3) Stilwell Diary, 4 Mar 44.

⁶⁸ (1) Lt. Gen. Shinichi Tanaka, *The Fighting of the Japanese 18th Division in the Kamaing and Walawbum (Burma) Area*, MS, May 1949. (Hereafter, Tanaka Narrative.) OCMH. (2) Tanaka, Japanese Comments, Sec. II.



MAP 8

GALAHAD's Fight at Walawbum

Small parties of Japanese blundered into the American lines on 3 March, but there were no organized attacks until the 4th. (Map 8) The drop field at Lagang Ga was attacked at dawn on the 4th but the garrison held. Orange Combat Team opened the battle in its sector with mortar fire on Walawbum, drawing mortar and 75-mm. fire in return from the 56th Infantry Regiment,

which had been Tanaka's left flank, as it assembled for attack. When it moved, the *56th* tried to cross the river and work around the Americans' flanks, where it met booby traps and ambushes thoughtfully prepared for just such a contingency. Some Japanese did cross to the east, but this failed to affect the course of the action, and seventy-five dead Japanese were counted, as against one American dead and seven wounded. These latter were evacuated by air the same evening.⁶⁹ The 2d Battalion, 5307th, to the west, received much heavier blows, for it was closer to the main Japanese concentration. Beginning late on the evening of 4 March the Japanese attacks lasted until the next day.⁷⁰ Ammunition began to run low in the 2d Battalion, and during the last thirty-six hours of the fight it was without food and water.

Orange Combat Team of the 3d Battalion was under no great pressure during the day of the 5th, but the men believed Japanese reinforcements were being brought up from Kamaing for an attempt to remove the roadblock. The Americans from Stilwell on down were convinced they had trapped Tanaka; it did not occur to any of them that Tanaka was trying to destroy the Americans. Several times during the 5th the Japanese appeared to be forming for an attack, but mortar fire seemed to be successful in breaking up such attempts. To the south, Allied aircraft could be seen bombing and machine-gunning what Orange Combat Team took to be Japanese reinforcements. One indication that the Japanese were increasing their strength in the immediate area lay in their being able to force Orange Combat Team's I & R Platoon back across the river about noon of the 5th.

Meanwhile, to the north and east of where the 2d Battalion and Orange Combat Team were fighting, heavy and constant pressure from Brown's 1st Provisional Tank Group was forcing Tanaka to alter his plans. Brown's reconnaissance had found a good trail running south from Tsumat Ga, and on the morning of the 5th the tanks moved out through the jungle. After the engineers had prepared a small stream for crossing, the tanks broke into a freshly evacuated Japanese bivouac area. Jungle vines looping across the trail from either side, and connecting masses of vegetation and trees, made effective obstacles as they slowed down the tanks by catching their turrets; not until late afternoon did the armor break out on the trail running east and west between Maingkwan and Wesu Ga. Almost immediately the tanks encountered what seemed to be a company of Japanese defending a small but marshy stream. The stream did not seem fordable, so Brown attacked by fire alone. Unknown to him, his tanks were firing on Tanaka's division headquarters, and now lay squarely between the *18th's* headquarters and its *56th Regiment*.

Further compounding the Japanese commander's problems, Brown had brought his tanks down the trail that the *55th Regiment* was to have used for its

⁶⁹ GALAHAD, pp. 21-22.

⁷⁰ (1) Tanaka Narrative. (2) Tanaka, Japanese Comments, Sec. II. General Tanaka claims the *3/56th* captured the Nambyu river crossing with one rapid attack on 4 March, the one major point at which his account differs from the American.

attack on GALAHAD. The *55th* as a result had displaced westward so that instead of coming up on line with the *56th* for an assault on GALAHAD it had in a sense fallen in behind the *56th* in a sort of column formation. The *56th* itself was making little progress against GALAHAD.

Tanaka decided to give up his attempt to crush GALAHAD. Instead, he decided to swing his force around the American roadblock, using a Japanese-built trail of whose existence the Americans were unaware, and then to re-establish his front facing north in an east-west line across the Kamaing Road once more. So resolved, Tanaka, or one of his staff, late on the 5th of March, picked up a field telephone and began to give the necessary orders. The bypass road over which the *18th* was to withdraw had been built by the Japanese engineers some days before:

The Engineer Regiment commander, Colonel Fukayama, had considered the possibility of reversals in our position and, in order to facilitate the withdrawal of the division, he had previously cleared a secret jungle trail about 20 kilometers long leading from the vicinity of Lalawng Ga to Jambu Hkintang on his own initiative. This trail was used in the withdrawal of the main body of the division.

Meanwhile, within the 2d Battalion's roadblock, Sgt. Roy H. Matsumoto had been monitoring Japanese telephone conversations, for the *18th's* wire communications passed through the roadblock and had been tapped by the Americans. Sergeant Matsumoto immediately picked up Tanaka's order, and in a matter of minutes the American commanders knew of Tanaka's intentions.

In the light of this disclosure, and since the 2d Battalion lacked food and water, the decision was reached to withdraw the 2d at nightfall. The 2d was ordered to fall back on Wesu Ga, receive fresh supplies there, then march south to join the 3d Battalion below Walawbum. Colonel McGee and his men arrived at Wesu Ga at noon of 6 March, and went on to rejoin the 3d.⁷¹

Late on the next day, the 6th, the fighting reached its climax, as Tanaka sought to move his division from between the 22d Division on the north of his current positions and the American roadblock to the south. Supported by the other combat team of its battalion, Orange Combat Team spent the morning and early afternoon of the 6th in bracing itself for the expected supreme Japanese effort. Shells from Japanese medium artillery suggested it might not be long in coming. The pack animals suffered severely from this preparation, but the men in their foxholes with overhead cover took few casualties. At 1715 an estimated two companies of Japanese in line of skirmishers, with heavy supporting fire, crossed the river. The American mortars continued their work; the automatic weapons held back until the Japanese were within fifty yards. Two heavy machine guns, which had a clear field of fire along the river bank, were especially effective. The Japanese failed, leaving many dead on the open ground east of the river and on the river banks. Orange Combat Team found

⁷¹ (1) GALAHAD, pp. 24, 27-28. (2) Tanaka Narrative, p. 2. (3) Tanaka, Japanese Comments, Sec. II. (4) Brown Notes, p. 6.

its ammunition low, and so sent a request for more to Khaki Combat Team, which was about one hundred yards downstream.⁷²

From the Japanese point of view, withdrawal was begun just in time, for the leading elements of the 113th Regiment, Chinese 38th Division, which had been teamed with GALAHAD, met General Merrill about a mile northeast of Walawbum at 1600 hours, 6 March. The arrival of the Chinese meant that the outcome of the battle could not be an Allied defeat; the problem was now to make the outcome a real and if possible a decisive victory.

There was an unfortunate incident when the remainder of the 38th Division and an American patrol met near Walawbum on 7 March. The recognition signal had been arranged as three bursts of three rounds each. This necessarily meant there would be firing when the Chinese and Americans met. When the tops of the American helmets, which looked not unlike the Japanese pot helmet when their brims were invisible, appeared through and over the brush, there was a brief exchange of fire in which three Chinese were wounded before identity was established.

As soon as the Chinese were present in strength, Merrill by arrangement with Sun but over the protests of his battalion commanders withdrew GALAHAD on the morning of 7 March. His intent was to circle south and cut the Kamaing Road again farther to the south. Merrill was very mindful of Stilwell's order to keep his casualties down, and since he had held his position until the 38th Division appeared, he believed he had complied with Stilwell's orders. In effect, his decision removed GALAHAD from the battle of Walawbum.⁷³ In announcing his withdrawal from the Walawbum area, Merrill told Colonel Brown, the tank commander, that he was relieved of attachment to Merrill's headquarters and should radio Stilwell for further orders.⁷⁴

Apparently determined to make every moment count, Brown while waiting his next orders attempted on the morning of 7 March to arrange a co-ordinated tank-infantry attack toward Walawbum. He asked the commander of the Chinese 113th Regiment to join him in a thrust direct at Walawbum, but the Chinese officer was unable to agree because his orders were to hold at Wesu Ga, about 4,000 yards north-northeast of Walawbum. Brown returned to his own bivouac area and talked the situation over with staff members of his attached Chinese infantry battalion and his own people. While the discussion was under way a battalion commander of the 64th Regiment, Chinese 22d

⁷² GALAHAD, pp. 27-28.

⁷³ (1) *Merrill's Marauders*. (2) The statement by Gen. Dr. Ho Yung-chi in *The Big Circle*, page 86, that the 5307th broke and ran at Walawbum is denied by Hunter and Merrill. Some doubt is cast on Dr. Ho's charge by his own claim that the 38th Division subsequently chased the Japanese "to the walls of Walawbum." Walawbum was half a dozen burned-out grass shacks on a dirt road. On page 44 of *Merrill's Marauders* is a picture of the Chinese moving in while the Americans moved out, which event may have given rise to the story. (3) The brief account in Fred Eldridge's *Wrath In Burma* (New York: Doubleday Doran & Company, 1946), page 221, is not accurate. (4) Ltr to Sunderland, cited n. 66(3). (5) Merrill Notes.

⁷⁴ Ltr, Brown to Ward, 25 Aug 51. OCMH.

Division, appeared. Placed between two Chinese divisions which because of communications difficulties were operating almost independently, Brown had to make his own arrangements for a suitable role, so he turned to the newly arrived battalion commander with his suggestion for an attack. This officer, as it turned out, had no specific orders from his own higher headquarters, but he did have an aggressive disposition, and promptly adopted Brown's suggestion that tanks and infantry join to move south from their present site and place a block across the Kamaing Road as it runs due east toward Walawbum.

About 1500 on 7 March, the tanks and the battalion of the 22d Division placed themselves across the Kamaing Road in not one but two places, respectively one and two miles west of the Nambyu Hka. The infantry set up a roadblock, while the tanks moved out aggressively along the road to east and west.

One tank company moved west along the Kamaing Road and had bad luck, for it met nothing but an impassible stream that halted further progress. A second company went east along the Kamaing Road until it came to a bridge that proved to be well covered by Japanese antitank guns. The lead tank was almost across the bridge when it gave way, dumping the luckless vehicle into the water. Antitank fire ripped through the thinly armored portions and killed all but one of the crew.

The third tank company was the most successful. Its commander decided to turn off the Kamaing Road onto a trail that showed signs of heavy traffic. This may have been Tanaka's evacuation route, for the tanks encountered a body of Japanese on the march and scattered them. Two weeks later a mass grave of 200 dead Japanese was found in the area. On the evening of the 7th the tanks reassembled after dark.⁷⁵

The "Big Squeeze Play"

When dawn broke on the 8th, Stilwell's forces, with the already-noted exception of GALAHAD, occupied areas forming a great arc whose several segments were seeking out the Japanese near them, the task of search no easy one in the country around Walawbum. In order from west to east were two regiments of the 22d Division, the tanks, and the 113th Regiment of the 38th. The 22d's regiments were not arrayed neatly in line but had their elements over a considerable area which included the ford over the Nambyu Hka at Kumnyen—thus explaining how Brown's tankers met a battalion of the 22d near the Nambyu Hka. Tanaka seems to have made his withdrawal from the area through which elements of the 22d were moving but they did not keep pressure on him, and to this he later attributed his escape from the Allied arc that might have become a deadly ring: "The cautious movement of the Chinese forces

⁷⁵ Brown Notes, pp. 7-11.

engaged in the frontal attack made it possible for the *18th Division* to save itself.⁷⁶

Back at his headquarters, Stilwell on 8 March checked over the situation as it appeared to him on the basis of the information available at his headquarters. He believed Merrill to be still in place along the Kamaing Road south of Walawbum, Sun's 38th Division to be on the field, Brown's tanks to be in action, Liao's 22d Division to be coming down from the north, and the *18th Division* to be withdrawing. Victory on a major scale appeared to be in sight, so Stilwell issued orders for a "big squeeze play" of every unit he had to converge on the *18th Division* and crush it. The 64th Regiment Stilwell thought to be on the west of the Japanese position so the 64th was to attack towards the east; Sun's 113th Regiment was to attack towards the southwest, and so on round the arc.⁷⁷ What followed illustrates how dependent the commander is on forces and factors beyond his immediate control or even knowledge, for the shortcomings of the radio net made Stilwell and Merrill unaware of each other's intentions and movements. Moreover, the several units, Chinese and American, often did not know of each other's locations and maneuvers, and so instead of a co-ordinated assault on an encircled *18th Division* what actually took place was a battalion and regimental commanders' battle as units engaged what Japanese they could find.⁷⁸

In compliance with Stilwell's orders, the tanks and the 38th Division began the moves that ultimately placed them in what was left of the village of Walawbum. The tanks, which were on the Kamaing Road west of Walawbum and separated from it by the Nambyu Hka, moved out eastward to seek a ford. Japanese antitank fire covering the ford on the main road at a place called Kumnyen Ga discouraged thoughts of crossing there so bulldozers covered by infantry prepared a new crossing one and a half miles to the north. Once this was done, Brown was ready to take his tanks across the stream and attack Walawbum itself. The site itself had nothing of value but since the Japanese had put up such a fight in the immediate vicinity Brown felt they must value the location and so he resolved to make a determined effort to get it. To do this, he decided to send two tank companies across the newly prepared ford to bypass the Japanese position covering the old ford at Kumnyen Ga, and go on to Walawbum, while one company of tanks made a frontal attack on the Japanese.⁷⁹

The envelopment went very smoothly, and as soon as the two tank companies had cut behind the Japanese positions and were on the main road they continued on toward Walawbum. Unfortunately, the tank company and

⁷⁶ (1) NCAC History, I, 63. (2) Unidentified overlay, showing opns, 1-3 Mar 44. Folder, X-RAY Force, NCAC Files, KCRC. (3) Tanaka Narrative, p. 2. (4) Quotation from Tanaka, Japanese Comments, Sec. II.

⁷⁷ Stilwell Diary, 8 Mar 44.

⁷⁸ For comments on the communication problem, see Merrill Notes.

⁷⁹ Stilwell's diary entry of 9 March describes Brown as having done his part.



A CHINESE COOK *makes his way forward with his cooking equipment.*

Chinese infantry which were making the frontal attack moved only as far as Kumnyen Ga itself, which lay on the west of the ford. It was then 1600 and the Chinese infantry refused to move farther. The appearance of Chinese soldier cooks with rice kettles suggests one reason for the delay. But the Chinese tankers were willing to keep on, and the tanks crossed the Nambyu Hka at the main road. They soon rejoined the other two companies in Walawbum. At dark, the tanks pulled back out of Walawbum to the Nambyu Hka, where the Chinese infantry had halted, as Brown did not want the armor to be without infantry support during the night. Next morning, the 9th, the tanks and their accompanying battalion moved back to Walawbum and found it, as Brown later recalled, "swarming with people from the 64th Infantry and the 113th Infantry" who, to the tankers' great disgust, disputed the latter's claim to have taken Walawbum.⁸⁰

The largest share of the 38th Division's work at Walawbum had fallen to the 2d and 3d Battalions of the 113th Regiment. It was the 2d Battalion that had established contact with GALAHAD and relieved that unit. The 1st Battalion, which followed it, was kept in reserve. The 3d Battalion, which had

⁸⁰ Brown Notes, pp. 8-11.

moved up by forced marches, re-established the roadblock west of Walawbum that GALAHAD's 2d Battalion had been forced to yield several days before, and kept its hold during the 8th and 9th after considerable fighting. Presumably it was this battalion the tanks met in Walawbum on the 9th. General Sun used the 112th Regiment to guard his rear and eastern flank lest the Japanese attack him from across the hills which mark the eastern boundary of the Hukawng Valley, the Kumon Range. The 114th, Sun kept in reserve.⁸¹

After GALAHAD was withdrawn from Walawbum and on its way to cut the Kamaing Road again farther south, communications between Merrill and Stilwell were finally re-established late on the evening of the 8th. Merrill was ordered to halt, for Stilwell was now looking toward the next phase. Stilwell recorded in his diary that he learned of GALAHAD's maneuver only after issuing orders for a co-ordinated action by the 64th, 113th, GALAHAD, tanks, artillery, and the rest. Weighing the situation, Stilwell decided that his orders to Merrill had not been clear enough. In saying, "use your discretion" he had meant to keep casualties down, not "go roaming." Stilwell's conclusions and his willingness to assume responsibility for not making his orders more clear deserve respect, but the communications difficulties that kept Stilwell in the dark as to the movements and location of the several units, plus the extreme caution of the Chinese 22d Division, seem major factors in Tanaka's successful withdrawal from the Walawbum area. The 18th Division made good its escape from Stilwell's trap, but in so doing it had yielded control of the greater part of the Hukawng Valley to the Allies, and the Chinese Army in India could celebrate a well-earned victory.⁸²

Between the Hukawng Valley and the Mogaung River valley is the ridge barrier of the Jambu Bum. Once Stilwell was fairly over the Jambu Bum, he would be in a corridor, the Mogaung valley, which leads directly into the Irrawaddy valley and Burma proper. The North Burma Campaign was beginning to yield results. For them, the 22d and 38th Divisions were paying a toll in casualties. From fall 1943 to 18 March 1944, the campaign had cost 802 Chinese dead and 1,479 wounded, plus 530 undifferentiated casualties. Of the dead, 539 were from the 38th Division.

Medical aid for the Chinese victors of Walawbum was provided by the U.S. Army. The 42d, 43d, and 46th Portable Surgical Hospitals worked with the 22d Division. Surgical teams from the Seagrave Hospital Unit, the 25th Field Hospital, and the 13th Mountain Medical Battalion were with the 38th Division. An ambulance shuttle up the Kamaing Road evacuated patients to the 25th Field Hospital at the new Taihpa Ga Airstrip.⁸³

⁸¹ G-3 Per Rpts, Chih Hui Pu, 7, 12 Mar 44. NCAC Files, KCRC.

⁸² Stilwell Diary, 8, 9 Mar 44.

⁸³ (1) NCAC History, App. 5, History of 1st Prov Tank Gp, Chinese-American, 8 Aug 43-9 Mar 45, pp. 8, 14. (2) Rad Y-285, 26 Mar 44; Rads, Fwd Ech OUT. NCAC Files, KCRC. (3) Stilwell Diary, 4 Mar 44. (4) Stone MS, pp. 131, 133, 135.

Summary

The two-month stalemate around Yupbang Ga in November-December 1943 finally obliged Stilwell to leave CBI Theater headquarters and assume command in the field. The arrival of reinforcements that gave the Chinese a considerable numerical superiority, the constant air supply that gave them mobility unprecedented even in jungle warfare as the Japanese conducted it, enabled Stilwell, Sun, and Liao to make a series of envelopments that forced Tanaka to loosen his grip on the strategic area where the Tanai and the Tarung join. The long stalemate was broken and a war of movement began. Stilwell decided to use a fresh regiment of U.S. infantry for his next envelopment, while Tanaka decided that because his opponent moved so slowly he could safely mass his forces against the attempted envelopment and defeat his opponents in detail. A confused and stumbling clash around Walawbum followed, in which the Japanese were outfought and thrust to the south. This was the first series of Allied victories in the North Burma Campaign and a major slice of Burma was freed from the Japanese. But four months had gone by since the first shots were fired. Progress forward had been slow, if victorious.

CHAPTER V

The Burma Campaign in the Balance

When the soldiers of the Chinese Army in India entered Walawbum, deep in Japanese-held Burma, they were for all practical purposes masters of the Hukawng Valley and well on the way to Myitkyina. But their success did not guarantee enthusiastic support of the Burma campaign by either SEAC or the Chinese Government, while the Japanese at one point were within a few miles of making the whole North Burma Campaign impossible. So far was SEAC from favoring a campaign in north Burma, that Mountbatten sent a mission to London and Washington to plead for cancellation of the campaign, while the Americans in north Burma believed that on his part the Generalissimo was ordering Generals Sun and Liao to go very slowly indeed. For some weeks the campaign hung in the balance, while Stilwell did what he could to tip that balance on the side of vigorous action to break the long blockade of China.

The SEXTANT Decisions Challenged

On 4 March 1944, when the fighting at Walawbum was moving to its peak, Admiral Mountbatten visited Stilwell at the latter's invitation. The relation between the Supreme Allied Commander and his acting deputy was in need of adjustment because of a chain of events stretching back to the preceding January.¹ The Generalissimo's unwillingness to cross the Salween and advance into Burma, plus the long-felt desire of Mountbatten's commanders in chief to bypass Burma and to postpone major operations until after the defeat of Germany, led SEAC's planners to revive, and Mountbatten to approve, the old plan for an attack against the Netherlands Indies that had first been presented in May 1943. SEAC's staff argued that the clearing of north Burma to break the blockade of China was out of step with global strategy because of the now quickened pace of operations in the Pacific. They recommended that the Combined Chiefs of Staff order SEAC to keep its resources out of the Burma fighting and conserve them for a major offensive in the fall of 1944 or the spring of 1945. The first phase of this operation should be the securing of a

¹ *The Stilwell Papers*, p. 282.

foothold in Sumatra. Success in the East Indies should be exploited into the South China Sea, with the goal of opening a port on the China coast. Germany's fall was expected to release the means for this.²

On learning of this development, the deputy CBI Theater commander, Maj. Gen. Daniel I. Sultan, had promptly warned Stilwell of it. Telling Stilwell that Mountbatten was about to send a mission to Washington and London to present this plan, General Sultan had suggested that Stilwell counter with a mission of his own. Stilwell was, as acting Deputy Supreme Allied Commander, subordinate to Mountbatten; he was also Chief of Staff, China Theater, with obligations to China and Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek. A decision to postpone any effort to relieve China until after Germany had been defeated might have the gravest repercussions in China. As Chief of Staff, China Theater, Stilwell therefore had decided to send his own mission to Washington: Generals Boatner and Ferris, Colonels Francis Hill and Francis G. Brink.³ Moreover, Stilwell was an officer in the service of the United States, and there lay his first loyalty. As commanding general of a U.S. Army theater of operations he had been charged with several missions, such as support of the airline to China, which might be adversely affected by the strategy SEAC was proposing. He also knew that the objections of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to bypassing Burma had been placed on the record at the Washington conference of May 1943. Unhappily, he failed to inform Mountbatten of his decision to send the mission.

As soon as the situation around Taihpa Ga permitted, Stilwell had placed his arguments directly before SEAC. At a Supreme Commander's meeting on 31 January, Stilwell stated flatly that the entire concept of attacking Sumatra and bypassing Burma was wrong. While he fully realized the advantages of opening a Chinese port that could ultimately result from the proposed operation, Stilwell believed this could be accomplished by an overland advance of ten Chinese divisions in about one month, after the Ledo Road to supply them had been opened. Stilwell believed that the road would be opened sooner than the SEAC War Staff anticipated and wanted to know if account had been taken of the existing road to Myitkyina, the Kamaing Road, from which he was then only twenty miles away. As for the argument that a change in strategy was necessary because of the faster schedule of Pacific operations, Stilwell did not see how that made it necessary to wait six months to fight elsewhere instead of fighting the Japanese at once in Burma.⁴

² (1) Rad AM 37, Sultan to Marshall, Stilwell, and Hearn, 6 Jan 44. Item 1602, Bk 5, JWS Personal File. (2) CM-IN 5998, Sultan to Marshall, 9 Jan 44. (3) Rad, Mountbatten to COS and Prime Minister, 8 Jan 44. SEAC War Diary.

³ (1) Rad AMMDEL AG 13, Stilwell to Marshall, McNarney, and Handy, 2 Jan 44; Ltr and Incl, Hearn to Mme. Chiang, 11 Jan 44. Item 263, Bk 3, JWS Personal File. (2) Rad RE 76, Sultan to Stilwell, 13 Jan 44. Item 16, Bk 6A, JWS Personal File.

⁴ Min, SAC's 52d Mtg, 31 Jan 44. SEAC War Diary. Stilwell probably meant the motorable portion of the Kamaing Road.

Stilwell's representations made no impression, for a clash of national policy was involved far deeper than differing views on strategy. The United States wanted to support China; the British Commonwealth, to liberate its prewar territories in Burma and Malaya, and again raise the British flag over Singapore. In retrospect, British emotions and British policies should be fully understandable in terms of similar emotions and policies that resulted in the American effort to liberate the Philippines. As Admiral Mountbatten stated the problem in his report:

The Americans, on the one hand, regarded Assam and Burma primarily as part of the air and land line to China; the British, on the other hand, saw the liberation of Burma as an end in itself, and as a step on the road to Malaya and Singapore. It seemed necessary to establish the fact that, although the two conceptions were divergent in motive, in execution they were complementary and inseparable.⁵

To the Prime Minister, viewing the war from the lonely summit of his position, all of Burma seemed far from Japan, and he feared that if the British forces were mired in Burma they would not have their just share of victory in the Far East. He "wished, on the contrary, to contain the Japanese in Burma, and break into or through the great arc of islands forming the outer fringe of the Dutch East Indies." As he wrote his memoirs several years later, Churchill added: "It is against this permanent background of geography, limited resources, and clash of policies that the story of the campaign should be read."⁶

Unknown to Stilwell, the subject of a new directive for SEAC was an urgent topic of conversation among War Department planners. Their conclusions, a reaffirmation of their May 1943 views, were reached before Stilwell's mission to Washington could present his reactions to CULVERIN (SEAC's plan for an attack on Sumatra). On 12 January the Asiatic Section, Operations Division, examined the proposed attack on Sumatra in response to Sultan's warning on the 6th. The section pointed out that President Roosevelt's 20 December 1943 message to the Generalissimo strongly indicated a land route to China. Furthermore, as Japanese strength in Burma increased, the enemy's offensive capabilities were correspondingly improved, a factor to be weighed in any consideration of operations against Sumatra.⁷

From north Burma Stilwell had been reporting successes against the Japanese and asking when 4 Corps would move forward from Manipur State to engage them. In response, the Joint Chiefs of Staff asked the British Chiefs of Staff to inquire of SEAC when it proposed to advance the 4 Corps, and what its mission would be.⁸

⁵ Mountbatten Report, Pt. B, par. 2.

⁶ Winston S. Churchill, *Closing the Ring* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1951), p. 561.

⁷ (1) Memo, Col William H. Wood, Actg Chief, Asiatic Sec OPD, for Chief, S&P Gp OPD, 12 Jan 44, sub: Opns, SE Asia Theater. Case 228, OPD 381 Security, A47-30. (2) See p. 79, above; pp. 297-98, below.

⁸ (1) CM-IN 857, 2 Jan 44; Rad MS 37, 22 Jan 44; CM-IN 14766, 23 Jan 44. These radios were "Action Handy; Info Marshall, McNarney." (2) CCS 452/5, 25 Jan 44, sub: Opns in Burma 1944.

The JCS, disturbed by the evident SEAC tendency to postpone operations in Southeast Asia, and approving the Joint Staff Planners' view that the capture of Myitkyina in the current dry season was essential to the U.S. policy of developing China into a base capable of supporting Pacific operations, warned the CCS of their apprehension that further delay in issuing a CCS directive to SEAC would result in very little being done before the monsoon began. The Joint Chiefs went on to say that every means available for operations in north Burma should be employed immediately. They recommended that SEAC be ordered to seize and hold Myitkyina before the 1944 rains and that 4 Corps be ordered to cross the Chindwin and move on to central Burma. To this view, the British Chiefs of Staff replied that they did not agree with the proposed directive, but that they were not prepared to advance counterproposals, pending the outcome of conversations with Mountbatten's mission.⁹

The British Chiefs of Staff reaffirmed a SEAC assertion that SEAC was making the maximum offensive effort that its line of communications could support. They doubted whether the 4 Corps could seize or hold the Shwebo-Monywa area before the monsoon and whether the Ledo Force could advance to Myitkyina in time to bring the Ledo Road forward before the monsoon. In the opinions of the British Chiefs, if this could not be accomplished Myitkyina could not be held.

Aware of these exchanges between the Joint and British Chiefs of Staff, Admiral Mountbatten complained that the views of the Joint Chiefs were based on Stilwell's representations, with all that implied of insubordination by the latter. He accused Stilwell of inspiring a press campaign against CULVERIN and asked that Stilwell's relief from SEAC duty be arranged. General Marshall quickly pointed out to Field Marshal Sir John Dill, Chief of the British Joint Staff Mission in Washington, that the JCS paper had been prepared before Stilwell's staff officers had arrived in Washington and before the JCS had seen Stilwell's objections to CULVERIN. Fully consistent with the previous course of U.S. service opinion the JCS paper had stemmed from the OPD memorandum of 12 January, and the latter was drafted before General Sultan suggested Stilwell send his mission.¹⁰ Therefore, Stilwell's mission on its arrival had no need to present his views, for they were identical with the positions already taken by the Joint Chiefs of Staff and President Roosevelt.

At this point Stilwell received concrete indication that the President's attitude toward him was becoming more favorable. From Washington, General Boatner radioed that the President revealed complete sympathy with Stilwell's

⁹ (1) Memo, Wood for Chief, S&P Gp OPD, 9 Feb 44, sub: Opns, SEAC; Rpt (JCS 678/1), JPS, 16 Feb 44, sub: Opns in SE Asia, 1943-44. ABC 384 (Burma) 8-25-42, Sec 5, A48-224. (2) CCS 452/6, 17 Feb 44, sub: Opns in SE Asia; CCS 452/7, 20 Feb 44. (3) CM-OUT 8897, 21 Feb 44. Case 297, OPD 381 Security, A47-30.

¹⁰ (1) CCS 452/8, 26 Feb 44, sub: Opns in SE Asia. (2) Rad SEACOS 99, 21 Feb 44. Item 66, OPD Exec 10. (3) Ltr, Marshall to Dill, 23 Feb 44. Case 297, OPD 381 Security, A47-30. (4) Ltr, Mountbatten to Wedemeyer, 20 Feb 44. SEAC War Diary. (5) *Stilwell's Mission to China*, Ch. IX.

efforts to advance in Burma. Not since the spring of 1942 had Stilwell received any evidence that the Commander in Chief was supporting him. Unimpressed, Stilwell replied to Boatner that he would trade the sympathy for one U.S. division.¹¹

Reporting on his interview with the President, Boatner stated that Roosevelt said he was more dissatisfied with the progress of the war in Burma than anywhere else. The two men discussed the role of the British and Chinese ground forces in Burma. Boatner urged the President to aid in persuading the British and Chinese to take a more aggressive role in Burma. The President agreed to address the Prime Minister and urge immediate aggressive action in compliance with the SEXTANT decisions, but he said nothing about similar representations to the Generalissimo.¹²

Lending point to Boatner's arguments was a widely circulated OPD estimate of the strength of the contending parties in Burma. OPD believed that there were in India 1,654,094 British and Indian troops, 44,036 U.S.-trained Chinese, and 2,943 U.S. infantry, or 1,701,073 men, against a G-2 and SEAC estimate of 150,000 Japanese in Burma.¹³ The strength estimates made by OPD are, however, not a true picture. The Japanese strength in Burma, exclusive of naval and air personnel, was approximately 252,000.¹⁴ As for the Indian forces, OPD did not take into account the very considerable forces needed to restrain the warlike and turbulent tribes of the North-West Frontier Province, the need of garrisons to maintain internal security in an empire of some 400,000,000 peoples of diverse races, and the administrative establishments required for support of the Indian divisions in the Mediterranean and Middle East, as well as in Burma.

Colonel Hill of Stilwell's party underscored the relationship between taking Myitkyina and increasing Hump tonnage above its current plateau of a 13,000-14,000-ton level. Hump tonnage was limited by the high density of air traffic at the Assam gateway and by the lack of instrument let-down facilities in China. As a result the Hump was rather closely confined to 10,000 tons a month in bad weather, 12,500 tons in good. The ATC, said Hill, was suggesting that a more southerly route by way of Myitkyina would have to be flown to lessen traffic density.¹⁵ However, so long as Japanese fighters could use the Myitkyina airstrip, ATC's transports would have to stay well to the north.

The President, as he had promised Boatner, told Churchill that he was expecting Stilwell to take Myitkyina by the end of the dry season, and that he thought Stilwell could hold there if 4 Corps did its part. Roosevelt expressed grave concern over recent trends in SEAC's strategic thinking, which favored Sumatra and Malayan operations. He concluded that advantageous as

¹¹ Rad RE 296, Sultan to Stilwell, 20 Feb 44. Item 44, Bk 6A, JWS Personal File.

¹² Rpt, Boatner, 18 Feb 44, on interv with Roosevelt. Item 245, Bk 15, OPD Exec 9.

¹³ App. A to Rpt cited n. 9(1).

¹⁴ Japanese Officers' Comments on third CBI MS.

¹⁵ Min, Washington Conf, 9 Feb 44. ABC (Burma) 384, 8-25-42, Sec 5, A48-224.

a successful CULVERIN might be, more could be gained by an all-out drive into upper Burma to take Myitkyina and thus increase the airlift to China. This would permit building air strength in China and insure essential support for the projected cross-Pacific advance to the Formosa-China-Luzon area. Churchill replied that SEAC would not withdraw or withhold any forces from the campaign in upper Burma for the sake of CULVERIN or any other amphibious operation. This reply was reassuring, for General Sultan had heard gossip at SEAC headquarters that troops would not be committed to current operations lest such delay CULVERIN.¹⁶

The Japanese Create More Command Problems

While the lengthy radioed exchanges on the new directive for SEAC were taking place, the Japanese seized the initiative in Burma, thus justifying the apprehensions so often expressed by General Marshall. On 7 January, *Imperial General Headquarters* had finally approved the major portion of the plan to attack India so long urged by *Burma Area Army*, and had directed:

In order to defend BURMA, the Commander-in-Chief of the Southern Army may occupy and secure the vital areas of Northeastern INDIA in the vicinity of IMPHAL by defeating the enemy in that area at the opportune time.¹⁷

Significant of the limited scope of the intended operation, which was given the simple code name *U*, this directive was issued in accordance with an *Imperial General Headquarters* basic order of summer 1942 which had given a defensive role to the Japanese garrison of Burma.¹⁸

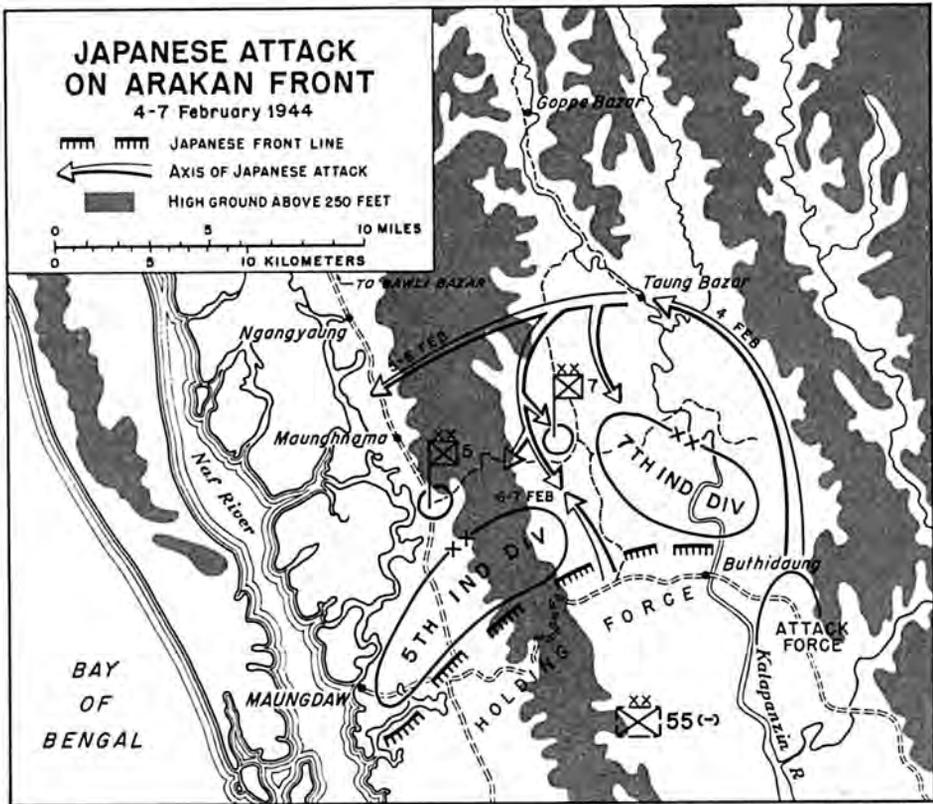
In the opinion of the former chief of the *Operations Section, Imperial General Headquarters Army Department*, another order by that body would have had to be issued for an advance into Assam Province beyond the Imphal area. All things considered, so ambitious an operation by *15th Army* did not seem possible to the Japanese command. Some members of the *15th Army* command, including General Mutaguchi himself, did want to descend into Assam, and expected that such a bold offensive would be permitted by Tokyo when the *U* operation had been successful.¹⁹

¹⁶ (1) Memo, Marshall for Leahy, 24 Feb 44, with Incl, sub: Proposed Msg from President to Prime Minister. Case 297, OPD 381 Security, A47-30. (2) Rad, President to Prime Minister on SEAC Strategy, 25 Feb 44. SEAC War Diary. (3) Rad 592, Prime Minister to President, 25 Feb 44. Folder, Prime Minister-President, OPD Exec 16. (4) The President's radio is quoted in Churchill, *Closing the Ring*, page 561.

¹⁷ (1) *Imperial General Headquarters Army Directive* 1776, 7 Jan 44 (hereafter, *IGH Army Dir --*), GHQ, Far East Comd, Mil Hist Div, *Imperial General Headquarters Army Orders*. OCMH. (2) SEATIC Bull 240, 9 Jul 46, pp. 3-5; SEATIC Bull 247, 22 Apr 47, pp. 3-4; Lt Gen Kitsuji Ayabe in Bull 247, p. 6; SEATIC Bull Special Int Bull, Pt. V, p. 22. MID Library. (3) Japanese Study 89.

¹⁸ (1) *IGH Army Order* 650, 29 Jun 42. (2) For a discussion of Japanese strategy in Southeast Asia in the summer of 1942, see *Stilwell's Mission to China*, Chapter V. (3) Japanese Comments, Sec. I.

¹⁹ Statement, Col Hattori, 5 Oct 51; Statement, Col Fujiwara, 5 Oct 51. Japanese Comments, Sec. I.



MAP 9

These details were unknown to the Allied staffs and commanders, but on 4 February 1944 they saw the beginnings of the crucial stages of Operation *U* when the *55th Division* attacked in the Arakan to lure SEAC's reserves away from Imphal.²⁰ (Map 9)

The Japanese attack was not a surprise to SEAC, to CBI headquarters, or to General Headquarters (India), though Stilwell, like Marshall, had always feared an attack on Kunming. As early as 15 July 1943, Lt. Gen. Geoffrey Scoones, 4 Corps commander, had predicted the Japanese move. In December 1943 the likelihood of such an attack was under active discussion in SEAC. Wingate was advised of its probability on 16 January 1944. SEAC's joint intelligence accepted the view that a Japanese offensive was imminent and objected to a War Staff estimate which forecast a rather passive Japanese attitude.

²⁰ Mountbatten Report, Pt. B, par. 68.

By 8 February 1944 Stilwell's mission to Washington could report that an estimate of the situation by General Headquarters (India) suggested a major Japanese offensive was about to begin. Almost immediately, CBI staff officers began to study the implications of such an attack in terms of the air supply needs of surrounded Allied units. On 14 February Admiral Mountbatten told the British Chiefs of Staff that a Japanese attack on 4 Corps was planned to follow a successful offensive in the Arakan. On 5 March he inquired of General Giffard, the senior British Army commander in SEAC, how that officer proposed to reinforce Imphal to meet the expected Japanese attack.²¹

The Japanese *28th Army* in the Arakan had three divisions, the *2d*, the *54th*, and the *55th*. Convinced that SEAC contemplated an amphibious descent on the Arakan coast, the Japanese employed the *2d* and *54th Divisions* in the profitless tasks of building coastal defenses and keeping a sharp watch for hostile landing craft, as well as the more useful work of forwarding supplies to the veteran *55th Division*, victors of the Battle of the Sittang Bridge, February 1942. The *55th Division's* mission was to place the Indian divisions facing it in such peril as to attract British reserves from the decisive point at Imphal.

The Japanese striking force made its way around 15 Corps' east flank without discovery and attacked on 4 February. So quickly and hard did the Japanese strike that on 6 February they overran the headquarters of the 7th Indian Division. Similar Japanese tactics had yielded very considerable results in previous years. Here was a threat.

But General Slim, commanding Fourteenth Army, the headquarters immediately controlling 4 and 15 Corps, saw the opportunity presented by the Japanese move. Exploiting the advantages of air transport and air supply he quickly massed a force that far outnumbered the Japanese by bringing up the 26th Indian Division and moving the British 36th Division into a supporting position. A third division of two brigades, the 81st West African, was operating in the Kaladan valley, parallel to the Arakan coast.

To meet the Japanese attack, the three brigades of the 7th Indian Division, the brigade of the 5th Indian Division attached to it, and the division service troops formed perimeters and went on air supply while the rest of 15 Corps drove toward them. Called "baby tortoise" or "beehive" tactics by the baffled Japanese, this type of operation was something new in Burma fighting. The unit training, and equipment, of the Indian Army had greatly improved in the past years. By cutting the Indians' supply lines, the Japanese had expected to force them back in confusion. Instead, though the Japanese were carrying out

²¹ (1) Rad 213, Stilwell to Bennett, 7 Dec 43; Rad, Stilwell to Marshall, 9 Jan 44. Folder, Rads, Stilwell to Marshall, Oct 43-25 Mar 44, NCAC Files, KCRC. (2) CM-IN 2094, Stilwell to Marshall, 4 Jan 44. (3) Note, Secy Plans on War Staff, 1944, p. 12; Note, Gen Wingate-Situation in North Burma. Items 4, 16, SEAC Info Bk, OCMH. (4) Min, 1st Conf with Offs USAF CBI, 8 Feb 44. ABC 384 (Burma) Sec 5, 8-25-42, A48-224. (5) Rad RE 240, Evans to Stilwell and Sultan, 11 Feb 44; Rad RE 260, Evans to Stilwell, 14 Feb 44. Items 34, 38, Bk 6A, JWS Personal File. (6) Minute SC4/438/G, SAC for Giffard, 16 Mar 44; SAC Dir to CinC, 11 Army Gp, 5 Mar 44. SEAC War Diary. (7) British Comments, Serial 56.

their mission of containing superior forces, they themselves, depending on what supplies could trickle to them over jungle trails, were effectively encircled and were running out of supplies in a few days.²² In two weeks' time, 7th Indian Division restored communications with its service elements and held the initiative.

That these new Allied tactics involved air supply posed new problems for Stilwell. On 13 January 1944, well before the Japanese struck, Stilwell's staff warned him that the Arakan situation (where an African division was soon to require air supply) might result in a request for diversion of Hump aircraft and Hump tonnage at any time. A week after the battle began such a request came from SEAC. The Arakan supply commitments strained Mountbatten's resources to the limit, and as it would soon be time to fly Wingate's new and ambitious long-range penetration group effort into Burma, Mountbatten wanted to divert thirty-eight aircraft from the Hump. He wanted Stilwell's concurrence before he radioed the CCS, but no reply came before the radio was dispatched.

Stilwell's reply was a refusal for he had understood that only one Japanese battalion was causing the trouble. How, he asked, could he justify a diversion on those grounds to the Generalissimo? The CCS, however, agreed, providing no more than thirty C-47's were taken off the Hump. Mountbatten could argue that the spirit of the SEXTANT discussions with the Generalissimo contemplated Hump diversions in an emergency, and this was one.²³ Hump tonnage fell from 14,431 tons in February to 10,954 tons in March, then rose to the mid-13,000's in April and May. (*See Chart 5.*)

When the Arakan crisis ended in late February with the driving of the Japanese from their key roadblocks, both sides could find cause for satisfaction. Churchill proclaimed: "The enemy has been challenged and beaten in jungle war-fare. His boastfulness has received a salutary exposure."²⁴ From all indications, the Japanese task force took very heavy casualties. But the men who planned to meet again at Yasukuni Shrine expected this, and *Burma Area Army* believed the sacrifices of its men had in fact mired Giffard's and Slim's reserves in the Arakan while the decisive action was being fought out hundreds of miles to the north. The Japanese had in effect sacrificed the *55th Division* and greatly weakened their defense of the Arakan, so much so as to make its future loss inevitable. This meant the Japanese would have to win at Imphal to make the Arakan sacrifice worth while. They did not perceive that Slim and Giffard, by the rapid movement of their strategic reserves, had taken the first major step toward defeating them in detail, for they did not realize that Slim and Giffard could shuttle whole divisions by air.

²² (1) Japanese Study 89. (2) Mountbatten Report, Pt. B, pars. 60-92.

²³ (1) Rad RE 248, Evans to Stilwell, 12 Jan 44; Rad RE 260, Evans to Stilwell, 14 Feb 44; Rad, Stilwell to Evans. Items 15, 38, 47. Bk 6A, JWS Personal File. (2) Rad SEACOS, 18 Feb 44; Rad JSM to War Cabinet Office, 25 Feb 44. SEAC War Diary.

²⁴ Owen, *The Campaign in Burma*, p. 65.

The principal concern of the Japanese staffs after the Arakan battle was the slowness with which their *15th Division* was moving into place for the attack on Imphal. The drive on Imphal was to have begun on 22 or 23 February. The Japanese D Day came and went and the *15th Division* was still not ready to move. Anxiously the Japanese staffs watched the time they had bought by sacrificing the *55th Division* slip through their fingers.²⁵

Mountbatten and Stilwell Meet

On 2 March General Marshall told Stilwell to see Mountbatten at once and re-establish cordial personal relations with him. Marshall referred to some press indiscretions, which Mountbatten thought had been Stilwell's work, and told Stilwell that he knew the latter bore no responsibility whatever for them, that they originated with a U.S. naval officer. Nevertheless, the Prime Minister and British Chiefs of Staff had at once concluded that Stilwell was responsible for them. Their irritation had been increased by the mission Stilwell sent to Washington without telling Mountbatten. Though Marshall had assured Dill and Mountbatten that the Joint Chiefs had reached their views independently of Stilwell, harm had been done. Hinting at great combined operations to come, which made Allied unity essential, Marshall asked Stilwell to close the rapidly widening breach between himself and Mountbatten.²⁶

As was his custom, Stilwell carefully drafted what he wanted to tell Mountbatten:

Mission to Washington was to inform War Department of my plans and arguments, report on situation, and attempt to put China in proper perspective. I am CofS for CKS. I command CBI Theater. I have a mission. My orders *re* SEAC are to use U.S. forces to best purpose and I have done so. I am serving under Slim. I diverted Hump tonnage. I am following orders. I have never been appointed as Deputy [Supreme Allied Commander, SEAC]. Opinions differ. I have stated mine frankly. E.G., 'Ledo Road cannot be built or held, nor can it carry any tonnage.' It *is* being built. It *can* be held—not of course if the British leave the whole job to two Chinese divisions. It will carry tonnage. It is *now* carrying 20,000 tons a month without trying.

Burma *can* be taken. The Japs *can* be licked. (Slim's job. Our job.) The road *can* be opened. All we need is pressure on CKS, which I have struggled to get. The problem in front of us is Burma. That is what I am working on.

What are the objections to me? I have assured you that once a decision is made, I will play ball. Am I supposed to sink my opinion *before* that time? And help to put over a point of view I do not believe in? Why should I take the opinions of your staff and not my own?

Have I covered up to you on the Chinese? Have I withheld possible help? Do you believe *now* what your experts said of the [Assam] LOC? Have I squawked about my status? Have I talked for publication? (Indian Press). Have I meddled in politics? (Mr. Churchill told me last May he understood my position and wanted to help).

²⁵ Japanese Comments, Sec. I.

²⁶ Rad WAR 4654, Marshall to Stilwell, 2 Mar 44. Item 2062, Bk 6, JWS Personal File.

TRIDENT, QUADRANT, and SEXTANT all bore down on opening up China. Why should I be panned for trying to do it?

Have I mentioned publicity? (Show him the Road article.) Does *that* tend to create suspicion or not? (Constant belittling [in the Indian and British press] of American effort here with the Chinese). . . .

Army Commander did not have any remarks on *military* effort. I have no desire to mix in political matters.

What is it? Do you want me to resign? I have never been appointed, so that is easy. Do you want me to be relieved entirely from this Theater? Or do you want the CBI abolished? (Have *you* political reasons for your attitude?) You asked me to be frank. I should like you also to be frank. I can stand it.²⁷

The meeting between Mountbatten and Stilwell passed off pleasantly and successfully. Stilwell kept no notes on what he said but reported to Marshall that he "ate crow" because he had not told Mountbatten of his mission. "We are good personal friends," he went on, "and our relations have never been stiff." Stilwell stated that he was carrying out Mountbatten's orders to the best of his ability and would carry out future orders as soon as the decision was made. At Cairo, he went on, he had tried to get a statement of the United States China policy but this had not been vouchsafed him. Since this guidance was lacking, he was trying to protect U.S. interests, carry out his original mission, and comply with TRIDENT, QUADRANT, and SEXTANT decisions.²⁸

Admiral Mountbatten was pleased by the meeting and told Dill of Stilwell's apology. Mountbatten's letter to Dill suggests a certain reserve but he considered that he and Stilwell had settled their current problems and had effected a personal *rapprochement*. However, Mountbatten added:

He really is a grand old warrior but only the Trinity could carry out his duties which require him to be in Delhi, Chungking and the Ledo Front simultaneously, and I still think Al. Wedemeyer or Sultan should be appointed as Commanding General for the American SEA theater and that Stilwell's command should be confined to China though he could certainly continue with the title of deputy SAC, SEA since he had never really done anything about those duties during the whole time I have been out here.²⁹

Later events showed that Stilwell was willing to focus his attention on China, to be relieved of a post that was of purely symbolic significance, and to let others cope with problems of administration and command south of the Hump. The accord reached by Stilwell and Mountbatten did not include questions of grand strategy, for differences there went beyond the competence of the local commanders.³⁰

Immediately after the interview, Mountbatten was seriously injured when a bamboo splinter was rammed into his eye as he was driving in his jeep. He was temporarily blinded, and had to spend many days in the hospital. The

²⁷ (1) Stilwell Diary, Notebook 10½. (2) *Stilwell's Mission to China*, p. 379.

²⁸ CM-IN 4651, Stilwell to Marshall, 7 Mar 44.

²⁹ Minute SC4/439/D, SAC for Dill, 16 Mar 44. SEAC War Diary.

³⁰ Ltr, Mountbatten to Lt Gen Sir Henry Pownall, CofS, SEAC, 8 Mar 44. SEAC War Diary.

accident was doubly unfortunate, for it immobilized SEAC's commander at a time when the Japanese were expected to make their attack on Imphal.³¹

The Chiefs of Staff Reject CULVERIN

The mission (AXIOM) sent to Washington and London in February 1944 to persuade Mountbatten's superiors of CULVERIN's advantages, included Generals Wedemeyer and Wheeler of SEAC's American component, and Maj. Gen. M. W. M. MacLeod, Capt. M. G. Goodenough, RN, and Brigadier Geoffrey K. Bourne. In London the AXIOM Mission found that the British Chiefs of Staff and the War Cabinet had not settled on what British strategy in the Pacific war should be. The military wanted to dispatch a powerful task force to co-operate with the U.S. Navy in the Pacific. Mr. Churchill, for the Cabinet, wanted British effort to concentrate on the Indian Ocean. The strategic concepts of CULVERIN were most appealing to the Prime Minister but he complained of SEAC's estimate of the resources needed. Churchill thought the estimates inflated, a "terrific bill." The British Chiefs of Staff objected to the strategy expressed in CULVERIN. They considered an attempt to mount it would postpone the defeat of Japan by six months. As a result of the London discussions, the AXIOM Mission was told that in Washington they could speak for British authority only to the extent that the Prime Minister and Chiefs of Staff agreed with Mountbatten's views on Burma operations. Beyond that, no decision had been reached. They were also to assure their American hosts that no British resources would be withheld from current operations in Burma to mount CULVERIN.³²

The mission's reception in Washington, March 1944, revealed the Joint Chiefs' opposition to CULVERIN. General Marshall was so impressed with Stilwell's objections to CULVERIN that, instead of just noting their outstanding points for the President's consideration, he sent in the whole paper.³³

The Joint Chiefs objected to CULVERIN because they believed that resources for it would not be available until after the defeat of Germany. Therefore, exploitation of a successful CULVERIN would not reach Singapore before the middle of 1945 at the best. This date would be eight to ten months after U.S. forces were expected to have cut the Japanese line of communications to that area. The Joint Chiefs did not believe that the establishment of Myitkyina as an air base would necessitate the recapture of all Burma. While General Wedemeyer, AXIOM's chief spokesman, agreed that taking Myitkyina would increase the Hump lift (in that it would make possible a lower, wider air route to China), he added that the operation was too risky. As to north Burma opera-

³¹ (1) Mountbatten Report, Pt. B, par. 97. (2) SAC's Personal Diary, 7 Mar 44. SEAC War Diary.

³² Rpt of AXIOM Mission, 3 Apr 44. SEAC War Diary.

³³ Memo, Marshall for Leahy, 20 Feb 44. Item 251, Bk 15, OPD Exec 9.

tions in general, Wedemeyer stated: "Without full Chinese help it was impossible to deny Upper Burma to the enemy, though one of the subordinate commanders in the area did consider that it would be possible to reach the Myitkyina area. The Supreme Commander and his staff, however, believed this to be very problematical, and even if accomplished, would not result in the necessary degree of control of Upper Burma. . . ."

At the end of the SEAC mission's visit to Washington, the Joint Chiefs presented a memorandum to the Combined Chiefs of Staff stating they were now more firm than ever in their belief that the greatest contribution SEAC could make would be to provide timely support to a cross-Pacific advance to the China-Formosa-Luzon triangle, and that Mountbatten's greatest accomplishment would be to secure Myitkyina and build up an immediate increase in Hump traffic to China. They believed that successes in the Arakan and Hukawng areas, plus improvement in the Assam line of communications, indicated that difficulties previously emphasized in Burma operations might have been considerably overestimated.³⁴

A major change in Japanese naval dispositions supplied the final argument against CULVERIN. In February 1944, the Japanese moved the bulk of their fleet from Truk to Singapore. From Singapore it could quickly counter any attempted amphibious attack on Sumatra, and the Japanese now had the strength at Singapore to make their countermove a success.³⁵

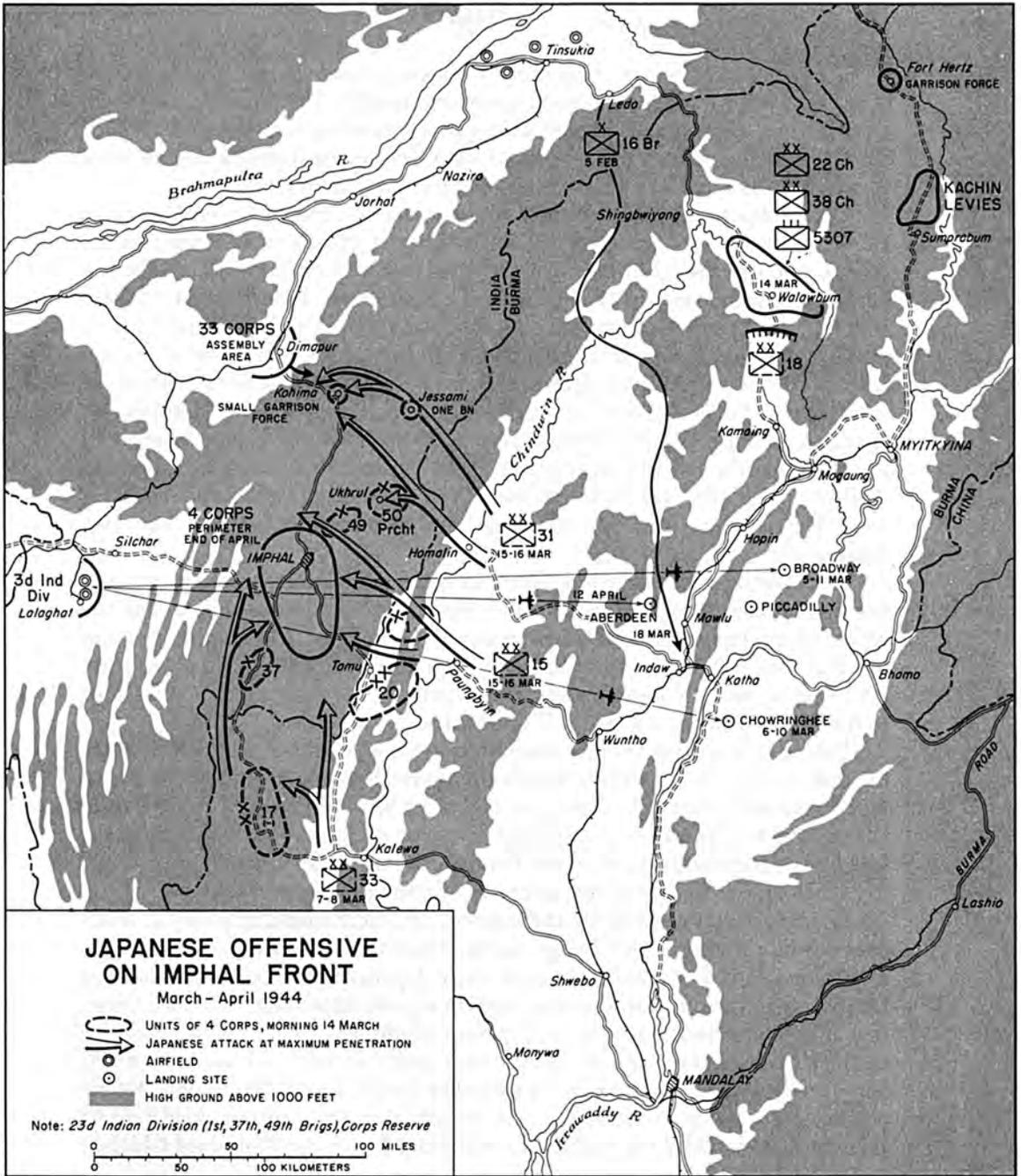
The Japanese Attack Forces Hump Diversions

The Japanese attack on Imphal had been anticipated, and Slim's plans had been long ready. His intention was that 4 Corps should retire before the Japanese attack, persuading the Japanese that 4 Corps was in retreat. The Japanese would follow over the wild country between the Chindwin River and the Imphal plain. There, at Imphal, 4 Corps would turn on the Japanese. Heavy reinforcements would be flown in from the Arakan directly to Imphal, while a fresh British corps, concentrating around Dimapur, would fall with smashing weight on the Japanese flanks and rear. The plan assumed but one Japanese regiment would attack Kohima, a town near the Bengal and Assam Railway.³⁶ (*Map 10*)

³⁴ (1) Mountbatten's understanding of why the JCS wanted Myitkyina taken is given as: "They had come to the conclusion that the air effort from China could best be supported by establishing air bases and a large staging area at Myitkyina, and by pushing ahead with opening the land route into China as fast as possible." Mountbatten Report, Pt. B, par. 135. (2) Wedemeyer's quotation from Supplementary Min, JCS 154th Mtg, 21 Mar 44, Item 1. (3) CCS 148th Mtg, 3 Mar 44, Item 1. (4) JCS 774, 16 Mar 44, sub: Strategy in SEAC. (5) CCS 452/10, 21 Mar 44, sub: Strategy in SEAC.

³⁵ (1) Mountbatten Report, Pt. B, par. 277. (2) Churchill, *Closing the Ring*, p. 575.

³⁶ (1) Ltrs, Col Clarence W. Bennett, Ln O, 4 Corps, to CG, 5303d Area Comd, 20 Mar, 4 Apr 44. NCAC Files, KCRC. (2) Mountbatten Report, Pt. B, par. 95.



MAP 10

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The Japanese offensive began on 8 March, a week earlier than had been expected, and moved with stunning speed and weight. The Japanese used three of their own divisions plus some units (later formed as a division) organized among Indian prisoners of war. Four days before the Japanese began their attack, Mountbatten had ordered the Manipur front reinforced.

On 14 March, Mountbatten was told that the 5th Indian Division had not yet begun its move to reinforce 4 Corps at Imphal. He also concluded that the Japanese attack, though it had been expected, was proceeding with a vigor and a momentum thoroughly disturbing to the Fourteenth Army staff. He and his staff had not been aware that the situation was thought to be deteriorating so rapidly. Mountbatten believed that responsibility for the nonarrival of the 5th Indian Division and for the failure to keep him informed of the situation lay with General Giffard, and so informed him. In criticizing Giffard, Mountbatten (perhaps because of his recent accident in north Burma) may have been unaware that the 5th Indian Division had been launched on an attack on the Arakan on 6 March and could not have been disengaged earlier than in fact it was. The incident had its effect on the relationship between the two commanders.

Mountbatten personally intervened to speed the reinforcement process, and the 161st Indian Brigade was rushed forward. It arrived just in time to find the whole of the Japanese *31st Division* moving on Kohima. This Japanese action was a serious affair, for near at hand, though a stretch of very difficult country lay between, was the Bengal and Assam Railway, the line of communications to the Hump airfields and Stilwell's campaign.³⁷

This in turn created another complication for Mountbatten and for Stilwell, because in order to fly reinforcements up to save Kohima Mountbatten had to divert transports from the Hump, as earlier he had been obliged to do during the peak of the Arakan fighting. This diversion of transports, which were the sole line of communications of the Fourteenth Air Force, was a serious matter for CBI Theater headquarters. Patently, if enough transports were diverted, Chennault's position would be endangered, and there would be political repercussions all the way from Chungking to Washington. Stilwell's deputy, General Sultan, asked Mountbatten how three Japanese divisions could menace Imphal when three Indian divisions had thought it impossible to advance from that area. The answer was that the Japanese would take chances such as had led to their recent setback in the Arakan, that they normally did not need much supply and were entering an area where they could live off the country. Relaying this explanation to Stilwell, Sultan warned that Mountbatten would divert ATC aircraft and place the burden of overruling him on the Combined Chiefs.³⁸

³⁷ (1) Rad SEACOS 112, DIAL 46, Mountbatten to COS and JSM, 15 Mar 44; Minute SC/486/G, SAC for Giffard, 16 Mar 44; Minute SC4/440/W, SAC for Wedemeyer, 16 Mar 44. SEAC War Diary. (2) Ltr, Mountbatten to Dill, 26 Jun 44. Item 70, Folder 57, OPD Exec 10. (3) British Comments, Serial 67.

³⁸ Rad RE 464, Sultan to Stilwell, 15 Mar 44. Item 70, Bk 6A, JWS Personal File.

Mountbatten did order the equivalent of thirty C-47's off the Hump, and the Joint Chiefs at the urgent request of the British agreed to a temporary diversion to fly in reinforcements.³⁹ These transports were a palliative, and on 25 March Mountbatten wanted to take seventy more C-47's from the Hump. The original diversion was being used to fly the 5th Indian Division from the Arakan to Imphal, to be followed by the 7th Indian Division. The request for seventy more, made as it was five days before the Japanese cut the Imphal-Kohima Road, suggested acceptance of Japanese ability to surround the 5th, 17th, 20th, and 23d Indian Divisions on the Imphal plain with two divisions of their own and to maintain themselves in that position long enough to exhaust 4 Corps' accumulation of stores and force 4 Corps to go on air supply. Generals Sultan and Stratemyer did not face the prospect of further diversions from the Hump with equanimity, and the evident prospect that 4 Corps with 70,000 combat troops would be cut off by a force that was (mistakenly) believed to be much smaller brought increasingly severe but perhaps unjustified criticism of 4 Corps conduct of operations. Actually, the Japanese exhibited their customary willingness to take chances with logistics by building up the two divisions that fought at Imphal to 53,000—40,000 Japanese, the rest Burmese laborers who freed the Japanese to fight.⁴⁰ The outcome was that an Army Air Forces troop carrier group of sixty-four C-47's was supplied on one month's loan from the Mediterranean area as well as an RAF transport squadron of fifteen aircraft more.⁴¹ This ultimately permitted return of the twenty C-46 aircraft diverted from the Hump, when Stratemyer found they were not being fully utilized.⁴²

Inkangabtaung: An Attempt That Failed

Meanwhile, far to the north of Imphal, Stilwell in the Hukawng Valley was resolved to try another envelopment of the *18th Division*. He was willing to accept less than a complete encirclement, for he seems to have contemplated putting such pressure on Tanaka's line of communications that the Japanese would be obliged to fall back. Merrill and his staff were ordered to make a plan to put a roadblock behind the *18th*. The orders to Merrill from Chih Hui Pu

³⁹ (1) Operational Dir 8, Mountbatten to Peirse and Stilwell, 16 Mar 44. Item 285, Bk 3, JWS Personal File. (2) Min, SAC's 73d Mtg, 17 Mar 44. SEAC War Diary.

⁴⁰ (1) CM-IN 18058, Sultan to Arnold, 25 Mar 44. (2) COS (W) 1237, 26 Mar 44. SEAC War Diary, 26, 27 Mar 44. (3) CM-OUT 14633, Arnold to Spaatz for Portal, 26 Mar 44. (4) Folder, Wedemeyer-Mountbatten, 3 Sep 43-14 Apr 44, OPD Exec 10. According to U.S. calculation, the British disposed of 219 transports in India and the Middle East; these appeared a better source than the Hump with all the consequences implied as to Fourteenth Air Force operations. (5) Estimated division strengths with attachments: *15th Division*—23,400; *31st Division*—34,000; *33d Division*—30,000; service troops—52,000. Of these, the *15th* and *33d* were at Imphal, the *31st* at Kohima. Japanese Officers' Comments, 1951 and 1955.

⁴¹ Mountbatten Report, Pt. B, par. 140.

⁴² Rad ACC 876, Peirse to Mountbatten, 19 Apr 44; Rad SEAC 284, Mountbatten to Peirse and Stratemyer. SEAC War Diary.

prescribed a shallow envelopment, and also provided that as at Walawbum the GALAHAD force would be supported by a Chinese regiment that would not be under Merrill's command.⁴³

Merrill and Sun, personal friends as well as colleagues, discussed these plans and concluded they had the same weakness which in their opinion had caused difficulties at Walawbum, that is, that the Chinese and American units which were to work in the same area were under separate command. Some years later, Merrill remembered Sun's offering to let Merrill have operational control of any units of the 38th Division that Chih Hui Pu might designate for the operation, so as to make effective co-operation possible. Colonel Hunter was sent to Stilwell's headquarters to present Merrill's and Sun's recommendations, which were to send Merrill's entire force, plus reinforcements from Sun, in a wide sweep to set up one block near Shaduzup. Merrill felt that a wider envelopment would have less chance of being detected.⁴⁴ Meanwhile, the 22d Division and the tanks would drive down the Kamaing Road from the north.

Hunter's embassy had only limited success. At the suggestion of his staff, Stilwell approved a wider envelopment, but at the cost of splitting the enveloping force. The orders as finally put out called for the 1st Battalion of the 5307th, followed at a day's interval by a regiment of the 38th Division, to make a shallow envelopment and block the Kamaing Road south of the pass through the Jambu Bum ridge line. The 2d and 3d Battalions, 5307th, followed by another Chinese regiment, would make a wide swing to the east, then turn back west and cut the Kamaing Road several miles south of the block that would result from the shallow envelopment.⁴⁵

In proffering their suggestions, GALAHAD's staff had been unaware that their march could be screened by Kachin irregulars raised by the Office of Strategic Services and commanded in the lower Hukawng area by 1st Lt. James L. Tilly, and that Lieutenant Tilly had most detailed and accurate information of the whereabouts of the Japanese. Because of extremely faulty co-ordination and what might be termed a hoarding of information GALAHAD's staff were actually unaware that Tilly's force existed. After the war, Merrill believed such data might have permitted Hunter to offer conclusive arguments for the GALAHAD proposals.⁴⁶

Possibly because of concern over the Japanese offensive in the Arakan, the Generalissimo attempted to slow Stilwell's advance.

1. It is believed that you have received my radio to you dated February 23rd.
2. You are requested to report the operational plans of New 1st Army in advance.
3. In view of the operations of British forces and the preparations of our forces, the New 1st Army should not advance until there are advances in Arakan by the British forces. Before

⁴³ (1) Ltr, Merrill to Ward, 26 May 52. OCMH. (2) Stilwell Diary, 21 Mar 44.

⁴⁴ Merrill Notes.

⁴⁵ NCAC History, I, 77.

⁴⁶ (1) Merrill Notes. (2) Interv with Tilly, 9 Jun 50. OCMH. (3) GALAHAD, pp. 49-54. (4) FO 11, Hq Chih Hui Pu, 8 Mar 44. NCAC Files, KCRC.



TROOPS OF MERRILL'S MARAUDERS *rest on a mountain trail.*

any advances are made by the friend [sic] forces, our army should stop at the present positions, so that we will not be attacked individually.

4. Please send a reply on the above mentioned two points.⁴⁷

The language was conditional, and Stilwell seemingly resolved to make no immediate reply but take the matter up on his next trip to Chungking.

Stilwell did ask Marshall to have some pressure put on the Generalissimo to attack across the Salween into Burma. The Chief of Staff was told that it was time the Y-Force attacked, that if just Teng-chung and Lung-ling were taken the effort would be worth while. "Just this once can't we get some pressure on him?" In view of the performance to date by 4 Corps Stilwell did not think it would be safe for him to go below Kamaing. Stilwell hoped that by attacking, the Generalissimo might lessen the pressure on Slim and himself. Mountbatten agreed, and asked his superiors to make such a suggestion to the Chinese "with great urgency."⁴⁸

Stilwell also wanted another Chinese division flown to Burma. Mountbatten

⁴⁷ Memo, Generalissimo for Stilwell, 6 Mar 44. Item 278, Bk 3, JWS Personal File.

⁴⁸ (1) Rad MS 18, Stilwell to Marshall, 16 Mar 44. Item 72, Bk 6A, JWS Personal File. (2) Rads, SEACOS 116, DIAI 52, 17 Mar 44. SEAC War Diary.

strongly supported Stilwell's request for it, and also his desire for another American long-range penetration group. SEAC's commander asked that the President and Prime Minister approach the Generalissimo for another Chinese division.⁴⁹

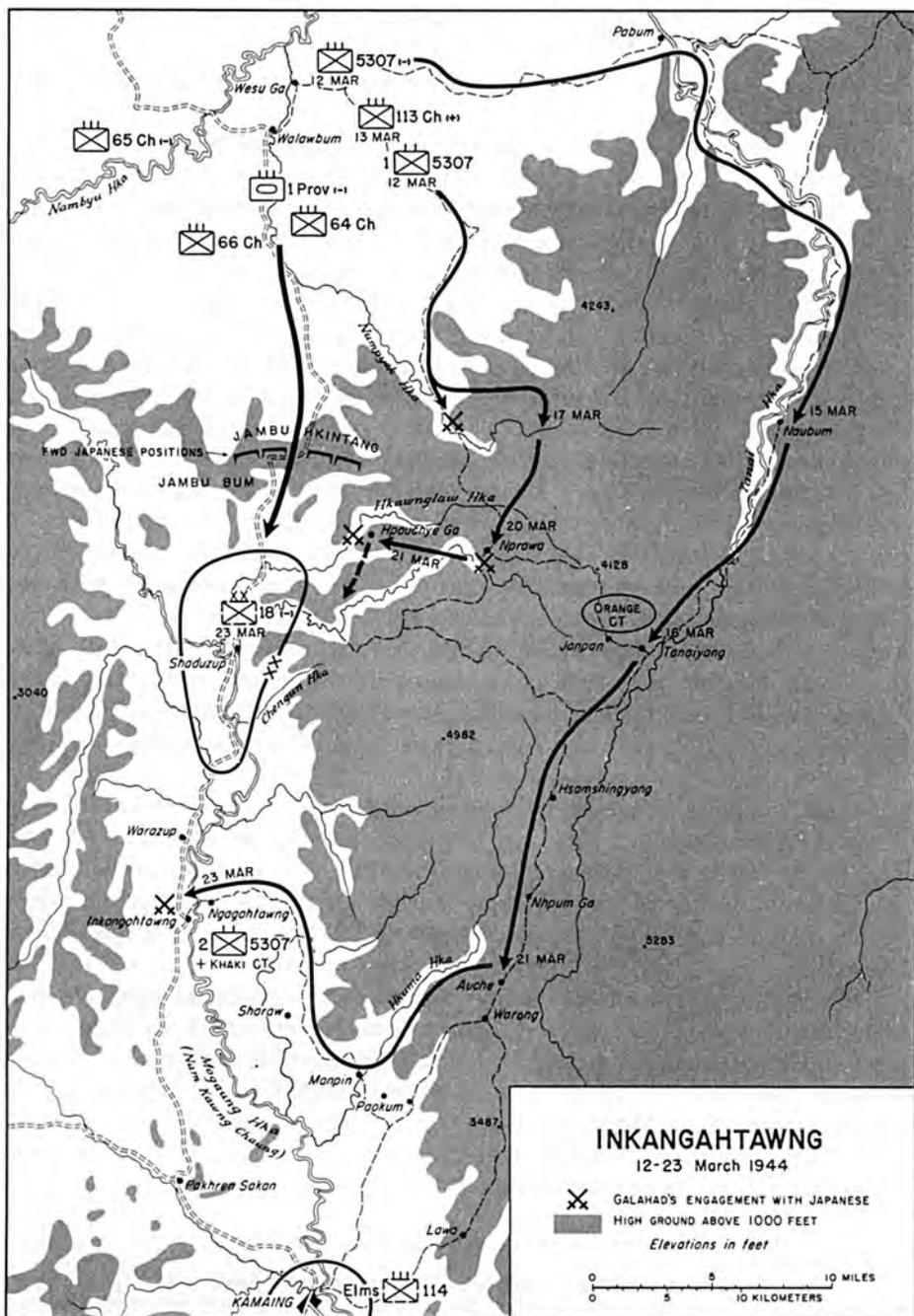
As for the Japanese in north Burma, thanks to the professional skill of General Tanaka, the foresight of his engineer, Colonel Fukayama, and the fighting qualities of their men, the *18th Division* had got away to fight another day. In doing so, they had yielded a considerable stretch of north Burma to Stilwell, and with every successful withdrawal they backed closer and closer to the Irrawaddy valley and Myitkyina. Once in the Irrawaddy valley, Stilwell would be in a position to advance down the railroad and place himself behind the Japanese *15th Army* in its drive on Imphal. Consequently, Tanaka had orders to hold the Kamaing area at all costs, which in the Japanese service meant just that. So the time was coming when Tanaka would have to stand and fight it out.⁵⁰

The terrain in which the operation would take place was the most difficult that had yet been encountered. So far the fighting had been in the narrow valley. Now, in order to make the wide swing, Merrill's force would have to climb out of the valley into the hill mass on the eastern side. The hills defy any brief description, for the rains have carved a drainage pattern as complex as can be imagined. The result is a jumbled collection of hills most difficult to cross in any direction. Only one feature offered what might be taken as an avenue of approach, the incredibly narrow and steep little valley cut by the Tanai. In the area near the Jambu Bum the Tanai flows from south to north, and over the centuries has cut a narrow gash in the hills about fifteen miles to the east of the Hukawng and Mogaung valleys and roughly parallel. (*Map 11*)

The first day's march of Hunter's two-battalion force went well, though frequent rains provided an obstacle and hinted at an early monsoon. A day of rest was taken on 18 March, and at dusk an added mission was received from Stilwell, to block from the south the approaches to the Tanai valley. General Merrill complied the following day by ordering the 2d Battalion plus Khaki Combat Team of the 3d Battalion to move south through the hills on the Warong trail, reconnoiter the trails toward the important Japanese base of Kamaing, and block the Kamaing Road in the general vicinity of Inkangah-tawng, while Orange Combat Team of the 3d Battalion stayed near Janpan in the hills and patrolled to the north, south, and west. So sited, Orange Combat Team could block the Tanai and still be ready to support the rest of the force on the road. The 5307th stayed at Janpan the night of 20 March, received an air drop the next day, and held a medical clinic for the Kachins of that vicinity. A regular feature of the campaign, these clinics did much to build and hold

⁴⁹ Rad SEACOS 118, 17 Mar 44. Folder, Wedemeyer-Mountbatten, OPD Exec 10.

⁵⁰ (1) Tanaka Interrog. OCMH. (2) Tanaka Narrative, p. 4.



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MAP 11

the good will of the Kachins, on whom the Americans relied heavily for early warning of the Japanese.⁵¹

On the afternoon of the 21st Hunter and his task force resumed the march to Inkangahtawng and the Kamaing Road, with all concerned in the operation, from Stilwell down, highly confident. Two days later Hunter was in position and decided to put two blocks across the road and patrol to the north. About this time, just when he was ready to profit by his march, Hunter learned that the 1st Battalion of the 5307th and its Chinese support, which were to make the shallow envelopment, had been seriously delayed.⁵² He thought it too late to change plans and went ahead. Between 20 and 24 March Hunter, the force commander around Inkangahtawng, would have liked to strike directly for Kamaing itself with at least three combat teams. His force was at one time only about five miles from Kamaing, he had received an air drop, and what he learned of Japanese troop movements only confirmed his feeling that Kamaing was wide open. But holding it was problematical to Hunter, for with the other officers of GALAHAD he believed that the Chinese division commanders, though formally under Stilwell, were in constant communication with the Generalissimo, and that the latter had to approve every order of Stilwell's before the Chinese would execute it.⁵³ From this circumstance, in Hunter's opinion, stemmed what he regarded as a lack of aggressiveness on the part of the Chinese, which would make them shy away. However, Hunter placed the attack on Kamaing before Merrill who replied that Stilwell would not approve it.⁵⁴

Merrill's unwillingness to approve such a project seems related to the conclusion he was gradually forming, that with the 22d Division's attack progressing so slowly there was a real possibility all three battalions of GALAHAD might be immobilized around Inkangahtawng and take heavy losses while accomplishing little that was commensurate.⁵⁵ These views he placed before Stilwell.

Meanwhile, on the scene of action, American patrols encountered the Japanese on 23 March and reported about a company entrenched at Inkangahtawng. The 2d Battalion went forward as far as possible in face of increasing resistance to block the Kamaing Road while Orange Combat Team stayed on the east bank of the Mogaung to protect the rear. Shortly after dawn on 24 March, two reinforced platoons sent to envelop Inkangahtawng found it too strongly held and had to withdraw.

⁵¹ (1) GALAHAD, pp. 49-54. (2) Interv with Tilly, 9 Jan 50. OCMH.

⁵² GALAHAD, p. 54, 55.

⁵³ Hunter Notes. Hunter actually wrote "Boatner" rather than Stilwell but Boatner had been several months in Washington, and as of late March was just returning to his post in north Burma. It seems safe to say Stilwell. Later in the campaign, the issue of whether the Generalissimo, despite his giving Stilwell command, was interfering in the conduct of operations became a major one and it will be discussed below.

⁵⁴ Hunter Notes.

⁵⁵ (1) Merrill Notes. (2) Stilwell Diary, 24, 25 Mar 44.

The Japanese reaction to this attempt to block the road, beginning 24 March, was vigorous, and one Japanese counterattack followed on another. These Japanese were a hastily assembled force drawn from a battalion gun platoon, an engineer company, a medical company, and division headquarters; they were given two 75-mm. guns, placed under command of the *18th Division's* senior adjutant, and rushed south to Inkangahtawng. Within the U.S. lines Japanese trucks could be heard, presumably with reinforcements; and ammunition was running low in the 2d Battalion. At this point, Merrill radioed Hunter information coming from a captured Japanese map, that two Japanese battalions were moving to outflank him. The message was heard by McGee, commanding the 2d Battalion, but not by Hunter. Weighing it, McGee decided to pull out. He could not tell Hunter because the terrain masked his radio. Late on the 24th McGee moved to the Manpin area.⁵⁶

After the 2d Battalion had withdrawn across the river through Khaki Combat Team, Hunter's men moved to Ngagahtawng and bivouacked there, in the area protected by trail blocks and booby traps.⁵⁷ While the GALAHAD combat teams were pulling back off the road to less exposed positions, Merrill received word from Stilwell "leaving him discretion but telling him to hold back if possible."⁵⁸ On the afternoon of 26 March Hunter was told that an estimated three Japanese battalions were moving north from Kamaing. He called for air interception which hit the Japanese forces at 1730, five to eight miles away from McGee's force at Manpin. This enemy force was the regimental headquarters and one battalion of the *114th Regiment*, organized as two understrength battalions of about 800 men with four infantry guns, under Col. Fusayasu Maruyama.⁵⁹ His mission was to protect General Tanaka's right flank.

On the 26th Merrill reported to Stilwell and his staff that GALAHAD had been withdrawn from the road, Merrill thus having exercised the option Stilwell gave him the day before. All morning long Stilwell's headquarters had been seeking a way to give timely help but now that GALAHAD was withdrawn Stilwell considered that his presence at the front was no longer required and that he was free to visit the Generalissimo in China. He flew there on 27 March.⁶⁰

Back at Stilwell's headquarters, a captured Japanese sketch suggested that a reinforced Japanese battalion was moving north in the Tanai valley to attack the flank of the Chinese driving toward Shaduzup. His staff were seriously concerned and ordered General Merrill to block this thrust, stopping any move

⁵⁶ (1) Memo, Hunter for Greenfield, 11 May 45, sub: Comments on "Merrill's Marauders." OCMH. (2) Notes by McGee on draft MS. OCMH. (3) Tanaka, Japanese Comments, Sec. II. (4) The Japanese initially reported at Inkangahtawng are described by the Japanese as some soldiers passing accidentally. Japanese Officers' Comments, p. 15.

⁵⁷ GALAHAD, pp. 55-59.

⁵⁸ (1) Stilwell Diary, 25 Mar 44. (2) Merrill Notes.

⁵⁹ (1) Maruyama Interrog. OCMH. (2) Tanaka, Japanese Comments, Sec. II. This left but one battalion at Myitkyina.

⁶⁰ (1) Stilwell Diary, 26, 27 Mar 44. (2) See Ch. VIII, below.

north of Nhpum Ga, for there was a good trail through Nhpum Ga and Janpan to Shaduzup. This use of the 5307th in a static defensive role was a radical change in the concept of its employment.

With the Japanese moving north from Kamaing, there was the possibility that they might thrust themselves between GALAHAD and Nhpum Ga. Orange Combat Team, of the 3d Battalion, under Colonel Beach, was the logical protection, as it was nearest the Kamaing Road. Therefore Beach was ordered to guard the south flank, which he did with two platoons.⁶¹ McGee, with the 2d Battalion and the remainder of the 3d, moved off from Manpin on the afternoon of the 26th. McGee set a stiff pace, and kept his men marching until long after darkness had fallen. Next dawn they were up and on their way again. So quickly and easily described in print, these marches in north Burma were in reality exhausting struggles against every variety of obstacle. Staggering up stream beds, clawing their way between jungle growths, clinging to hillsides, their only respite a few hours on the sodden ground, their food a little K ration gulped on the march—the infantry endured a continuous ordeal that language is really inadequate to describe.⁶²

A trail runs from Manpin to Auche, passing through Warong and Paokum in an arc bulging to the south. From Warong and Paokum two trails lead south; they would be logical avenues of approach. Another trail from Manpin to Auche forms the chord of the arc, and by using it and putting a platoon at Warong and Paokum respectively, the two battalions would have their southern flank well protected as they moved across the Japanese line of advance. At noon, 25 March, 1st Lt. Logan E. Weston and his I & R Platoon were ordered to Paokum. Lieutenant Weston arrived late that afternoon, set up his roadblock, and later was joined by a rifle platoon. From Paokum to Warong to Auche, Weston, 2d Lt. Warren R. Smith, and their two platoons delayed the Japanese on 26, 27, and 28 March, suffering no losses. Covered by Weston's and Smith's skillful and well-fought action, the main body arrived at Auche on the 27th and left the next morning.⁶³

Later, enemy shellfire began and enemy infantry attacked soon after from the south. Lieutenant Weston was ordered to fight another delaying action up the trail to Nhpum Ga to give the 2d and 3d Battalions time to organize their defenses. Shells also fell as the 2d Battalion headquarters and Green Combat Team were leaving Auche, the 3d Battalion having gone on ahead. The trail ran along a ridge, making it impossible to take cover or disperse, and during a brief panic men cast away equipment. One American was killed and perhaps five were wounded.⁶⁴ The battalion collected itself and, despite the shaking-up taken on the trail, quickly set up its perimeter on the hilltop at Nhpum Ga.

⁶¹ GALAHAD, pp. 58, 59.

⁶² Hunter Notes.

⁶³ Ltr, Weston to Col John M. Kemper, Chief, Hist Div SSUSA, 22 Jan 45. OCMH.

⁶⁴ (1) GALAHAD, p. 62. (2) Capt. J. E. T. Hopkins, Medical Study of the 5307th Composite Unit, MS. OCMH.

General Merrill's decision was to split his force. He did not want to disperse his force strength in that fashion any more than he had wanted to concur with the original order to put two blocks across the Kamaing Road, but in this case he felt the terrain forced dispersion on him. The 2d Battalion was put on the hilltop at Nhpum Ga; and the 3d Battalion, three miles north at Hsamshingyang to protect the airstrip there. Merrill had one hundred wounded who had to be flown out, and Nhpum Ga commanded the airstrip, so it had to be held. Both battalions were to patrol to keep the Japanese from bypassing on the trail along the Tanai Hka.⁶⁵

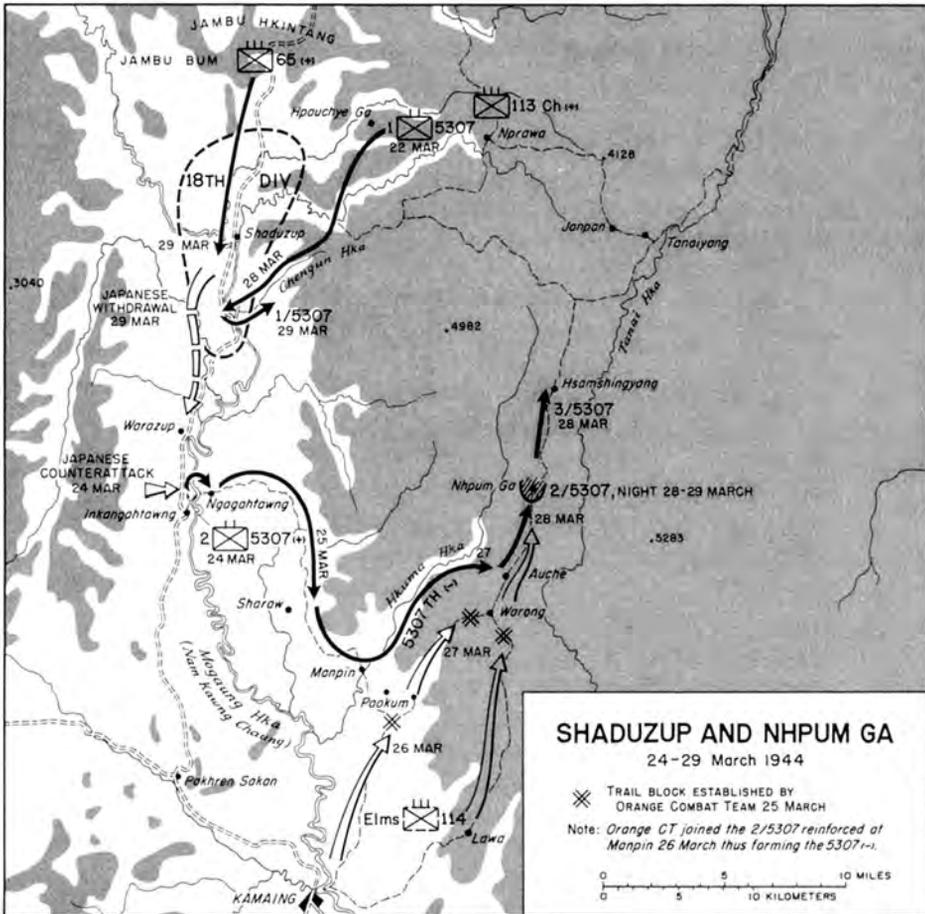
The Japanese Delay the 1st Battalion, 5307th

From bivouac areas in the hills northeast of Shaduzup, on the Kamaing Road, the 1st Battalion of the 5307th, followed by the 113th Regiment, moved out on the morning of 13 March to put the northern clamp across the Kamaing Road just south of the Jambu Bum, in the vicinity of Shaduzup. (*Map 11 and 12*) The I & R Platoon followed some fresh footprints into an enemy bivouac and stirred up a hornet's nest of Japanese. There was brisk skirmishing, and though the Americans managed to cross the Numpyek Hka just beyond, the Japanese had been alerted and proceeded to delay them expertly. Colonel Osborne, commander of the 1st Battalion, decided to cut a fresh trail around the Japanese. This was painfully slow business, and waiting for an airdrop took another day. On 22 March, when Colonel Hunter to the south was one day's march from his goal, aggressive patrolling by Red Combat Team revealed that the Japanese had blocked every trail in the area through which Osborne had to pass, so again Osborne elected to make his own trail, this time over ground so rough that the mules had to be unloaded. The maneuver succeeded, and no Japanese were seen on 23 or 24 March. Osborne's march would have been greatly aided had he known Tilly's Kachin Rangers were in the same general area.

The 1st Battalion's arduous march had placed it close to the Chengun Hka, a stream which runs approximately southwest into the Nam Kawng Chaung, along whose banks the Kamaing Road runs, south of Shaduzup. Osborne elected to follow the Chengun to its confluence with the Nam Kawng and place his block across the Kamaing Road, where the *chaung* makes a U bend to the north a few miles south of Shaduzup.

While the 1st Battalion and the Chinese bivouacked on the banks of the Chengun, the I & R Platoon of White Combat Team explored the area where Osborne planned to place the block. There they found two Japanese camps comfortably placed between the river and the road. There were many Japanese at hand, grenading fish, bathing, or loafing under the trees. *Bashas* filled with supplies suggested the establishment was an advance supply depot. Fully in-

⁶⁵ Interv with Merrill, 26 Apr 48. OCMH.



MAP 12

formed by the I & R Platoon's skillful patrolling, Osborne decided to make a surprise attack, sweep the Japanese from the immediate area, and set up his block across the road.

The GALAHAD battalion and the Chinese 113th Regiment made their way down the Chengun Hka on the 27th. Chinese march discipline was not perfect, but on the other hand Japanese security measures were nonexistent. During the night of 27-28 March the Allied force established itself along the Nam Kawng Chaung. At 0300 White Combat Team slipped across the river onto the west or Japanese side and crept up within easy reach of the camp. Lying on their arms, the men waited for first light and the signal to attack. As the Japanese began to build their cooking fires the attack order was given.

Surprise was complete and overwhelming. With fixed bayonets the combat

teams swept through the camp. The Japanese scattered in confusion, and the area was quickly overrun. Thrusting beyond the camp site, the 1st Battalion set up its roadblock, and consolidated its position. The process of consolidation yielded some dividends of practical value—Japanese rations and equipment.⁶⁶

The subsequent reaction of the Japanese was much like that at Walawbum. They could not risk the blocking of their line of communications while they were heavily engaged with the 22d Division some four or five miles to the north. The 1st Battalion did not budge, but the Japanese were primarily interested in bypassing it to the west and in extricating themselves from between GALAHAD and the 22d Division. Later in the day on the 28th, the Americans were relieved by the 113th Regiment, which in turn established contact with the 22d Division about 30 March.⁶⁷

After its relief the 1st Battalion rested two days, then retraced its route, for it was under orders to rejoin the other two battalions which were thought to be near Hsamshingyang. Late on 30 March radio orders to proceed to Janpan by easy stages were received. The way was rough and the march was very slow. Then on 1 April the radio was damaged and Colonel Osborne, worried by being out of touch with headquarters, went to Shaduzup and there learned that he was to go as quickly as possible to Hsamshingyang. On the 6th word came that his help was badly needed. He and his men marched five and one half miles that day and night under the worst conditions so far encountered, and reached Hsamshingyang at 1700 on Good Friday, 7 April.⁶⁸

Delay at Jambu Bum

While the GALAHAD battalions and the Chinese 113th Regiment had been trying, with varying success, to set up their roadblocks across the Kamaing Road and behind the Japanese positions, the 22d Division and the 1st Provisional Tank Group were attacking the 18th Division from the front. The 66th Regiment was operating to the west of the Kamaing Road, the 64th Regiment, to the east, the 65th (—) was in division reserve. Directly before the 22d Division was the Jambu Bum, which is about two miles in depth; Shaduzup is five or six miles south of it. To the north of the ridge line is an area of paddy fields; to the south the road goes through the thick brush and tall trees of the north Burma countryside. A third of the way down the reverse slope is the rather considerable obstacle of the Hkawnglaw Hka.

On 15 March the tanks and the two regiments were about three miles north of the ridge line. The 1st and 2d Battalions of the 64th were sent wide round

⁶⁶ GALAHAD, pp. 39–44.

⁶⁷ (1) GALAHAD, pp. 45–47. (2) NCAC History, II, 140. (3) Ltr, Col Van Natta to Ward, 16 Jul 51. OCMH. (4) Notes by Van Natta on draft MS. (Hereafter, Van Natta Notes.) OCMH.

⁶⁸ GALAHAD, pp. 48–49.



DAMAGED M3A3 TANKS *south of Jambu Bum.*

the left flank. The march was opposed and at one time the lead battalion was partly encircled and had to be extricated by a counterattack. Progress of the frontal attack was very slow. It was difficult to co-ordinate infantry and tank action, because the tankers found it hard to distinguish their countrymen from the Japanese. A few such cases of mistaken identity and the 22d's men were understandably reluctant to get too close to the tanks. Two days and a sharp fight in an open paddy field just north of the crest were needed to reach the north slope and crest.

Once over it, the 22d found the road down to be mined and blocked with fallen trees. Two days were lost in clearing the road, and then three battalions made a frontal attack, guiding on the road. Next day they tried a co-ordinated tank-infantry attack and the leading tank platoon reached the Hkawnglaw Hka about four miles south of Jambu Bum, destroying a few machine guns and taking four antitank pieces. But the infantry would not follow the tanks and dug in two miles short of the stream. The tanks patrolled till dark, then fell back to their own lines.⁶⁹

It was the 2/66th's turn to lead on 21 March. Again the tanks got well ahead of the infantry. A combination of ambush and counterattack by the Jap-

⁶⁹ G-3 Per Rpts, Hq Chih Hui Pu, 22, 28 Mar 44. NCAC Files, KCRC.

anese cost five tanks, and then the Japanese came on up the road, almost overrunning the battalion headquarters, which was saved by the courage of two engineer platoons that had been clearing the road.⁷⁰ That night the 1/64th, which had been making the enveloping move, came in from the east and cut the Kamaing Road, right in the segment held by the Japanese. A tank attack on the 23d found Japanese antitank guns just south of a small stream (north of the Hkawnglaw Hka) that prevented the tanks from outflanking the position. The guns knocked out the three lead tanks in quick succession, blocking the road. After heavy fighting at the stream crossing, the tanks finally had to withdraw, leaving the derelicts. In the afternoon the two flanking battalions made their way up the road and joined the 66th.

Because he did not know of all these delays, the operation seemed to Stilwell to be going very well; he believed the 1/5307th was at Shaduzup, while he knew the 2d Battalion was in place at Inkangahtawng. Unfortunately, the meeting of the 64th and 66th Regiments did not signal the end of Japanese resistance. Japanese and Chinese positions on the road were thoroughly intermingled, making movement in the immediate area extremely hazardous. An attempt to break the deadlock with the tanks failed when the device chosen to identify the Chinese infantry backfired. Both the Chinese and the Japanese waved white cloths at the tanks. The armor moved blithely on into a nest of Japanese antitank men, who destroyed five tanks with magnetic mines, effectively blocking the road. General Liao, the 22d Division's commander, now cut a bypass road for the tanks around his west (right) flank. A tank platoon tried it, could not cross a ravine improperly prepared for tank crossing, came under artillery fire, and had to be withdrawn.

The decision was now reached to bring the 65th Regiment up from reserve. With the 1/66th and the 3/64th attached, it leapfrogged the 64th and 66th Regiments on 26 March and attacked. The Japanese held stoutly, counterattacking five times on 28 March. With the cutting of the Kamaing Road below Shaduzup by the 1/5307th and the Chinese 113th Regiment, Japanese resistance softened, and on the 29th the 2/65th entered Shaduzup. In retrospect the Chih Hui Pu staff considered, and their judgment seems correct, that their plan to establish and exploit the two roadblocks had been thrown out of joint by two of the Japanese reactions, the stubborn defense north of Shaduzup (whereas it had been thought that the Japanese would conserve their strength), and the flanking move up the Tanai valley. There was a third factor, not mentioned by Chih Hui Pu, but a sore affliction at the time—unseasonable and heavy rains.⁷¹ Looking toward the future, Stilwell, who was highly pleased by the

⁷⁰ (1) Unidentified overlay. Folder, X-RAY Force, NCAC Files, KCRC. (2) NCAC History, Vol. II.

⁷¹ (1) NCAC History, II, 131–40, and Stilwell Sketches H to K in Vols. I, II. (2) History of 1st Prov Tank Gp. OCMH. (3) G-3 Per Rpts, Hq Chih Hui Pu, 5 Apr 44. NCAC Files, KCRC. (4) Stilwell Diary, Mar 44. (5) Brown Notes.

work of the OSS's Kachin Rangers, ordered recruiting and training a force of 10,000 guerrillas.⁷²

By 15 April 1944 the cost to the Chinese of the North Burma Campaign was: 22d Division, 800 men killed, 2,000 men wounded; 38th Division, 650 men killed, 1,450 men wounded.⁷³

The Siege of Nhpum Ga

As previously noted, the tangled jumble of hills that forms the eastern boundary of the Hukawng and Mogaung valleys is cut from south to north by the deep, narrow valley of the Tanai Hka. If the Japanese made use of this valley for a counterstroke, it could lead them around Stilwell's left (eastern) flank and into his rear areas. The Japanese force from Kamaing, which had compelled the 2d and 3d Battalions of GALAHAD to yield their roadblock at Inkangahtawng, was in a position to launch such a move. Consequently, when a captured Japanese sketch had indicated that a reinforced Japanese battalion was moving north in the Tanai valley to attack the flank of the Chinese forces in the Hukawng Valley, Chih Hui Pu had been seriously concerned, and had ordered the 2d and 3d Battalions to stop any Japanese movement north of Nhpum Ga. The resulting march had been made just in time, apparently, for the Japanese had followed close behind the 2d and 3d Battalions as they moved to Nhpum Ga. A well-fought delaying action had given the 2d Battalion time to set up a perimeter defense at Nhpum Ga, and the 3d Battalion to establish itself at Hsamshingyang, three miles to the north, where it protected an airstrip for evacuation and resupply.⁷⁴ Their defenses established, the men of the 2d Battalion had just time to look about their positions before the Japanese were on them.

Nhpum Ga is on a sharp, thin ridge at the northern end of a hill mass. The elevation continues for half a mile past Nhpum Ga, then slopes downhill over bamboo-covered ground to Hsamshingyang, a clearing in the jungle. To the east, the ground drops rapidly to the Tanai, falling 1,400 feet in two miles. To the west is the similar valley of the Hkuma Hka, which flows to the south. At the northeast quarter of the perimeter established by the 2d Battalion a rocky point dominates a water hole, the only local source. The initial perimeter included the water hole in an eastward-jutting salient.

Both at Walawbum and at Inkangahtawng, GALAHAD battalions had been withdrawn from the roadblocks they occupied. However pertinent the reason for these moves, they had not increased the prestige of American arms in the eyes of the Chinese, who believed American troops were leaving dangerous

⁷² NCAC History, App. 8, p. 1.

⁷³ Stilwell Diary, 6 May 44.

⁷⁴ See pp. 181-83, above.

positions that the Chinese had to take over and maintain.⁷⁵ Now, at Nhpum Ga, the Americans had orders to stand and fight it out. Tired by their constant marches, racked by dysentery and malaria, and beginning to show the effects of malnutrition, the Americans were now called on to show that they too could hold a given patch of ground.

The Japanese besiegers included Maruyama's original task force and a considerable body of reinforcements, the main force of the *1st Battalion, 55th Infantry Regiment*, which had been the *18th's* right flank guard. Maruyama's mission was not to attack the immensely superior Chinese force near Shaduzup but rather to push the Americans back as far as possible along the Kumon Range in order to protect General Tanaka's right flank.⁷⁶ In the first phase, 28-31 March, the Japanese drove the American outposts on the Auchel trail back into the Nhpum Ga perimeter on the 28th, then after a brief preparation attacked the American position from the south. The attempt failed. Harassing fire that night failed to keep the exhausted men of the 5307th awake. Another attack from the south came at 0600 on the 29th after an artillery and mortar concentration had failed, as did two later efforts in the same direction. The 3d Battalion at Hsamshingyang felt unable to help because the need to defend the airstrip was vital, but did send a platoon twice daily to keep the trail to Nhpum Ga open. On the 30th the Japanese were attacking, ominously from east and north. The trail from Nhpum Ga to Hsamshingyang was still open when the fighting died down, but next day, attacking from south, east, and northwest, the Japanese succeeded in prying the water hole from the Americans' grasp and in beating back an attempted counterattack. Moreover, the cumulative effect of losses made it impossible to hold so large a perimeter even if the hole had been retaken. That same day the patrol from Hsamshingyang found the trail blocked, and neither the patrol nor a sortie from the hilltop could restore communications. Fortunately, the trapped battalion could go on air supply.⁷⁷

Colonel Hunter now commanded at Hsamshingyang. General Merrill had long had heart trouble and now was so weak that Stilwell, learning of his condition, ordered him evacuated over his protests. Merrill was flown out on 31 March. He did not lay down his responsibilities. On arriving at Ledo, he ordered two 75-mm. howitzers sent to Hunter's 3d Battalion by airdrop, because Hunter had promptly begun to clear the trail and the forces at his disposal, Orange and Khaki Combat Teams of the 3d Battalion, needed artillery support. Attempts by Orange Combat Team on 1 April failed. On 2 April, attacking with artillery support and some men from Khaki Combat Team to make an envelopment, Hunter again made no progress. Then an attack was

⁷⁵ (1) For a sample of the Chinese reaction, see Ho, *The Big Circle*, p. 99. (2) Boatner, who at Chih Hui Pu could receive both Chinese and American points of view and had to deal with both nations, believed that these withdrawals from the roadblocks embarrassed Chih Hui Pu in dealing with the Chinese. See Boatner Notes.

⁷⁶ (1) Interrogs, Tanaka, Maruyama. OCMH. (2) Tanaka, Japanese Comments, Sec. II.

⁷⁷ (1) GALAHAD, pp. 62-70. (2) Interrogs, Tanaka, Maruyama. OCMH. (3) Tanaka Narrative.

made, with air support, by both combat teams and the garrison, but the Japanese did not budge.

The situation seemed serious. The Japanese were believed to be moving ever more troops up the Tanai and it was believed that the 1st Battalion, which had been ordered to aid, would not arrive for four more days at least. Hunter's reaction was to attack on the 4th with everyone but the sick and the mule skinnners, with his large patrols called in and Kachins used to replace them. A fake fight, using carbines (which sounded like the Arisaka rifle), was staged to deceive the Japanese, and the air support made three passes at them. The first two were genuine, the last a feint which made the Japanese take cover, only to come out and find the American infantry on them. Hunter's force gained that day and came within 1,000 yards of the besieged. About this same time Capt. John B. George and a small party, sent north by Hunter to find the Chinese regiment which Hunter understood would support him in this area, met the 1/112th at Tanaiyang, about eight miles northeast. After an interval, presumably used to obtain permission to do so, its commander moved toward Hsamshingyang. His first element arrived at the airfield on 4 April and was used to guard a trail junction. Despite this increasing pressure the Japanese made a very heavy attack on the Nhpum Ga garrison, actually reaching the foxholes at one point, and being driven out by two soldiers using hand grenades.⁷⁸

On its hilltop the garrison, though suffering no shortage of food or ammunition (aside from the monotony of diet which was itself a hardship), suffered from an acute shortage of water. There were no plaster casts for the wounded, and they took their sulfadiazine dry. The pack animals could not be protected from the Japanese fire. When dead, their carcasses could not be buried, and the stench and the carrion flies added more miseries to the battle. Sergeant Matsumoto, who had played an important part at Walawbum, was a pillar of strength to the garrison, constantly scouting between the lines, overhearing Japanese conversations, and informing Colonel McGee accordingly.⁷⁹ On one occasion, when Matsumoto learned of plans to surprise a small salient at dawn, the Americans drew back their lines, booby-trapping the abandoned foxholes. Punctually the Japanese attacked, straight into the massed fire of the waiting Americans. Throwing themselves into the foxholes for cover, they set off the booby traps. Matsumoto completed the debacle by screaming "Charge!" in

⁷⁸ (1) GALAHAD, pp. 73-80. During the last two weeks of March and the first week of April the 114th Regiment remained in reserve in the Maingkwaw-Walawbum area. The 113th was supporting the 1/5307th. The 2d and 3d Battalions of the 112th spent some time in trying to find a large group of Japanese stragglers in the Lagang Ga area, failed, returned to Lagang Ga, and at the end of the period began to move to the Anche-Warong area. Only the 1/112th, relieved by a battalion of the 30th Division and sent from Pabum down the Tanai valley, took part in the battles around the hilltop. (2) Per Rpts, Hq Chih Hui Pu, 28 Mar, 5, 11Apr 44. NCAC Files, KCRC.

⁷⁹ (1) Stone MS, p. 149. (2) Matsumoto received the Legion of Merit for his services in north Burma.

Japanese, causing a supporting platoon to throw itself on the American guns.⁸⁰

The relieving force made no gains on the 5th, but the Japanese were beginning to have their own problems. That day there were only two Japanese attacks, at 0200 and 0430, which, thanks to Matsumoto, were anticipated and stopped. Colonel Maruyama's force was finding its supply problems increasingly difficult, and Tanaka grew daily more concerned about the defenses of Myitkyina.⁸¹ On the 6th Orange Combat Team gained another 200 yards. Two key machine guns were knocked out by 2d Lt. William E. Woomer, who conducted mortar fire from twenty-five yards away. That was the story of the next two days, grinding slow advances that gradually cut the gap between the battalions, and steadily weaker Japanese attacks.

The long-awaited 1st Battalion of GALAHAD arrived at 1700 on 7 April, after an extended and exhausting march. Two hundred and fifty of its men were still capable of exertion. On the 8th and on Easter Sunday they tried to seize positions on the trails over which the Japanese moved supplies to their positions.

On the afternoon of Easter Sunday, the Japanese vanished, leaving cooking fires and equipment. There was no pursuit, for Stilwell wanted no movement beyond Nhpum Ga. The battalion of the 114th made its way to Myitkyina, where General Tanaka, anxious about the town, added it to the garrison. The attempted roadblock at Inkangahtawng, and the siege of Nhpum Ga, which followed when the Americans abandoned the block on 24 March, had cost the 5307th 59 dead and 314 wounded. A total of 379 were evacuated by air for wounds or illness. The most serious result of Nhpum Ga was the exhaustion of troops.⁸² The fighting edge of the most mobile and most obedient force that Stilwell had was worn dull. From this fact were to flow consequences of great magnitude. There was no compensating damage to the 114th, and it bore the major burden of the defense of Myitkyina.

Air Supply Problem at Imphal

The consequences of Nhpum Ga were hidden by the veil of the future; at the time, the engagement was seen from the point of view of a commander whose theater stretched from the Indian Ocean to the Yellow Sea. After checking with Col. Henry L. Kinnison of GALAHAD, Stilwell wrote in his diary: "GALAHAD is OK. Hard fight at Nhpum. Cleaned out Japs and hooked up. No worry there."⁸³ Though one of the hardest-fought American engagements in Burma, it was from the perspective of CBI Theater headquarters a battle be-

⁸⁰ (1) GALAHAD, p. 78. (2) Notes, Maj John Jones, sub: Burma—Notes on Merrill Expedition, 1944, JICA SN 8623, JICA CBI SEA, New Delhi, 27 Sep 44. OCMH.

⁸¹ (1) Maruyama and Tanaka comment on the 114th's ammunition supply problem. (2) Ltr, Merrill to Ward, 26 May 52. OCMH.

⁸² (1) GALAHAD, pp. 80–84. (2) *Merrill's Marauders*, p. 94.

⁸³ Stilwell Diary, 11 Apr 44.

tween a few battalions. Farther south, around Imphal, whole divisions were grappling for a prize that might change the course of the war in Asia, and the trend of reports from that front was far from reassuring.

As one report after another on the Japanese advance to Imphal was laid before Stilwell, he grew progressively more concerned. Allied defeat at Imphal would sweep away everything that he had won. Japanese success in the center would redeem every defeat suffered in the Arakan and in north Burma. Estimating his situation and weighing his resources, Stilwell concluded that he could offer SEAC use of the 38th Division to guard his and its line of communications and to meet a Japanese thrust across the thirty miles that separated Kohima from the Bengal and Assam Railway. At this time he had two of the 38th's regiments in reserve. To co-ordinate the defense of his line of communications he asked Admiral Mountbatten and General Slim to meet with him at Jorhat on 3 April.⁸⁴ (*See Map 10.*)

At this conference Stilwell was agreeably surprised to learn that General Slim, though worried, felt himself master of the situation around Kohima. Slim was deploying a new corps, the 33, for defense of that area. Granting that the next five to ten days would be critical, Slim wanted no help at Dimapur and favored Stilwell's going on to Mogaung and Myitkyina. So did Mountbatten, and with great relief Stilwell went back to his campaign. He did accept responsibility for local defense of the line of communications from Tinsukia to Nazira, with point defense at Jorhat. SOS personnel went through hasty training courses, while a striking force was organized. This was GASPER Force—the 89th Regiment of the Chinese 30th Division, the 2d Battalion, 1st Provisional Tank Group, and a heavy mortar battalion.⁸⁵

Soon after the Jorhat conference the Imphal operations made Mountbatten fear that expiration of the thirty-day loan period for the Mediterranean aircraft would find 4 Corps still dependent on air supply. Therefore, on 22 April he radioed General Giffard asking about a request from Generals Slim and Stratemeyer to keep the transports until 1 July. Mountbatten found it "very difficult to accept" the conclusion that land communications would not be opened before then. In reply, Giffard would not promise that communications to 4 Corps would be open even by 1 July, and warned Mountbatten that withdrawal of these aircraft on schedule would mean disaster for 4 Corps.⁸⁶ Therefore, when the promised time for their return arrived, Mountbatten was obliged to tell his superiors that SEAC had to keep the transports. The CCS acquiesced to the extent of extending the loan date to 15 June. By that time the first of a consid-

⁸⁴ (1) *The Stilwell Papers*, pp. 285–87. (2) Rad, Stilwell to AGWAR, 31 Mar 44; Rad TK 20, Stilwell to Marshall, 2 Apr 44. Items 98, 101, Bk 6A, JWS Personal File.

⁸⁵ (1) FO 12, Hq Chih Hui Pu, 5 Apr 44. (2) *The Stilwell Papers*, p. 287. (3) Secy Plans SAC (44) 160, Hq SEAC; Min, Conf at Jorhat, 3 Apr 44. SEAC War Diary. (4) Stilwell Diary, 3 Apr 44.

⁸⁶ (1) See p. 168, above. (2) Rad SAC 1779, Mountbatten to Giffard, 22 Apr 44; Rad FE/3, Giffard to Mountbatten, 23 Apr 44; Rad OPD 191, Giffard to Mountbatten, 4 May 44. SEAC War Diary.

erable reinforcement of transport aircraft was expected to be on hand, and this would permit return of the borrowed aircraft.⁸⁷

Air supply was not a sovereign remedy for the situation created by Japanese encirclement of 4 Corps because the transports could not bring in enough. Half-rations were ordered, and as operations continued week after week, "it was now [in May] calculated that if the rate of air supply could not be increased 4 Corps was likely to run out of essential supplies and certain supplies of ammunition by the first week in July."⁸⁸ The outbreak of the monsoon rains was imminent in late May, and if this forced a suspension of the airlift, 4 Corps might well be forced to attempt a difficult and hazardous withdrawal. This was deduced by the Japanese who clung desperately to their positions on the perimeter of Imphal.⁸⁹

Why 4 Corps should find itself so close to a defeat that would have incalculable effects in India and China appeared to require explanation, for Allied intelligence agencies were not aware that the Japanese had succeeded in massing 155,000 men for their attack on India, and their superiors of course were no better informed. Because of this error in intelligence, as early as 19 May SEAC was calling on Giffard to tell "why with the large number of divisions employed the fighting is characterized by company and platoon actions." Giffard replied that his first objective was killing Japanese, and that this had to be done by destroying each Japanese in his foxhole. Giffard's second objective was to break the Japanese encirclement, and his third, to guard the valuable installations on the Imphal plain. There were so many of these, Giffard explained, that by the time the security of each had been provided for, the force available for aggressive operations had been somewhat reduced.⁹⁰

The Chief of the Imperial General Staff criticized the lack of offensive action northward by 4 Corps to link with 33 Corps coming down from Dimapur.⁹¹ Sharing the general underestimation of Japanese strength, SEAC's deputy chief of staff, General Wedemeyer, commented:

With a superiority on the ground 2½ to 1 on the Arakan and Imphal fronts and with complete mastery of the air, we remain on the defensive and the enemy retains the initiative. Apparently the 4th and 15th Corps have no concrete plans for aggressive and decisive operations. The battle in those areas may be described as being fought passively on a day-to-day basis, countering enemy blows and hoping to bag many Japs in the process.⁹²

Wedemeyer believed that only air supply was preventing an ignominious de-

⁸⁷ Rad SEACOS 153, Mountbatten to JSM, and COS, 5 May 44; Min, SAC's 95th Mtg, 8 May 44; Rad SEACOS 162, Mountbatten to JSM and COS, 17 May 44. SEAC War Diary.

⁸⁸ Mountbatten Report, Pt. B., par. 196.

⁸⁹ (1) Rad ACC 953, Peirse to Mountbatten, 20 May 44; Rad 02393, Slim to Giffard and Mountbatten, 25 May 44. SEAC War Diary. (2) SEATIC Bull 242, p. 29. MID Library.

⁹⁰ (1) Rad 533 OPS, Giffard to MGGS [Major General, General Staff], 19 May 44; Min, SAC's 96th Mtg, 9 May 44. SEAC War Diary. (2) Japanese Officers' Comments, p. 15.

⁹¹ Rad SAC 2834, Mountbatten to Giffard, 27 May 44. SEAC War Diary.

⁹² Memo, Wedemeyer for Mountbatten, 5 Jun 44. Case 14, OPD 201 (Wedemeyer, A. C. [O]), A47-30.

feat at Imphal. He contrasted the vigorous efforts of 33 Corps to drive from Dimapur with the defensive attitude of 4 Corps. To these comments, the observations of the NCAC liaison officer with 4 Corps added chapter and verse.⁹³

It must be noted that the terrain around Imphal offered several advantages to the Japanese. When on the tactical defensive they could occupy steep hills, some forested, some grassy. With the antlike industry of the Oriental soldier they quickly dug themselves into the hillsides, and soon formidable earth and log bunkers faced the Imphal garrison. The Japanese, though on the strategical offensive, lay across vital lines of communications; on many occasions they could force the defenders to attack Japanese bunkers, while their own attacks could be massed on objectives chosen from among a variety of important installations.

Fortunately for SEAC, Stilwell, and Chennault, the *31st Division* never went past Kohima into the Brahmaputra valley. Having judged the Japanese by European standards, Fourteenth Army had expected them to send only one regiment against Kohima. The Japanese had thrown a full division against the town with its small and hastily improvised garrison. Thanks to Mountbatten's initiative, the whole of the 161st Brigade was in the area by 29 March. After some initial changes in plan caused by an erroneous intelligence report, the leading battalion of the 161st, the 4th Battalion Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment, Lt. Col. H. J. Lavery commanding, succeeded in entering Kohima to reinforce the garrison before the Japanese surrounded the town. From the 4th of April until relieved on the 20th, the small garrison of Kohima held off the Japanese *31st Division*. It was a notable feat of arms, and the role of the West Kents in the defense of Kohima reflected the greatest credit on the regiment and Colonel Lavery. The time won by the gallant defense of Kohima permitted 33 Corps to concentrate around Dimapur, to relieve Kohima, and then advance to the relief of Imphal.⁹⁴

Relief of Kohima left the Japanese still barring the road from Imphal north to Kohima. They held desperately until 22 June when the road was reopened. In that time the Japanese made a number of strong local attacks on Imphal, which 4 Corps repelled. An offensive effort by 4 Corps was concentrated on driving north to meet 33 Corps: ". . . the opening of this road now became our main preoccupation."⁹⁵ With the opening of the line of communications from Dimapur to Imphal, the enemy effort failed; the Japanese narrowly missed a great triumph, but such was the nature of their gamble that their failure resulted in disaster for them.

⁹³ (1) Ltrs, Col Bennett to CG, 5303d Area Comd, sub: Daily Int and Opns Sitreps. NCAC Files, KCRC. (2) Japanese Officers' Comments, p. 15.

⁹⁴ (1) Maj. E. B. Stanley Clarke and Maj. A. T. Tillott, *From Kent to Kohima, Being the History of The 4th Battalion the Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment (T.A.), 1939-1947* (Aldershot, England, 1951), Ch. XI. (2) Operational Record of Eleventh Army Group and A.L.F.S.E.A., November, 1943-August, 1945, pp. 27-28. OCMH. (3) Japanese Comments, Sec. I. (4) Mountbatten Report, Pt. B, pars. 93-116. (5) Owen, *The Campaign in Burma*, Ch. 14.

⁹⁵ Mountbatten Report, Pt. B, Par. 192.

The Japanese, with three divisions plus the Indian nationalist formations, now found themselves at the end of muddy jungle trails with the monsoon rains pouring down. The Japanese supply system had never brought up food to the *31st Division* at Kohima or to the *15th* north of Imphal. Both relied on what they could extract from the hill folk. Supply arrangements for the *33d Division* began to break down in May. Its food could be brought forward some distance up the Japanese line of communications from the Chindwin, but the condition of the trails, the rains, and the attentions of Allied aircraft made distribution almost impossible.

In the last week of June, General Mutaguchi concluded that the breaking of his blockade of Imphal on 22 June, the extremely bad Japanese supply situation, and the exhaustion of the fighting strength of his force left no hope for success. His conclusions were presented to his superiors in *Burma Area Army* and *Southern Army*. Perhaps ten days passed in arranging for the issuance of the order to suspend operations.

The intent of the order that Gen. Masakazu Kawabe, *Burma Area Army* commander, issued about 5 July, was not fully grasped by his subordinates, and so *15th Army* did not discontinue its attacks until 15 July. The monsoon rains were then falling, and the state of the Japanese soldiers was soon tragic. The Japanese were exhausted by malnutrition and malaria. Roads collapsed in mud. Over 17,000 horses died. Morale broke, and the Japanese, who had done all that soldiers could, now began to throw away their arms, quarrel, and fight for food. Only the *33d Division* kept its spirit and acted as a rear guard in the long retreat back to the Chindwin.

Of the 155,000 Japanese combat and supply troops who engaged in the drive on Imphal, 65,000 died. Deaths from sickness and hunger were far more numerous than battle casualties, and many of the survivors were diseased. After the war, the Japanese set the casualty rate in combat units at 85 to 90 percent. The *U* operation was a debacle and ruined the officers who directed it. Relieved were: the Commander in Chief, *Burma Area Army*, and his chief of staff; the commanding general and chief of staff of the *15th Army* with their senior staff officers; the division commanders and their chiefs of staff.⁹⁶ The battles around Imphal were decisive for the Japanese in Burma. They could still delay, but they could not hope to win.

Meanwhile, on the British side, the victors of Imphal were resolved to press their hard-won advantages. The question facing Mountbatten, Slim, and Giffard was that of choosing the better way to exploit success—whether to

⁹⁶ (1) Lt. Gen. Shibata Uichi, who assumed command of the *15th Division* on 30 June 1944, remarked that in the retreat he had to abandon large stocks of food which he could not distribute. His forward elements ate what was left of their original stores, supplementing their rations with grass, and sometimes attacking 4 Corps positions to get the rations to be found in them. SEATIC Bull 240, pp. 7, 10–13, 23–24, 51; SEATIC Bull 242, pp. 29, 31–32; SEATIC Bull 245, p. 7; SEATIC Bull 247, pp. 23, 25, 26–28. MID Library. (2) Japanese Comments, Sec. I. (3) Japanese Officers' Comments, App. 2, Mutaguchi; App. 4, Kawabe.

undertake a close pursuit of the beaten Japanese to the Chindwin, or to request from the CCS the air and amphibious resources for a stroke against some strategic point in Japanese-held territory. The choice was not an easy one. Close pursuit through the monsoon rains meant sending tired battalions, their ranks thinned by wounds, death, and sickness, to force a way along the same sort of muddy hillsides and half-drowned valleys that had contributed so heavily to the Japanese defeat. On the other hand, waiting for amphibious resources might give the Japanese time to repair the defeat. The alternatives were simple, but immensely difficult to weigh.

The Chindits Go Back to Burma

While the Japanese were hurling themselves on Imphal, and while Stilwell was gathering his Chinese to close on Kamaing and Myitkyina, a third active front was opened in central Burma. Despite SEAC's belief that too deep an involvement in Burma was unwise, and despite the changed situation caused by the Japanese offensive, that portion of the old SEAC plans which called for General Wingate and his men to be dropped into central Burma on the Japanese lines of communications was put into operation on 5 March.

For his greatest experiment in long-range penetration Wingate had assembled and trained a formidable force, largely drawn from the 70th British Division, a veteran formation with long Middle East experience. This force was given the cover name of 3d Indian Division though it included few Indian troops. The division had six brigades, 14th, 16th, 3d West African, 77th, 111th, and 23d, each of four battalions. Because of the Imphal crisis 23d Brigade was later detached, leaving five brigades. The Chindits had their own pocket-sized air force, designated as No. 1 Air Commando, AAF, and including fighter bombers, medium bombers, transports, and liaison craft.

The mission of Wingate's force changed not long after it entered Burma. The personal intentions of the aggressive Wingate were in line with the original SEAC plan chosen by Mountbatten so many months before: to establish an airborne division at Indaw before the monsoon rains and link up with it later. With the cancellation of BUCCANEER and the subsequent anticipation of the Japanese drive on Imphal this plan had been forgotten by all but Wingate.

General Wingate had the highest hopes, though he made no promises, that by concentrating three brigades around Indaw, he might force the Japanese to evacuate north Burma. He hoped to threaten Japanese communications south of Wuntho, menacing the 15th Army and giving 4 Corps a chance to turn the tables with a speedy advance to the Chindwin. Then "14 Brigade (less two columns) can be introduced to Pakokku to sever the 33d Division's communications, and further exploit against divisions to the north. This should

permit a bold advance by 4 Corps raftwise down the Chindwin to create a bridgehead in the dry zone prior to the monsoon." If operations went well, 23d Brigade would be put into the Meiktila area to exploit the situation generally. This done, the Japanese at the beginning of the monsoon would face a front stretching from Pakokku to Lashio with the Chindwin in British hands. Wingate's aims were thus far different from Slim's plan to lure the Japanese to Imphal and there defeat them. He saw them recoiling in confusion, stunned and baffled by the conflagration at their rear, and then hotly pursued across the Chindwin—all before the monsoon began in mid-May.⁹⁷

The fly-in began late on 5 March. The whole of 77th Brigade was directed onto one airstrip, BROADWAY, about fifty miles northeast of Indaw, as the Japanese had blocked one of the other sites contemplated, and it was feared that time did not permit briefing pilots for the third. Among the first in were U.S. engineer personnel who, despite repeated glider crashes and pile-ups in the confined space, shook themselves clear and had their strip ready for the transports. In came the rest of the 77th Brigade, soon followed by the 111th. The fly-in was complete by 11 March, and the 9,250 Chindits proceeded to organize themselves with their own airstrips for fighter cover and resupply, and their own 25-pounder artillery. Moving over to the railway, 77th Brigade established a stronghold near Mawlu, WHITE CITY,⁹⁸ and cut the line of communications supporting the *18th Division* far to the north. This action was not, of course, immediately decisive, for the *18th* had been accumulating supplies for a year, but it meant ultimate defeat for the *18th Division* if the British could not be driven away.⁹⁹

The time chosen to drop the Chindits near his line of communications was most embarrassing to General Tanaka. On 10 January 1944, *Headquarters, 15th Army*, had suspended movement of supplies to the *18th Division* in order to accumulate stocks for the projected attack on Imphal. Shipment was to resume as soon as the Imphal operation was under way. Then the Chindits cut the rail line, and just when the supply movement was to have resumed, the *18th Division* had to start living on what was at hand in north Burma. It was aided by the *56th Division*, which shipped about ninety tons of vital supplies to Myitkyina via Bhamo, but Tanaka's supply position was fundamentally compromised by the Chindit fighting along the railway to north Burma.¹⁰⁰

The landings created panic among Japanese line of communications troops. A scratch force was hastily gathered to deal with the Chindits, for the effort

⁹⁷ (1) See Ch. II, above. (2) Appreciation COS/24, Comdr Special Force at Imphal [Wingate] for SACSEA, 10 Feb 44, sub: LRPg Opns, Exploitation of Opn THURSDAY; Memo, Comdr Special Force for SACSEA, 13 Mar 44, sub: Forecast of Possible Development of THURSDAY. SEAC War Diary.

⁹⁸ So called both from the supply parachutes that festooned the trees, and after an amusement park of that name.

⁹⁹ (1) Mountbatten Report, Pt. B, pars. 117-25. (2) Tanaka, Japanese Comments, Sec. III.

¹⁰⁰ Tanaka, Japanese Comments, Sec. III.

was underestimated. Then, when the first Japanese attempts to clear the Chindits from the railway were unsuccessful (around 16 and 17 March), some staff officers of the Japanese *15th Army* were apprehensive and suggested ending the offensive on Imphal, but General Mutaguchi resolved to continue it and instead directed enough troops against the Chindits to deal with them. So odd battalions came hurrying from all over, the *2/51st* of the *15th Division*, *3/114th* of the *18th Division*, *1/148th* of the *56th Division*, and *1/213th* of the *33d Division*. Each was thus drawn away from a parent unit at a key sector, for example, the *3/114th*, which had just been released from army reserve to join the *18th Division*. The *24th Independent Mixed Brigade* (less one battalion) was moved north and opened headquarters at Indaw on 25 March. Farther back, the *53d Division*, then moving slowly into Burma, was ordered to march north and engage as fast as its units arrived. All this, of course, was a diversion from the main effort toward Imphal, and a great aid to Stilwell's operations. The 111th Brigade paid its respects to the Imphal operation by harassing the Japanese line of communications, Indaw-Tamu, from 10 March to 30 April, forcing the Japanese to abandon its use.¹⁰¹

By mid-March the Japanese offensive seemed to SEAC to need stronger measures, so the fly-in of the rest of 3d Indian Division, originally intended to relieve the first wave, was accelerated. The 3d West African and 14th Brigades were flown into a new stronghold (ABERDEEN) near Manhton, and arrangements were made for the 16th Brigade which, against fantastic difficulties of terrain, had marched in all the way from Ledo, past the fighting in the Hukawng-Mogaung valleys, without pause except for a diversionary attack on Lonkin. General Wingate now had his five brigades deep in central Burma; but before he could seize the rewards of his planning, thought, and preparation, he was killed in an aircraft wreck on 24 March. His death was a heavy blow. After the war the commander of the 16th Brigade explained the unique difficulties in which Wingate's death placed his men:

General Wingate's death would have been a catastrophe whenever it happened, but it could not have happened at a worse moment than it did. He was on his way out from a conference with myself and another of his brigade commanders; the orders which he had given us were unknown to his headquarters, and their ignorance of them was unknown to us. His successor was in the field, and could not be reached; the headquarters themselves were on the move from Imphal (which was nearly threatened by the Japs) to India, with results to our communications which may be imagined; and a further blow to our radio contact took the form of four days of violent thunderstorms. These days of confusion left a legacy behind them which made its mark and contributed largely to the breach of two principles of war which were all-important to us: those of concentration and maintenance of the objective; though in the latter case, breach of principle was inevitable with the change of plan.

¹⁰¹ (1) SEATIC Bull 244, *History of Japanese 33d Army*, 3 Oct 46, pp. 19-20, 71-72; SEATIC Bull 245, pp. 3-4; SEATIC Bull 247, pp. 11-13. MID Library. (2) Cyril N. Barclay, *The History of the Cameronians (Scottish Rifles)* (London, 1947), pp. 147-48. (3) Japanese Comments, Sec. I.

At the time, and indeed until I discussed this lecture with General Slim, I and all the brigade commanders were under the impression that the change of plan happened at this stage when the Japanese were developing their movement across the Chindwin. But now I find that the plan was actually altered some weeks or months before, when the Japanese intentions first became apparent. For reasons of his own this decision [fall back to Imphal] was not communicated to us by General Wingate, perhaps in the hope that he might be able to win such success as would justify the High Command into reverting to the original plan.¹⁰²

The next development in Stilwell's relation to the 3d Indian Division was at the Jorhat conference of 3 April. There, it was agreed that as Stilwell continued to advance on Mogaung and Myitkyina two brigades would help his advance by operating on the Japanese line of communications while two others would head west across the Chindwin to harass the Japanese lines of communications to Imphal, if they could cross the Chindwin's escarpment. Thus, instead of thirteen battalions operating vigorously behind *15th Army* and slicing its communications, the 3d Indian Division had its strength dispersed among several forces with no clear-cut mission.

Shortly after the Jorhat conference the 3d Indian Division received a new directive ordering it to devote its principal efforts to helping Stilwell, once it had completed the successful evacuation of its initial strongholds and landing strips. This employment of the 3d Indian Division speedily led to differences between Stilwell and Maj. Gen. W. D. A. Lentaigne, Wingate's successor. Stilwell wanted the LRPC's to hold firmly at Indaw, cutting the Japanese line of communications to north Burma and keeping major Japanese forces away from his right flank. Against this was SEAC's belief that the endurance of the Chindits was limited to about ninety days, which meant taking them out in mid-June and moving the division at a still earlier date to a place from which it could be flown out. Proposals for their withdrawal from Burma would therefore inevitably be made by the Chindit commanders sometime in June, and maneuvering to an assembly area might well take them off the railroad. Either would be bitterly opposed by Stilwell, who did not, as he told General Sultan, relish the prospect of Lentaigne's men retiring on him and bringing in their wake all the Japanese that they had attracted.

A British Broadcasting Corporation announcement that Stilwell and Lentaigne were in perfect accord brought the matter before higher authority when Stilwell denounced it to Mountbatten and Marshall as a fabrication. He would accept the British leaving Mawlu, he said, since higher authority had directed it, but he did not like the public proclamation that it was in accord with his views.¹⁰³

¹⁰² B. E. Fergusson, "Behind the Enemy's Lines in Burma," *Journal of the Royal United Service Institution* (August, 1946).

¹⁰³ (1) Papers cited n. 85(3). (2) Rad SH 40, 16 Apr 44; Rad SH 44, Stilwell to Sultan, 17 Apr 44; Rad SH 74, Stilwell to Sultan, 24 Apr 44. Items 117, 120, 140, Bk 6A, JWS Personal File. (3) Memo, Wingate for War Cabinet, 10 Aug 43. SEAC War Diary. (4) Fourteenth Army Opn Instr 60, 4 Apr 44. SNF 4. (5) Mountbatten Report, Pt. B, par. 165.

The Question of Myitkyina

While the British, Gurkhas, and West Africans of the 3d Indian Division were cutting the Japanese line of communications to Myitkyina, and Stilwell's Chinese were advancing on the town, the highest Allied authorities were engaged in discussing whether Myitkyina's capture was worth while and should be attempted. Following the visit of the SEAC mission to Washington and London and the inability of the mission to secure approval of CULVERIN, the question of a directive for SEAC was still unsettled. In late March 1944 the Joint Chiefs again urged that the Combined Chiefs direct SEAC to undertake vigorous operations in north Burma. Because militarization of the Bengal and Assam Railway had greatly increased the capacity of the Assam line of communications, and because recent operations in the Arakan and the Hukawng Valley had gone so well, the Joint Chiefs hoped SEAC would be more favorably inclined toward seizure of north Burma. Apprised of the JCS view through channels, SEAC's planners asserted that nothing had happened to change their belief that it was an extremely uneconomical use of manpower and resources to become deeply involved in the Burmese jungles.¹⁰⁴ The SEAC planners always hoped that the CCS would assign to SEAC air and sea resources that would permit the Allies to exploit successes at Imphal by airborne or amphibious assault—which the Japanese would have been hard put to counter—against vital points behind the Japanese defenses of Burma, such as Rangoon.

Admiral Mountbatten, basing his reply to the JCS recommendations on his planners' views, stated that a preliminary examination of the possibility of taking the Mogaung-Myitkyina area and dominating north Burma down to the line Katha-Bhamo by December 1944 showed that two more infantry divisions, a parachute brigade, and a long-range penetration brigade should be on hand in India, and two more divisions should arrive by the winter of 1944-45. "My conclusion is that the conquest of Northern Burma down to the line Katha-Bhamo is impossible to carry out by the given dates, and that even by later dates it is unsound and should not be attempted." Rather than suggest CULVERIN again, Mountbatten proposed an operation against the Prome-Rangoon area after the main thrust in the Pacific. References to holding a perimeter in the Imphal area after the conclusion of current operations there suggest that as of mid-April SEAC was not yet committed to exploiting victory at Imphal by a major thrust across the Chindwin into central Burma, but preferred an amphibious attack on Rangoon.¹⁰⁵

Through CBI headquarters in Delhi, Marshall repeated to Stilwell the JCS view that Myitkyina had to be seized and a buffer zone created to the south so

¹⁰⁴ (1) Rad, JSM to SACSEA, 24 Mar 44; Secy Plans SAC (44) 166/1, Hq SEAC, 10 Apr 44. SEAC War Diary. (2) CCS 452/10, 21 Mar 44, sub: Strategy in SEAC.

¹⁰⁵ Rad SEACOS 137, SACSEA to War Cabinet and JSM, 14 Apr 44. ABC 384 (Burma) 8-25-42, Sec 6, A48-224. Also in JWS Misc Papers, 1944.

that Hump tonnage could be increased. The build-up of Hump tonnage to 20,000 tons a month and completion of a two-way, all-weather road and a 4-inch pipeline to China seemed necessary and timely to Marshall so that the maximum possible aid to projected U.S. operations in the Pacific might be given by China-based air power in early 1945. Commenting on these orders from Washington, General Stratemeyer pointed out to General Arnold that Myitkyina as an oil head at which Hump transports could refuel was the key to the sharp increase in Hump tonnage that was the prerequisite of any ambitious plans in China Theater.

Both Stratemeyer and Sultan observed that plans for Burma operations ultimately depended on a Combined Chiefs decision on strategy. Sultan stated that there was an inclination in SEAC not to accept support of the main Pacific thrust as its primary mission if such a mission required land operations in north Burma, because SEAC thought such operations not worth the effort. Sultan believed SEAC would propose Hump expansion without the commitment of any of its ground forces to Burma, in order that the campaign to secure the Mogaung-Myitkyina area might resolve itself into a Sino-American effort entirely. To support this thesis, Sultan pointed out that the current plans for the Chindits called for their withdrawal through the Mogaung valley, which would leave Stilwell without flank support.¹⁰⁶

A new directive, foreshadowed by Marshall's recent radio to Stilwell, arrived in CBI Theater on 3 May 1944 direct from the Joint Chiefs of Staff. It gave CBI Theater a new mission, emphasized the importance of Myitkyina in the plans of Stilwell's American superiors, and relegated to the past any question of whether CBI Theater headquarters favored carrying out the SEXTANT decisions or of how it reacted to Mountbatten's views. The JCS now ordered CBI Theater to clear north Burma and take Myitkyina in order to carry out the new mission of CBI—air support to forthcoming operations in the western Pacific. Land-based air support from Chinese bases was declared to be necessary for successful carrier aircraft operations against Formosa, the Ryukyu Islands, the Philippine Islands, and the China coast. Stilwell was also ordered to give what indirect support he could to attacks on Mindanao Island of the Philippine group in November 1944, without prejudice to operations of greater strategic importance, such as taking Myitkyina. The Joint Chiefs asked Stilwell for an estimate of the effort he could make to support these Pacific operations and to cover temporary reinforcement of the Fourteenth Air Force by the Tenth Air Force. The JCS said they were aware that accumulating logistical support for the projected air effort would require major curtailment of Hump support for the Chinese ground forces in China and of other activities that did not

¹⁰⁶ (1) Rad SH 3, Stilwell to Sultan, 7 Apr 44; Rad CRA 1416, Sultan to Stilwell, 16 Apr 44. Items 111, 118, Bk 6A, JWS Personal File. (2) CM-IN 19350, Sultan to Marshall, 27 Apr 44. (3) Rad CRA 2367, Sultan to Marshall, 30 Apr 44. SEAC War Diary.

directly support the air effort. The immediate and progressive stockpiling of supplies in China was ordered.¹⁰⁷

As Sultan had predicted, the SEAC planners on 6 May reported that the Mogaung-Myitkyina area could be taken by accepting very grave risks elsewhere. Should these, which they tabulated at length, be unacceptable, then they suggested the old plan of a less advanced oil head. But in the light of the JCS directive these views could not be controlling on CBI Theater. The plan that CBI promptly submitted to the Joint Chiefs and SEAC called for, as Phase I, seizure of the Mogaung-Myitkyina area as soon as possible; Phase II, preparation of all-weather airfields there by 1 January 1945, and clearance of the trace of the road from Myitkyina to Kunming in order to increase support for the ground and air forces in China; and Phase III, completion of the India-China line of communications before the end of 1945.¹⁰⁸ When these radios were sent, Stilwell's men were ten days' march from Myitkyina.

To capture the Mogaung-Myitkyina area Stilwell would have the use of five Chinese divisions. Personnel of the 30th Division had been trained at Ramgarh as they arrived at wide intervals from July 1943 on. The 88th Regiment of the 30th Division left Ledo for Shingbwiayang on 1 March 1944. By 24 March its forward concentration was complete and it was on its way to Pabum to relieve the 1/112th, 38th Division. The 89th Regiment, at Jorhat to guard against a Japanese thrust past Kohima, would be ready as soon as 33 Corps was assembled to relieve Kohima.¹⁰⁹

When GALAHAD's withdrawal from about Inkangahtawng rendered immediate encirclement of the *18th Division* a remote possibility, Stilwell flew to Chungking and asked the Generalissimo for reinforcements in order that the success already gained might be exploited and Myitkyina seized. On 28 and 29 March Stilwell met with the Generalissimo. No conference minutes are in Stilwell's files, but his diary records that the Generalissimo agreed that the Chinese 50th Division might be flown to north Burma. Stilwell asked for another division, but the decision was postponed for a few days. Then he was offered the Chinese 14th Division. Stilwell's first reply was that only the 50th Division could be airlifted to Maingkwan, where an airstrip had been built, and he asked that the Chinese leader consider infiltrating the 14th Division through the Kaoli-kung Mountains to attack Myitkyina from the China side. Then he reconsidered and on 1 April asked General Hearn to have Gen. Ho Ying-chin consent to fly both the 50th and 14th Divisions over the Hump. The Chinese moved with commendable promptness. By 15 April 1944 almost all of the 50th Division had been airlifted to Maingkwan, and that same week the 14th Divi-

¹⁰⁷ Rad CRA 2655, Gen Evans to Stilwell, 4 May 44. Item 102, Bk 6A, JWS Personal File. This radio was a relay of the JCS directive to Stilwell at the front.

¹⁰⁸ Revised Rpt, War Stf on WS (44) 29, 6 May 44; Rad CRA 2927, Sultan to Marshall, 7 May 44. SEAC War Diary.

¹⁰⁹ G-3 Rpts, Chih Hui Pu, 7-28 Mar 44. NCAC Files, KCRC.

sion began to arrive at the Hump airfields. These were of course transfers of men, not of fully equipped units ready to fight.¹¹⁰

Thus, by mid-April 1944, of 316 Chinese divisions, five had been committed to operations in north Burma. Opposing those five were three understrength regiments of the Japanese *18th Division*, soon to be reinforced by two regimental headquarters and three battalions. The arms, uniforms, food, pay, and ammunition supplied to the five Chinese divisions in north Burma were U.S. lend-lease and British reciprocal aid. The medical and service units supporting them were from the U.S. Army. Air support—tactical, strategic, supply, and evacuation—was given by the Army Air Forces.¹¹¹

Summary

When, in May 1944, Marshall ordered Stilwell to take Myitkyina, there was no longer any possibility that Stilwell's superiors might of their own initiative order the North Burma Campaign to be canceled. When Kohima was relieved on the 20th of the month the Japanese offensive, though still very menacing, was no longer an immediate threat to the line of communications that supported operations in north Burma. On 29 March the Chinese had entered Shaduzup, which meant they were over the Jambu Bum and had opened the door to the Mogaung valley, at whose south end lay the Irrawaddy and the Burma railway and, a few miles beyond, Myitkyina itself. The campaign was no longer in the balance; both in the council room and on the field, the scales had inclined.

¹¹⁰ (1) Stilwell Diary, 28, 29 Mar 44. (2) G-3 Rpts, Chih Hui Pu, 5-18 Apr 44. NCAC Files, KCRC. (3) Rad CFB 15536, Dorn to Stilwell, 31 Mar 44; Rad SHC 1, Stilwell to Hearn, 1 Apr 44. Items 2152, 2154, Bk 6, JWS Personal File.

¹¹¹ For a detailed account of the organization, training, and equipping of the Chinese Army in India, see *Stilwell's Mission to China*, Chapter VI.

CHAPTER VI

The Drive for Myitkyina

While the Chinese Army in India had been edging up to Shaduzup the thought had crossed Stilwell's mind that Shaduzup might be as far as his forces could get before the rains began. Then the Japanese drive on Imphal began to acquire a disturbing aspect, and the conference between Mountbatten, Slim, and Stilwell was called at Jorhat on 3 April 1944. At the conference, Slim expressed his confidence that he would win at Imphal. Perhaps as a result of that confidence, Mountbatten confirmed the existing directives that called for Stilwell to take the Mogaung-Myitkyina area. Meanwhile, in one radio after another, SEAC's staff told the Joint and Combined Chiefs that Myitkyina probably could not be taken without sending heavy added reinforcements to SEAC, if taken probably could not be held, and even if held was not worth taking.

The Japanese offensive on India, the slow progress of the North Burma Campaign, the Generalissimo's reluctance to cross the Salween, and the steady consumption of time, all registered on Stilwell's estimate of what he could do in north Burma. His estimate of what he could do with the means his several superiors had allotted him began to shrink drastically.

The QUARTERBACK Calls an END RUN

Time was pressing on Stilwell as he in turn was pressing on General Tanaka; if he was to take Myitkyina he must take it with a quick bold stroke before the rains began. The solution began to reveal itself to Stilwell immediately after the Jorhat conference. Over the next few days the solution became a plan and was presented to his Chinese subordinates and to Merrill.

To seize the Mogaung-Myitkyina area as directed by Mountbatten at Jorhat, Stilwell determined to drive down the Mogaung valley on Kamaing with such vigor as to persuade General Tanaka that this was the principal effort. Meanwhile, a task force of GALAHAD's survivors (END RUN Force) plus two Chinese regiments and a Kachin screen would slip east over the Kumon Range, which formed the eastern boundary of the Mogaung valley, and strike directly at

Myitkyina. Myitkyina's garrison would, Stilwell hoped, be depleted to help defend Mogaung from the Chindits.¹

In driving for Myitkyina, Stilwell's immediate objective was to increase Hump tonnage. As of this moment, he did not believe that opening a land line of communications to China, which he thought to be still the mission given him by the TRIDENT, QUADRANT, and SEXTANT Conferences, was any longer within his capabilities. The SEXTANT directives and the radios from Marshall had stressed the connection between Myitkyina and the Hump. Stilwell ordered Hearn to:

Make following report to the Generalissimo. Without holding Mogaung he will of course realize that it will be impossible to build road and pipeline into Myitkyina and as a result the anticipated increase in Hump tonnage will not materialize. If we had Myitkyina and a pipeline into it, the Hump tonnage could be materially increased. In an effort to get forward and make this possible I have issued orders for an advance to certain areas making use of maximum force and effort. These orders are not being put into effect with the speed and effort which in my opinion the situation requires. As a result, the chances of getting to Mogaung are now slim and any increase in Hump tonnage will disappear, if these chances dwindle further. I am reporting this so that the Generalissimo will know that I am not satisfied with what the division commanders are doing to get forward and make our mission a complete success.²

A few days later, in commenting on a plan for major airborne operations in Burma the next fall, Stilwell observed that the decisions of the TRIDENT, QUADRANT, and SEXTANT Conferences still held: ". . . to get enough of No. Burma to reopen communications with China. . . . It could have been done last fall, when there were only four Jap divisions in Burma. It could have been done this spring, with one or two American divisions and the cooperation of the Y-Force. It can still be done, with a reinforcement of U.S. ground troops [which Stilwell later set at a corps plus engineers], at a much smaller cost than is contemplated in proposed plans."³

As of 10 April, General Pick had only eight U.S. engineer companies actually working on the Ledo Road. Two engineer aviation battalions had been taken away from him, while the remainder of his engineers, save the eight companies, were working on airstrips and maintenance.⁴

The drive on Kamaing had changed in concept. Initially, on 20 March the 112th Regiment, 38th Division, reinforced with elements of its two sister regi-

¹ *The Stilwell Papers*, p. 291.

² Rad SH 83, Stilwell to Hearn, 26 Apr 44. Item 2269, Bk 6, JWS Personal File.

³ (1) Rad CHC 1019, Stilwell to Sultan, 1 May 44. Item 153, Bk 6A, JWS Personal File. (2) Rad DTG 240240Z, Stilwell to Marshall, 24 May 44. Item 2740, Bk 7, JWS Personal File. (3) Having studied Stilwell's radios, the Asiatic Section, OPD, concluded on 22 June 1944 that since it could not give CBI Theater the U.S. corps plus engineers Stilwell said he would need to open ground communications to China, it was not in a position to direct him or Mountbatten to undertake operations with that in view. Therefore emphasis would be on increasing Hump tonnage, with ground operations secondary. Memo for Record, 6/22/2170, Case 404-2, OPD 381 Security, A47-30.

⁴ Ltr, Covell to Somervell, 17 Apr 44. Folder, Monthly Rpt to Somervell, OCMH.

ments, had been ordered to envelop the *18th Division* by means of a roadblock below Kamaing. A later order, 4 April, gave the 114th Regiment the mission originally set for the 112th and defined the role of the 22d Division. Its 65th and 66th Regiments were to hold in the Shaduzup area, while the 64th Regiment enveloped the *18th Division's* left flank. The final directive on 23 April, in "positive, written orders"⁵ to make the record clear, called for the 22d Division to attack, rather than hold, and to swing the 64th and 65th Regiments around General Tanaka's left (western) flank, while the 66th Regiment fought down the road. Once again the 112th was told to block off Kamaing from the south. The orders directed the "22d and 38th to be in Pakhren and Lawa areas by April 27. Now I've shot my wad," wrote Stilwell. Generals Sun and Liao at once came in to protest the orders, but to no avail.⁶

General Tanaka's mission, dating from 1943, was to hold the Kamaing area to the end. In March 1944 he was told by *Burma Area Army* that when the *53d Division* (-) had driven the Chindits off the rail line it would be attached to him for a counteroffensive, providing the attack on Imphal succeeded. While Tanaka was waiting for the *53d Division* to arrive, he was reinforced in April and May by two very understrength regiments, the *146th Regiment*, *56th Division*, with one battalion, and the *4th Regiment*, *2d Division*, with two battalions. Thus, at one time in May when the force from the *56th Division* was attached to the *18th*, only two regiments plus a reinforced battalion of the *56th Division* faced the Chinese across the Salween. Elements of the *53d Division* duly arrived in the Mogaung area, but the Japanese headquarters for north Burma, then the newly activated *33d Army*, in Tanaka's opinion could not decide to commit them toward either Kamaing or Myitkyina, and his hopes for a smashing counterattack were lost. He therefore decided to hold above Kamaing until the eve of the rainy season, then withdraw to prepared positions while the Chinese and the Americans struggled in the floods that cover the valley during the rains.⁷

Though Tanaka knew that the Americans and the Chinese would have to take Myitkyina to open the way across north Burma, he estimated that there would not be a direct attack on Myitkyina as long as the bulk of the *18th* was able to hold the Kamaing-Mogaung area. Analyzing his problem after the war, Tanaka remarked that after the battle of Walawbum his divisional intelligence section was increasingly handicapped, that he found it ever more difficult to get good strategic intelligence.⁸

⁵ Stilwell Diary, 23 Apr 44.

⁶ (1) FO, 20 Mar 44, Folder, 38th Div Sitreps; FO 12, Hq Chih Hui Pu, 4 Apr 44; FO 14, Hq Chih Hui Pu, 23 Apr 44; FO 13, Hq Chih Hui Pu, 21 Apr 44. NCAC Files, KCRC. (2) Stilwell Diary, 23 Apr 44.

⁷ (1) Tanaka's remarks, in Japanese Comments, Section III, are distinctly acid where *33d Army's* action is concerned; he accuses that headquarters of endless vacillation. (2) See also his remarks on other occasions, in Tanaka Narrative, pages 3 and 4, and the Tanaka Interrogation in OCMH files. (3) See Ch. IX, below.

⁸ Tanaka, Japanese Comments, Sec. III.

damn valley after another!" wrote Stilwell to his wife.) On either side of the long narrow valley—9,000 or so yards wide at Warazup—rose the hills now familiar to the soldiers. The Kamaing Road lay in the center of the valley, and along the road ran the stream by which nature had carved out the valley. This was the Nam Kawng Chaung (the upper reaches of the Mogaung River), whose tributaries arched out to right and left like the ribs of a fish's skeleton. These streams offered a series of water barriers to troops fighting their way down the valley; the Japanese took full advantage of them.

When the 22d began to move south, Stilwell's orders to it were among the first casualties as the 22d's units attempted, not always as vigorously as Stilwell wished, to get around the Japanese facing them (*4th Regiment* to the extreme left of the Japanese line, across the Kamaing Road). Some of the 22d's units were taken out of line to refit; others simply held back. From west to east, General Liao had the 1/65th, the 64th, the 65th, and the 66th. The 64th Regiment, 22d Division, began cutting its way around the Japanese left flank and occupied Hill 988, two miles west-southwest of Warazup, after the Japanese abandoned it. The 64th then moved southwest and reached a point well to the rear of the Japanese front-line positions along the Pangyu Hka.

About this time one of the senior Chinese armored force officers took Colonel Brown, the tank group commander, aside and stated that both Sun and Liao had received orders not to advance until the Generalissimo felt it was safe for them to continue. The Chinese told Brown that he himself would continue to attack if ordered but that such conduct would seriously embarrass him were he (the Chinese) ever to serve under Sun or Liao. Brown reported the conversation to Stilwell.

Next morning, Stilwell ordered Liao to move the 22d Division against Inkangahtawng, which remained in Japanese hands after GALAHAD withdrew. Liao soon moved his headquarters about a mile farther south. This move put the division headquarters in line with Brown's armored force command post. Amazed, Brown checked to see if there had been a general advance by the Chinese. There had been none; Liao had simply advanced his headquarters. Stilwell again ordered Liao to attack, and again Liao moved up his headquarters, this time till it was up with that of the 66th Regiment. Almost daily, word would come to Brown that Liao was not going to attack until permission came from the Generalissimo. Brown himself thrust forward time and again with his tanks, without infantry support, losing several, but probably hoping that considerations of face would induce Liao to make whatever adjustments would permit him to obey Stilwell's orders and attack.⁹ Presumably permission to attack was finally granted by the Generalissimo, possibly after he had had time to weigh the implications of the relief of Kohima on 20 April, for in late April the 22d Division again began to move.

A formidable obstacle barred its way to Kamaing. Just south and east of

⁹ Brown Notes, p. 14.



TROOPS OF THE CHINESE 22D DIVISION *move down the rain-soaked Kamaing Road.*

Nanyaseik is a range of hills, perhaps eight miles long, and rising to a 1,200-foot peak. There were large caves in the hills, and in them the Japanese emplaced four 150-mm. guns, far outranging the 155-mm. howitzers which, supervised by Col. George W. Sliney, were the heaviest pieces the Chinese had. The caves shielded the Japanese guns from bombardment and counterbattery, and the hills gave them excellent observation. With these pieces the Japanese blasted away at every profitable target that revealed itself, to as far north as Warazup.¹⁰

The 65th Regiment plus the 3/66th, fighting down the Kamaing Road, met Japanese resistance north and west of Inkangahtawng. The 64th stayed behind the Japanese left flank, or what had been the Japanese left, until 3 May, when it moved again, this time straight east, across the Kamaing Road. The 64th Regiment cut this vital artery about five hundred yards south of the Hwelon Hka, four days after its patrols first crossed it. The rest of the 22d Division waited for clear weather to make a co-ordinated attack by air, armor, artillery, and the dogged Chinese infantryman on Inkangahtawng. The 4th of May met weather specifications and Inkangahtawng fell that day. The 64th Regiment

¹⁰ Brown Notes, p. 15.

promptly linked up with the rest of the 22d Division. Then the 66th Regiment was put in line to relieve the 65th.¹¹ The 22d Division had gained perhaps five miles down the road in these last few weeks of fighting, but the Japanese were "sticking it out to bitter end." Stilwell's diary shows him tirelessly at work, going from one Chinese command post to another to urge and exhort the Chinese onward.¹²

The 22d Division stayed in this area for the next several weeks. During this time, elements of the Chinese 50th Division (149th and 150th Regiments), which had been flown into Maingkwang by 15 April, arrived at the front, and were attached to the units of the 22d Division.

Along the Hwelon Hka, the 64th Regiment, 22d Division, was in contact with the Japanese. General Liao moved the 65th Regiment into line on 19 May, prolonging the right flank of the 64th, and the 66th Regiment was sent still further west. The 1/66th and the 3/149th, the latter from the Chinese 50th Division, plus two companies of division engineers, all attached to the 65th Regiment, cut a trail over the ridge marking the western boundary of the Mogaung valley and entered the small valley of the Lasi Hka. Moving south with comparative speed, they were in the vicinity of Chishidu on 27 May and about to cut back into the Mogaung valley. The Japanese company opposing them was steadily pushed back toward Nanyaseik.

The 22d Division had thus successfully completed a maneuver which had failed when a task force, code name PURPLE, composed of the 149th Regiment, 50th Division, plus a detachment formed from GALAHAD evacuees, had been sent on the same task. Commanded by an American, PURPLE Force took the wrong turn and, after being located by Lt. Col. Joseph W. Stilwell, Jr., in a liaison plane, was forced to return to the Mogaung valley.¹³ On its march, PURPLE Force encountered mountains too steep for its animal transport. Two of the mules, loaded with medical equipment, fell over the side of the cliffs. The American medical personnel had to send back the pack train and carry their own supplies.¹⁴ That it was an American officer who had lost the way made a bad impression on the 149th's commander, a very competent Chinese who may well have thought that he should have led the force. Thereafter, he had little use for Americans in any capacity. This was perhaps natural but was regrettable, for the 149th was an excellent regiment and its commander respected by those

¹¹ The 22d Division combat order of 23 April called for the 64th Regiment to swing wide around the *18th Division* and take Nsawgatawng, just north of Kamaing. (1) G-3 Rpts, Chih Hui Pu, 26 Apr, 1 May, 8 May 44; Opns Rpt, 22d Div, 20 Apr 44; Daily Opns Map, 22d Div, 25 Apr 44. NCAC Files, KCRC. (2) Combat Rpts, Fwd Ech and Misc Ln Os, 22d Div, 26 Apr 44; Situation Maps, 22d Div, 30 Apr-2 May 44, Combat Folder, 22d Div, 23 Apr 44. ALBACORE Hist File, KCRC.

¹² Stilwell Diary, 12 Apr 44.

¹³ (1) NCAC History, II, 159. (2) Tanaka Narrative, p. 4. (3) Situation maps, 22d Div; G-3 Rpts, Chih Hui Pu, 24 May, 30 May 44; FO 15, Hq Chih Hui Pu, 17 May 44. NCAC Files, KCRC. (4) Stilwell Diary, 21 May 44. (5) Col Stilwell's Diary, 21 May 44. (See Bibliographical Note.)

¹⁴ Stone MS, p. 164.

who dealt with him.¹⁵ The presence of the 250 or so American infantry from GALAHAD was agreed to between Stilwell and Merrill. Because of the tasks known to lie ahead of GALAHAD, Stilwell discussed the attachment with Merrill before ordering it. Years later, Merrill remembered telling Stilwell that GALAHAD sorely needed the 250 men and that it was really not in shape for the job ahead. But he was aware of the pressures and obstacles that Stilwell daily faced, and resolved not to add to them.¹⁶

Thus, the southward progress of the 22d Division had been painfully slow during May, but as the month drew to its end, the wide envelopment of the 65th Regiment and its reinforcing battalions suggested that Tanaka would soon be pushed back on Kamaing itself. Stilwell and the Chinese would then be deep into Burma and very close to the north-south corridor through which the railway ran from Mandalay to Myitkyina; the corridor in turn would take them behind the 15th Army.

The 38th Division: The Generalissimo and Stilwell

Gen. Sun Li-jen's 38th Division had the most difficult sector in which to operate, the hill mass that formed the eastern boundary of the Mogaung valley. It was in this area, incredibly difficult for troops to cross, that GALAHAD's stand at Nhpum Ga had been made a week or so before. The 38th had been moved into the area within which Merrill's and Hunter's men had been operating. But if the hills themselves were a formidable obstacle to troops, they did offer a way around Tanaka's right flank. And, if Tanaka moved to halt the threat posed by the 38th's movement south through the hills, he spread his forces thin down in the valley. To Stilwell, the opportunities lying before the 38th were obvious, so he kept constant pressure on Sun.

After a visit to the latter's command post on 11 April, Stilwell wrote in his diary: "At least it looks like a *start!* The piled-up inertia is terrible. . . ." ¹⁷ On the next day the 114th Regiment relieved the 113th on the line of three villages all named Tingring. This move placed the 114th and 112th in line, the 112th to the east forming with its lines a small salient about Nhpum Ga. The 114th Regiment was operating in rugged terrain which was almost as much an obstacle as the delaying positions directly about Kamaing defended so skillfully by the Japanese. On at least one occasion the 114th lost its way and had to be located by aerial reconnaissance.

The 1/114th was to have taken the eastern Tingring and worked round the right flank of the 55th Regiment, but though it passed the line of the Tingrings, the Japanese rear guard held stoutly on Hill 1725, while the 18th fell back to the line Wala-Malakawng. Not until 20 April did the Chinese clear the hilltop. Stilwell chafed and fretted over the 38th Division's slowness, which he blamed

¹⁵ Dupuy Notes.

¹⁶ Ltr, Merrill to Ward, 26 May 52. OCMH.

¹⁷ Stilwell Diary, 11 Apr 44.

on General Sun. After Hill 1725 had been taken, the 114th came up against the Lahkraw Hka, which was in open country with little cover and dominated by the guns of the *18th Mountain Artillery Regiment*. To the east, the 1/112th moved from Tategahtawng on 23 April to relieve END RUN Force for the move on Myitkyina. The force was then within a mile of Manpin and created a salient whose tip at Manpin bulged ominously toward Kamaing and whose sides ran generally north of the Lahkraw Hka and the Auché-Warong trail.¹⁸

The slow rate of the 38th Division's advance alarmed Stilwell. After the First Burma Campaign he had always feared the Generalissimo might again try to conduct the campaign from Chungking with emphasis on the defensive. Stilwell surmised that again, as in 1942, the Generalissimo was corresponding directly with Sun and Liao. On 15 April Stilwell received a radio from the Generalissimo observing that the Mogaung valley was "good for attacking and defending," so Stilwell should be careful. Stilwell promptly called the matter to Marshall's attention. He told the Army's Chief of Staff that in his opinion the hard core of Japanese resistance had been broken, that the Chinese with little further trouble could go rapidly on to Kamaing. Stilwell concluded that Sun's and Liao's conduct of operations could only be explained by secret orders from the Generalissimo to slow their pace. He asked Marshall to keep the President informed of this situation.¹⁹ To placate the Generalissimo, Stilwell had Hearn present an optimistic appraisal of the Burma campaign with the tactful statement that Stilwell would move cautiously by exploiting every Japanese blunder.²⁰

The 22d and 38th Divisions continued to plod along. Completely apprehensive, Stilwell asked General Liao bluntly if the Generalissimo had ordered a slowdown. Liao replied that the Generalissimo did correspond with him directly and assured Stilwell that the Generalissimo had ordered him to obey, even when Stilwell was wrong. Far from reassured, Stilwell asked Hearn to raise the issue with Madame Chiang, specifically, to ask whether the Generalissimo had sent a message encouraging Sun and Liao as Stilwell had requested.²¹

After the war, an officer of Sun's staff happened to meet with Col. Thomas F. Van Natta, III, who had been the senior liaison officer with the 38th Division. They refought the campaign, and when the discussion turned to the long delay above Kamaing, the Chinese stated that he personally had seen several messages from the Generalissimo to Sun, as of this period, ordering him to proceed with caution.²²

¹⁸ (1) Lt. Col. Thomas F. Van Natta, III, History of the 38th Div, CAI, 1 Oct 43-31 Aug 45, MS. (Hereafter, Van Natta MS.) NCAC Files, KCRC. (2) G-3 Rpt, Hq Chih Hui Pu, 26 Apr 44, NCAC Files, KCRC. (3) Tanaka Narrative, App. (Overlay) II. (4) Stilwell Diary, Apr 44, 2 May 44.

¹⁹ (1) Memo, Generalissimo to Hearn for Stilwell, 6 Apr 44. Item 2219, Bk 6, JWS Personal File. (2) Rad SH 34, Stilwell to Marshall, 16 Apr 44. SNF 131.

²⁰ Memo, Hearn for Generalissimo, 16 Apr 44. Item 2221, Bk 6, JWS Personal File.

²¹ (1) *The Stilwell Papers*, p. 290. (2) Rad SH 45, Stilwell to Hearn, 17 Apr 44. Item 2231, Bk 6, JWS Personal File.

²² Van Natta Notes.

The Generalissimo's response to Hearn's and Stilwell's efforts was dampening:

I am in receipt of reports through the kindness of General Hearn. It is gratifying to know that if the situation in the Kohima area can be stabilized, the problem of supply and morale of the units now fighting in northern Burma will not deteriorate.

I beg to express my deepest respect to you for your leadership and direction of the progress we are making in northern Burma. Although I hold no responsibility in the combined operation of the present Burma campaign, I hope we will not cause unexpected damage and failure to our friends and units. That's why I am so concerned with the general situation in the Salween district.

We will exert to the fullest in doing whatever necessary to the attainment of our victory. Please do not unduly worry.

The Chinese Expeditionary Force in the Salween district is now prepared for counter-offense, and is very attentive in watching for the most opportune moment to coordinate with the campaign for Myitkyina. It is impossible now for us to directly reinforce northern Burma. But I hope you will maintain the limited offensive strength now at your disposal, and be judicious in its employment.

Generals Sun and Lieu [sic], under your brilliant leadership, have done valuable services for which I have extended to them my personal congratulations.

Respectfully yours,

CHIANG CHUNG CHEN [chop]²³

The passage that struck Stilwell with greatest force was the Generalissimo's assurance that he would keep his friends and troops from undue losses. Stilwell promptly relayed the message to Marshall. Analyzing his situation for the Chief of Staff, Stilwell concluded that he could take no remedial action, for any new division commanders would also get secret orders from the Generalissimo, and that anything precipitate would "risk the loss of all the results we have gotten to date." In effect, Stilwell would have to persevere in his exhortations and hope that they would be enough to bring the Chinese into Mogaung and Myitkyina.²⁴

So the 22d and 38th Divisions continued as before. When on 26 April General Sun came in with his plan to take Kamaing, Stilwell disapproved it, "verbally, and in writing." Sun came back next day with another, and that, too, Stilwell rejected. The 38th Division went ahead on the basis of existing orders.²⁵

Turning Tanaka's Flank

To break the stalemate along the Lahkraw Hka, the 114th Regiment had to clear away the Japanese observation posts in the hills. The 1/114th on the regiment's east flank cut around the flank of the *55th Regiment* on 28 April,

²³ Ltr 654, Generalissimo to Stilwell, 17 Apr 44. Item 2252, Bk 6, JWS Personal File.

²⁴ Rad SH 73, Stilwell to Marshall, 24 Apr 44. SNF 131.

²⁵ Stilwell Diary, 26, 27 Apr 44.

while the 2/114th pushed the same Japanese unit back a few hundred yards. This bending process continued during the next two days, and the 114th Regiment was well south of the enveloped Japanese flank and within half a mile of Wala. The 1st and 2d Battalions of the 114th then began moving straight south, leaving behind them pockets of determined Japanese who held up the 3/114th.

The 113th Regiment came back into line at the end of April to put frontal pressure on the Japanese positions along the Lahkraw Hka and Tigrawm Hka. Meanwhile, the 112th Regiment on the 38th Division's east flank was holding its salient without attempting to move. The Japanese managed to stabilize their lines on the creeks east and west of Wala and hold there until 6 May when a company of the 114th crossed the Nawngmi Hka and started the advance going again. Two days later the 114th's advance became general, while on the east at Stilwell's order the 112th began to gather its companies to take Warong.²⁶

East Wala and Hlagyi were taken on 9 May, and the 114th's penetration, driving deeper into the Japanese lines, began to approach the 112th's outposts just north of Manpin. By 12 May the 114th and 112th Regiments were able to maintain communications, with very few Japanese between them. The 114th's penetration weakened the position of the Japanese facing the 113th, and the 113th's line began to roll up slowly from east to west as the 1st and 2d Battalions went through what had been the center of the 55th's and 56th's positions to press on to Wala and Maran.²⁷

The whole right flank of General Tanaka's position in the Mogaung valley was now crumbling. To bolster it, Tanaka ordered the 1/55th, which had been his extreme right (east) flank detachment (and significantly, regarding his casualties, was commanded by a captain) to be reinforced by the 146th Regiment, 56th Division. Command of this task force was given to Maj. Gen. Toshiji Aida, Tanaka's infantry group commander.²⁸ About this time, the officers of the 18th Division learned that there was no chance of the Japanese counteroffensive in the Hukawng Valley on which so many hopes had been staked, for the *U* operation was failing "miserably." Their morale began to sag, and in Tanaka's later opinion this realization marked the "turning point" for his division.²⁹

The Japanese held desperately at West Wala, Maran, and Sharaw, temporarily stalemating the 113th Regiment. The 114th was sent hooking west behind these Japanese strongpoints, and the two regiments took them one after another between the 18th and 25th of May. To the east, in front of the 112th Regiment, the Warong position fell on 20 May. It had been stubbornly defended, and a number of Japanese were cut off along the Aucho-Warong trail north of there. With the clearing of the Japanese from these strongpoints

²⁶ (1) Van Natta MS. (2) 38th Div Sitreps, 29 Apr-8 May 44. NCAC Files, KCRC. (3) Stilwell Diary, 5 May 44.

²⁷ 38th Div Sitreps, 8-19 May 44. NCAC Files, KCRC.

²⁸ Tanaka Narrative, p. 4.

²⁹ Tanaka, Japanese Comments, Sec. III.

on the east side of the Mogaung valley, the right side of Tanaka's line seemed to be dissolving, even though the Japanese were still falling back slowly before the 22d Division on the center and left.³⁰ According to Tanaka, his right was in "a state of confusion." Part of the 55th Regiment still clung to a little piece of the Wala heights, with Chinese infantry between the regimental headquarters and the battalion position, and other Chinese to the rear of regimental headquarters.³¹

The 112th Regiment's Stand at the Seton Block

On the night of 19 May, General Sun probably received the Generalissimo's permission to take Kamaing, for the next morning at breakfast he told the American liaison officer, Colonel Van Natta: "We go on to take Kamaing now." Promptly, Sun and Van Natta called on Stilwell with Sun's plan to take the town. The change in Sun's attitude "astonished" Van Natta. Previously, Sun had been all difficulties, delays, complaints, and objections. Now, though Stilwell could promise to airdrop only 50 percent of the supplies he needed, Sun raised no objection.³² Sun's plan was simple and direct: send the 112th Regiment wide around the Japanese east flank to cut the Kamaing Road south of Seton. The 114th would exploit the evident confusion and weakness of the Japanese on the east by moving steadily down the Kumon Range to Tumbonghka near the point at which the Mogaung valley merges with the Irrawaddy valley. Its goal was Mogaung. This plan Stilwell approved.³³

On the 22d Division front, the task force which had taken Chishidu kept briskly toward the Kamaing Road several miles south of the Japanese position at Mataing Sakan. The 22d Division was thus keeping Tanaka fully occupied. Meanwhile, to the east, the 112th was cutting its way through the jungle, unobserved by the Japanese. The commander of the Japanese right flank, Aida, was watching events to the direct north, and the 112th slipped around him.³⁴

On 25 May the 112th (-) emerged from the jungle well in the rear of Tanaka's lines, and crossing the Mogaung River, burst into one of Tanaka's major supply centers. The Chinese captured 35 Japanese trucks, a jeep, a sedan, 8 warehouses of food and ammunition, 100 horses, 4 pieces of artillery, a workshop, and a motor pool. It was a great coup for General Sun and the Chinese, and a major crisis for Tanaka. If the 112th could keep its grip on the Kamaing Road, the 18th Division would be in its last battle. General Aida, who had had

³⁰ The Japanese were feeling the drain of the last six months' fighting. The 6th Company, 2/56th, was down to fifty men as of 15 April. (1) Statement, Superior Pvt Fujiyoshi Kawaguchi, 2 Oct 44. Folder 62J 41-50, NCAC Files, KCRC. (2) Van Natta MS. (3) 38th Div Sitreps, 15-22 May 44. NCAC Files, KCRC.

³¹ Tanaka, Japanese Comments, Sec. III.

³² Van Natta Notes.

³³ (1) *The Stilwell Papers*, p. 297. (2) G-3 Rpts, Hq Chih Hui Pu, 30 May, 10, 13 Jun 44. NCAC Files, KCRC.

³⁴ Tanaka, Japanese Comments, Sec. III.

strict orders from Tanaka to hold the village of Lawa, where several trails converge east of Kamaing, abandoned his position without authority, and the whole of Tanaka's right rear flank was wide open.³⁵

Tanaka stripped his division headquarters and service units of available troops and attacked the 112th at once. From his left flank he called in the *4th Regiment, 2d Division*, under Col. Yusaku Ichikari to attack the Chinese from the north. On the south, the *18th Division's* service troops were hastily assembled and hurled at the block. Simultaneously, Tanaka ordered his chief engineer to cut a secret escape route. With great relief the Japanese learned that such a route had already been reconnoitered. The trail ran from the Noidaw Bum to the Bumrawng Bum via Noidawyang.³⁶

The Japanese battered in vain at the Seton Block. The Chinese fought valiantly. Rain, floods, and constant Japanese attacks made the action one of the most trying of the campaign; the Chinese stood up to it with fortitude and devotion. Though Tanaka was withdrawing his forward elements from their positions in the Mogaung valley, it was probably obvious to him that complete withdrawal from the Kamaing area would find the *18th* minus its artillery and vehicles and so weakened as to need complete rebuilding. Moreover, he had orders to defend Kamaing to the last. Therefore, he had every incentive to break open the line of communications to the south, and his men did their best. Attack after attack was hurled at the 112th, but the Japanese on both sides of the Seton Block were suffering from malnutrition and disease; many of those to the south were replacements, and the 112th held doggedly. At the end of its ordeal, only two of the 112th's officers were on their feet.³⁷

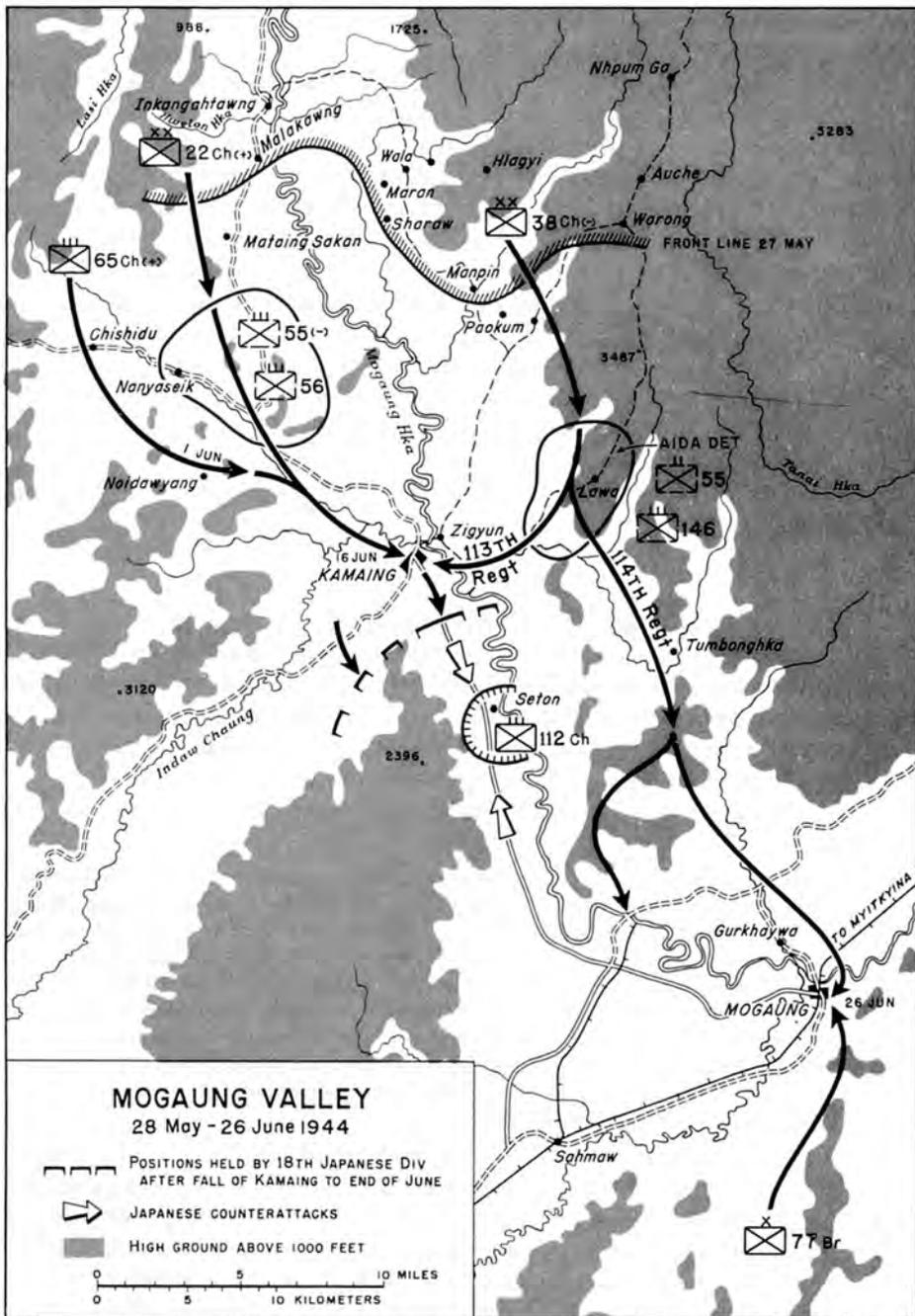
The success of the 112th Regiment in holding the Seton Block suggested that the climax of the valley campaign was close at hand. The Chinese, now that the Generalissimo had lifted all restrictions, drove in on Tanaka from all sides. (*Map 14*) The 22d Division task force which had been moving toward the Kamaing Road moved squarely across it on 1 June, cutting off the *55th*, *56th*, and *4th Infantry Regiments* from the withdrawal route in the hills by which Tanaka had planned to bypass Kamaing. Such was the current disorganization of the Japanese that the commander of the *55th Infantry Regiment* was in contact with but one company of his regiment. The *2d Battalion* (-) of the *56th*, supported by six 75-mm. and two 150-mm. pieces, tried to force the 22d Division off the Kamaing Road, but failed. Since the Chinese barred the escape route via the Noidaw Bum, the *56th* had to make a crude trail to the southeast, from the Pakhren Bum area, in the hope that, covering some 500 sick, the artillery, and the motor transport, it might swing east around the 22d Division's roadblock, and then back onto the escape trail.³⁸

³⁵ Tanaka, Japanese Comments, Sec. III.

³⁶ (1) G-3 Rpts, Hq Chih Hui Pu, 30 May, 10 Jun 44. NCAC Files, KCRC. (2) Tanaka Narrative, pp. 4-5.

³⁷ (1) Tanaka Narrative, p. 6. (2) Van Natta Notes.

³⁸ (1) Tanaka Narrative. (2) Tanaka, Japanese Comments, Sec. III.



MAP 14

R. Johnston

With the 22d Division blocking him just southeast of Nanyaseik, and the 38th firmly holding the Seton Block, Tanaka was faced with the gravest tactical problems. Nevertheless his skillful delaying action, greatly aided from December to May by Chinese tactics that to the Americans appeared willful delay, was yielding results for the Japanese. His attempt to hold until the monsoon closed down on the Chinese and on the American SOS showed acute appreciation of the factors in his favor. By June about one inch of rain fell daily. Though supply convoys could still move from Ledo to Shingbwiyang, the combat trail from Shingbwiyang south was very difficult. The road was graded to Tingkaw Sakan (mile 164) and metaled almost to Mile Post 138. However, rainfall had blocked the road over the flats north of Tingkaw Sakan. At the end of June the situation was unchanged. The Japanese stand at Kamaing and the heavy rains immobilized the survey party and the road trace.³⁹ As the flood waters rose in the valley, they effectively barred armor from moving south to Mogaung or Myitkyina.⁴⁰

Defeat of the 18th Division

The condition of the *18th Division* was now almost desperate. The rice ration, normally 860 grams per day, had shrunk to 100 grams. Lack of gasoline immobilized the Japanese trucks. Allied bombers had destroyed about 40 percent of the supply dumps. The artillery was rationed to four shells a day. The *18th's* units were far understrength. Where in April they had had perhaps fifty men to a company, now they were down to thirty.

The *56th Regiment* in particular was in grave straits. Its commander reported on 7 June:

The advance attack of the enemy from the north is unexpectedly swift; the enemy is advancing southward, threading through the gaps in our lines by wading chest-high through marshy zones. I am unable to contact the 1 and 3 Battalions, which are under my command, and their situation is unknown. The platoon occupying the vicinity of Nanyaseik received an enemy onslaught and all troops were annihilated. The enemy stormed into our main artillery position, and with our motor trucks, artillery and other vehicles crowded together in the vicinity of the narrow, forked road, there is much confusion. The transfer of most of the patients has been completed. The regiment will cover the withdrawal of the main body of the division at the sacrifice of our lives. I believe this will be our final parting. Please give my best regards to the division commander.

The survivors of the *56th's* infantry made good their escape to the southeast, then back to the sheltering hills, but the artillerymen died alongside their six 75-mm. and two 150-mm. pieces as the Chinese 149th Regiment overran them, while the motor transport was destroyed. The colors of the *56th Regiment* were safely conveyed to division headquarters in Kamaing.⁴¹ It was victory and complete evidence of the high martial qualities of the Chinese soldier.

³⁹ SOS in CBI, pp. 451-52.

⁴⁰ Brown Notes, p. 15.

⁴¹ (1) Tanaka Narrative, pp. 5, 6. (2) Dupuy Comments. (3) Tanaka, Japanese Comments, Sec. III.

The 113th Regiment in its turn moved south down the foothills of the Mogaung valley's east side. It took Lawa, then Zigyun, directly across the Nam Kawng Chaung from Kamaing. The 113th began to probe for a crossing. To the north and west of Kamaing, the 22d Division and the 149th Regiment kept the Japanese under heavy pressure. As the Japanese began to shift their forces west toward an escape route, they left a gap in their positions through which the 3d Battalion of the 65th Regiment made a deep penetration, permitting a wide envelopment that placed the battalion south and west of Kamaing. The remainder of the 65th poured on through. Meanwhile, the 149th made a close-in envelopment of Kamaing. Kamaing was now encircled to the west, north, and east, with the 149th due west. On 16 June the 149th moved out of the bush, across the fields, and into Kamaing to take the settlement. With Kamaing in Chinese hands, the *18th Division* was pushed into the hills south and west of Kamaing.⁴²

On that same 16 June that Kamaing fell, the 114th Regiment which had been sent south past the fighting around Kamaing met the Chindits at Gurk-haywa. Their meeting established a ground line of communications to the Chindits and meant that the Allies were solidly established in Burma, just about two years after the end of the First Burma Campaign.⁴³

The experiences of the surgical team from the 43d Portable Surgical Hospital which accompanied the 114th Regiment illustrate the marching qualities of the Chinese Army. By 28 May the terrain over which the 114th was making its way was so bad that horses could not be used. The medics then took with them only 100 pounds of supplies, carried by the Chinese. Unhappily, some of the medics' scanty food stock was stolen, and their rations were exhausted around 30 May. The inhabitants of the little village of Kawnan contributed some pork and rice. From 1 to 4 June the Americans lived on a cup of rice and water twice a day, which they obtained from the Chinese. Their operating table was a litter on two bamboo trestles over which hung a little thatched roof. Under these conditions, the surgical team performed 138 operations with but three postoperative deaths. When they rejoined the parent unit on 16 June, the members of the team had lost twenty-five pounds each on the average, and staggered as they walked. The 114th Regiment was still battleworthy.⁴⁴

On 22 June, *Headquarters, 33d Army*, ordered Tanaka to withdraw from the Kamaing area to the area north of Sahmaw. Tanaka argued that he should stand his ground while the *53d Division*, which had done so little to restore the Japanese fortunes, pushed aside the Seton Block and reopened his line of communications. The *33d Army* agreed, and for three days Tanaka and the *53d Division* tried to pry the Chinese away from their strangling hold. But the 112th

⁴² (1) Dupuy Comments. (2) G-3 Rpt, Hq Chih Hui Pu, 10, 13 Jun 44. NCAC Files, KCRC.

⁴³ Stilwell Diary, 16 Jun 44.

⁴⁴ Stone MS, pp. 169-74.

Regiment was now reinforced by the 113th, and they were too strong for the Japanese.

Tanaka reported as much, and 33d Army ordered the 18th Division to withdraw to the hills north of Sahmaw, a village on the Burma railway south of Mogaung. While the 4th and 146th Regiments made covering attacks, the remnants of the 55th and 56th Regiments destroyed their artillery and heavy equipment, then withdrew along the escape trail cut through the forest west of the Seton roadblock, the same trail of which Tanaka had earlier learned with such relief. The Japanese rear guard fell in behind the ragged survivors of the elite division that had taken Singapore in 1942, and the starving, malaria-ridden Japanese slowly trudged out of the Mogaung valley. The Chinese Army in India, with vital assistance from the 3d Indian Division and GALAHAD, had cleared the Japanese from the Hukawng and Mogaung valleys.

By keeping intact the blockade of China for yet another year, the 18th Division and Tanaka may have profoundly affected the history of Asia. If Stilwell had won a speedy victory in north Burma, the position of the Generalissimo's government in China could have been greatly strengthened by the return of good Chinese troops and the delivery of trucks and artillery to China in 1944. But events did not fall that way.

The Japanese paid heavily to hold north Burma and prolong the blockade of China. The 18th Division lost 50 percent of the strength with which it began the action; the 4th and 146th Regiments, perhaps 33 percent. Of the 18th Division, 3,000 men succeeded in withdrawing; of the two regiments, about 1,000 men each.⁴⁵

Stilwell and the Chindits

The meeting between Chinese and Briton, *lao ping* and Tommy, on 16 June dramatized the work of the 3d Indian Division in cutting the Japanese line of communications to Kamaing and Myitkyina and in containing substantial Japanese forces. The role of the Chindits occasioned heated controversy at the time, and some of the embers were still glowing after the war. A detailed account is beyond the scope of this volume, for the exchanges were numerous and bitter. The withdrawal of the Chindits from Mawlu and the belief, which the Chindits shared with the men of GALAHAD, that "after 90 days we get out of this epithet place," a belief in which SEAC concurred, led to strong differences between Stilwell and his staff on one side and Lentaigne, Mountbatten, and SEAC on the other.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ (1) Tanaka Narrative, p. 7. (2) Tanaka Interrog. OCMH.

⁴⁶ Stilwell Numbered Files 4 and 172 plus Folder, Memos and Operational Instructions (CAI, NCAC, 3d Indian Division, January-May 1944, NCAC Files, KCRC), contain many of the records in possession of American officers or agencies. The SEAC War Diary and Admiral Mountbatten's report give another point of view.

The officers of the 3d Indian Division and SEAC held as doctrine that when soldiers had been ninety days behind the Japanese lines they were *ipso facto* exhausted and should be withdrawn from the field. The belief was Wingate's, drawn from his 1943 experience, and was known to the men in the ranks. Moreover, the monsoon rains made the whole process of air supply most difficult, while the waters made cross-country marches extremely trying. Stilwell objected that the simple presence behind Japanese lines of the Chindits was no support to him, that they aided his operations only when they actually placed themselves across the Japanese lines of communications. Stilwell feared that in retreating to the north the Chindits would bring with them the swarms of Japanese they had attracted. He also feared the effect on the morale of Chinese who had been engaged since November 1943 if troops who entered the field only in March 1944 passed through the Chinese lines on their way out.

On 17 May, 3d Indian Division came under Stilwell's operational control, and Lentaigne placed his headquarters next to Stilwell's. Stilwell did not desire operational control, for he did not believe his orders would be accepted. Moreover, he was under constant pressure from SEAC and the Chindit commanders to agree to their early evacuation. While Stilwell and Lentaigne were conferring on 25 May on holding a position (BLACKPOOL) near the railway in the vicinity of Namkwin, and were agreeing that it should be evacuated only in case of emergency, the block was being evacuated. Stilwell's anger at this course of events, together with the steadily declining strength of the Chindits, created a crisis which soon required the attention of the highest SEAC officers.

Then, Stilwell ordered the 77th Brigade of the Chindits to attack Mogaung. Its capture would be a great aid to Stilwell's Chinese and would pull out the keystone of the whole Japanese position in north Burma. Between 22 and 26 June, 77th Brigade attacked Mogaung with a dash and gallantry that drew praise from U.S. observers, but it lacked the weight to overrun Mogaung in one rush. The 114th Regiment, 38th Division, joined in the fight. Mogaung fell on 26 June and both units claimed credit for the victory.

The commander of the 77th Brigade now insisted that his men be withdrawn as unfit for further service and soon after himself ordered them withdrawn. Charges of bad faith were freely made on all sides and feeling ran high. Stilwell believed the 77th Brigade had been withdrawn in disobedience of written orders to hold its ground and prevent the Japanese from sending heavy reinforcements to Myitkyina. Lentaigne assumed responsibility for the act as necessary to preserve his troops.

There was still another clash between Stilwell and the Chindit headquarters in June, when Stilwell asked Lentaigne to report why the 111th Brigade had not complied with a series of orders issued between 8 and 17 June. These called for the 111th to occupy positions in the rather large area between Pahok and Sahmaw in order to guard the right, or western, flank of the 3d Indian Division. The matter was aired at a meeting on 30 June between Mountbatten, Stilwell,

Lentaigne, and members of Stilwell's staff. There it developed that Stilwell had misunderstood the orders his staff had issued the 111th. These had called for the occupation of an area, rather than of a point, Sahmaw itself, as Stilwell had believed. The conference agreed on a further evacuation of the Chindits after the southward advance of the Allies in north Burma had reached Sahmaw.

In the weeks that remained of the Chindits' campaigning the 111th Brigade briefly seized Point 2171, a hill feature north of Taungni, which was a critical terrain feature controlling approaches to the railway. The Japanese defended it stubbornly; significant of the bitterness of the fighting was the posthumous Victoria Cross awarded Maj. Frank G. Blaker. The 14th Brigade relieved the 111th and, reoccupying Point 2171 in the process, cleared the hills to the western side of the railway.

Fortunately, the veteran British 36th Division was arriving in the forward area to replace the battered Chindits; the steady success of the campaign in north Burma made air space for evacuation available, and sober second thought prevailed. In retrospect, it seems apparent that neither Stilwell nor Mountbatten wanted to let so potentially grave a dispute develop further. After heated discussion, the charges made were simply dropped, and the flood of events began to sweep over the episode, as the jungle closed over the paths and clearings where the Chindits had fought and died.

As the Chindits were slowly coming out of Burma there was apparently some disposition to disparage their accomplishments. SEAC considered they had yielded 5 percent return instead of the hoped-for 15 percent—which latter would have been generous indeed. Some considered that GALAHAD and 23d Brigade (which had fought the *15th Army*), with their tactic of close-in envelopment, had demonstrated the correct use of long-range penetration groups.⁴⁷ A minute of Giffard's based on the view that GALAHAD and 23d Brigade had been correctly used suggested forming six long-range penetration brigades for the next campaign. When that campaign began, Fourteenth Army in its supply arrangements and its tactics reflected many of the pioneering Chindits' arrangements.

In assaying what Wingate and the Chindits had done, a group of former Japanese officers wrote:

The Chindits interfered with the Imphal Operations from the very start and forced *15th Army* to divert one battalion each of the *15th* and *33d Divisions*, to deal with them. Also diverted was the main force of the *53d Division* which was to be the general reserve for the *Burma Area Army* and was, if there had been no such emergency as the descent of the Chindits, to have reinforced the *15th Army* at Imphal. The *5th Air Division* was obliged to use half of its strength against the Chindits when its full strength should have been employed to support the *15th Army*.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ (1) Telg 2739, Air Ministry to SACSEA, COS (RL) 206, 25 May 44; SAC (44) 307, 30 Jun 44, sub: Reconstruction of LRPG's by CinC, Eleventh Army Gp. SEAC War Diary. (2) Lt. Col. J. E. B. Barton, Special Force in Direct Support of C.A.I., draft monograph. Cabinet Office, Hist Sec, London.

⁴⁸ Japanese Officers' Comments, p. 18.

As for the operations of the *18th Division*, Japanese sources state that cutting its supply line made its holding operation useless.⁴⁹

The March to Myitkyina

The clearing of the Mogaung valley accomplished one half of Stilwell's objective for the spring of 1944 and brought nearer the ultimate accomplishment of the other—the taking of Myitkyina, the goal of this campaign. His aim, indeed, had been to take Myitkyina first, but events had not fallen that way. On 21 April Stilwell set up a force to seize Myitkyina, and called it END RUN (harking back to his college football days, as he often liked to do). Wasting away as rapidly as were the Chindits, GALAHAD now had but 1,400 men of its original 2,997, and so they had to be combined with Chinese troops.

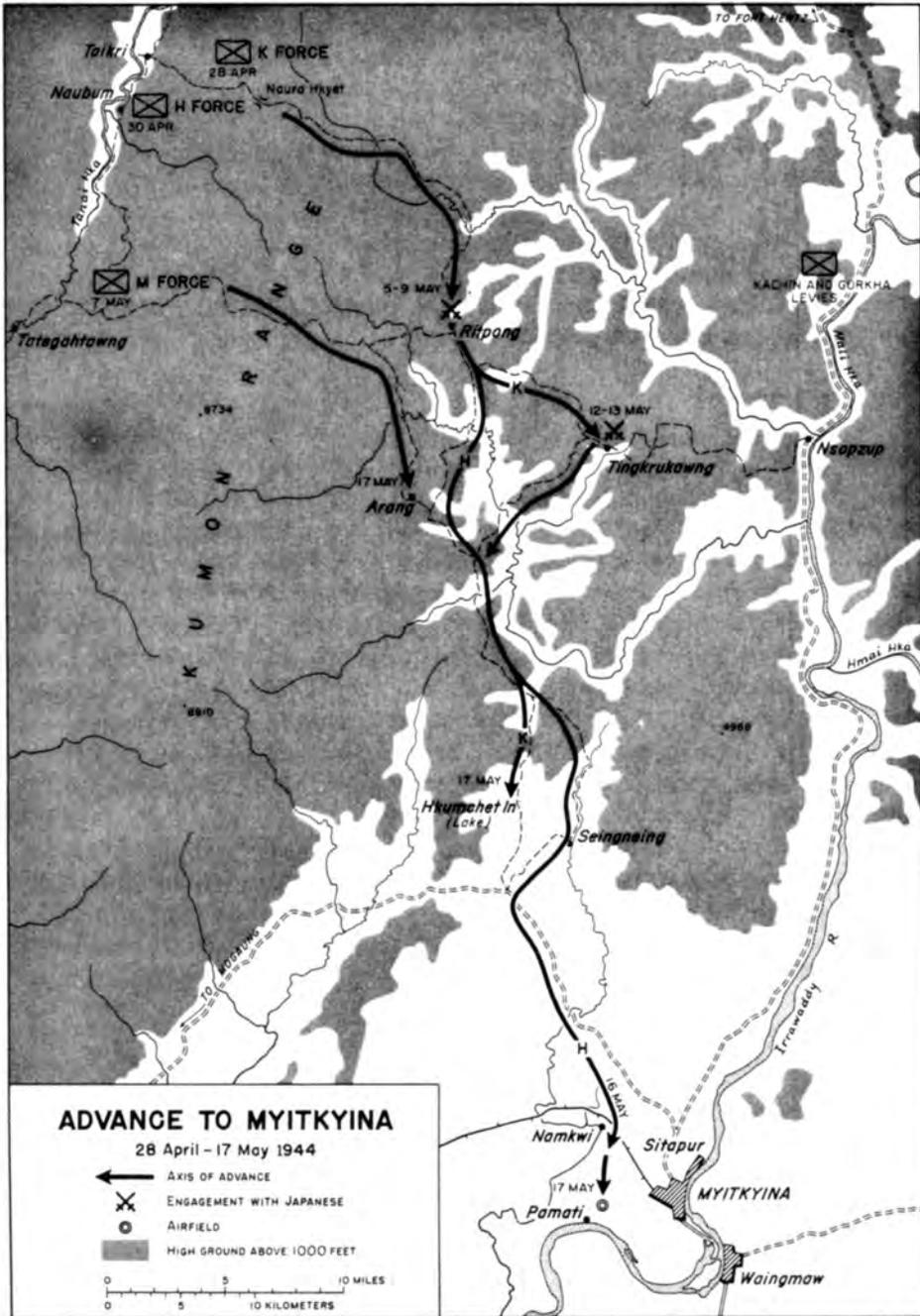
Three combat teams were created: H Force under Colonel Hunter (150th Regiment, 50th Division, and the 1st Battalion of GALAHAD; 3d Company, Animal Transport Regiment, and a battery of the 22d Division artillery); K Force under Colonel Kinnison (88th Regiment, 30th Division, and 3d Battalion of GALAHAD); M Force under Colonel McGee (the 2d Battalion of GALAHAD plus 300 Kachins). With them went surgical teams from the Seagrave Hospital Unit and from the 73d Evacuation Hospital, plus the whole of the 42d Portable Surgical Hospital. Whatever prestige might accrue from the swift seizure of Myitkyina might have been the Generalissimo's, for Stilwell now urged him to send a Chinese division from China to Myitkyina via the Hpimaw pass. The Generalissimo refused.⁵⁰

Shortly after the siege of Nhpum Ga, Merrill from his sickbed sent a staff officer to Hunter's headquarters to advise him that a thrust over the mountains at Myitkyina was contemplated. This was a change from the original plan for working down the Hukawng and Mogaung valleys, and terrain data plus staff studies were obviously called for. Hunter at once put the GALAHAD staff to work. From their studies they prepared a rough plan which was returned to Merrill. Their plan appeared an improvement over Merrill's original ideas and he drafted the final plan for Stilwell accordingly. (*Map 15*)

The version approved by Stilwell called for crossing the Kumon Range with H and K Forces via the Naura Hkyet (a 6,100-foot pass), then turning south on Ritpong. From there the two forces would take separate routes that would later converge on Myitkyina. M Force would be in position to cover the south flank, the most likely danger spot, though in such a march through territory nominally in Japanese possession no one could guess from what quarter the enemy might attack, and which force would actually have the blocking role.

⁴⁹ SEATIC Bull 240, p. 9; SEATIC Bull 242, p. 20; SEATIC Bull 247, pp. 12-13. MID Library.

⁵⁰ (1) FO 14, Hq Chih Hui Pu, 21 Apr 44. NCAC Files, KCRC. (2) GALAHAD, pp. 87-88. (3) Stone MS, p. 182. (4) Rad SH 36, 16 Apr 44. Item 2228, Bk 6, JWS Personal File.



MAP 15

Merrill, somewhat improved in health, again assumed command of the force, with orders to take and hold the Myitkyina airstrips. In giving Merrill his orders for the march, Stilwell stated that he knew he was calling on GALAHAD for more effort than could fairly be expected, but that he had no other option. In the light of that, and the exhaustion of the unit, he authorized Merrill to begin evacuating GALAHAD "without further order if everything worked out as expected."⁵¹

After discussing the plan with his battalion commanders, Merrill said a few words about what would be done for GALAHAD on completion of the mission.⁵² Such a prospect was a tremendous incentive to the weary men of GALAHAD, and Merrill believed many made the march as a last desperate effort for a great prize.⁵³ Capt. William Laffin was sent ahead with 2d Lt. Paul A. Dunlap, thirty Kachin Rangers, and thirty coolies to make the trail negotiable.

K Force moved out on 28 April; H Force, on 30 April. The so-called trail over the pass was more nearly a route used by the Kachins; in some places there was no path. Twenty pack animals slipped and fell off the narrow, muddy way. It was a grueling march for men who had already marched 500 miles and fought several battles, most of the time on K ration. Before END RUN Force reached Ritpong, it had only one contact with the Japanese. A few of the enemy were flushed from cover by the 1/88th, but it was feared the Japanese held Ritpong in strength.⁵⁴

On 5 May, when the leading elements of K Force (3d Battalion of GALAHAD and the 88th Regiment, 30th Division) were a mile from Ritpong, Colonel Kinnison began an envelopment to hit the village from north and south. The 3d Battalion managed to cut its way through the woods and place itself across the southern approaches to Ritpong on 6 May. Meanwhile, the 89th Regiment tried to take Ritpong from the north but failed. Next day an American reinforced company attacked Ritpong from the south but was stalled by a machine gun nest.

Since the Chinese were attacking skillfully and well, Colonel Kinnison decided to let them take Ritpong, while the Americans blocked the trail to the south. During the night of 7-8 May Japanese breakout attempts were repulsed. The Chinese attacked again on the 8th, and Ritpong fell on the 9th. The delay at Ritpong permitted H Force to overtake and pass through K Force.

Meanwhile, M Force (2d Battalion of GALAHAD, plus 300 Kachins) had had one skirmish with Japanese, routed them, and begun to cut its own paths. The march was fatiguing in the extreme; fully half the animals died of exhaus-

⁵¹ (1) Quotation is from Merrill Notes. (2) Hunter Notes.

⁵² Ltr and Rpt, Office IG, CBI, to CG, USAF CBI, 12 Jul 44, sub: Investigation *re* 5307th (Prov) Unit (GALAHAD) (hereafter, GALAHAD Investigation), pp. 10, 17, 21, 64. AG 333, NCAC Files, KCRC.

⁵³ (1) Merrill Notes. (2) Hunter Notes.

⁵⁴ GALAHAD, pp. 87-91.

tion or fell into the gorges. The men were further harassed by fevers and dysentery, but they were only two days behind H and K Forces.⁵⁵

Proceeding from Ritpong, K Force feinted toward Nsozup, a Japanese supply point on the trail from Myitkyina to Sumprabum, to attract the Japanese. While so engaged, K met a Japanese force near Tingkrukawng that was strong enough to pin both of its combat teams to the ground and then to halt the Chinese when they were committed. Attempts to envelop the Japanese failed. Since H Force (1st Battalion of GALAHAD and the 150th Regiment, 50th Division) was proceeding unmolested, Merrill told Kinnison to withdraw. K Force then picked up H's trail and followed it to Myitkyina. Moving on, Kinnison reached Hkumchet In on 17 May and paused to await an airdrop. M Force was similarly engaged at Arang. During these strenuous days, Kinnison became ill of the deadly mite typhus, was evacuated, and died with shocking speed. In all, 149 men contracted the little-known scourge. Many of them died.⁵⁶

MERCHANT OF VENICE!

While K Force was fighting at Tingkrukawng, H Force kept on to a river just south of the village of Namkwi on the Mogaung-Myitkyina railroad and about two miles from the principal Myitkyina airstrip that lay almost due west of Myitkyina itself. Despite the several brushes with the Japanese, Kachin informants were sure that the Myitkyina garrison was not on the alert. To ensure surprise, before Colonel Hunter and his force bivouacked for the night of 16 May they rounded up the local Burmans and kept them under careful watch. A patrol reported the airstrip lightly held. Hunter decided to attack at 1000, 17 May. The 150th Regiment was ordered to take the airstrip, while GALAHAD personnel took the Irrawaddy ferry terminal at Pamati. The other airstrip, north of the town, was left alone for the present.

The attack went like a service school demonstration, for though the Japanese knew Myitkyina was in danger, the actual assault was a complete surprise. Colonel Maruyama, the Japanese commander, had two understrength battalions of the *114th Regiment* in the town of Myitkyina and in its little suburb of Sitapur. There were 100 more men of the *15th Airfield Battalion* on the north and south airstrips, 318 men from labor and service units on various details in Myitkyina, and 320 patients in a military hospital. Perhaps 700 able-bodied Japanese were present when the battle began.⁵⁷

As soon as Colonel Hunter considered his hold on the major airstrip secure, he sent the prearranged code signal, MERCHANT OF VENICE, which meant the process of supply and reinforcement could begin. Previous code signals sent

⁵⁵ GALAHAD, pp. 91-97.

⁵⁶ Ltr, Brig Gen Waldemar F. Breidster to Ward, 4 Sep 51. OCMH.

⁵⁷ (1) GALAHAD, pp. 97-101. (2) G-2 Per Rpt, Hq Chih Hui Pu, 24 May 44; PW History, Folder, Current Chronological PW File. (Hereafter, PW History.) NCAC Files, KCRC.



A BRITISH ANTI-AIRCRAFT UNIT *at Myitkyina airfield.*

forty-eight and twenty-four hours in advance of the actual descent on the airstrip had alerted Stilwell's headquarters, and the process of reinforcement had been prepared. It had been feared that the Japanese might have been able to damage the airstrip. So the Air Forces had gliders with aviation engineers standing by. Hunter reported by radio that the strip was in good condition, word which by agreement with Merrill was to have begun a flow of food, ammunition, and infantry.⁵⁸

The process of reinforcement was a disappointment to the waiting troops. A company of the 879th Engineer Aviation Battalion came in via glider; a battery of .50-caliber anti-aircraft was flown in; and then the 2d Battalion, Chinese 89th Regiment, arrived before the weather closed in on the 17th.⁵⁹

At this point General Stratemyer, commanding the Army Air Forces, India-Burma Sector, intervened and upset the planned schedule of resupply

⁵⁸ Hunter tells, in his notes on the draft of this chapter, of his effort to prearrange through Merrill for the immediate supply of food and ammunition, and for the arrival of infantry to exploit the dazzling success that would be gained were the strip captured quickly in good condition.

⁵⁹ (1) Stilwell Diary, 17 May 44. (2) *The Stilwell Papers*, p. 296. (3) G-3 Per Rpt, Hq Chih Hui Pu, 24 May 44. NCAC Files, KCRC. (4) NCAC History, Vol. I, App. 2, The Siege of Myitkyina, pp. 13-17. (Hereafter, this section of the NCAC History will be called Siege of Myitkyina.) (5) Hunter Notes.

and reinforcement by ordering the W and X Troops of the 69th Light (Anti-aircraft) Regiment, a British unit, to be flown in. When these arrived on the 18th, Merrill and Hunter were sorely disappointed to receive more anti-aircraft instead of the infantry and supplies so badly needed if the town was to be taken quickly. There could be no quarrel with Stratemeyer's intent, for the precaution was a reasonable one, but the local commanders would have preferred the arrangements they themselves had made.⁶⁰

Back at his headquarters Stilwell was exultant. Again and again he had been told that Myitkyina could not be taken, if taken could not be held, and if held was not worth holding. Now his transports were landing on Myitkyina airstrip, flying in the Chinese who would take the principal center of north Burma and go on to lift the blockade of China. In six months his forces had driven 500 miles into Burma and won engagements against seven Japanese regiments, among them, the victors of Singapore. The brilliant seizure of the Myitkyina airstrip was the height of Stilwell's career and the grand climax of the North Burma Campaign.⁶¹

The seizure of the principal airstrip at Myitkyina on 17 May was a stunning surprise to SEAC. The Prime Minister sent a radio to Admiral Mountbatten asking if he had expected the sudden blow at Myitkyina. In reply, Mountbatten pointed out that he had heard only incidentally that Stilwell planned to attack Myitkyina. Since this attack might eventually involve the use of considerable numbers of British troops, Mountbatten thought that he should have known beforehand of the decision to attack Myitkyina and planned to send Stilwell a personal letter explaining his position.⁶²

Stilwell's coup cast a new light on the long-debated SEAC directive. As the Allied columns drew ever closer to Myitkyina, the British and American views on the North Burma Campaign had been approaching agreement. The Strategy and Policy Group of OPD on 3 May had noted that the speed of the American advance across the Pacific promised to outstrip any ground action that might be undertaken in China, which suggested to them that Stilwell should be told to concentrate on building up his air force in China to support the U.S. offensive in the Pacific.⁶³ The current position of the British Chiefs of Staff was an acceptance of Mountbatten's view that SEAC's directive should be to develop, maintain, broaden, and protect the air link to China with its current resources, in time to support projected operations against Formosa.⁶⁴

The Joint Staff Planners of the JCS on 16 May suggested adopting the British position. That same day, the Army Service Forces, which had been

⁶⁰ (1) Ltr cited n. 16. (2) Hunter Notes.

⁶¹ *The Stilwell Papers*, p. 296.

⁶² (1) Min, SAC's 104th Mtg, 20 May 44. SEAC War Diary. (2) This letter cannot be found among Stilwell's papers, and perhaps was not sent.

⁶³ Memo, Roberts for ACofS, OPD, 3 May 44, sub: Memo for Gen Somervell Concerning Plan of Action Within China. Case 367, OPD 381 Security, A47-30.

⁶⁴ JPS 406/3, 16 May 44, sub: Strategy in SEAC.

energetic in support of the Ledo Road, argued that the Joint Planners were in effect suggesting an end to offensive action in north Burma at a time when the trace of the Ledo Road was virtually in Allied hands. Then came Stilwell's bold stroke at Myitkyina. In response the planners decided to suggest that acceptance of the British position be contingent on securing the Mogaung-Myitkyina area.⁶⁵

The result of these different points of view, powerfully affected by the blow at Myitkyina, was a compromise CCS directive to SEAC, issued 2 June 1944. Unlike the QUADRANT directive, which had taken no stand on ground versus air operations in Burma, the new CCS directive gave first priority to building up the Hump operation in order to provide the maximum flow of supplies to the air force in China for support of Pacific operations. So far as was consistent with the primary objective, SEAC was to press advantages against the enemy by exerting the maximum ground and air effort, and in so doing be prepared to exploit the opening of the Ledo Road.

Securing Myitkyina, conquering enough of north Burma to protect the Allied hold on that key point, and building pipelines to China were viewed as integral parts of building up air strength in China. By omitting ground operations save as they did not conflict with the Hump build-up, the CCS temporarily resolved the conflict over the location of a ground offensive. In this way the controversy over operations in north Burma as against those in Sumatra (Operation CULVERIN) was settled for the present, and perhaps for good.⁶⁶

The Myitkyina airstrip was not long in proving its worth, and as the weeks went on more and more troops, food, ammunition, artillery, and construction equipment were flown in to carry on operations against the town of Myitkyina, to build the line of communications across north Burma, and to support the transports that made Myitkyina a base on the way to China. From May to October 1944, about 14,000 transport flights into Myitkyina were logged, carrying over 40,000 tons of cargo.⁶⁷

The First Attempts To Take the Town

Initial attempts to take the town of Myitkyina were hampered by poor intelligence and faulty organization. At Myitkyina the local intelligence agencies gained the mistaken impression that they were faced by relatively few Japanese, and plans were made accordingly. On 18 May the total of Japanese was set at 300; on 15 June after a period of uncertainty G-2 of the Myitkyina

⁶⁵ Memo, Deputy Director, Plans and Opns, ASF, for ACofS, OPD, 16 May 44, sub: Strategy in SEAC; Memo, Roberts for CG, ASF, atn Deputy Director, Plans and Opns, ASF, 19 May 44, sub: Strategy in SEAC; JCS 774/1, ABC 384 (Burma), 8-25-42, Sec 6, A48-224. JCS approved this paper on 26 May 1944 as JCS 774/1.

⁶⁶ (1) Min, CCS 161st Mtg, 2 Jun 44. (2) CM-OUT 46159, Marshall to Stilwell, 4 Jun 44.

⁶⁷ EAC Despatch, p. 115.

Task Force set the number at 500, a gross underestimate.⁶⁸ There was much confusion in the first few days at Myitkyina. It was aggravated by the fact that the Chinese troops came from three separate divisions, the 30th, 14th, and 50th. The toll it took was heavy.

On the afternoon of 17 May, after the airfield was cleared of Japanese, two battalions of the 150th Regiment moved off on the first attempt to take Myitkyina. (*Map 16*) Following the wrong road, they went toward Sitapur instead; on encountering Japanese rifle fire, they lost direction completely and engaged in fighting among themselves. Meanwhile, Colonel Hunter was calling up K and M Forces, directing them to move at once. Although the men had not eaten for several days, they abandoned all attempts at receiving the airdrop they so badly needed, took up their packs, and set out for Myitkyina.⁶⁹

As one GALAHAD company trudged on to the airstrip, Merrill noted that hardly a man could walk normally, for fatigue, Naga sores, and skin diseases ("jungle rot") were making themselves pitifully evident. One platoon, tormented by dysentery, had cut away the seats of their fatigues so as not to be unduly hampered in combat. His "men were pitiful but still a splendid sight," wrote Merrill after the war.

On 18 May the rest of the 89th Regiment and a company of heavy mortars were flown in. They were followed next day by the 3/42d of the Chinese 14th Division. Stilwell arrived to watch operations.

About noon of the 18th the 150th Regiment of the Chinese 50th Division was sent toward Myitkyina and, repeating the mishap of the day before, became confused, fought among themselves, and drove themselves right back out of the town. In these episodes passed the opportunity of swiftly overrunning Myitkyina. GALAHAD personnel were now fatigued and riddled with tropical disease, just as the Chindits were, and no fresh regiment had been provided from the United States for Myitkyina, on whose capture the JCS had placed such emphasis. In the strain of these days Merrill suffered another heart attack and had to be evacuated. An assault on 20 May carried the 150th Regiment to the railroad yards, but then was stopped by heavy Japanese fire. The 150th, which by this time had taken 671 casualties since the campaign opened, had to be withdrawn.⁷⁰

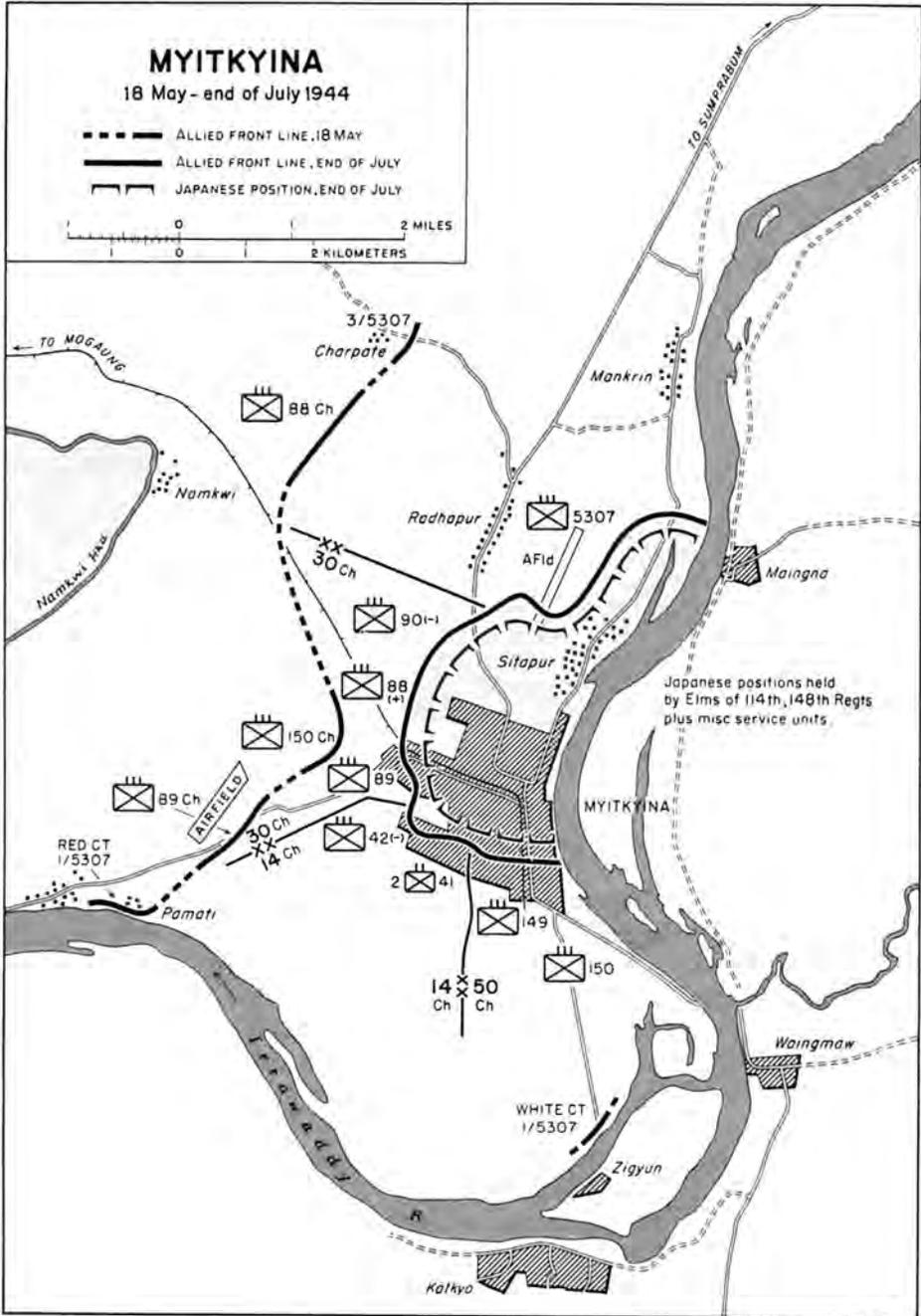
Japanese Build-up at Myitkyina

The Japanese commanders at Myitkyina had been given the mission of holding there until mid-August. They were soon winning the race to build up

⁶⁸ (1) GALAHAD, p. 103. (2) G-2 Roundup, Hq MTF, 15 Jun 44. AG 319.1, NCAC Files, KCRC. This document quotes GALAHAD Force officers to that effect, but the estimate was picked up by Headquarters, Chih Hui Pu, in their G-2 Daily Situation Report 33 of 30 June, and as late as 24 July Brig. Gen. Russell E. Randall, arriving at Myitkyina, was told there were only 500 Japanese there. (3) Rpts 470, 477, 478, JICA, 6 Sep 44. JICA CBI Br, Calcutta, India. OCMH.

⁶⁹ (1) GALAHAD, p. 98. (2) Siege of Myitkyina, p. 11.

⁷⁰ (1) Siege of Myitkyina, pp. 18-19. (2) Stilwell Diary, 18 May 44.



MAP 16

C.A. Frost



JAPANESE DEFENSIVE POSITIONS *in the railroad yards at Myitkyina.*

enough strength to carry out their orders. As early as 1700 on 17 May Colonel Maruyama had brought the main force of the *1/148th, 56th Division*, in across the Irrawaddy. Other Japanese hurried in at night through the gaps in the Allied position about the city, so many that by 31 May there were about 2,500 Japanese in Myitkyina plus several hundred sick and wounded. From the *56th Division* on the Salween came the commander of its infantry group, Maj. Gen. Genzu Mizukami, with his staff, the rest of the *1/148th*, and two pieces of artillery. Assuming command, General Mizukami ordered that Myitkyina hold for at least three months and the surrounding area for thirty days more to keep the Chinese and Americans from moving south into central Burma. Control of Japanese operations at Myitkyina was assumed by *33d Army* in early June, and Tanaka was freed to concentrate on operations around Kamaing.⁷¹

Fortunately for the attackers, the Japanese grossly overestimated their strength, as they seem to have done throughout the North Burma Campaign. It was thought that the Myitkyina Task Force comprised 30,000 men. The Japanese knew they inflicted heavy casualties but thought that replacements

⁷¹ (1) Maruyama Interrog. OCMH. (2) Tanaka, Japanese Comments, Sec. III. (3) Japanese Officers' Comments, p. 19.

were coming in at a corresponding rate.⁷² Many of the Japanese sick took their places in the fortifications that were quickly built and fought with the traditional stubborn valor of their people. Equipped with plenty of machine guns and mortars, and four mountain guns, they were well dug in, ready to die for the Emperor. From beginning to end, at least 4,600 Japanese fought at Myitkyina; the peak strength at any one time may have been 3,500 men. Their morale was high and it was long before they stopped believing that relief would soon arrive.⁷³ Indeed, at one time a regimental combat team of the *53d Division* under a Colonel Asano was actually under way to relieve Myitkyina but the Allied advance on Mogaung forced its recall.⁷⁴

So, this was no handful to be brushed aside, especially not by troops fatigued by long exertion and privation, whose fire support was initially a battery of pack howitzers plus what the fighter bombers could do. Perhaps luckily, these steadily worsening odds were unknown to the attackers. On 19 May Merrill estimated there were two and one-half battalions of Japanese in Myitkyina plus more coming up from the south. Stilwell's G-2, Colonel Stilwell, was skeptical. Certainly on the 19th the organizational framework of two and one-half Japanese battalions was in Myitkyina but the numerical equivalent of such a force was not.⁷⁵

Hoping for a quick seizure of the town, which would permit subsequent operations against the rear of the Japanese forces on the Salween front, Stilwell briefly considered asking that the British 36th Division be rushed in to take Myitkyina. Giving no reason in his diary, he decided against this move and instead resolved to order in some U.S. combat engineers from the Ledo Road. "I will probably have to use some of our engineer units to keep an American flavor in the fight," he told Marshall.⁷⁶

GALAHAD took the suburban village of Charpate, north-northwest of Myitkyina, and the 88th Regiment extended its lines south to the railway tracks, which in this area run northwest before turning south to Mogaung. Unfortunately, K Force did not occupy a small height which dominated Charpate. M Force took the little settlement of Namkwi without opposition, in order to shield the Allies against any Japanese attempt to relieve Myitkyina by an attack from Mogaung. On 21 May the 3d Battalion of GALAHAD was

⁷² Maruyama Interrog. OCMH.

⁷³ (1) GALAHAD, pp. 104-05. (2) PW History. (3) Statement, Sgt Maj Hirose Yutaka, 10 Aug 44. Folder 62J, 161-170. NCAC Files, KCRC. A code clerk, Yutaka was an excellent source of information on the Japanese side. (4) Maruyama Interrog; Tanaka Interrog. OCMH. (5) SEATIC Bull 247, pp. 18-19. MID Library. (6) A G-2, Myitkyina Task Force, memorandum, 9 August 1944, estimated that 4,075 Japanese were killed at Myitkyina. These, plus the several hundred who escaped, come close to Tanaka's figure of 4,600. The garrison commander, Maruyama, set his strength at 3,500, which can be reconciled with the above if Tanaka's figure is taken as the grand total. The G-2 estimate is in Wessels' File, OCMH.

⁷⁴ SEATIC Bull 244, p. 2. MID Library.

⁷⁵ Col Stilwell's Diary, 19 May 44.

⁷⁶ (1) Stilwell Diary, 22 May 44. (2) Rad CHC 1097, Stilwell to Marshall, 22 May 44. SNF 131.



ALLIED CASUALTIES AT MYITKYINA AIRFIELD



ordered by the newly created Headquarters, Myitkyina Task Force, to seize the auxiliary airstrip north of Myitkyina. Next day, Col. John E. McCammon was put in command. At his disposal were the 88th and 89th Regiments of the 30th Division, Gen. Hu Su commanding, an improvised division of the 150th and the first echelons of the 42d Regiment, under Maj. Gen. Pan Yu-kun of the 50th Division (who arrived 23 May), the survivors of GALAHAD, the Seagrave Hospital Unit, and the 42d Portable Surgical Hospital.⁷⁷ For the occasion, Stilwell, stretching several points, told McCammon to assume the rank and insignia of brigadier general and rushed off a recommendation for promotion to the War Department. McCammon's assignment was a difficult one, doubly so for a man just out of hospital. Keeping his stars in his pocket, and assisted by Hunter as executive and commander of GALAHAD, McCammon took up his task.⁷⁸

McCammon's command was a little island of precariously held territory, which lay between Mizukami's garrison in Myitkyina and the Japanese forces to the south, north, and west. Across the Irrawaddy to the east was a small force of Chindits, Morris Force, with orders to block Japanese traffic from the east, a task of which it proved incapable. McCammon's forces were completely dependent on air supply, which in the early weeks kept them in about two days' reserve supplies.

The main airstrip was tightly held by the 150th Regiment, whose lines extended toward the Irrawaddy. North of it and to the west were the perimeter defenses of two GALAHAD combat teams. The 88th and 89th Regiments were on either side of the tracks of the Myitkyina-Mogaung railway, and the 3d Battalion of GALAHAD was north of Myitkyina. All units were deployed into strongpoints organized for all-round defense. There was much patrol activity during the daylight hours to keep clear the trails over which oxcarts moved supplies from the airstrip.

Gaps were numerous through which the Japanese could work their way into Myitkyina, and Mizukami set up a regular ferry service across the Irrawaddy by which supplies and individual replacements could be brought in. The terrain was excellent for defense. The roads lay high above the surrounding rice paddies, and each was therefore an earthwall making a first-rate obstacle. Clumps of trees were all about, and there were plenty of houses on the outskirts of town which the Japanese used to advantage. The northern part of the Japanese perimeter was well shielded by a crescent-shaped depression

⁷⁷ (1) GALAHAD, p. 106. (2) Siege of Myitkyina, p. 22, and App. (3) Stone MS, pp. 187-89.

⁷⁸ (1) Probably McCammon was given this rank to help him command the Chinese. Merrill recalled suggesting to Stilwell that a Chinese officer be placed in command at Myitkyina. There is no evidence from which to reconstruct Stilwell's intentions, but McCammon's elevation marked the sixth time Stilwell had used American officers to command Chinese troops in Burma, McCammon's predecessors being Boatner, Col. Rothwell Brown, Col. Campbell Brown, Colonel Sliney, and Colonel Dupuy. See Merrill Notes. (2) Notes by Col McCammon on draft MS of this chapter. (3) Ltr, Dupuy to Ward, 12 Sep 52. Colonels Sliney and Dupuy were authorized to give commands to Chinese artillery in Stilwell's name.



JAPANESE TRENCHES *at the outskirts of Myitkyina.*

which the monsoon rains quickly turned into a swamp. In effect, the Allies and the Japanese were committed to position warfare. Though the operation was called a siege, the Japanese received a steady trickle of supplies and replacements until Mogaung fell.

The problem facing the Allied command was to overcome the combination of machine guns and earthworks which had been so effective on the Western Front in Europe in 1914-18. They would have to do it without tanks, with a final maximum of fourteen artillery pieces, and with air support (the twelve P-40's of the 88th Fighter Squadron, ultimately based on the airstrip itself) which, though devoted and skillful, did not have the weight to drive the Japanese from their positions. To make matters completely uncomfortable and further complicated, after mid-May the rains grew steadily worse, which made air supply very difficult. It was Cassino on a shoestring.

The first phase of the operation was an attempt to occupy the town by moving in. It was dominated by the belief that Myitkyina was lightly held. The 3d Battalion, GALAHAD, attacked southward on 21 May, but while still far from the northern airstrip was forced to dig in at the Mankrin-Radhapur road junction. That night it was attacked from the rear, or Mogaung, side and the following day fell back to Charpate. The night of the 23d the Japanese

struck again, and the tired, fever-ridden men of the 3d Battalion repelled the attack with difficulty. Another attack came the next morning, and the 3d was pushed back. These were ominous signs of the shifting balance of strength. There was yet another in GALAHAD's evacuation rate, now running between 75 and 100 a day. At this time, from 15 to 30 men a day began to report sick with symptoms of the lethal mite or scrub typhus, and about 80 percent of GALAHAD suffered from dysentery in various forms.⁷⁹

Colonel McCammon's first attempt at a full-dress assault was made on 24 May. The 88th and 89th Regiments were ordered to jump off at 0700 on the 25th and drive through Myitkyina to the riverbank. When the day ended, the 88th Regiment had succeeded in straightening its lines; the record does not even mention its sister regiment. McCammon, who was in the early stage of pleurisy, was depressed by the failure, and Stilwell flew in to check the situation. While he was there, Hunter gave him a letter stating that GALAHAD was being unfairly treated, and that under Boatner's influence Headquarters, NCAC, was discriminating against GALAHAD in favor of the Chinese.⁸⁰ After a brief return to his headquarters near Shaduzup Stilwell went again to Myitkyina and made a quick decision, relieving McCammon and replacing him with General Boatner on 30 May.

While Stilwell was making these command changes, the earlier optimism was replaced by a brief period of extreme alarm, caused by the rapid disintegration of GALAHAD and the Chindits' evacuation of the block they had placed across the railway near Hopin. Only twelve men were left in the 2d Battalion of GALAHAD, while the Chinese 150th Regiment was down to 600 men.⁸¹

American reinforcements of any men who could hold a rifle were rushed in from every possible source. Between 26 May and 1 June, two engineer battalions, a group of replacements for GALAHAD (optimistically assembled as a battalion), and evacuees of GALAHAD itself were flown in. With the situation thus steadied and with Stilwell and Chih Hui Pu believing that Myitkyina was held by only a few hundred Japanese, a plan was made for a co-ordinated attack by two Chinese regiments plus the survivors of GALAHAD and the 209th U.S. Engineers. In this operation, which was attempted on 31 May, the 42d Regiment reached the Waingmaw ferry road. Built up twelve feet above the neighboring paddy fields, the road gave the Japanese a magnificent defensive position, which they exploited cleverly. The Chinese recoiled from this natural fortification but were able to beat off a Japanese counterattack. The 150th Regiment reached the riverbank and drew up in an arc about a sawmill in which the Japanese had a strongpoint. The 88th and 89th Regiments were not in-

⁷⁹ (1) GALAHAD, p. 106. (2) Siege of Myitkyina, p. 25. (3) Stone MS, p. 190.

⁸⁰ (1) Hunter Notes. (2) Boatner Notes. (3) Stilwell's only diary reference of this period to Hunter is for 26 May: "Hunter, Osborne, McGee, Beach—all fine soldiers. Guts, calm, confidence. They ooze it." (4) Ltrs, Boatner to Stilwell, Jun 44. SNF 207. The letters praise Hunter highly.

⁸¹ Stilwell Diary, 30 May 44.

volved in this attack. The American attempt netted little, and it was apparent that Myitkyina would not fall at once.⁸²

The night of 31 May the Japanese attacked the 209th Engineer Battalion in position near Radhapur, north of Myitkyina. After the war Colonel Maruyama stated that on 30 May he tried to break out with three battalions. General Tanaka recalled that such an attempt had been planned but canceled. Whatever the mission of these particular Japanese, there was heavy, close-in fighting on the Myitkyina side of the engineers' perimeter.⁸³ When the day came, the Chinese tried again to take Myitkyina but counted their gains in yards. The 236th U.S. Engineer Battalion, which on twenty-four hours' notice had been taken from its road building and from the operation of gravel and ice plants and rushed to Myitkyina, was sent to retake Namkwi, west of the auxiliary airstrip.

The motive behind the 236th's attack of 1 June was to contain the Japanese in the Namkwi area and introduce the battalion to combat under relatively easy conditions. One company of the 236th did succeed in entering Namkwi but instead of promptly consolidating to meet the inevitable Japanese counter-attack fell out for a break. The Japanese counterattacked and drove the unwary engineers right back out of the village.⁸⁴

Next day, 2 June, the Chinese commenced formal siege operations in the eighteenth century manner, tunneling toward the Japanese; in the virtual absence of artillery there was nothing else to do. General Boatner was still optimistic on 2 June, but after that time the Allied command again feared the Japanese might yet turn the tables on their attackers. Reinforcing this impression was the steadily graver aspect of local command problems.⁸⁵

Command Problems at Myitkyina

The steady deterioration in the physical condition and morale of GALAHAD, the cumulative effect of the fighting on the strength of Chinese units, the poor combat performance of the engineers and the GALAHAD replacements, the bad supply position, and the increasing aggressiveness of the Japanese brought about a period in which the optimism of a few days before yielded to the fear that the Japanese might overrun the airstrip and win a major victory. On 20 May the Allied forces had three days' rations on hand, very little mortar ammunition, and only 350 rounds of 75-mm. shells. Six days later nine disabled transports on the airfield mutely added another reason for the supply pinch. At the end of May the quartermaster had no U.S. rations, while 40 percent of the rice and grain rations for the thousands of Burmese, Chinese, and refugees from Myitkyina was spoiled by dampness. The effect of the supply situation

⁸² (1) FO 12, Hq CAMELOT Task Force, 30 May 44. NCAC Files, KCRC. (2) Siege of Myitkyina, pp. 30-31.

⁸³ Maruyama Interrog; Tanaka Interrog. OCMH.

⁸⁴ (1) Hunter Notes. (2) Siege of Myitkyina, p. 31.

⁸⁵ (1) Siege of Myitkyina, pp. 28, 31-32. (2) Stilwell Diary, 2 Jun 44.

was underscored when the force surgeon asked for some variety in the food because the American troops were vomiting all but the breakfast part of the K ration. Attempts were made to control ammunition expenditure, since the Chinese often seemed extremely wasteful in the use of it. Captured Japanese weapons were being turned against their former owners. By 1 June the food supply was set at one day for Americans and two for Chinese. There were now thirteen damaged transports on the airstrip.⁸⁶

The GALAHAD situation became obviously critical around 19 or 20 May. While Stilwell had been ordering the 3d Indian Division kept in Burma over the protests of its commanders that their men were exhausted, the GALAHAD evacuation rate had been steadily expanding up to 134 in one day. As set by Hunter, who had received no directives and had to exercise his own best judgment, GALAHAD policy required for evacuation a fever of 102 degrees for three consecutive days, and approval of each case by a board of doctors. This was a delicate situation.⁸⁷

Boatner was under a certain handicap in his relations with the American troops. He knew of Hunter's letter of 27 May, with its charges against him, charges he felt would not have been made if it had been generally known that he had been in the United States during most of the campaign. He believed that GALAHAD enlisted personnel fully endorsed the charges made. After reflection, he decided that his contacts with GALAHAD and Hunter should be through his own chief of staff, Col. John P. Willey. A further argument was that Willey spoke no Chinese, while Boatner knew the language and considered he would be fully occupied in trying to exercise command over the Chinese, drawn as they were from three divisions.⁸⁸

With the growing realization that Myitkyina would not fall quickly, that the Japanese might take the initiative, Stilwell ordered staff officers in the rear area to send any GALAHAD personnel fit for duty back to the fight. This order was in sharp contrast to the men's expectation that after reaching Myitkyina they would have a long period of recuperation.

General Boatner gave four reasons why this unpleasant and difficult decision was made:

1. GALAHAD was the only U.S. combat unit in the theater available for the assault on Myitkyina.
2. The Chinese 88th and 150th Regiments that marched over the Kumon Range with GALAHAD had had few evacuations for sickness or fatigue in spite of their heavy casualties.
3. Since early May Stilwell had been resisting heavy pressure to evacuate 3d Indian Division.

⁸⁶ Rpts, Maj Milligan Bethel, G-4, to Lt Col Joseph A. McNerney, Supply and Evacuation Off, G-4, 20 May-1 Jun 44, sub: Supply Rpts. NCAC Files, KCRC.

⁸⁷ (1) Memo, Boatner for Col Stanley F. Griswold, 25 Jun 44. Folder, Misc Corresp MTF, NCAC Files, KCRC. (2) GALAHAD Investigation. (3) For Stilwell's authority over the 3d Indian Division, see page 221, above.

⁸⁸ Boatner Notes.

4. The Japanese lines were only 1,500 yards from the airstrip which was the only base and source of supply.

Stilwell, said Boatner, thought it necessary not to "let the impression be created that we were withholding U.S. troops from combat in a sector where as an Allied commander Stilwell was keeping British and Chinese troops in combat."⁸⁹

The exhaustion of GALAHAD personnel was appearing in combat. When the Japanese counterattacked at Charpate, 27 May, Colonel McGee's men were so tired that they kept falling asleep during the engagement. McGee himself fainted three times during the battle but with iron determination commanded his battalion from the aid station. McGee asked that his unit be relieved.⁹⁰

Meanwhile, in the rear areas efforts were being made to round up GALAHAD evacuees who were fit for combat. Extremely heavy moral pressure, just short of outright orders, was placed on medical officers to return to duty or keep in the line every American who could pull a trigger. In one group of 200 men sent to Myitkyina many were not fit for duty, and ten were immediately re-evacuated. This incident, plus the fact that still more GALAHAD survivors were actually ill with malaria and dysentery, seemed to mark the exhaustion of the moral as well as the physical reserves of GALAHAD. Summarizing this unhappy episode, the inspector general wrote that the plans and assumptions of the War Department plus unauthorized statements reached the enlisted men and junior officers of GALAHAD as promises of what was in store. These never materialized and, coupled with "the physical deterioration of the unit, after months of arduous jungle combat and culminating in a rapidly growing feeling that hospitalization procedures were not being carried out, resulted about June 1st 1944 in almost complete breakdown of morale in the major portion of the unit."⁹¹ However, it should be noted that six Distinguished Service Crosses went to GALAHAD veterans during the siege and GALAHAD itself was awarded the Distinguished Unit Citation.

By 4 June, GALAHAD casualties were:

<i>Casualty</i>	<i>Number</i>
Deaths	93
Nonbattle deaths	30
Wounded	293
Missing	8
Amoebic dysentery	503
Scrub typhus	149
Malaria	296
Psychoneurosis	72
Miscellaneous	950

⁸⁹ (1) Memo cited n. 87(1). (2) GALAHAD Investigation.

⁹⁰ GALAHAD, p. 108.

⁹¹ GALAHAD Investigation, p. 3.

Figures for wounded in action are deceptively low because minor cases were treated in the unit. This is also true of malaria, which in many cases was not approved as a cause of evacuation. Other figures represent men actually evacuated. The average loss of weight per man was estimated at thirty-five pounds. It was observed that chlorinating water with the means available for individuals or small groups offered little protection against amoebiasis. The circumstances were different with respect to malaria; the men could have taken atebirin. The general appearance of malaria at Myitkyina meant a breakdown in morale.⁹²

The engineers rushed to Myitkyina from their rear-area duties were no substitute for the trained, organized, and experienced GALAHAD combat teams. Their performance and that of the GALAHAD replacements who began to arrive was what might be expected from raw troops not acquainted with each other or their leaders. Following an incident in which a company of the 209th Engineers broke and ran after being ambushed by a small force of Japanese, the 209th's companies were sandwiched between the GALAHAD units. Stilwell told Marshall that the engineers ran on several occasions, "incidentally abandoning wounded." On 8 June, the 209th and 236th were grouped as a provisional regiment and, once shaken down, fought with great credit to themselves and their corps.⁹³

The GALAHAD "replacements" had greater potentialities than the engineers, for the latter had not seen a rifle since their basic training days and had simply been taken from their bulldozers and power generators to fight as infantry combat teams. As of 28 May about 2,600 replacements were in India. Stilwell ordered them rushed into action, for he feared that the Chindits' withdrawal from the block they had put across the railway near Hopin would bring down the Japanese in force. The War Department's opinion in October 1943 had been that refilling GALAHAD by individual replacements would be impracticable. Instead, the War Department proposed to form new units in the United States and ship them out intact. When they arrived in the theater, GALAHAD veterans were to be assigned to key posts in the new units.

At Fort George G. Meade, Md., the replacements were set up (on the "four platoons to a company" basis) as an infantry regiment less headquarters and headquarters staff. The War Department intention behind this preliminary step was apparently never made clear to the lower administrative echelons, for the battalions and companies were never activated nor allowed to function as such.

From the text of the call for volunteers that brought many men into the body of replacements, many believed their destination to be Burma. Because of the imminence of combat the advisability of letting the *ad hoc* companies

⁹² Stone MS, pp. 197-98.

⁹³ (1) Rad CHC 1216, Stilwell to Marshall, 22 Jun 44. SNF 131. (2) Ltrs, Boatner to Stilwell, 3, 5, 7, 12, 14, 15 Jun 44. Folder, Misc Corresp MTF, NCAC Files, KCRC. (3) Leslie Anders, The Engineers at Myitkyina, MS. Engineer Hist Sec.

formed for shipping purposes function as bona fide infantry companies was several times called to the attention of proper authority by individual officers at Fort Meade, at the port of embarkation, and even on the transport, but the several headquarters would not concur. For its part, theater headquarters in May 1944 was unaware of these points.⁹⁴

Of the 2,600 replacements, 400 formed two quartermaster pack trains. The rest were mostly infantrymen, with some artillerymen. There was a generous seasoning of experienced commissioned and noncommissioned officers who had volunteered from the permanent cadre of the several replacement centers.

On arrival at Bombay on 25 May, the men were speeded by train to Ramgarh. After an average stay of about one week (for some men were at once flown to Myitkyina as individual replacements), the men were hastily formed into two battalions, flown to Myitkyina, and placed in combat as the "New GALAHAD." Unfortunately, filling the Table of Organization spaces of a battalion with men does not produce a fighting team until the men have had a period of training together. The commanders at Myitkyina took what corrective measures they could. Three battalions were formed of the survivors of the old GALAHAD and the newcomers. Boatner listed them as the 1st GALAHAD (old), 2d GALAHAD (new), 3d GALAHAD (new). Officers and men were freely exchanged among the battalions to spread the hard-won experience of the GALAHAD veterans. The resulting strengths were: 1st Battalion, about 300 men; 2d, about 950; 3d, about 950.⁹⁵

A training program was also set up. Lessons were given in the intervals between combat. The men were also sent to the Namkwi area to shoot at live targets: ". . . the Japanese disposition there remained defensive and the replacements could be disengaged without being pursued."⁹⁶ The shock of an introduction to combat under the conditions then prevailing at Myitkyina produced about fifty psychopathic cases among the replacements, and some of the officers were unfit.⁹⁷

As a result of these circumstances, Boatner told Stilwell on 15 June:

Reports continue to indicate the complete disorganization and fear in U.S. units. They are in many cases simply terrified of the Japs. We can expect time, experience, and casualties to reduce their strength but make those that remain better soldiers. From GALAHAD's rear [echelon] in Dinjan I hear that 250 of Old GALAHAD men are being equipped and will be flown back today. They will be of tremendous help. Rumor has it that they were moving around the countryside and many AWOL's. Col. Osborne just saw me and spoke most earnestly about how he felt these men are malingering and wants to go back to get a few more officers and many men back here. If Hunter OK's I will send him back. On the face

⁹⁴ (1) Rad WAR 3495, Marshall to Stilwell, 2 Oct 43. Item 1056, Bk 4, JWS Personal File. (2) Statement, Maj George L. Converse, 10 Jan 49. Major Converse was a member of the replacement shipment. (3) Rad CRA 4407, Sultan to Stilwell, 27 May 44. Item 185, Bk 6A, JWS Personal File.

⁹⁵ Ltrs, Boatner to Stilwell, 7 Jun, 10 Jun, 44. SNF 207. These letters tell of the reorganizing process of GALAHAD.

⁹⁶ (1) Siege of Myitkyina, pp. 31-35. (2) Statement by Converse cited n. 94(2).

⁹⁷ Rad CHC 1216 cited n. 93(1).

of it it might appear that we have plenty here on the field for protection. Such is not actually the case—we in fact have only a prayer.⁹⁸

Great though the endurance and devotion of the Chinese were, the steady drain of casualties was reducing their strength to dangerously low levels. This situation was called to General Boatner's attention on 7 June by the commanders of the 30th and 50th Divisions, who pointed out that the 150th and 89th Regiments mustered between them only 1,000 men. The 88th and 42d could each find only one battalion for an attack. The accuracy of their statements was confirmed by an American liaison officer, who reported that the regiment to which he was attached was down to 481 officers and men. Boatner relayed this information to Stilwell, adding that the Chinese troops were taking casualties (121 on a comparatively quiet day) while he was trying to make the raw Americans battleworthy. Obviously, the two engineer battalions and the GALAHAD replacements represented the margin of numerical superiority over the Japanese garrison of Myitkyina. But because of the fixed belief that there were only 500 Japanese in Myitkyina the full import of this was not realized; nonetheless, there was disquietude.⁹⁹

Across the Irrawaddy from Myitkyina was a group of Chindits, Morris Force, that had been attached to Boatner's headquarters. Its experiences had paralleled those of GALAHAD and its companions of the 3d Indian Division, and like them it was disintegrating from the cumulative strains of the campaign. Commanded by Brigadier G. R. Morris, these 1,300 men were originally ordered to cut the Japanese line of communications via Bhamo to Myitkyina.

On 25 May the orders were changed to clearing the Japanese from the east bank of the Irrawaddy opposite Myitkyina. The Japanese garrison in Waingmaw was a reinforced company, the terrain was flooded, and Morris's men were tired. Boatner welcomed them enthusiastically: ". . . really believe you are just in time for the kill." Morris did not take Waingmaw, and Boatner found it increasingly difficult to keep in touch with his headquarters.

The tone of Boatner's communications grew ever stronger as he told Morris that Mountbatten had ordered Myitkyina taken at all costs, which meant having casualties in the effort. Eleven days later, on 14 June, Boatner told Morris that the situation was "precarious," that Morris was to attack any way he chose so long as it was promptly. Morris's replies then began to come through. He explained that except for a few avenues of approach, well covered by Japanese machine guns, the country was flooded chest high. His men were wasting away at the rate of one third of a platoon a day, were exhausted, and were falling asleep under Japanese fire.

⁹⁸ Ltr, Boatner to Stilwell, 15 Jun 44. SNF 207.

⁹⁹ Ltr, Gens Hu Su (30th Div) and Yu Pan-kum (50th Div) to CG, MTF, 7 Jun 44, sub: Recommendations for Opns (Urgent); Ltr, Gen Hu to CG, MTF, 7 Jun 44, sub: Rpt; Ltr, Boatner to Stilwell, 8 Jun 44; Ltr, Maj Edward H. S. Wilkie, Jr., to CG, MTF, 8 Jun 44. Folder, Misc Corresp MTF, NCAC Files, KCRC.

By 14 July Morris had only three platoons left, and Lentaigne asked for his evacuation. Chih Hui Pu objected, saying Morris could still make an offensive effort. A week later Lentaigne asked ironically if Morris Force could be evacuated when it was down to 25 officers and other ranks from the 1,301 it had on 19 May. Stilwell approved.¹⁰⁰

The Attacks of Mid-June 1944

Coming to a head almost simultaneously, these difficulties and dangers made General Boatner's position unenviable. Airborne assault and LRPG warfare have the vices of their virtues, among them that the attacker cannot fall back and reorganize for a second try. Victory is the only solution to his problems. There were days in which a banzai charge by General Mizukami's garrison or a determined push by the *53d Division* (which had once been ordered to send a regiment and lift the siege) would in all probability have swept right over the airstrip. Even fairly accurate artillery practice by Mizukami's four 75-mm. pieces, at about 2,500 yards' range, could have destroyed transports at a rate to make supply prohibitively expensive, while Boatner's headquarters itself was only a mile from the Japanese lines.

Boatner made one more attack on 3 June with the 42d and 150th Regiments plus the 1/89th. The two regiments took 320 casualties, but putting a good face on matters, Boatner reported to Stilwell that if he had had air support about noon he could have taken the town. Because of the Chinese casualties, the fall of his 75-mm. ammunition stock to 600 rounds, and his .303 and belted .30-caliber to one day's supply, Boatner reported that he would hold back until his supplies were built up. He reaffirmed his position a few days later, saying that the lack of an immediate Japanese threat, the need to cut Chinese casualties and to train U.S. troops inclined him to wait a few days more. He thought that the Japanese garrison was in bad condition.¹⁰¹

¹⁰⁰ (1) Ltr, Hq Chih Hui Pu to CofS, 3d Ind Div, 16 Jan 44, sub: Addition to Dir for CG, 3d Ind Div; Ltr, Hq Chih Hui Pu to CG, 3d Ind Div, 25 May 44, sub: Dir to CG, 3d Ind Div. Folder, Memos and Opnl Instr, CAI NCAC, 3d Ind Div, Jan-May 44, NCAC Files, KCRC. (2) Ltr, Boatner to CO, Morris Force, 1 Jun 44, sub: Orders; Ltr, Boatner to Morris, 3 Jun 44, sub: Orders; Ltr, Boatner to CO, Morris Force, 7 Jun 44, sub: Orders; Rad M329, Boatner to Morris, 14 Jun 44. Folder, Orders MTF, 3d Ind Div, Jun 44, NCAC Files, KCRC. (3) Ltr, Boatner to Morris, 2 Jun 44; Rad M333, Boatner to Morris, 14 Jun 44; Rad, Boatner to Morris, 14 Jun 44; Rad, Morris to Boatner, 14 Jun 44; Rad 49, Col to AMITY, 3d Ind Div, and KKO, 14 Jun 44; Rad, Wallace to Boatner, 14 Jun 44. Folder, Rads Wallace-Boatner, Morris Task Force, Jun 44, NCAC Files, KCRC. (4) Ltr, Boatner to Stilwell, 6 Jun 44. Folder, Misc Corresp MTF, NCAC Files, KCRC. (5) Ltr, Morris to GO Commanding, Myitkyina, and 3d Ind Div, 2 Jul 44; Ltr 2/2/G, Lentaigne to Advance Hq CAI, 14 Jul 44. NCAC Files, KCRC. (6) Ltr, Hq Chih Hui Pu to CG, 3d Ind Div, 20 Jul 44, sub: Relief of Morris Force by Haswell Force; Ltr 7/4/G, Lentaigne to Advance Hq CAI, 20 Jul 44; Ltr, Hq CAI to CG, 3d Ind Div, 21 Jul 44, sub: Status of Comd, Morris Force and 26 Column. Folder, Radios-3d Ind Div, NCAC Files, KCRC. (7) Statement, Sgt Suyeyoshi Tokuda, Myitkyina PW Rpts. PW History.

¹⁰¹ Ltrs, Boatner to Stilwell, 3, 4, 5 Jun 44. Folder, Misc Corresp MTF, NCAC Files, KCRC.

During the next few days the Allies pecked away at the Japanese lines, while the staff prepared orders for an attack on 10 June. This operation called for the 150th Regiment to take Japanese positions in the railroad yard running due east from the engine shed; the 42d Regiment would go to the Irrawaddy; and the 89th Regiment, which had a zone twice that of the 42d and 150th together, would attack directly toward the river. Chinese units, lying west and south of Myitkyina, were to move northeast into the town, then wheel east and drive to the river. The Americans to the north would attack southwards. On the south side of the city was the bulk of the infantry, but the mass of the artillery supported the 30th Division (88th and 89th Regiments). Artillery was arriving by air now. Two batteries plus one platoon of 75-mm. howitzers, two 105-mm., and two 155-mm. howitzers, were ultimately present. All except two pieces with GALAHAD were kept under headquarters control. During the siege they fired 600 tons of ammunition, very rarely with massed fire.¹⁰²

The attack jumped off as scheduled. Flying over the battlefield on 14 June, Boatner reported to Stilwell that he did not see much "effort" being made, though he found the scene a beehive of industry compared with the last week. On the ground matters seemed lively enough at the infantry's level. On 13 June the Japanese hit a platoon of K Company, New GALAHAD, so hard that the company broke and re-formed on the L Company line. The portion of the Japanese thrust that hit the perimeter next to the river made most of the men "take off," but two stayed in place and repelled the Japanese with an automatic rifle and a machine gun. To the west of this little break the Japanese worked their way in close but were stopped by grenades and small arms fire.¹⁰³

In the course of the action between 13 and 16 June, a number of men in the small U.S. contingent distinguished themselves by their extraordinary bravery. Lt. Col. William H. Combs, who had been liaison officer with the Chinese 150th Regiment, died of wounds received while attempting to warn units of the 209th Engineers against a Japanese ambush. Pvt. Howard T. Smith took command of his platoon when the platoon leader was killed and the attack stalled by a Japanese pillbox. Smith assaulted the pillbox singlehanded and silenced it with hand grenades. Pfc. Willard J. D. Lilly destroyed an enemy machine gun firing into his own machine gun position. While under fire 1st Lt. Melvin D. Blair rescued wounded and silenced an enemy machine gun. Smith, Lilly, and Blair were veterans of GALAHAD. When his company was pinned down by machine gun fire, T/Sgt. Richard E. Roe of the New GALAHAD crawled forward and at the cost of his own life grenaded a Japanese machine gun that was causing heavy casualties. Fatally wounded, he gave his life to save

¹⁰² FO 14, MTF; Memo, Col Laughlin, 12 Aug 44, sub: Rpt on Artillery. NCAC Files, KCRC.

¹⁰³ (1) Ltr, Boatner to Stilwell, 14 Jun 44, SNF 207. (2) Rpt, Hunter, 13 Jun 44. Folder, Misc Corresp MTF, NCAC Files, KCRC. (3) For his valor on this occasion, Staff Sgt. Alvin O. Miller of the 209th Engineers received the Distinguished Service Cross. GO 99, Hq USAF CBI, 17 Aug 44.



ARTILLERY IN ACTION AT MYITKYINA. *Above, the Chinese crew of a 105-mm. howitzer, and below, a 75-mm. pack howitzer's GALAHAD crew firing on Japanese positions.*



his friends. Sgt. Fred N. Coleman of the 236th Engineers threw himself on a Japanese grenade, and saved two comrades.¹⁰⁴

Despite these efforts and setbacks the impression persisted that Myitkyina was lightly held, with the Myitkyina Task Force G-2 Roundup circulating an estimate by "GALAHAD officers" that the besiegers faced only 500 Japanese, the remnants of two battalions.¹⁰⁵

As a result of the attack, the 3d Battalion, GALAHAD, by 17 June, had cut the Maingna ferry road and reached the Irrawaddy north of Myitkyina. The 150th Regiment in the same period finally took the sawmill and gained 200 yards, using flame throwers. The 88th Regiment gained 100 yards from positions in the old rifle range area of the Burma Frontier Force barracks. The principal gain for the Americans was the capture of the Myitkyina-Mogaung-Sumprabum road junction. The gains were not in proportion to the effort expended, and Stilwell ordered the end of all infantry attacks. Boatner replied that he would stop attacking Japanese positions until ". . . our troops are steadied and a favorable opportunity presents itself."¹⁰⁶

There was reason for the troops to need steadying. A and B companies, 209th Engineers, were cut off from their main body by infiltrating Japanese. Trying to close in on them, Company C and Headquarters and Service Companies were in turn halted by Japanese. The condition of A and B Companies became critical during 14 June, for they had only one meal with them. Two of their men managed to work their way back to the block on the Sumprabum Road with news of their plight, but enemy small arms fire prevented airdrops. The isolated companies finally made their way back in small groups to the rest of the battalion over 15 and 16 June. The 3d Battalion of GALAHAD reported trouble in effecting reorganization and enforcing orders.¹⁰⁷

The Americans were not alone in their problems. Two companies of the Chinese 2/42d which had made a small penetration into the Japanese lines on 14 June were wiped out by counterattack that night. These setbacks emphasized the nature of the Myitkyina fighting. The Allies held a ring of battalion and regimental strongpoints enclosing a similar Japanese system. Though the Allied strongpoints were close enough for the troops in one to sortie to the aid of another should that be needed, they were not so close that interlocking fire could be put down to close the gaps. Consequently, there was plenty of room for maneuver and ambush, and the inexperienced engineers and New GALAHAD troops often suffered at the hands of General Mizukami's veterans.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁴ These men, among others, received the Distinguished Service Cross. For the leadership, professional skill, and valor he repeatedly displayed during the early days of the operation, Colonel Combs was posthumously awarded an Oak Leaf Cluster to the DSC. GO's 137, 78, 48, 131, Hq USAF CBI, 20 Oct, 20 Jul, 21 Dec, 12 Oct 44.

¹⁰⁵ G-2 Roundup cited n. 68(2).

¹⁰⁶ Ltrs, Boatner to Stilwell, 10 Jun 44; G-3 Per Rpts, Hq Chih Hui Pu, 13, 20 Jun 44. NCAC Files, KCRC.

¹⁰⁷ Siege of Myitkyina, pp. 46-51.

¹⁰⁸ Siege of Myitkyina, p. 48.

On 18 June Headquarters, Myitkyina Task Force, directed that, for the time being, tunneling would be used to close with the enemy. Patrol skirmishes continued, and energetic regimental and battalion commanders were occasionally able to carve out small gains, always against strong Japanese resistance. In one of the patrol clashes of this period, Pfc. George C. Presterly of the Engineers won the Distinguished Service Cross by a lone assault on a Japanese strongpoint. Moving out ahead of his patrol, he continued firing and advancing, drawing all the Japanese fire from his patrol. Even after being mortally wounded, Presterly continued his charge.¹⁰⁹

On 18 June Stilwell made another quick trip to Myitkyina. Boatner had reported that "U.S. troops are shaky," possibly referring to the incident involving the 3d Battalion of GALAHAD. Stilwell visited the lines at or opposite Charpate, Sitapur, and Mankrin. After discussing the situation with Colonel Hunter, now commanding the American forces under Boatner, Stilwell concluded that the "men looked good," that the picture Boatner had painted was "not nearly that bad." Chih Hui Pu G-2 on 30 June was still reporting only 500 Japanese in Myitkyina and undoubtedly thought so a few days before. Stilwell was also of the opinion that Boatner should have spent more of his time with the troops. Adding these factors together, Stilwell ordered Brig. Gen. Theodore F. Wessels to fly from SEAC headquarters to Myitkyina.¹¹⁰

Changes in Command

After General Wessels arrived, he spent about a week looking over the situation while Stilwell debated Boatner's relief. On 25 June Boatner had a severe recurrence of the malaria that had troubled him earlier in the campaign, and this made inevitable a change in command.¹¹¹ After a brief stay in the hospital, Boatner returned to duty as Commanding General, Northern Combat Area Command.

Boatner's successor, General Wessels, had been on the staff of the Infantry School at Fort Benning, Ga., when he was sent to CBI as a part of Stilwell's plans for training the Chinese Army. When it finally became apparent that the Chinese did not accept these plans to an extent that would occupy all of the 2,213 officers and men sent to CBI to train the Second Thirty Divisions in east China, Wessels was sent to SEAC headquarters.

The billet Wessels took over on 26 June was an uncomfortable one, but the situation began to improve the day after he assumed command. Mogaung fell, and the Chinese forces from the Mogaung valley began moving up the railroad to connect with Wessels' forces. This was a great gift of fortune. It removed the

¹⁰⁹ GO 111, Hq USF IBT, 5 Jun 45, par. I.

¹¹⁰ (1) Stilwell Diary, 13, 15, 17, 24 Jun 44. (2) *The Stilwell Papers*, pp. 304-06. (3) Daily Sitrep 33, Chih Hui Pu, 30 Jun. NCAC Files, KCRC.

¹¹¹ *The Stilwell Papers*, p. 306.



GENERAL STILWELL AND COLONEL HUNTER *talk to the leader of a patrol which has returned from Myitkyina.*

recurrent menace of a Japanese drive from Mogaung, guaranteed reinforcements and the opening of a ground line of communications, and meant that Wessels' men, instead of being an island in a hostile sea open to attack from 360°, could concentrate their attention on the Japanese to their front. Moreover, General Mizukami and his men lost one of the two bases (the other was Bhamo) from which supplies had trickled in to the Japanese. Wessels made a point of visiting each unit, talking with the men and trying to instill confidence and raise morale.¹¹² Under orders from Stilwell, Hunter on 29 June was placed in command of all U.S. troops at Myitkyina.

Stilwell left Wessels a problem resulting from one of Stilwell's rare interventions in the siege. After a conference with Hunter he personally ordered that a Chinese battalion of at least 400 men be sent to penetrate through the Japanese positions to Sitapur roughly on a southeast azimuth, cutting off the Japanese to the north from Myitkyina proper. The 1st Battalion, 42d Regiment, of about 250 men, made a very considerable advance over 28 and 29 June. It drove deep into the Japanese defense system, leading Stilwell to hope this was

¹¹² (1) Interv with Wessels, 19 Jul 48. OCMH. (2) History of India-Burma Theater, 1944-1945, I, 55. OCMH.

the turning point; on receiving Japanese fire, it halted and dug in. Air supply was necessary. Since Stilwell had given Wessels personal orders to support the battalion, Company F of the 2d Battalion, New GALAHAD, was ordered to join the 1/42d.

F Company, unaware it had lost its way and under an inexperienced commander, proceeded with a small point almost directly ahead of the marching column. The company commander at the head of the point met a small group of Orientals whom he took to be Chinese and who greeted him affably. The strangers then suggested he and his party lay aside their guns. At this point the commander realized that he had been ambushed and gave the alarm. The Japanese machine guns opened on his trapped column, inflicting heavy casualties. Some of his men made their way back to the Allied lines, but the company was never reconstituted and was broken up and distributed among the rest of GALAHAD. For his constant gallantry during a stubborn eight-hour rear-guard action, which permitted the survivors to extricate themselves from ambush, Pfc. Anthony Firenze of New GALAHAD received the Distinguished Service Cross. On 2 July reports came of the approach of a strong Japanese force from the north. Despite Stilwell's orders concerning the 1/42d, Wessels thought his lines too thin and pulled back the 1/42d, to strengthen himself toward the north.¹¹³

Hacking Out Small Gains

The only gains in the week of 25 June–2 July were a few hundred yards taken by the 150th Regiment and the 236th Engineers. Monsoon rains, low visibility, and high water turned much of the terrain into a swamp in which men crawled, stumbled, waded, slipped, fell, and sometimes died. The few hundred yards that looked so small on the map were an immense distance to the men who had to crawl them under Japanese fire and keep them by beating off the inevitable Japanese counterattack.¹¹⁴ Seen in retrospect, the prospect appears to have brightened slowly in the next few weeks. With every passing day experience improved the quality of the troops after the first shocks wore off. A training program was instituted on 7 July. Units in reserve were taught for eight hours daily; those in contact with the enemy trained four. The 3/88th and 1/89th were put in reserve to prepare for a set-piece attack, to capture a stretch of the Sumprabum Road.¹¹⁵

Wessels' first attempt at a major attack was made on 12 July. It was a co-ordinated attack with the small amount of air support obtainable. Arranging

¹¹³ (1) *Siege of Myitkyina*, pages 67–71, treats the episode very cautiously. (2) Wessels Interv cited n. 112(1). (3) Stilwell Diary, 29 Jun, 1, 2 Jul 44. (4) GO 131, Hq USAF CBI, 12 Oct 44. (5) A letter, Wessels to Ward, 3 October 1951, has as an inclosure a most interesting letter, 10 July 1944, by the liaison officer with the battalion, Capt. Paul L. Tobey. OCMH.

¹¹⁴ G-3 Wkly Per Rpt, Hq MTF, 25 Jun–2 Jul 44. NCAC Files, KCRC.

¹¹⁵ G-3 Per Rpts, Hq MTF, 2–9 Jul 44; FO 17, Hq MTF, 11 Jul 44. NCAC Files, KCRC.

this latter took time, and while the process was under way, a radio came from Stilwell: when is the attack of the 12th going to be made? A staff officer drew Wessels' attention to the hint in the radio, which he had missed, and the attack plan was hastily completed. Maj. Gen. Howard C. Davidson of the Tenth Air Force, who was consistently helpful and co-operative, on his own initiative arranged a bombing by thirty-nine B-25's.

There was further support from the 88th Fighter Squadron. It gave 80 percent of the fighter-bomber support at Myitkyina and was commanded by an officer who made a point of examining prospective targets from the front lines and consistently went beyond the call of duty in his efforts to give the infantry effective close-in support. From the beginning to the end of the siege, the Air Forces dropped 754 tons of bombs, or 20 percent more than the artillery effort.¹¹⁶

The attack on 12 July did not succeed. The intent was to have units in forward positions fall back while the bombing was done to avoid casualties from shorts, then advance immediately after. Air-ground liaison was ineffective; the B-25's underestimated the bomb safety line, and 40 percent of their bomb loads fell among the American troops north of Sitapur, causing some casualties and quite a bit of confusion. The gains by the 88th and 89th Regiments were again measured in hundreds of yards, and the attack simply petered out. However, the series of attacks made since 17 May had its cumulative effect. The Allied lines were steadily constricting around Myitkyina. Units once separated by intervals through which Japanese seemed to slip at will were now in close contact. Of the Japanese garrison, 790 were dead and 1,180 wounded by mid-July.¹¹⁷

When the attempt at a co-ordinated attack bogged down, Wessels' men went back to their patient day-by-day advances, driving back the Japanese to their immediate front. On 21 July, in one of the patrol clashes that erupted now and again around the Allied strongpoints, Pfc. Marvin H. Dean, a GALAHAD veteran, won the Distinguished Service Cross for taking out a Japanese machine gun position that had stopped the patrol for which he was the lead scout.¹¹⁸

Stilwell came back on the 23d to check progress. The 149th Regiment joined the 50th Division on 24 July and took its place in line relieving portions of the 42d and 150th Regiments. Next day the 1/90th took over a quiet sector. These were substantial reinforcements. A day before they arrived, the first clear indications came that the Japanese were relaxing their grip on Myitkyina. Eight rafts and a boat laden with Japanese were attacked on the Irrawaddy by Kachins of the OSS Detachment 101. Twenty-four Japanese were killed, two captured,

¹¹⁶ (1) Wessels Interv cited n. 112(1). (2) JICA CBI Rpts 470, 477, 484, 6 Sep 44, sub: Air Support on Capture of Myitkyina. OCMH.

¹¹⁷ (1) Maruyama Interrog; Interrog. Gen Honda, CG, 33d Army, 9 Jan 48. OCMH. (2) Siege of Myitkyina, pp. 84-85. (3) G-3 Per Rpt, Hq MTF, 9-16 Jul 44. NCAC Files, KCRC. (4) PW History.

¹¹⁸ GO 131, Hq USAF CBI, 12 Oct 44.

and then it was learned these were hospital patients fleeing Myitkyina. Three more Japanese seized by friendly Burmans revealed that hospital patients were being evacuated by the simple expedient of letting them drift down the river on rafts.¹¹⁹

On 26 and 27 July the 3d Battalion, New GALAHAD, waded across the crescent-shaped swale which had effectively protected the Japanese positions to the north and was finally on the northern airstrip which Mizukami's men had held so long. The 209th and 236th Engineer Battalions, which had now taken as heavy casualties as any American units in any theater (the former, 41 percent), were pulled out of line and put to defending the airstrip. In the last week of July the daily gains began to stretch out, and since the area held by the Japanese was steadily shrinking, began to reach deeper into their vitals. Japanese counterattacks were no longer so dynamic, the positions captured from the enemy were no longer so well made, and many Japanese dead were found to be badly wounded men returned to the line. As July ended, gains of several hundred yards a day were frequent, though still costly. On the 28th, GALAHAD veterans T/5 Russell G. Wellman and Pfc. Herman Manuel teamed to rescue a wounded comrade from under "intense enemy machine gun and rifle fire." Though they were wounded, Manuel and Wellman succeeded in their gallant attempt, and won the Distinguished Service Cross.¹²⁰

One of the siege's command problems was uncontrolled and seemingly uncontrollable fire by the Chinese. With all ammunition coming in by air, every wasted round was to be deplored, yet time and again Chinese units let fly with all they had, and in every direction. The night of 30 July apparently was especially memorable in this regard, and General Wessels ordered an investigation. In one Chinese battalion alone, ten men were wounded by this wild firing. And one Chinese interpreter, though not classed as among the most reliable, stated that the 89th Regiment was so angered by the firing that "it was ready at any time to take on the 41st!" The report concluded:

4. All of the above-listed Liaison Officers are willing to testify, under oath, that their lives were endangered by the throwing of hand grenades and by firing of automatic weapons going in 3 directions, over and near their positions during the night; that the throwing of hand grenades and firing was done by the Chinese.¹²¹

The Last Days

Within Myitkyina, General Mizukami made his last decisions. At the end of July, Colonel Maruyama requested that his regiment be withdrawn. Mizu-

¹¹⁹ *Siege of Myitkyina*, pp. 105-09.

¹²⁰ GO 131, Hq USAF CBI, 12 Oct 44.

¹²¹ Ltr, Col Laughlin, ACofS, G-3, MTF, to Wessels, 31 Jul 44, sub: Rpt of Firing During Night 30-31 July. Wessels File, OCMH.

kami's intention had been to fight to the last, but he agreed. Instructions were issued accordingly, and Mizukami, having done his duty as a soldier, made his apology to his Emperor and committed suicide on 1 August.¹²² This was, of course, unknown to Wessels' headquarters, but the weakening of Japanese resistance had become ever more obvious. Attacks on the 29th, 30th, and 31st made ever deeper advances into the Japanese lines. Cpts. Shields A. Brubeck and John J. Dunn and 1st Lt. Donald W. Delorey, all of New GALAHAD, led their units during these days with valor that brought them the Distinguished Service Cross.¹²³

Weighing the many evidences that control of the situation was rapidly passing into their hands, Wessels and his colleagues drafted a new plan of attack. It included an ingenious device, credited to General Pan Yu-kun of the 50th Division. A raiding party, formed into fifteen heavily armed sections, was organized and briefed on infiltrating Japanese lines facing the 50th Division. Having made its way through the Japanese lines in darkness, it was to remain hidden until 0430 when the 50th would assault while the raiders spread confusion behind the Japanese lines. Meanwhile, air reconnaissance revealed many rafts moored against the Irrawaddy within the Japanese lines.¹²⁴

"At 0300 hours (3 August), when the moon went down and rain and thunder set in, the raiding party of the 50th Division moved out. The approach was detected only once and some shots were fired at the raiders, who hit the ground. The Chinese did not return fire however, and after laying low for a while, moved out again quietly and cautiously." Later the 50th Division attacked and, thanks to the efforts of the raiders and the preliminary stages of the Japanese evacuation, made rapid progress. The attack spread rapidly up the Allied line as regiment after regiment moved forward with comparative speed. Resistance by the Japanese rear guards was speedily overcome and at 1545, 3 August, Myitkyina was officially called secure. One hundred eighty-seven Japanese prisoners were taken, most of them patients. Colonel Maruyama made good his withdrawal with about 600 men.¹²⁵

The direct cost of Myitkyina to the Allies was:

	<i>Killed</i>	<i>Wounded</i>	<i>Sick</i>
Chinese	972	3,184	188
American	272	955	980

Some of the Chinese shown as killed may well have been among the deserters who after the war created something of a problem in the Myitkyina area; others probably perished in the fighting among Chinese units during the first confused

¹²² Japanese Officers' Comments, Incl 6, Col Masanobu Tsuji. Mizukami's adjutant was among those evacuated, and reported later to Colonel Tsuji.

¹²³ (1) GO 131, Hq USAF CBI, 12 Oct 44. (2) GO 141, Hq USAF CBI, 24 Oct 44.

¹²⁴ Siege of Myitkyina, pp. 128-29.

¹²⁵ (1) PW History. (2) Tanaka Interrog. OCMH. (3) Siege of Myitkyina, pp. 130-32.

attempts to take Myitkyina. Of the U.S. sick, 570 were from GALAHAD;¹²⁶ even so, the discrepancy between the Chinese and American figures shows the virtues of the Chinese insistence on drinking only boiled water and eating only cooked food, as well as the very considerable resistance of the Chinese to a contaminated environment.

The attack had been costly in suffering and losses, but the Mogaung-Myitkyina area in Allied hands was a great prize and marked an achievement of which the end of the fighting at Myitkyina was the outward and visible symbol. In the first instance, it helped increase Hump deliveries to China. As the fighting moved ever southward down the Hukawng and Mogaung valleys, it became safer for ATC transports to use the lower and more southerly routes to China. When Stilwell's men stood on the main airstrip at Myitkyina on 17 May 1944, the wider, southern route over lower terrain was a reality. Almost simultaneously with the taking of the airstrip the India-China Wing of ATC began to reap the benefits of better maintenance and a steadily increasing allotment of aircraft. The combination of more and better transports, better maintained, flying a shorter, lower, safer route was a potent one, and was speedily reflected in the Hump tonnage deliveries,¹²⁷ which rose from 13,686 tons in May to 18,235 tons in June, and 25,454 tons in July. (*See Chart 5.*) That in the months to come Hump tonnage would be of such an order of magnitude meant a great change for the better in the American position in China. American officers there would in the future have resources that Stilwell and Chennault in 1942 and 1943, worrying over the distribution of a few thousand tons, would have regarded as sheer opulence.

In the second place, occupation of the Mogaung-Myitkyina area meant that as soon as the pipeline and Ledo Road reached it, the Allies would have a great supply base squarely on the road and rail net of Burma, and within easy distance of China itself. About 1 May 1944, as noted above, Stilwell had concluded that opening the line of communications to China was not within his capabilities and had so informed his superiors. Then the results of Slim's and Giffard's decision to meet and break the Japanese *15th Army* at Imphal began to be apparent, together with the heavy casualties the Japanese were suffering around Kamaing, Mogaung, and Myitkyina. Observing this, Stilwell changed his mind about the possibility of taking the key points which controlled the line of communications. He told Mountbatten in mid-July that the Japanese had suffered very heavy losses, that it was doubtful if by November they could recover two thirds of the effectiveness they had possessed in early 1944. He was convinced that the Allies could now do better than just hold Myitkyina, and so he assured Mountbatten that "with reasonable help from the Y-Force, the CAI can get to the Bhamo-Shwegu area." The next step would be to take Lashio,

¹²⁶ *Siege of Myitkyina*, pp. 130-32.

¹²⁷ *History of the India-China Division, Air Transport Command, I* (1944), 39. Hist Div, MATS, Andrews Field, Md.

terminal of the Burma Road and the prewar gateway to China. Plainly, to Stilwell the end of China's isolation was near.¹²⁸

Stilwell's renewed optimism was in complete accord with conclusions of Slim and the latter's corps commanders. After visiting them at the front at this same period of mid-July, Mountbatten recorded in his diary that "the thing that struck me most was the absolute certainty that whatever else happened we must start our offensive after this monsoon before the Japanese can start theirs. . . ." The question that remained was to plan the offensive whose execution would be begun in the fall of 1944.¹²⁹

When it became apparent that Myitkyina was about to fall, Stilwell left north Burma for SEAC's headquarters at Kandy, Ceylon. Mountbatten was going to London to rearrange SEAC's command structure, and Stilwell was happy that his position as acting Deputy Supreme Allied Commander made it obligatory for him to visit the beautiful island and enjoy a brief respite from field command.¹³⁰ Since there were an army group and an army headquarters to handle the land fighting, and since no major naval operations were contemplated, Stilwell was glad to let SEAC headquarters run itself while he toured the island and rested.

The press took the opportunity of examining him on the North Burma Campaign, and Stilwell on 5 August discussed it with candor:

We think there were approximately 1,000 [Japanese] in Myitkyina, when we struck it. Various units got into Myitkyina because our cordon around the town had holes in it. Certainly more got in there than I calculated, and I admit underestimating the strength of the Jap garrison. The situation was very confused.¹³¹

In Stilwell's opinion, the Chinese soldier best withstood the hardships of the campaign. He saw no change in the high quality of the Japanese soldier. Take a man from any Japanese service unit, said Stilwell, and he will get into a hole with a light machine gun and stay there. Stilwell believed that the *18th Division* was destroyed. He did not know of any units that might have escaped

¹²⁸ (1) *History of India-Burma Theater, 1944-1945*, I, 81, 173. OCMH. (2) Memo, Stilwell for Mountbatten, 18 Jul 44. SAC (44) 288. SEAC War Diary. (3) The pipeline reached Myitkyina on 2 October 1944, and a temporary combat road was opened to Myitkyina in early November. The Ledo Road itself bypassed Myitkyina.

¹²⁹ (1) Personal Memo for C-in-C's on SAC's Visit to Burma Front, SCM/44, 6 Jul 44. SEAC War Diary. (2) Allied Burma operations of 1944-45 are described in Volume III of this subseries.

¹³⁰ (1) *The Stilwell Papers*, p. 310. (2) When, if ever, Stilwell was formally appointed Deputy Supreme Allied Commander is not fully clarified by the sources the authors have been able to consult. In March 1944, drafting notes for a conference with Mountbatten, Stilwell wrote that he had never been appointed Deputy. See page 169, above. A lengthy (seventeen-page) handwritten list of differences and difficulties between Stilwell and SEAC, which internal evidence indicates was written very near the close of Stilwell's stay in CBI, was found by Sunderland at Carmel, Calif., in May 1950, and filed with the JWS Miscellaneous Papers, 1944. It contains the statement that SEAC never issued orders appointing Stilwell as Deputy. On the other hand, Mountbatten's report always refers to Stilwell as Deputy. When Stilwell assumed command at Kandy in July 1944 it was his first exercise of authority as a Deputy, and he seems to have confined himself to cutting down the flow of minutes and staff studies (paper work of all kinds being one of Stilwell's phobias) and to presiding over meetings.

¹³¹ Interv of Stilwell by press, Kandy, Ceylon, 5 Aug 44. SNF 172.

intact. A few men from the *55th* and *56th Regiments* might have escaped, but he thought the *114th Regiment* was gone, together with the division artillery and vehicles. Stilwell did not know how many aircraft the crisis at Imphal had diverted from the Hump but agreed that of course it had cut Hump tonnage.

That turned the conversation to China and to the situation there. It was grave, Stilwell conceded. Because of his official position he could not comment bluntly and said as much. What he did say was tactful and sympathetic toward the Chinese in their time of sorrow. China was his next problem, and he was soon to go there.

Summary

The taking of Myitkyina on 3 August, which successfully accomplished a task many informed observers had termed impossible, marked a milestone in the history of CBI. It could not be termed a successful carrying out of Stilwell's plans, for Stilwell's own plan, which he presented in the summer of 1942, called for a drive from Imphal with the Chinese Army in India, together with a Chinese drive from Yunnan, aimed at taking Rangoon and reopening the prewar line of communications from Rangoon to Kunming. These operations, Stilwell thought, should be launched during the dry season that began in November 1942 and be completed sometime in 1943.

Stilwell's superiors, in successive conferences, whittled down some of these conceptions and substituted others of their own, so that all the final plans had in common with Stilwell's own proposals was that both envisaged a land campaign in Burma. The manifold obstacles, political and military, that had to be surmounted before the campaign opened postponed it until fall 1943, or one year after the time Stilwell had sought to begin it.

But though Myitkyina was taken very late in the day, taken it was, and the feat was a triumph for the man who had maintained it could be done. The town was taken to make possible an intensified air effort from bases in China in support of U.S. operations in the Pacific and it is against subsequent events in China that the Burma campaign, and the decisions that resulted in postponing it from 1942 to 1943, must be weighed.

CHAPTER VII

Logistics and Administration

Behind the successes in north Burma and Manipur State lay successes in the field of logistics. Probably the most important of these was the improvement in the Assam line of communications that followed its passing under Anglo-American military control. There were also major administrative changes in both SOS and theater organization. These may have contributed to victory in the field, though with less obvious directness than did the increased flow of supplies to the front.

The Headquarters Reorganized

In India, responsibility for American supply, maintenance, and construction operations lay with the Commanding General, Services of Supply, save for a few exceptions. In China, the situation was extremely complex and is treated separately below. In CBI after 15 November 1943, General Covell commanded the SOS, while his predecessor, General Wheeler, became Principal Administrative Officer, SEAC.¹ General Covell, after surveying his new command in the light of the added resources that would come to CBI as a result of the QUADRANT decisions and give him a freedom of action Wheeler had never enjoyed, suggested certain major changes.

He proposed to reorganize the SOS along lines suggested earlier by the War Department to meet the world-wide problem of an efficient division of responsibilities between theater headquarters and SOS. Theater headquarters approved generally, but preferred to keep Signals, Postal Service, Censorship, Special Services, Military Police, and Malaria Control under its own jurisdiction. (*Table 4*) Covell at once moved to set up general depots and Engineer and Transportation Services under SOS control. The American port activities at Bombay became an exempted station under the Chief of Transportation, SOS.

General Covell wanted to simplify the geographical setup by merging Advance Section No. 1 (Gaya) with Base Section No. 2 (Calcutta,) but hesitated for a while because Calcutta was not working to his satisfaction. Covell also wanted to merge Advance Section No. 2 and Base Section No. 3 into an

¹ Rpt, Covell to CG, USF IBT, 20 May 45, sub: Final Rpt, 15 Nov 43-20 May 45, pp. 1-2. (Hereafter, Covell Report.) OCMH.

TABLE 4—STRENGTH OF U. S. ARMY FORCES IN THE CHINA-BURMA-INDIA THEATER: JANUARY-SEPTEMBER 1944

End of month	Total	Theater troops	Services of Supply	Army Air Forces		Unassigned
				Air Transport Command	Other	
January	105,073	21,064	37,353	11,363	35,293	(*)
February	116,903	19,835	42,574	11,568	42,926	(*)
March	131,323	17,282	47,239	12,202	52,054	2,546
April	154,521	17,543	48,005	12,660	72,997	3,316
May	162,506	17,963	50,355	12,974	77,214	4,000
June	169,111	22,206	51,707	13,480	80,787	931
July	175,546	22,436	51,521	14,102	85,445	2,042
August	186,364	24,245	53,186	16,160	91,586	1,187
September	188,565	23,306	54,315	19,133	90,825	986

* Data not reported.

Source: G-4 Personnel Rpt, quarter ending 30 Sep 44, Hq USAF CBI. OCMH.

Intermediate Section, but being anxious not to interfere with Colonel Pick, who commanded Base Section No. 3, and the road-building effort, he contemplated waiting until Pick was ready to displace forward as the Ledo Road progressed.²

In his own headquarters, Covell set up a chief of administration and a chief of operations, dividing the general and special staff functions between them. His aim was to reduce the number of officers reporting to him. Ultimately, SOS reverted from this organization to the customary general and special staff organization.³

Once the Engineer Construction Service had been set up under Col. Thomas F. Farrell, SOS chief engineer, Engineer Division No. 1 (Base Section No. 1) and Engineer District No. 2 (Advance Section No. 2, Base Section No. 3, exclusive of the Ledo Road), plus Engineer Division No. 3 for the Delhi-Agra area, were organized to take care of all the SOS major engineering projects.⁴

Possibly feeling that with Covell changing the SOS the time had come for a renovation of the theater's organization, General Hearn on 17 January suggested to General Sultan, Deputy Commander, CBI Theater, that theater headquarters itself should be established in New Delhi, and that Chungking headquarters should be redesignated Headquarters, Forward Echelon. (See Chart 2.)

² (1) Ltr, Covell to Somervell, 16 Dec 43. Somervell File, Vol III, Hq ASF, Ts of Opns, CBI 1942-43, A46-257. (2) Roland G. Ruppenthal, *Logistical Support of the Armies*, Vol. I, Chs. I, III, V, UNITED STATES ARMY IN WORLD WAR II (Washington, 1953).

³ (1) SOS in CBI, p. 24. (2) GO 16, Hq SOS USAF CBI, 1 Feb 44. (3) GO 114, Hq SOS USAF CBI, 11 Aug 44.

⁴ Ltr, Covell to Somervell, 27 Jan 44. Somervell File, Vol IV, CBI 1944.

This would result in an administrative structure more closely related to existing circumstances. One circumstance was that since Stilwell had spent most of his time in India and Burma, it would be appropriate for his principal headquarters to be on that side of the mountains. Another was that because of geographic barriers, most of the American men and material in CBI were in India and Burma, and there of necessity were the bulk, even if not the most complex, of the theater's administrative problems. For Stilwell's brief visits to Chungking, a small headquarters would serve very well.⁵

For whatever reason, Sultan did not take up Hearn's suggestions with Stilwell until March 1944. Stilwell promptly approved them. The general order which announced the change on 31 March 1944 made plain that there was a certain shift in the center of the theater commander's interest away from China. Theater headquarters at New Delhi was made responsible for "formulating general overall policies and announcing them to the Command, for planning and for the administration of the Theater. . . ." Forward Echelon headquarters was given strictly limited responsibilities:

- a. Liaison and coordination with the Chinese Government on all matters of common interest to the United States Army Forces and the Chinese Government.
- b. Securing and transmitting information from China as required by instructions from Theater Headquarters.
- c. Coordinating and supervising the execution within China Theater of orders, directives, et cetera.
- d. Assisting Theater Headquarters in the preparation of policies, conduct of planning, and establishment of procedures concerning the operation and the administration of United States Army Forces and supporting installations in China.⁶

When the order was put into effect, word of the change quickly spread through higher Chinese social and governmental circles in Chungking, in the distorted form that the United States Army was withdrawing from China. U.S. Ambassador Clarence E. Gauss was disturbed by the rumor and took the matter up with Hearn. Hearn quickly reassured him, but the fact that reassurance was necessary suggested that liaison between the Embassy and theater headquarters was not what it might have been.⁷

SOS Problems

On surveying his far-flung command, Covell noted that most of his problems came from two factors not under SOS control, the port of Calcutta and the Assam line of communications. Despite the firm conviction of local author-

⁵ (1) Stilwell's Mission to China, Ch. X. (2) Rad CFB 12494, Hearn to Sultan, 17 Jan 44. Item 1635, Bk 5, JWS Personal File.

⁶ GO 5, Fwd Ech, Hq USAF CBI, 31 Mar 44.

⁷ (1) Rad CFB 15614, Hearn to Marshall, 2 Apr 44. Item 2160, Bk 6, JWS Personal File. (2) CM-OUT 18999, Marshall to Hearn, 5 Apr 44. (3) Ltr, Gauss to Hearn, 2 Apr 44; Memo, Hearn for Gauss, 3 Apr 44; Ltr, Gauss to Hearn, 12 Apr 44. Items 292, 294, Bk 3; JWS Personal File.

ity that the Assam line of communications could not be improved in time to support the projected operations in Burma, Covell had been told by Somervell that the line could and must be substantially improved in a matter of weeks.⁸ The first problem Covell proposed to attack was that of the line of communications. Solution of this would permit the more rapid flow of supplies to SOS's great engineering projects, and other major projects—the Ledo Road, the pipelines, and the airfields. It would also permit supplies in quantity to reach the British forces on the Manipur and Arakan fronts, whose supply problems had been so severe that in some areas troops had suffered from malnutrition.⁹

The most immediate problem, and the one with aspects of emergency, was the supply situation in Assam. Because low water on the Brahmaputra River impeded barge operations, and because the meter-gauge lines of the Bengal and Assam Railway were clogged with traffic, stocks in Assam dwindled to a seven-day level. Since it then required sixty-seven days for supplies to go by rail from Calcutta to Assam, it was possible to foresee a situation in which supplies would be below the subsistence level, and in which timely replenishment would be most difficult.¹⁰

To forestall this emergency, and to impress upon local authority the grave situation resulting from the inefficient and lethargic operation of the line of communications, requests were made for several complete trainloads of specified items to be made up and shipped to Assam on passenger-train schedules. The Indian rail authorities and the Bengal and Assam Railway agreed, and the emergency passed.¹¹

Negotiations

Negotiations with the British to arrange military control of the port of Calcutta and the line of communications began in a favorable atmosphere, with the British and American military authorities soon finding themselves in accord as to what had to be done to improve matters. Both sides wanted a British port controller with a U.S. assistant to regulate and control port facilities and personnel; definitely assigned dock areas to permit each party to concentrate its resources in its area; a central pool of dockside labor; pooling of lighters.¹² Putting a British officer with an American assistant in charge of the entire line of communications seemed desirable to both parties.

The British and American supply authorities who engaged in the preliminary talks secured the assent of CBI and SEAC to their proposal for a port controller and military control of the entire line of communications from

⁸ Covell Report, pp. 1-2.

⁹ Ltr 3872/17/Q, Slim to GHQ (India), 30 Oct 43. SEAC War Diary.

¹⁰ Covell Report, pp. 27-28.

¹¹ (1) *Ibid.* (2) SOS in CBI, pages 425-26, has an excerpt from the Covell Report in a discussion of the general difficulties of supplying U.S. installations in Assam.

¹² (1) Ltr cited n. 2(1). (2) Ltr, Covell to Wheeler, 16 Jan 44; Ltr, Covell to Somervell, 1 Feb 44. Somervell File, Vol IV, CBI 1944.

Calcutta north. The lower echelons of the Government of India approved in principle. Then the proposal seemed to encounter heavy weather. While SOS waited for clearing skies, it urged Army Service Forces to have a supremely well qualified man ready to represent the United States as assistant port controller.

By 21 January, Covell was ready to write:

Probably our biggest headache has been with the L of C from Calcutta to Assam which is in British civilian hands. We get all kinds of promises but nothing happens. As a result, for the last two weeks I have been raising hell, but still feel that more drastic action may be necessary.

In December with an approximate equal amount of tonnage allocated to the U.S. and British military, the U.S. Army lost 14,981 tons while the British lost only 723 tons. As a result of our vigorous protests we received the promise that this shortage would be made up in January 1944 and the deficiencies divided equally thereafter. Now we have just learned that the line is congested and we still will not get what was promised to us. The whole situation looks bad to me, and I am having great difficulty in digging out necessary information. I get the impression that the Indian Civil Railway Administration is not much concerned about military traffic. I have been trying for two months to find out *reliable* total figures over the broad gauge road north of Calcutta, but have been unable to get any true figures on civilian traffic, but I am still trying.¹³

The drastic action Covell wanted was immediately forthcoming. General Marshall put the matter before the President. Describing the situation on the line of communications as "precarious," and pointing out that three of the ATC airfields in which the President took such close interest were out of gas, Marshall said that Anglo-American military control of the line of communications was the only solution, and asked that Roosevelt write to the Prime Minister.¹⁴ The President agreed and, pointing out that the operations of the ATC had been embarrassed by lack of vigorous management on the line of communications and that the results of civilian administration had been disappointing, he urged that Churchill intervene in person to obtain full military control of the line of communications from Calcutta to Assam. In reply, the Prime Minister promised a personal investigation.¹⁵

A few weeks later, SOS learned that the War Transport Department of the Government of India had been strongly opposing any move to place the port of Calcutta under military control. The civilian authorities wanted a commissioner who had been prominently identified with the existing regime to have charge of the port. The military, British and American, vigorously opposed the suggestion. They swept the field when the Viceroy, that distinguished soldier, Field Marshal Lord Archibald P. Wavell, decided personally

¹³ Ltr, Covell to Somervell, 21 Jan 44. Somervell File, Vol IV, CBI 1944.

¹⁴ Memo, Marshall for President, 29 Jan 44, sub: Failure of Calcutta-Assam Line of Communications. Somervell File, Vol IV, CBI 1944.

¹⁵ Col. Charles K. Gailey, Exec Off, OPD, for Handy, 31 Jan 44. Item 55, OPD Exec 10. Attached to the memorandum is a draft radio, Roosevelt to Churchill, which Colonel Gailey says was dispatched on 29 January. Colonel Gailey also reports Churchill's 30 January reply to the President.

that there would be a complete change in Calcutta. Perhaps remembering how his own operations in Burma had been hobbled by logistical problems that were called insoluble, the Viceroy, "with the accompaniment of a little desk pounding," made his wishes known. The civilian departments heard and obeyed.¹⁶

The agreement on the line of communications that resulted on 6 February provided that an outstanding man should control the entire working of the port, and all agencies concerned with it. Under him would be two deputies, one of them an American. To meet civilian objections, it was agreed the port director would be a civilian, and responsible to the War Transport Department of the Government of India.¹⁷

Another agreement, completed the same day, provided a new set of controls for the line of communications. Responsibility was placed on the Calcutta representative of General Headquarters (India), advised by the regional controller of traffic priorities for the Government of India, a representative of the U.S. Army, and representatives of the railway and barge lines.

3. The mechanism for implementing the above decisions will be as follows:

(a) The total capacity of the L of C will be estimated periodically by D. D. Mov., CALCUTTA [Deputy Director, Movements], in conjunction with the Railway and Steamship Companies concerned, and in consultation with the Officer Commanding U.S. Railway Troops. This estimate of capacity will be telegraphed immediately to PAO (I) [Principal Administrative Officer, India], and PAO (SEAC).

(b) Proposals as to the allotment on each sector and in both directions of this capacity as between military, essential civil, and railway construction and maintenance requirements, and the routing of three tonnages, will be prepared in CALCUTTA . . . by . . .

D. D. Mov., CALCUTTA
 Representative of Commanding General, SOS
 Representative of Army Group, S.E.A.
 Regional Controller of Priorities, CALCUTTA NORTH
 Representative of B & A Railway,

and submitted to DELHI where they will be agreed or amended by representatives of GHQ (I), War Transport Department, H.Q., S.A.C., S.E.A.C. and the Railway Board, the approved constitutional procedure being followed in the event of failure to agree.

(c) Responsibility for implementing the agreed allotments of (b) will be placed on a panel constituted as in (d) below. . . .

(d) The panel . . . will consist of D. D. Mov., CALCUTTA, who will be chairman . . .

Regional Controller of Priorities, CALCUTTA NORTH
 Commanding General, S.O.S.
 B & A Railway
 Rivers Steam Navigation Co.
 India General Navigation Co.
 Movement Control (Railway)
 Movement Control (IWT [Inland Water Transport])¹⁸

¹⁶ Ltr, Covell to Somervell, 11 Feb 44. Somervell File, Vol IV, CBI 1944.

¹⁷ Incl to Ltr cited n. 16.

¹⁸ Ltr, Ferris to Marshall for OPD, 11 Feb 44, Incl, sub: Calcutta Port and Assam LOC. Somervell File, Vol IV, CBI 1944.



THE KING GEORGE DOCK AREA in Calcutta, India.

Clearing the Port of Calcutta

Clearing the congested port of Calcutta was unwittingly facilitated by the Japanese. Submarine activity in the Bay of Bengal during December 1943 forced the convoying of ships from Ceylon to the mouth of the Hooghly River, upon whose banks Calcutta is built. This threat slowed the arrival of cargo and permitted the dispatch of much that had accumulated on the docks and in the warehouses. For the Americans, the burden fell on two port companies of Negro soldiers, the 540th and the 541st (Transportation Corps). For months these men had worked like Trojans, sometimes right around the clock.¹⁹

During the winter months, British consent to SOS control of part of the great King George Docks was obtained. In the week of 29 December 1943–5 January 1944, seven companies (the 497th and 508th Port Battalions, TC) of veteran longshoremen with complete equipment for unloading ships arrived. In the month of January, the ten U.S. port companies then on duty unloaded 98,859 long tons, as against 42,325 long tons the month before.²⁰

¹⁹ (1) SOS in CBI, App. 3, History of Base Section No. 2. (2) Ltr, Covell to Somervell, 4 Jan 44. Somervell File, Vol IV, CBI 1944.

²⁰ App. cited n. 19(1).

In addition to the tripling of the U.S. force at hand and the leasing of the King George Docks, other steps contributed greatly to faster movement of cargo through the port.

1. The procurement of large floating cranes and other modern dock equipment.
2. The diversion of barge line equipment to augment port facilities.
3. The partial replacement of native labor with troops having stevedoring experience, the training of other units along these lines and the pooling of native labor.
4. The establishment of a 24-hour work day with shifts to maintain it.
5. The more efficient use of transportation facilities in removing cargo from the docks.
6. The improvement in the Assam LOC.²¹

On 15 March 1944 the King George Docks were completely cleared for the first time. During the next thirty days the dock workers handled 97,000 measurement tons of freight. By 20 April, General Covell could report: ". . . no special concern need be given to the capacity of the port of Calcutta, nor has any indication been given at this time that it has reached its saturation point."²² The port director, Mr. F. A. Pope, arrived 22 May 1944.

On 23 January Brig. Gen. Gilbert X. Cheves was assigned to the command of Base Section No. 2, succeeding Brig. Gen. John A. Warden, who went to the west coast of India to take command of Base Section No. 1 (Karachi). General Cheves found a problem in relations between U.S. troops and the people of Bengal. SOS personnel had not been well disciplined. The port of Karachi under General Warden continued to work with smooth efficiency. Its rate of discharging cargo never ranked below fifth among 110 ports in which the U.S. Army operated.²³

The steady flow of reinforcements to CBI after the QUADRANT Conference, August 1943, made it desirable to bring troops in through Bombay. For one reason, some of the transports were too large to use the Karachi facilities, and for another, the rail connections out of Bombay were better. In 1943, 118,983 U.S. troops passed through Bombay, some of them intended for the Persian Gulf Command.

Local authorities at Bombay were most co-operative in finding office space, hospital accommodations, and staging area quarters for American use. As a rule, troops remained on board their transports until the troop trains appeared. If it was necessary for the ship to leave before the trains came, then the staging areas were used. The principal drawback to this arrangement lay in the fact that British rations as prepared by Indian kitchen personnel were not satisfactory to American troops. Some relief was found in supplying the difference between the two rations, close supervision of the kitchens, and the partial use of

²¹ Covell Report, p. 8.

²² Ltr, Covell to Somervell, 20 Apr 44. Somervell File, Vol IV, CBI 1944.

²³ (1) GO 10, Hq SOS USAF CBI, 23 Jan 44. (2) SOS in CBI, p. 35. (3) Rpt, Covell to Somervell, 26 May, 21 Jun 44. Somervell File, Vol IV, CBI 1944.

American mess personnel. An American staging area, initiated in February 1944, received its first troops on 24 July.²⁴

Railway Problems

Restricting factors that affected tonnage moving up over the railway lines of the Bengal and Assam Railway lay both in the physical structure of the line itself and in the methods of those who operated it. The railway was partly of broad gauge and partly of meter. The broad-gauge line seemed capable of hauling more traffic than the meter-gauge line could receive; bottlenecks lay in the transshipment points, where coolies lethargically carried stores from broad- to meter-gauge cars and vice versa. There was no bridge across the Brahmaputra River, and the ferry between Amingaon and Pandu was an obstruction. Together with the stretch of steep-gradient track between Lumding and Manipur Road (near Dimapur), the ferry was regarded as a major obstacle. (*See Map 1.*)

Remedial construction was under way. The double-tracking of the Lumding-Manipur Road section had been begun by Indian authority but the pace of the work drew blistering comment from American railwaymen. Between July 1943 and April 1944, 3.25 miles had been completed.²⁵ The Government of India had made plans for a bridge across the Brahmaputra River, for double-tracking the main line, and for new yard facilities. However, such projects would require years to complete and would themselves be a major burden on the line of communications.²⁶

Signal communication along the Bengal and Assam Railway was lacking. Daily traffic figures were therefore not available, and trains would be "lost" four or five hours at a time.²⁷

Operating methods seemed strange to American railwaymen. The railway authorities of the Government of India thought it possible to analyze the existing facilities of a line of communications and from them determine its capacity. This estimate in turn would be set as a target. When the target had been reached, the mission would be regarded as accomplished. Moreover, the operating echelons on occasion took the target figure as literally indicating the limit of the line and refused to go beyond it.²⁸ A major element in attempts to set target figures was the local belief that railway management had to keep the number of loaded cars moving up to the front equal to the number of empties returning from the front. The American approach, on the other hand, con-

²⁴ SOS in CBI, pp. 35-36.

²⁵ Ltr, Col Appleton, Director, MRS USAF CBI, to Brig Gen Thomas B. Wilson, CG, Transportation Service, 4 Apr 44. Somervell File, Vol IV, CBI 1944. Appleton thought there was a deliberate slowdown.

²⁶ Ltr, Appleton to Wilson, 25 Apr 44. Somervell File, Vol IV, CBI 1944.

²⁷ Ltr cited n. 25.

²⁸ (1) Ltr, Covell to Somervell, 12 Apr 44. Somervell File, Vol IV, CBI 1944. (2) Ltr cited n. 25.

centrated on moving loaded cars to the front and accepted the resulting lack of balance until the returning empties corrected the situation. To American railroadmen, the quantity movement of freight was most important; to Indian railroadmen, the careful balancing of loaded and empty freight cars to avoid even a temporary drain on the resources of other lines.²⁹

Military Railway Service Begins Its Work

Anticipating a share of responsibility in operating the Assam line of communications, SOS established the Military Railway Service on 25 December 1943, under the Chief of Transportation, SOS, CBI. The main body of American railway troops whose assignment to India had been agreed to in the fall of 1943, arrived in India on 11 January 1944.³⁰ Advance elements of the railway troops had meanwhile engaged in reconnoitering the sections of line that the U.S. was to assist in operating. Officials and officers of the Government of India and of SOS framed a series of agreements under which the American railwaymen would function.

The basic principle of the agreements was that American personnel to the number of about 4,600 would be superimposed on the existing railway staff. No employees of the Bengal and Assam Railway were to lose their jobs. The Military Railway Service took over operation of 804 miles of main and branch lines. At Parbatipur, the Military Railway Service transferred its traffic between the broad- and meter-gauge lines and operated the bottleneck ferry at Pandu. Military Railway Service did not affect commercial traffic which continued to be completely under the Bengal and Assam Railway.

On the administrative side, the Military Railway Service and the Bengal and Assam Railway were each responsible for discipline of their own personnel. The railway management undertook to supply all expendable railway stores. The current construction program continued. The Military Railway Service agreed to ask for new construction through the existing railway channels.³¹

Headquarters of the Military Railway Service was set up at Gauhati, a central location and close to the two principal bottlenecks, the Pandu ferry and the Lumding-Manipur section of track. Headquarters personnel were members of the 705th Railway Grand Division. Colonel Appleton, formerly general manager of the New York Zone of the Pennsylvania Railroad, commanded. The operating battalions deployed, and the Americans took up their work at 0001, 1 March 1944, on the eve of the Japanese invasion of India.³² The relation between the two events was a coincidence, but it is interesting to speculate on what might have happened had the Assam line of communications been unable to meet the responsibilities soon thrust on it.

²⁹ Ltr cited n. 25.

³⁰ SOS in CBI, pp. 23, 63.

³¹ SOS in CBI, pp. 90-93, Summary of Agreements for Opn of Portions of B&A Ry by USAF, MRS.

³² SOS in CBI, pp. 63-66.

Changes in Operating Procedure

Colonel Appleton at once moved to break the bottleneck at the Pandu ferry. Work was begun immediately by using two locomotives simultaneously: one engine moved cars off the barge, and another, already coupled up, was ready to move cars on the barge. Prior to taking over, the Military Railway Service had agreed to a daily target of 305 cars eastward over the ferry; a daily average of 327 cars was achieved. A movement of 350 cars plus construction trains was projected for April. By 21 April the daily average was up to 413 cars eastward, and still rising, as shown by the 540 cars moved on that day.³³

For Parbatipur, the transshipment point from broad to meter gauge, Appleton directed that the target figures be dispensed with, that cars be loaded as fast as they were available. Appleton's directive plus the improvement of the ferry operations meant that an increased number of loaded cars began moving east. An increase in the operating efficiency of the railroad was called for. Changes in operating procedure provided this. Train lengths were doubled, permitting more efficient use of motive power. Hundred-car trains were not uncommon. Train speeds were increased. U.S. locomotive engineers took the throttle on difficult stretches (and eased the long "drags" over the high iron on the approaches to the Naga Hills).

The Indian block system was retained, in conformance with the policy of keeping Indian operating rules. The method was "not basically inefficient," but slow, lackadaisical operation made it appear so. "Reports of numerous inspections of the lines invariably included reference to stops at all stations whether necessary or not, halts of much longer than necessary duration to obtain clearance, inefficient methods of dispatching. . . . The placing of U.S. Army Station Masters at many of the dispatching points along the lines and close supervision of all personnel resulted in considerable speed-up of traffic movement."³⁴

With the steadily increasing forward movement of freight, the number of cars from other lines on the Bengal and Assam Railway inevitably increased. On 1 March the debit balance had been 9,600 cars. As Appleton disregarded all short-term considerations of balancing the movements of loaded and empty cars, the debit balance rose steadily. This attracted local criticism, but Appleton stood firm, for he expected that the cycle of return movement of empties would soon appear and stabilize the situation at a much higher level of traffic. In late April, the debit balance was 12,000 cars.

By the end of March it was apparent that the problems of meter-gauge operations were well on the way to solution. Figures furnished by British Movements Control revealed that military traffic from Pandu and Gauhati for

³³ (1) Rpt, Appleton to Wilson, 25 Apr 44, sub: Opns by MRS of B&A Ry (meter gauge). Somervell File, Vol IV, CBI 1944. (2) SOS in CBI, p. 70.

³⁴ SOS in CBI, pp. 68, 69.



RAILROAD OPERATIONS IN INDIA. *The loading of cars on the Pandu ferry is shown, above. A loaded train moves toward the front, below.*



March increased 44.6 percent over that for February, and that tonnages delivered to the forward areas at Manipur Road, Ledo, and Chabua were up 43 percent, or 34,568 tons. The meter-gauge lines now handled more traffic than the broad-gauge line could bring forward from Calcutta.

The broad-gauge line from Calcutta north began as multiple track, reducing to double track for a distance of 124 miles, and finally to a single track for the last 108 miles to Parbatipur. Because of inefficient and indifferent operation, the line was badly congested, and loading of cars actually had to be suspended.

Trains have been set off on sidings the length of the line definitely reducing the capacity by the lack of passing sidings. Crews have drawn the fires on engines, have left originating terminals after expiration of sufficient time to have reached final destination. Many reasons have been given for such a condition, such as lack of communication, insufficient motive power, and lack of tractive effort of power in service. It is hardly conceivable that a Broad Gauge system would be incapable of moving tonnage in greater volume that could be absorbed by a connecting Meter Gauge Railroad. But such has been the case. With proper supervision and operation the picture can be reversed.³⁵

Their attention directed to this state of affairs, the British took remedial action. A director general of railways took over the Calcutta area, and Army officers with experience in railroading were stationed along the line. A pool of 100 broad-gauge freight cars was provided at Parbatipur to handle sudden increases in freight from the meter-gauge lines.³⁶

Operations Under Military Railway Service

Because of the delay inherent in administrative communications the sharp increases in meter-gauge traffic under the Military Railway Service were not known in Washington until April 1944. General Arnold followed the situation closely. The critical supply situation in Assam, alluded to earlier in this chapter, moved him to tell Somervell on 17 March: "Unless the improvement of the rail and river lines, and the construction of the Calcutta-Assam pipe line, is given a more determined push, I shall be unable to furnish the service demanded [from the ATC]." ³⁷ Unaware that Covell was about to report a 34-percent jump in rail traffic for early March, Somervell at once sent him the gist of Arnold's strong memorandum. Meanwhile, in Delhi, General Sultan on 21 March was taking a pessimistic view of the line-of-communications problem. Delhi being a great deal closer to the scene, Sultan knew of Appleton's progress, but even so he thought that "no matter how much they do the communications will never be stretched to the point where they carry all the stuff that the British and Americans want to send to Assam." ³⁸

³⁵ Rpt cited n. 33(1).

³⁶ Bykofsky MS.

³⁷ Memo, Arnold for Somervell, 17 Mar 44. Somervell File, Vol IV, CBI 1944.

³⁸ Memo, Sultan for Stilwell, 21 Mar 44. Item 290, Bk 3, JWS Personal File.

The concern felt by Arnold and Somervell was speedily dissipated when Covell's and Appleton's reports reached their superiors. The messages came very close to crossing in passage. After March 1944, the Assam line of communications ceased to be a major problem; Arnold's memorandum was the last of its kind.

From 1 March to 25 April 1944, or during the time when the Japanese were on the flood tide of their drive into India, the Military Railway Service moved all traffic offered to it. No restrictions on traffic were requested of higher authority. Even more indicative of the swift change in the condition of the line of communications was the fact that between 23 March and 18 April sixty-four troop trains were moved in addition to scheduled traffic. "In fact during the month of April . . . the average daily tonnage over the Assam LOC exceeded the British estimate of 4,400 long tons for October 1944 made by the Director of Transportation, GHQ (I). . . ." ³⁹

The War Department relieved Colonel Appleton on 27 April 1944 to send him to another theater. On the occasion of his departure, General Lindsell, Principal Administrative Officer (India), after stating that all traffic offered to Military Railway Service had been accepted, added: "In addition to these admirable technical results Col. Appleton gave us a fine example of inter-allied cooperation and I know that all my officers who were privileged to work with him will be full of regret at his leaving India." Lt. Col. Stanley Bray of the Railway Grand Division acted as director until Colonel Yount took command on 17 May 1944. There was one ugly little note. Covell reported that discipline among the railwaymen was not good, that there had been considerable stealing of military supplies.⁴⁰

When tonnage bids were submitted by British and American authorities asking for priorities on rail cargo space for the month of June, they were accepted in full, just as March had marked the meter-gauge line's ability to receive all the cargo brought to it. "In July allocations for military traffic exceeded the target figure established at the Quebec Conference of 220,000 short tons per month for 1 January 1946." Indeed, the Military Railway Service soon found the meter-gauge line had surplus capacity.

During August, an all time high of 16,439 wagons [freight cars] was handled eastward over the Amingaon-Pandu Ferry which amounted to a daily average of 530 wagons. This figure when compared with the average of 327 wagons per day handled in March gives an idea of the steady increase in capacity achieved as operating experience was obtained. Although more American supplies were moved forward to Assam during this month than ever before, a part of the capacity previously allotted to the U.S. Army was turned back for civilian use.

Military dispatches over the Assam LOC had grown to 6,537 long tons per day in September although the total available capacity was not being used. The new wagon ferry

³⁹ SOS in CBI, p. 74.

⁴⁰ (1) Ltr, Lindsell to Covell, 26 Apr 44; Rpt, Covell to Somervell, 22 May 44. Somervell File, Vol IV, CBI 1944. (2) Bykofsky MS.

between Amingaon and Pandu and completion of many construction projects on the system began to be reflected in increased capacity sufficient to provide an excess of capacity of ten percent over actual requirements. In October the capacity for movement of military stores (exclusive of POL, personnel, and vehicles) exceeded demands by approximately 20 percent.⁴¹

Physical Improvements on the Railway

In the fall of 1943, floods had done so much damage to the Bengal and Assam right of way as to cause serious concern in General Headquarters (India).⁴² If the monsoon rains of 1944 did the same, Appleton's reforms might literally be washed away, and the Burma campaign endangered by supply failures. Thirty-odd streams cross the right of way and quickly flood during the monsoon. With the monsoon approaching, flood-control measures were taken in hand. Bridges were reinforced with heavy stone riprap to shield their piers from the swirling currents.

One of the most sensitive points was the Mora Manas River bridge. It was necessary both to strengthen the bridge and to keep the river from flooding the right of way. Lt. Col. George Branch, commanding the 725th Railway Operating Battalion, decided to cut a diversion channel from the Mora Manas to the near-by Bulkhadhoba River. The 725th Battalion completed the half-mile-long channel in June 1944. Thanks to the several measures of flood control, for the first time in thirty years the monsoon did not interrupt rail traffic. In October, Brig. Gen. Paul F. Yount could report that Colonel Branch's channel had kept flood waters from doing any more than cover the tracks for a brief period of time, without stopping traffic.

The right of way itself was improved and its capacity increased. New ballast was laid, kinky rails straightened, and low points lifted. In general, efforts were consistently made to bring the right of way nearer to American standards. By the end of 1944, the Government of India had double-tracked about 20 percent of the line. Of more immediate importance was the construction of a number of passing sidings and the enlargement of the main railway yards. Because it was doubtful that the double-tracking could be completed in time to benefit current operations, General Yount finally persuaded the Government of India to concentrate its attention on improving the passing sidings to speed two-way traffic. Though the burden of construction fell on local authority and resources, in many cases it was possible to furnish American earth-moving equipment to aid the long files of Indian laborers patiently carrying baskets of soil on their heads.

The problem of rolling stock was attacked by improved maintenance and the acquisition of U.S. equipment under lend-lease. On beginning its work, Military Railway Service found the rolling stock badly run down, and the

⁴¹ SOS in CBI, pp. 75-76.

⁴² For this section, the authors drew heavily upon the Bykofsky MS.

758th Railway Shop Battalion was faced with a problem. The Bengal and Assam Railway, under the operating agreement, was responsible for providing necessary spare parts and repair facilities. Unfortunately, it had few parts at hand. In practice, the Military Railway Service had to requisition matériel through the Transportation Service. Until spares could arrive from the United States, there was no alternative to cannibalizing engines and cars. Despite these several handicaps, from 1 March to the end of 1944, the 758th Battalion repaired 47,044 cars.

A great portion of the Bengal and Assam's motive power was of U.S. origin via lend-lease. When the Military Railway Service took over operations on 1 March 1944, 167 of the 396 locomotives on hand were War Department engines. By 30 September, the number was 203, over half the total on hand, and by the end of the year the figure was 238. With the engines came a steady flow of American meter-gauge freight cars, adding up to some 6,500 by the end of 1944. These were the commodious American boxcars, with twice the capacity of the little four-wheel cars used by the Bengal and Assam. Military Railway Service estimated that the capacity of the lend-lease rolling stock was, by the end of 1944, equal to that of the railway's own equipment.

Operation of the lend-lease boxcars was made more difficult because Indian shops, in erecting them, omitted brakes and vacuum hose. This often caused collisions and the breaking-in-two of trains. By the end of 1944 the shopmen were able to equip a sizable number with proper brakes. The end of this problem was foreshadowed when, in October, the Railway Board of the Government of India promised that all cars assembled by them would be properly equipped, and that they would provide 600 brake sets per month for cars already in operation.

A British Appraisal

The quick and dramatic improvement in the operations of the Bengal and Assam Railway was perhaps the outstanding example of successful application of American technology to the logistical problems of war in the China, Burma and India Theater. An editorial in the Indian press stated:

THE AMERICAN WAY

Railway communications in Eastern Bengal and Assam were never good. Difficulties of terrain and climate had been taken as excuse for sloth. Defence needs were ignored in India's north-east corner in odd contrast to its north-west one where there was lavish construction of strategic railways and roads. When the Japanese threat developed in 1942, there ensued sudden sharp deterioration in the efficiency of railways near the Eastern Frontier, particularly in Assam, owing to the wholly unwonted and unforeseen increase of traffic. External pressure and internal administrative stress on the communications system coming about just at the time when the need for quick movement was imperative were moreover soon aggravated by India's political disorders. The situation became insufferable; journeys took days; even deaths

en route were not infrequent. This state of affairs prevailed in the latter part of 1942 and continued, little modified, throughout 1943; drastic action was obviously necessary.

This came at last in the beginning of 1944 when sections of the Bengal and Assam Railway were turned over to American operational control. U.S. enterprise and hustle have succeeded in this instance, most remarkable results being achieved which (according to common report) British and Indian experts on the basis of much local experience had stoutly predicted were impossible. What has been done must be most gratifying to Maj-Gen Covell . . . completion of a job of extreme difficulty which must be regarded as a major contribution to the Allied victories in Burma. Both the Government of India's Railway Member and the Manager of the B and A Railway have praised the work of the U.S. railway battalions, first under Col. J. A. Appleton and later under Brig-Gen P. F. Yount. Thousands of Indian railwaymen cooperated with the Americans and though difficulties were inevitable, they were surmounted through a "remarkable degree of tolerance on both sides."

As the Railway Member said recently, the Americans "got their coats and shirts off to the task" in Assam. That is their way and perhaps was the only way to have completed at a critical juncture what the official statement . . . describes as the lifeline for the troops in Burma.⁴³

In his final report to the CCS, Mountbatten contented himself with remarking: "The immediate increase in deliveries to Assam over the railway was not as great as Lieut.-General Somervell had hoped, but during the latter part of 1944 and the early part of 1945 the lift rose very rapidly; and the introduction of military control was unquestionably justified by the results obtained."⁴⁴

Attempts To Use Indian River Transport

Since the Assam line of communications lay in the valley of the Brahmaputra, one of the world's great rivers, the use of inland water transport to supplement the rail line seemed an obvious approach, and a great deal of effort was expended in trying to make the river a more efficient artery. Barge lines under civilian operation were bringing up small quantities of supplies to the various river ports—many of them little more than landing stages. After the TRIDENT Conference (Washington, May 1943) decided not to attempt to retake all Burma and reopen the line of communications from Rangoon north, SOS planners suggested that barge equipment originally intended for use on the Irrawaddy River be placed on the Brahmaputra. The project was approved at the QUADRANT Conference, Quebec, August 1943, with the target date of 1 April 1944.

Over the six months' period September 1943–March 1944, experiments in the United States and in the CBI Theater revealed that the tugs and barges procured were not very well suited to their task. The question became one of using them to best advantage somewhere in India. Meanwhile, the sharp improvement in operation of the meter-gauge rail lines made the issue less urgent.

⁴³ The editorial (*Statesman*, May 27, 1945) appears as an inclosure of the Covell Report.

⁴⁴ Mountbatten Report, Pt. A, par. 46.

By July 1944 Transportation Service concluded that the equipment and men at hand, many of the latter highly skilled in barge-line operation, could best be used for lighter and towing service around Calcutta, ferry and terminal service on the Brahmaputra River, and moving POL (gasoline [petrol], oils, and lubricants) and dry stores to airfields in East Bengal.⁴⁵ Initial hauling of POL by barge from Goalundo, on the broad-gauge rail line, and Dacca in East Bengal was begun on 17 August. Hauling of dry stores from Khulna to Dacca began soon after. In September, the peak month of fall 1944, 1,934 long tons of stores and 601,474 imperial gallons of POL were carried from Goalundo to Dacca.

The civil barge lines on the Brahmaputra River came under the jurisdiction of the Assam Line of Communications Panel, which integrated their operation with that of the railway. The principle followed was that of cutting long barge hauls from Calcutta to Assam to the minimum, using instead rail from Calcutta to Sirajganj Ghat and Dhubri, ports on the Brahmaputra, thus cutting down the barges' turnaround time.⁴⁶

Pipelines in India

There were two major U.S. pipeline projects in India, one supplying the B-29 bases around Calcutta,⁴⁷ and one from the Budge-Budge oil terminal of the Burma-Shell Co., about sixteen miles below Calcutta, to a tank farm at Tinsukia in upper Assam. The latter line was an integral part of the Assam line of communications.

For construction purposes, the line was divided into four areas, each under an area engineer. The American portion of the construction work was done by the 700th, 708th, 709th, 776th, and 777th Engineer Petroleum Distribution Companies. Col. William C. Kinsolving was in charge of the project for Engineer Construction District No. 12. Because of the problems of labor recruiting, land use, housing, and local procurement, a British garrison engineer and five assistant garrison engineers were attached, and the project, as usual in India, became a combined one. Approximately Rupees 4,000,000 worth of work was contributed by agencies of the Government of India.

Following a period of reconnaissance and design on the 752-mile line, work began 25 February 1944. Because the Assam line of communications was badly congested at this time, deliveries of material were slow, and the work did not really get under way until April. The material itself was a headache to the construction crews. Pipe came in tons before couplings were delivered. Inexperienced port and freight personnel lost and damaged a good many pieces of equipment. Very few standard spare parts ever arrived. To the pipe-laying crews,

⁴⁵ (1) Bykofsky MS, pp. 115-16. (2) SOS in CBI, pp. 96-98.

⁴⁶ (1) Bykofsky MS, p. 119. (2) SOS in CBI, p. 99.

⁴⁷ See Ch. III, above.

sweating away in the Indian heat, it must have seemed as though a malign goblin was deliberately hiding the essential small parts, fittings, and screws without which the imposing devices of modern industry will not work. But the work went on, with the Indian artisan, ingenuity, and field expedients doing their best to fill the gaps.

The first 300 miles of pipe north from Budge-Budge were on the Bengal and Assam's track just outside the rails. The water table in that area is so high during the monsoon that ditches were not practicable, and the local road net was so poor that there was no other means of access. The staff of the railway could not have been more co-operative. The Indian railwaymen scheduled work trains so carefully that pipe was always in place along the tracks before the pipeline crews arrived. Rivers were crossed by pulling prewelded sections of line across them by tractor.

The fragility of the invasion-weight pipe used and the heavily populated countryside offered serious problems of construction and operation. The Westerner, and particularly the American, really does not comprehend the phrase *heavily populated* until he has seen the Indian countryside, with village following on village, sometimes only a mile or two apart, and the space between filled with little plots like suburban gardens. Where the safety of the villagers seemed to require it, the pipe was buried, and because of the dense population this meant burying long stretches of pipe. This in turn created two more problems: finding the labor to bury the pipe, and the rapid corrosion of the thin-walled pipe once laid.

Coolies were hired by the garrison engineer and his assistants through piecework contractors. The local contractors had never been faced with a job of such magnitude, particularly since it involved keeping a labor force moving forward. The laborers could not go far from their villages, for no surplus of food or housing would be available in the countryside. And the contractors' personnel policies, if they can be so dignified, were blends of inefficiency and time-honored skulduggery. When the Calcutta area was left behind, it proved best to put the laborers on the payroll directly, give them an identity token, pay them daily, and supervise them with American noncommissioned officers. Construction of three pipeline plows by District No. 12 shops proved very successful. They equaled 1,000 laborers for digging ditches in which to lay the pipe.

The thin-walled pipe was not only an operating problem but a hazard. Experience with 160 miles of it in West Bengal, in the B-29 supply system, suggested that the loss would rise steadily as the pipe remained in the ground and that it would not require many months to reach significant proportions in a long line. Hundred-octane gasoline seeping ever farther through the soil of a populated area is a deadly hazard.

On 26 June 1944 a leak was found where the pipe crossed the Hooghly River near the village of Ulabaria. The crews began to repair the line, following normal operating and safety procedures. Water was pumped into the line

and all gasoline seemed to be clear. The odor of gasoline in the vicinity did not seem heavy; moreover, a soldier was posted in the street warning the villagers not to start any open fire. Everything appeared in order and the crew prepared to test the pipe with compressed air for leakage. As the sergeant in charge walked toward the open end of the pipe, there was a vapor explosion. There was no subsequent vapor fire but the villagers' thatched huts promptly ignited. In the resulting holocaust, seventy-one people were burned to death, and about twenty buildings destroyed. After the Ulabaria tragedy it became customary to use standard-weight pipe in dangerous areas.

The pipeline was complete from Budge-Budge to Tinsukia on 8 July and testing began on the 13th. The entire system was in operation on 14 August, though, as noted above, sections of it began operating earlier to relieve pressure on the railway.

The same month, August, that saw completion of the first pipeline from the Calcutta area to upper Assam also saw War Department approval of a 6-inch line from the port of Chittagong to Tinsukia. Such a route would be shorter, have no major river crossings, be flood-free during the monsoon, and give the advantage of dispersal and extra facilities. Its capacity was estimated at 36,000 long tons a month. Construction began on 16 October with emphasis on completing the section from Chittagong to Tilagaon to connect with the East Bengal fields of the ATC.⁴⁸

Supply Problems in India

After General Covell's reorganization of SOS, and until late 1944, there were no major structural changes in the SOS. A War Department change in the authorized supply levels was successfully complied with, thanks to the improved Assam line of communications, and the supply of reciprocal aid from India gave signs of approaching the maximum. It was a period of steady improvement in efficiency of operations, in stocks on hand, and in ability to carry out the SOS mission.

General Covell's reorganization plan called for Advance Section No. 2 to become an Intermediate Section and expand northward to take over the Ledo base. Covell had postponed implementing this project lest it interfere with General Pick's building the Ledo Road. When in May 1944 the issue was raised anew, Pick opposed the change on the ground that his organization, fully extended in support of current operations, would suffer if such a major amputation was performed on it. His views prevailed, and though an order directing the change was published 23 August 1944, shortly after Myitkyina fell, the actual changes were not made until considerably later.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ The above is based on: (1) SOS in CBI, Appendix 12, entitled Construction Service, which contains a Report on Pipeline Program Carried Out by Engineer District No. 12. (2) SOS in CBI, pp. 115-16.

⁴⁹ SOS in CBI, pp. 335-56.

In January 1944 the War Department took on itself the responsibility of determining supply levels. Immediately thereafter, it cut the maximum level of supply in CBI for Class I and Class III supplies from 180 to 120 days, of which 30 were operating and 90, reserve. Theater headquarters protested that the 30-day operating level was insufficient because of the length of time it took to move supplies from Calcutta to the front. Fortunately, the sharp increase in deliveries over the Assam line of communications that ensued in March 1944 relieved concern on this point. Indeed, such was the over-all improvement in the theater supply situation that in compliance with a War Department directive ordering periodic review of supply levels to reduce them where possible, SOS recommended that authorized levels for Class II and IV supplies also be cut from 180 to 120 days.⁵⁰

New Agreements on Local Procurement

Because the U.S. forces in CBI had been directed to make the maximum use of local resources, and because the Government of India was most co-operative in supplying them as reciprocal aid, local procurement was a major interest of SOS.

In the summer of 1942, SOS, CBI Theater headquarters, and the Government of India reached an agreement which worked so well that in fall 1942, General Wheeler, then commanding SOS, could report to General Stilwell that the U.S. forces were living off the land.⁵¹

A group of new agreements with the Government of India in spring 1943, following the visit of a lend-lease mission from the United States, extended and speeded the reciprocal aid process. The sometimes-debated question of the scale on which India would issue supplies to U.S. troops was settled in June 1943 by India's agreement to issue supplies without reference to the British scale. The SOS agreed not to ask for supplies in excess of the normal American scale, and further, that save in emergency it would not requisition imported stores from India, except for oil products, which had a special status. India speeded the process of supply by permitting SOS to requisition rations from the nearest Royal Indian Army Service Corps depots. SOS in turn promised not to buy imported stores on the open market in excess of Rupees 10,000 without permission from the Government of India. To keep this latter agreement by SOS from hampering the American supply position in emergencies, the Government of India soon after agreed that the SOS could apply to the nearest Indian Army depot for imported or domestic stores other than foodstuffs in amounts up to Rupees 10,000.⁵²

In February 1944, the process of liberalization reached a probable limit when U.S. forces in the field were enabled to requisition certain items common to

⁵⁰ SOS in CBI, p. 344.

⁵¹ *Stilwell's Mission to China*, Ch. VI.

⁵² SOS in CBI, pp. 144-47.

Indian and U.S. Army use directly from the local Indian Army depot without securing approval from SOS headquarters or General Headquarters (India). In effect, this gave U.S. organizations the same status as that of neighboring Indian units in drawing common-user items from Indian stocks.

During 1943 and 1944, reciprocal aid from India steadily increased until it finally began to seem that the upper limit was being approached even though various U.S. agencies took steps to improve Indian productivity. Indians were trained in the United States. Teams of U.S. technicians toured Indian factories to teach improved production methods. Raw materials, such as steel and alkaline-reclaimed rubber, and capital goods, such as rolling stock and mining equipment, were furnished where advisable and possible.⁵³

Indian civilian employees, ranging from Anglo-Indian secretaries in headquarters installations to Indian technicians to unskilled Indian laborers were an essential and invaluable reinforcement. Since the American effort in India was primarily air and supply, employment of these Indian civilians meant that fewer American troops were needed. These Indians were paid by the Government of India under reciprocal aid. By 30 September 1944, the SOS and AAF's Air Service Command employed approximately 79,000, of whom 21,000 were skilled and semiskilled, and 58,000 unskilled. Many of the skilled people learned their trades while working for the U.S. Army. Training and supervising them were added to the responsibilities of many U.S. Army enlisted men, so that the advantage was not without its indirect cost.⁵⁴

In 1944, SOS could only estimate the dollar value of the reciprocal aid extended by the Government of India. That government claimed its administrative resources would not permit furnishing an appraisal of the dollar value of reciprocal aid. The SOS therefore was obliged to set up its own system for appraising reciprocal aid received so that it might have data both for current operational purposes and for the anticipated postwar settlement of accounts.⁵⁵ The SOS estimates for the period from January 1943 through October 1944 are given below:

	1943	1944
January-February.....	\$5,710,370	\$35,662,824
March-April.....	6,413,377	46,042,316
May-June.....	9,049,295	52,482,591
July-August.....	13,113,736	56,203,485
September-October.....	16,881,941	57,050,847
November-December.....	27,469,293	-----

In February 1944, the Finance Member of the Government of India, by an address to India's Legislative Assembly, gave clear warning that the Government of India was about to combat inflationary tendencies in the Indian

⁵³ SOS in CBI, pp. 149-50.

⁵⁴ G-4 Per Rpt, Hq USAF CBI, quarter ending 30 Sep 44, pars. 3i, 9g. OCMH.

⁵⁵ *Stilwell's Mission to China*, p. 209.

economy by cutting back military production. He hinted that if India was to furnish more support to operations in Southeast Asia, then her commitments for support of Middle Eastern and Mediterranean operations would have to be reduced. At the same time, official circles of the Government of India commented that 1944 supply would not be greatly affected by the new policy but that major cutbacks in military production could be expected in 1945.

Soon after, production of woollen cloth for military use stopped. All output was reserved for civilians, and by the end of 1944 many types of cotton goods were reserved for civilian use. Trying though this may have been for American supply personnel, nevertheless, the Indian point of view should not be overlooked. The cash income of that statistical fable, the average Indian, was about \$20.00 a year (Rupees 60). From that sum, he had to buy such cash items as cooking oil and salt, and supplement his meager diet. Very likely the peasant family wardrobe included one set of garments per person. Thus, there was no slack to be taken up, and the peasant counted on being able to replace clothing as it wore out. If no cloth was available at the bazaar, the little spinning wheels of the villages could hardly make up the difference. Sullenness in the villages, whence comes the Indian soldier, could soon imperil the whole Indian war effort, and the Government of India had to realize that there was a point beyond which the patient farmer could not be overloaded.

In the light of the warnings referred to above, SOS could not have been surprised to learn in July that 183 of 336 items previously available at Indian depots on blanket sanction would be unavailable in differing percentages, some as high as 100 percent. Similarly, the Government of India estimated that 246 items of 648 would be unavailable in 1945. Beginning 1 August 1944, the quantity of dairy products, meat, sugar, and fish that India would supply was cut back to the May 1944 level. Indian authorities said that they wanted to cancel supplying steam-laundry facilities, office supplies, and printing. General Covell personally interceded to have that action rescinded.⁵⁶

In addition to applying pressure at the policy level, the Government of India took unilateral action to cut the flow of reciprocal aid. General Covell commented:

Commitments in India had come to have none of the firm connotation associated with them in America. Promised delivery dates were ignored or quantities reduced without advance notice, often months after promised delivery dates. Many commitments for supplies were made but actual delivery was frequently late, often in quantities less than required, making it difficult for SOS to plan future supply. Frequently emergency shipments from the United States became necessary because last minute cancellations by Indian agencies would not permit requisitions on the U.S. to be processed normally.⁵⁷

The Indian attitude affected Sino-American relations because the United States understood that His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom would

⁵⁶ SOS in CBI, pp. 153-55.

⁵⁷ Covell Report, pp. 31-32. Substantially the same passage is in SOS in CBI, p. 156.

supply the Chinese forces based on India through British lend-lease to China. But, in "many cases" this had not been done, and approximately 33 percent of the total value of supplies to the Chinese Army in India came from U.S. sources, \$9,000,000.00 worth.⁵⁸

The situation was complex. Neither SOS nor the Government of India desired to go beyond a certain point, and so there was room for compromise, adjustment, and negotiation. SOS took full advantage of the diplomatic opportunities open to it, and succeeded in actually raising the dollar volume of reciprocal aid as between the May-June 1944 period and that of September-October. Examination of physical volume suggests that oil products increased, subsistence held steady, and textile items dropped. Despite the present success of its diplomacy, SOS felt concerned about the future.⁵⁹

Housekeeping Problems

Difficulties in the movement of supplies to the forward areas in Assam, further complicated by inadequate warehouse space, made stock control in Assam very difficult in 1942 and 1943. Since the base depots automatically forwarded balanced stocks, the lack of proper stock control ultimately led to an actual overstocking of certain items, particularly quartermaster supplies. Because the quartermaster had to provide food for an extraordinary collection of races and sects (Hindu, Moslem, Burmese, Chinese, hillman, British, and American) each with different dietary requirements or regulations, it was necessary to keep an extremely varied inventory, with all the administrative problems involved. Beginning in September 1943, a stock record system for quartermaster items was set up. It did not work well because the warehouses were not well organized.

The War Department in September 1943 instituted a system of automatic supply based on reports from overseas theaters, which in turn had to be an accurate reflection of stocks on hand. This required changes in CBI procedures. Stock control and inventory teams were sent out from the United States to place the system in operation, a task of several months.

Another problem was that of securing an adequate supply of spare parts. War Department procedure required spare parts to be requisitioned on a formula basis. Unfortunately, the formula did not fit operating conditions in Assam and Burma. Abrasive dust in the air wore down engine parts. Fungus and rust attacked delicate instruments. Not until requisitions could be based on usage factors as determined by actual experience in the theater, was it possible to obtain adequate stocks of spare parts.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ SOS in CBI, p. 156.

⁵⁹ (1) Covell Report. (2) SOS in CBI, tables facing p. 167.

⁶⁰ SOS in CBI, pp. 334-400.

Chinese Lend-Lease

For SOS, Chinese lend-lease was a housekeeping problem, for its responsibilities were executive, not policy-making. Housekeeping in the most literal sense was badly needed for Chinese lend-lease, for as late as the fall of 1943, 4,200 tons of Chinese lend-lease were still to be seen lying in the Assam rice paddies where the agents of China Defense Supplies, Inc., had dumped them in the spring of 1942. They had lain there through three seasons of monsoon rains and scorching heat. For example, there were in India 261,000,000 rounds of 7.92-mm. ammunition for China. One hundred million of them were in Assam. By February 1944, it was estimated that heat and moisture had oxidized 80,000,000 rounds. SOS asked General Headquarters (India) to renovate the whole store in Indian arsenals.⁶¹ Not only was lend-lease not properly stored, but the number and nature of items on hand were unknown.⁶²

The process of honoring earlier lend-lease commitments to the Chinese created what SOS knew as the stockpile problem. As the shipping situation on the high seas eased, lend-lease for China began to move to India, there to wait shipment to China. Since by Presidential decision, the bulk of Hump tonnage was to go to the Fourteenth Air Force, the prospects of moving these stockpiles to China were remote. Moreover, the International Division of Army Service Forces had been shipping matériel as it was available, against General Stilwell's requisitions for sixty Chinese divisions.⁶³ This meant that the stockpiles were out of balance, with critical items in short supply, and warehouse facilities filled with less vital needs.

The ever-growing bulk of the stockpiles, evenly divided between military and civilian goods, was a handicap in procuring items of current necessity because the Munitions Assignments Board in Washington (which allocated lend-lease in accord with directives from the Combined Chiefs of Staff) tended to see the bulk of the piles rather than their composition. Moreover, SOS officers could see little logic in their having to requisition items for the U.S. Army from the United States, with all the delay involved, when identical pieces of lend-lease equipment were on hand in India with their prospects of delivery to China very remote.⁶⁴

On 31 December 1943 Col. William S. Gaud, Jr., took up his duties in Chungking as representative of the War Department in "all matters pertaining to the assignment of military supplies and equipment to the Chinese Government." This arrangement made it possible for the Chinese Government to deal directly with the War Department on the sensitive issue of lend-lease and

⁶¹ SOS in CBI, pp. 465-67.

⁶² Memo, Col William S. Gaud, Jr., WD Mil Aid Representative to China, for Director of Materiel, Hq ASF, 10 Dec 43, sub: Lend-Lease to China, in Gaud Rpt 2, 4-10 Dec 43. (Hereafter Gaud Report ---.) AG (ASF ID) 319.1, A46-299.

⁶³ (1) SOS in CBI, p. 470. (2) For a discussion of the origins of the sixty division program, see *Stilwell's Mission to China*, Chapters VII and VIII.

⁶⁴ SOS in CBI, p. 471.



SUPPLIES IN OPEN STORAGE IN INDIA *included M3 tanks parked along Hospital Road in Calcutta (above) and fuel drums at Ranaghat (below).*



freed CBI Theater headquarters of the unpleasant duty of commenting on Chinese lend-lease requisitions.

Colonel Gaud's survey of the physical aspects of the lend-lease situation in Assam disclosed some of the arguments against pouring lend-lease into a command without the physical resources to handle it, and of shipping some of it under the auspices of an organization, in this case, China Defense Supplies, Inc., which did not function with administrative efficiency. Colonel Gaud found that no one knew exactly how many tons of Chinese lend-lease were in India nor exactly what was on hand. China Defense Supplies, Inc., did not always give adequate identification of what it shipped to India, nor did it always furnish manifests or shipping lists. Once goods arrived in India, they were handled by SOS, which was perennially short of American personnel and dependent on the Government of India for warehouse construction. Goods were manhandled from ship to train to shed by coolies ignorant of what *fragile* or *this side up* might mean. Once in the sheds, supplies were simply piled there, with no attempt at physical inventory. Records showed only "CDS supplies" or "spare parts." CDS storage areas in Assam were not fenced in, and were guarded only during daylight hours by a few unarmed Chinese civilians. Colonel Gaud believed the basic cause of wastage was a shortage of American enlisted personnel. He found SOS fully aware of the problem, but completely handicapped by the simple lack of men to do the work. Therefore, a situation had arisen in which Headquarters, SOS, and the subordinate sections gave totals of lend-lease on hand that differed by as much as 50 percent.⁶⁵

Since SOS was fully appreciative of the situation, the corrective measures and proper storekeeping could be applied as reinforcements came to the theater in accord with the QUADRANT decisions to provide an adequate logistical foundation for the Allied effort in Asia. Thus, SOS personnel strength increased from 31,074 on 30 November 1943 to 42,574 on 29 February 1944. (See Table 4.) And so, on 28 February, Colonel Gaud could report to the War Department that the situation in Assam was "markedly different" from what it had been in December.⁶⁶ With the inventory problem being solved, Gaud thought that the warehouse construction problem was the principal one to be faced in handling Chinese lend-lease.

In spring 1944 the inventorying and proper storage of Chinese lend-lease made diversions from it to fill U.S. supply needs administratively simple even if diplomatically complex. Ever since the opening of the first U.S. base at Karachi, the Chinese had been willing to permit diversion from their lend-lease stocks to the SOS. With the decision of the War Department in the spring of 1942 that General Stilwell should decide when and where title would pass to the Chinese, there were no legal barriers to repossession of War Department-procured Chinese lend-lease that arrived in India after the summer

⁶⁵ Gaud Reports 1 and 2.

⁶⁶ Gaud Report 7.

of 1942. However, Stilwell knew what the effect of a policy of wholesale diversion would be on the Chinese. Therefore, until May 1944, SOS was ordered to follow a policy of securing the consent of Chinese authorities before diverting any lend-lease item to American use.⁶⁷

In April, the Munitions Assignments Board in Washington ordered CBI Theater to repossess all War Department-procured lend-lease vehicles, tires, and spare parts in India beyond those needed for the Chinese Army in India, for the U.S.-sponsored Chinese divisions along the Salween, and for Ramgarh Training Center. The order specifically exempted nonstandard trucks and parts ordered by the Chinese for use in China. The Munitions Assignments Board further authorized the theater to divert any War Department-procured lend-lease that might be used to advantage in the war effort.

Gen. Ho Ying-chin, Chief of Staff of the Chinese Army, was told on 3 May that the Chinese would be informed of all diversions. The Chinese would be allowed to requisition replacements, but the Munitions Assignments Board reserved the right to pass on all such. The reason for the policy, General Ho learned, was to make effective use of all supplies that could not be transported to China.⁶⁸

The Chinese asked that Headquarters, CBI Theater, promise to replace all diverted lend-lease, and in Washington, T. V. Soong protested strongly. The reply to Dr. Soong said:

There existing in the United States a growing aversion to idle stockpiles, especially in view of spoilage and wastage, and an ever-increasing desire that all materials be used to the best possible advantage in the war effort. . . . The State Department and Foreign Economic Administration are in complete agreement that under the Master Agreements title to all lend-lease material of whatsoever nature and to whatsoever country transferred remains with the United States Government. . . .

The United States Government retains full authority for the diversion of such China Lend-Lease supplies as are incapable of serving the end use for which they were originally provided. . . .⁶⁹

In compliance with the Munitions Assignments Board directive, SOS was authorized to divert War Department-procured matériel to U.S. troops or issue such to U.S.-sponsored Chinese divisions, without consulting the Chinese. Initially, diversions under this policy were small, and until 1 July 1944 totaled only \$5,000,000 for medical, ordnance, signal, and engineer supplies.⁷⁰

Medical Problems in the Rear Area

The medical problems of operations in India and Burma were potentially grave. They reflected an environment that was either inherently unhealthful, as in Burma, or one that had, as in India, become unhealthful through the un-

⁶⁷ SOS in CBI, p. 475.

⁶⁸ Ltr, Ferris to Ho, 3 May 44. Gaud Report 12, Tab A.

⁶⁹ Ltr, Walter W. Fowler, Special Representative, to T. V. Soong, 5 Jun 44. Gaud Report 14, Table B.

⁷⁰ SOS in CBI, pp. 475-76.

sanitary practices of the inhabitants. In India, fevers and alimentary disorders were endemic. In Burma, the insect-borne diseases such as malaria and scrub typhus were everywhere, while the difficulties of maintaining sanitation on campaign in a hot, moist climate spread alimentary diseases. Fortunately, the American medical authorities in the theater, who functioned as part of the SOS, were able to draw on local experience and resources. Hospital space, supplies, and counsel were freely given by British and Indian medical organizations.

In October 1943 the SOS medical organization was deployed from Karachi to Ledo. There were probably close to 10,000 beds available for patients. The exact situation is obscure because hospitals operated more beds than their T/O's provided—about 75 percent more on the average. At Ledo the 20th General Hospital and the 14th, 48th, and 73d Evacuation Hospitals had 3,250 T/O beds. In central India, at Agra and Delhi, were the 97th and 100th Station Hospitals, with 100 T/O beds each. At Karachi was the 181st General Hospital, with 1,000 T/O beds. In China, whose support was the aim of all American effort, was the 95th Station Hospital, 100 T/O beds, at Kunming.

Working with the 20th General and 14th, 48th, and 73d Evacuation Hospitals in the Ledo area was the 151st Medical Battalion. The function of the 151st was to link the combat area with base medical units. Initially, it established a clearing station and a chain of collecting stations, which were eventually outmoded by the growing practice of air evacuation. The most significant work of the medical units from Ledo forward was medical care for the Chinese Army in India.⁷¹

The dispersal of American resources among the airfields of Assam and the United Provinces (Agra and Oudh), along the line of communications from Calcutta north, and in the port cities—a dispersal resulting in a great number of small extemporized detachments—forced an equal dispersal of medical care. Sixteen dispensaries were being operated in Calcutta and Karachi. Pipeline construction crews, railway personnel, and Signal Corps crews were followed by small provisional medical units. In early 1944 unauthorized provisional hospitals (not activated as T/O units) were operated at Kweilin, China, Kurmitola, Bengal, and Kanchrapara and Camp Angus, Bengal. Three more unauthorized hospitals were under construction. Personnel for these many *ad hoc* installations came from the several hospitals which were correspondingly strained when they needed facilities to care for the American and Chinese troops in their vicinity. The necessity of providing hospitalization for the Chinese in medical installations whose facilities had been calculated by the number of U.S. troops on hand was a further severe strain. Hospitals, perhaps 50 percent of whose personnel were on detached service, had to cope with a patient load far above their normal capacity.⁷²

⁷¹ SOS in CBI, App. 16, Medical Section, Sec. I, 1942–44, pp. 31, 47.

⁷² App. cited n. 71, Sec. I, pp. 52–53.

Theater authorities believed that the situation was not understood in Washington, for medical statistical reports reflected only the hospitalization provided for U.S. personnel. In June 1944, the Tables of Organization for hospitals in the theater provided 8,800 beds. Of these T/O beds, 7,787 were occupied, so that, formally, the picture was comforting. Actually, there were 18,635 beds available, or 212 percent of the T/O capacity. Of these, 12,530 were currently in use, 7,130 by Americans and 5,400 by Chinese. Since medical personnel had been allotted for only 8,800 beds, the strain was obvious. Energetic representations were made to the War Department, and the CBI Theater surgeon, Col. Robert P. Williams, presented them in person.

While CBI Theater waited for these requests to bear fruit, a program of reorganization and redeployment was begun within the theater. For example, the 1,000-bed hospital at Karachi, a port declining in importance as Calcutta grew, was reorganized as a 500-bed unit. The personnel and facilities thus released were used to activate the 371st Station Hospital which, in turn, went to Ramgarh, there to operate a 750-bed hospital. Other static hospitals were enlarged.

The Surgeon General's Office agreed to send two 1,000-bed general hospitals, one 400-bed field hospital, and two 100-bed station hospitals to the theater, plus medical personnel to permit expanding units in CBI and activating others. In the fall of 1944, the enlargement of six hospitals and the arrival of others from the United States greatly eased the personnel shortage.⁷³

The 1943 hospital admissions suggest the problems faced in India. There were 8,136 admissions for malaria; 6,744 for alimentary disorders; 2,637 for venereal disease, and 1,150 for dengue fever.⁷⁴ The first malaria control and survey units arrived in early 1943. A program of mosquito control was embarked on, but results were not satisfactory. In this connection, it must be recorded that DDT was not available in quantity in CBI until the end of 1944, nor was atebtrin suppressive therapy used in India proper. Only in the combat zone (roughly, forward of Ledo) was atebtrin used, and it was late 1943 before the use of it was made general.⁷⁵

Because theater medical authorities believed their attempts to control mosquitoes were effective, they were disappointed at the results obtained in 1944. The CBI malaria rate in 1943 was 206 per thousand per year (250 in the Calcutta area).⁷⁶ In 1944 it dropped to 167 per thousand per year. This did not seem to compare well with experience in the Southwest Pacific. The medical men were therefore inclined to believe that there had been a failure in discipline and personal protective measures, by implication, a failure in command and morale. In the light of this estimate, a campaign was undertaken in late

⁷³ App. cited n. 71, Sec. II, 1 Jul-24 Oct 44, pp. 13-18.

⁷⁴ App. cited n. 71, Sec. I, p. 46.

⁷⁵ (1) Stone MS, II, 381. (2) App. cited n. 71, Sec. II, pp. 37-38.

⁷⁶ App. cited n. 19(1), Sec. IIf.

1944 to indoctrinate all echelons of the theater in command responsibility, malaria discipline, suppressive atebirin, and the use of DDT.⁷⁷

The number of alimentary disorders admitted to hospitals was not a fair index of the seriousness of that problem. In the hot season of April to August 1944, the time of the year when disease rates always rose sharply, there were 16,562 cases serious enough to be marked either *hospital* or *quarters*. The doctors estimated that three times that number of men were affected, but able to stay on duty at whatever cost in discomfort and loss of efficiency. Nor can the factor of lowered vitality and predisposition to other diseases be ignored. All in all, perhaps 200,000 man-days were lost from this cause in 1944, a serious matter in an undermanned theater. "It is believed that this high rate was caused by poor mess sanitation, employment of native food handlers, inadequate refrigeration, inadequate water heating facilities, failure to control flies, insanitary disposal of human excreta, contaminated water, eating at civilian restaurants, and a defeatist belief among officers and men that such diseases were inescapable in this Theater and that the sanitary problem was unconquerable."⁷⁸

That alimentary disorders were endemic in India was no secret and the first American arrivals sought to meet the problem by radical measures. The base section veterinarian at Karachi in 1942 surveyed the local abattoir, ice plant, and dairy, and condemned them all. He recommended that the SOS build and operate its own food-processing installations, a step that became standard at all major U.S. troop concentrations. As American personnel were deployed across India the burden on the Veterinary Corps grew apace. "In addition to food inspection, they supervised the operation of abattoirs; supervised the production of dairy products; operated small farms; scoured the country for beef animals; assisted in vaccination of local herds against rinderpest and anthrax; and assisted local Quartermasters in closing contracts for food, and in the overhauling of subsistence stores."⁷⁹ The Sanitary Corps took analogous precautions with the water supply.

In addition to providing pure food and water, the medical authorities sought to prevent later contamination of foodstuffs. The personnel shortage, which made it hard to obtain kitchen help and waiters, made it necessary to employ Indian civilians. So far as possible, they were assigned duties which did not involve food handling. Attempts were made to provide adequate supplies of hot water, refrigeration, screening, garbage disposal facilities, and DDT spray.

Unfortunately, these efforts did not bring the results desired. Admission rates per thousand per annum for diarrhea and dysentery were, until August 1944, substantially higher than in 1943. Beginning in May 1944, the malaria admissions rate showed improvement over the preceding year, but it was not

⁷⁷ App. cited n. 71, Sec. II, pp. 37-38.

⁷⁸ App. cited n. 71, Sec. II, pp. 34-35.

⁷⁹ App. cited n. 71, Sec. I, p. 15; quotation, p. 45.

great. Preventive medicine did not come into its own in this theater until the winter of 1944-45.⁸⁰

Logistical Problems in China

The logistical problems of operating in China and India had a family resemblance. Neither India nor China had a well-advanced industrial structure. In both, the American forces were ordered by the War Department to make the maximum possible use of local resources of all sorts. In both, the population weighed heavily on the land. In both countries the U.S. forces depended on one major line of communications whose operation was perforce left in the hands of local authority, since the War Department directed that local resources be used and American operation would necessarily involve a heavy commitment of American resources of men and machines. Despite the family resemblance, the logistical problems in China represented the ultimate development of their species.

India was isolated by distance, but China was blockaded. Inflation was a grave concern of the Government of India, but it was out of control in China. Indian industry was hard-pressed, but growing and making a major contribution to the Allied cause in the Middle and Far East. Chinese industry retrogressed under the pressure of isolation and inflation. The Assam line of communications had as its principal component a railroad whose capacity had never been fully exploited; the eastern line of communications had a 500-mile-long road, scratched out of the mountains and navigated by a collection of dilapidated trucks. Until 1944, both arteries were the sole responsibility of local authority. In India, the American forces drew their food and clothing from the Government of India through the SOS. In China, the Americans were in the most literal sense guests of the Chinese, for they lived in hostels operated by the Chinese War Area Service Corps, known to every American as WASC.

Three logistical problems beyond the control of SOS greatly affected its operations in China. The Hump may be mentioned first. Suffice it to say the SOS problems diminished or increased as the amount of tonnage arriving from India fluctuated. The second problem was inflation. Because the U.S. forces were directed to live off the country and, in view of China's isolation, had no option in the matter, the galloping inflation which steadily weakened the Chinese war effort made it ever less possible for SOS to obtain goods and services, for example, spare parts and building construction, in the open market.

The Chinese Government insisted that the exchange rate between Chinese and American dollars should be \$20 Chinese for \$1 American. As of January 1944, the open or black market rate was 100 to 1. That was bad enough, but

⁸⁰ History of India-Burma Theater, 1944-1945, II, 298-300. OCMH.

prices were rising about six times as fast as the value of the dollar. Notably, prices of items used by the Chinese, such as blue cloth and rice, rose far faster than those used by Americans. In any event, there were too few Americans in China to affect so great a market as the 200 million plus Chinese in unoccupied China. The sophisticated and practical Chinese had long before discovered the magic of credit, and had an elaborate and nationwide net of small banks or "cash shops." Control of these myriad little banks was beyond the administrative resources of the central government. Speculators borrowed heavily from the banks, then accumulated inventories which increased in value far more rapidly than even the 9 percent a month the banks were charging by early 1944. As a result, from July 1937 to June 1944, the expenditures of the Chinese Nationalist Government increased 120 times; the purchasing power of its currency decreased by 384 times. In terms of actual goods and services, the Chinese Nationalist Government effort of 1944 was about one third that of 1937. Its budget was about 3 percent of the national income.⁸¹

The eastern line of communications from Kunming to Chennault's east China air bases was not under American control. Consistent with the policy followed in India, the American authorities had left the matter to the Chinese. There were considerable stretches of railway in the eastern line of communications that functioned with reasonable efficiency and a high degree of safety. The worst bottleneck was the Kutsing-Tushan Highway, a 500-mile stretch, and therefore longer than the 483 miles from Ledo, Assam Province, India, to Wanting, China. (See *Map 1*.)

The majority of the distance is characterized by rugged, mountainous terrain with a practically continuous series of hair-pin turns with grades as steep as 27%. The road-bed has a crushed rock foundation with a clay soil surface. Much of the road is extremely rough and caused a high incidence of spring failures and a rapid deterioration of chassis and bodies. The clay surface made travel extremely hazardous during the rainy season. The route has a large number of deep cuts and high fills and during the wet season, landslides and cave-ins frequently completely blocked all movement for days until native crews could clear the obstruction.⁸²

In January 1944, the Southwest Highway Transport Administration, the principal Chinese Government agency operating on the eastern line of communications, owned 1,196 two and three-ton trucks of which 183 were operable. The agency was able to contract for the services, at one time or another during the month, of 2,958 privately owned vehicles. Maintenance was of the most rudimentary sort. Because inflation steadily cut the salaries of the Chinese

⁸¹ (1) The Chinese Government financed the bulk of its war expenditures by issuing paper money, as has been noted in *Stilwell's Mission to China*. (2) SOS in CBI, App. I, SOS in China, Sec. II; App. F, Incl 4, Economic Conditions in Free China and Their Effects on Army Procurement. (3) Ltr, Col Coke S. Matthews, Pres, Bd of Investigation, to CG, USFCT, 31 Oct 45, with Rpt, sub: Housing and Construction for American Personnel and Installations in Kunming, China; Exhibit N. CT 40, Dr 4, KCRC.

⁸² SOS in CBI, App. I, SOS in China, Sec. II; App. C, p. 4.

Government employees operating the trucks, they perforce loaded their vehicles with passengers and goods for private gain. There were no facilities for the truck drivers along the route beyond the few little roadside inns. Therefore, in February 1944, an average of sixteen trucks a day was moving eastward, when ninety should have been the minimum. Wrecked trucks dotted the highway. Not unnaturally, the Chinese trying to operate the eastern line of communications were thoroughly disheartened. The most hopeful sign was that Chennault, his attention now fixed on the eastern line of communications, demanded remedial action.⁸³

Though Chennault had been extremely skeptical of the worth of the Ledo Road, he had not hesitated in May 1943 to place his air squadrons at the end of the much longer eastern line of communications. Not until October 1943 did he begin to draw the attention of his superiors to the problem of increasing its efficiency. The response of CBI Theater headquarters to his pleas and warnings may justly be compared to its response to the problems of the Assam line of communications.⁸⁴

As 1944 began, the SOS in China had a strength of 452 men, suggesting the scale of the logistical effort in China. It was organized into Advance Section No. 3 with 354 men, working mostly in and around Kunming, and Advance Section No. 4 with 98 men stationed at Kweilin and Heng-yang. The sharp disparity in strength reflected the circumstance that the Fourteenth Air Force was largely supported by the Air Service Command (ASC). On 20 January 1944, the two SOS sections merged to become Advance Section No. 1, Col. Lewis P. Jordan, commanding. At Kunming and Yun-nan-i were airfreight reception and discharge stations to handle Hump tonnage. The Ordnance people had a shop at Kunming for 3d and 4th echelon motor maintenance. The shop had facilities for manufacturing a few spare parts. There were no ordnance facilities on the eastern line of communications. The 95th Station Hospital at Kunming and a hospital improvised by the SOS at Kweilin met medical needs. Until March 1944 Chinese nurses were used. Because of the fact that each American in China increased demands on Hump tonnage, it was Stilwell's policy to keep U.S. personnel in China to the absolute minimum. It was believed that American women would need special types of housing and require allocation of Hump tonnage to certain modest luxuries such as cosmetics which would be better devoted to the stuff of war.⁸⁵

As for subsistence, the War Area Service Corps' support of U.S. operations in China was a major project for the Chinese.⁸⁶ In the Kunming area the

⁸³ Bykofsky MS.

⁸⁴ (1) See pp. 19-20, 23, above. (2) Memo, Chennault for Stilwell, 30 Dec 43, sub: Transportation Facilities from Yunnan Eastwards. The Chennault-Wedemeyer Letter, Item 6. (3) Bykofsky MS.

⁸⁵ SOS in CBI, App. I, SOS in China.

⁸⁶ (1) A fuller treatment of WASC is in History of CBI, Section III, Appendix XII, War Area Service Command.

WASC operated thirteen hostels. The hostels were numbered consecutively, with one exception. The sentiments of pilots who might find themselves assigned to Hostel No. 13 were respected. Consequently, the numbers ran 11, 12, and 14. Under U.S. supervision, the WASC operated an abattoir. The Chinese purchased cattle, hogs, and chickens, and delivered them to the abattoir. There they were inspected, butchered, and dressed under supervision of U.S. personnel and delivered to the several mess halls in U.S. trucks. The WASC furnished butcher, coolies, ice, and everything else needed to operate the abattoir. In the Cheng-tu area, the XX Bomber Command's base, the hostels were so far apart that WASC operated five abattoirs and a large co-operative market. All laundering was done by WASC. Fresh vegetables and staple products were purchased by WASC and delivered to the several mess halls in accord with the ration strengths.

The arrangement was not entirely satisfactory to the United States. Chinese intentions were good, but the WASC did not have the administrative ability to meet its commitments. Food was often very bad, buildings were not maintained, and sanitary conditions were often below the acceptable minimum. WASC padded the daily returns on U.S. personnel accommodated, presumably with a view to postwar settlement. By February 1944, the situation appeared "critical" to Stilwell.⁸⁷ In February, conferences began to see if the United States could not become a paying guest in China, with more control over the accommodations. The Quartermaster Section did what it could to supplement the WASC ration by supplying such items as butter, jam, coffee, powdered milk, and sweets, which were flown in from India. Liaison and radio teams in the field were given special rations of canned meats, fruits, and vegetables.

Transportation was hampered because operation of trucks in China was most difficult, due to China's isolation, lack of developed oil resources, and lack of an industry to supply spare parts in adequate quality and quantity. Replacement vehicles were bought on the open market. The trucks necessarily used a locally compounded fuel that was 25 percent gasoline and 75 percent alcohol. The alcohol formed acid compounds which attacked the bearings and crankshafts, forcing frequent cleaning and repair. The washboard roads over which the trucks operated subjected them to a terrible pounding which inevitably shook loose every joint and fitting.

Construction was principally a Chinese function. Until March 1944, the SOS contracted directly with individual Chinese firms for nonoperational construction. For operational construction, the SOS prepared plans and submitted requests to the Chinese Government. Such projects were paid for by the Chinese as part of their contribution to the United Nations war effort. The procedure was open to criticism because the Ministry of Finance was reluctant to advance the funds even after other Chinese agencies had concurred in the project.

⁸⁷ History of CBI, p. 215.

In February 1944 a division of responsibility between the SOS and the Air Service Command was arranged that gave the latter almost complete local responsibility in east China. The SOS would see to it that supplies came to Kweilin after which the ASC would take over. That shift in responsibility left construction for the instructors with the Second Thirty Divisions, transportation operations, and Kweilin hospital the only SOS activities in east China.

Very likely one of the major factors behind the new and clear-cut division of responsibility was Chennault's representations. The poor operation of the eastern line of communications so hampered his operations that in December 1943 he sent a sharp letter to Stilwell demanding either that the SOS set up an adequate line of communications to east China or let him have control over his own line of communications. In January 1944, Chennault flew to New Delhi to present his case in person. This resulted in the assignment of Lt. Col. Maurice E. Sheahan to be transportation officer of Advance Section No. 1. Colonel Sheahan's arrival on 2 February marked the beginning of better times. Soon after, Headquarters, SOS took more notice of problems in China. Since his arrival, Covell's attention had been fixed on India. Not until 23 February do his reports to Somervell mention the eastern line of communications, but then he describes it as a real problem.

Surveying the eastern line of communications, Colonel Sheahan found it in a depressing state and quickly proposed a series of remedies, dependent of course on Hump tonnage. They were grouped together as TIGAR 26 A, or TIG-26A. The mission of TIG-26A was to move supplies for the Fourteenth Air Force over the line of communications Kunming-Chanyi-Kweiyang-Tushan-Liuchow-Kweilin to be distributed around the east China airfields. The target for the period July-December 1944 was set at 8,000 tons a month. From the termini of Liuchow and Kweilin, Chinese agencies were to move the supplies. For means, Sheahan wanted to fly in 700 trucks (500 1½-ton 4 x 2 Chevrolets and 200 6 x 6 General Motors) and spare parts, engines, tires, and devices to convert gasoline-fueled engines to charcoal burning for the Chinese. He also requested three quartermaster truck companies, a heavy automotive maintenance company, and a military police platoon, plus overhead to supervise and control the American convoys Sheahan would operate. Simultaneously, SOS contemplated TIGAR 26 B, bringing in 500 5-ton truck-trailer combinations from the Persian Gulf to China via the Soviet Union. Colonel Sheahan's proposals began moving up the chain of command.⁸⁸ Until they were approved

⁸⁸ (1) App. cited n. 85. (2) Bykofsky MS. (3) See Ch. I, above. (4) Implementation of TIGAR 26 B was delayed by the refusal of the Soviet Union to allow vehicles to cross its territory. Permission was not granted until fall 1944, and a convoy, code name Lux, was organized in the Persian Gulf Command. Uprisings in Sinkiang Province, China, resulted in last-minute changes in Lux plans. The Lux movement was changed to enter China via the Ledo Road. With the arrival of the Lux convoy in China in March 1945, transportation problems were considerably relieved.

and the means to implement them arrived in CBI, Chennault's operations would be limited to what could trickle forward over the eastern line of communications.

Summary

After twenty months' experience proved that the Assam line of communications was not efficiently run under civilian control, and after the QUADRANT decisions resulted in service troops being allotted to CBI, it was possible to place the control of the line of communications in the hands of an Anglo-American military panel, and to use American personnel in key positions at Calcutta and on the Bengal and Assam Railway. The result was a great increase in tonnage brought forward at a most opportune time, when the Japanese were crossing the Indian border. Within the SOS, its administration was simplified, and though the Government of India feared that inflation might force it to cut back military production, the natural impact of such a move on the supplies India could give the U.S. forces on reciprocal aid account (reverse lend-lease) remained in the future. There was increasing dissatisfaction with the health of the command, but as yet little improvement in the fight against the effects of a contaminated environment. In India, the SOS picture in 1943-44 was a steadily brightening one.

In China, the picture remained one of problems and projects that outran the logistical support at hand. China's isolation, the unchecked inflation that was gradually but certainly wrecking her economy, and the extreme difficulties of transportation all combined to hobble the U.S. effort. In 1943, the President and the Generalissimo had defined the U.S. effort as being in the air, and had set it at a level beyond the ability of the CBI Theater to support. That having been done, there followed no co-ordinated effort to provide logistical support.⁸⁹ As the spring of 1944 came to east China, the manifold consequences of the President's and the Generalissimo's decision were about to unfold.

⁸⁹ See *Stilwell's Mission to China*.

PART THREE

COMMAND PROBLEMS IN CHINA THEATER

CHAPTER VIII

Decisions To Attack

North and east of Burma, diplomatic and military battles of great significance for the future of Asia were fought in 1944. Both the Chinese and the Japanese resolved on major operations in China Theater. So vast was the arena of conflict that the two sides could make their offensive efforts many hundreds of miles apart. Unfortunately for the Allies, as they attacked in one area and tried to defend in another, they were divided among themselves on national lines, and within each nation on lines of policy. The united, resolute wholehearted effort that might aid a speedy victory did not exist.

The Chinese decision to take the offensive ensued upon a complete change in the President's point of view. Though the United States and the British Commonwealth at Cairo in December 1943 had gone back on their long-standing and oft-repeated commitments for a major amphibious operation in the Bay of Bengal, the President now supported Marshall and Stilwell in taking the line that China's self-interest required the Chinese to attack across the Salween River into Burma. This change in Roosevelt's thinking meant support for the thesis long advanced by the War Department, that the Chinese should be asked to take definite aggressive action with the lend-lease, credits, and air support they received from the United States. With Stilwell fully occupied in north Burma, it was the President who took the lead in calling on the Generalissimo to act, and with messages that had clear echoes of the bargaining or *quid pro quo* approach so long urged by Marshall, Stimson, and Stilwell.

"Money Is the Root of All Our Trouble"

The President's radio of 29 December 1943 was strong in tone, explaining that considerable equipment and instructor personnel were scheduled for movement to China to assist in preparing the Y-Force for Burma operations. The President told the Generalissimo that he wanted to "avoid at this time the use of the restricted airlift in the employment of these resources in an effort, the full impact of which upon the enemy will be delayed."¹

With Stilwell in Burma, his own Chief of Staff, China, Burma and India Theater, General Hearn, had the duty of delivering the President's messages to

¹ (1) Memo 103, Roosevelt for Generalissimo, 29 Dec 43 (delivered by Hearn). Item 1578, Bk 5, JWS Personal File. (2) See Chs. II and IV, above.

the Chinese. This, however, did not mean that General Hearn was in any sense a staff officer of the Generalissimo's China Theater. Hearn informed Stilwell of the contents of each of Roosevelt's messages and relayed Stilwell's occasional comments on them to whichever Chinese dignitary, usually Madame Chiang, might accept them for the Generalissimo.

Noting the President's changed attitude, Stilwell told Hearn to impress on the Chinese that if Y-Force did not co-operate in Burma operations, the President might lose interest, and might conclude that the Chinese themselves were not really concerned about breaking the blockade of China. Stilwell also suggested the Chinese be told to weigh the effect on themselves of SEAC's suggestion that Burma be bypassed.²

The President himself, on 14 January 1944, finally began to hint that lend-lease to China might cease if it was not to be used against the Japanese. Beginning with the remark that the opening of the Burma Road was ". . . the next and most immediate solution to our present problem," Roosevelt went on to tell the Generalissimo:

I am informed that the Ledo Road forces are trained, equipped and in position against the enemy in North Burma, and that the progress of the Ledo Road secured by these troops is making good headway. I am of the opinion therefore that all of us should concentrate our efforts with the means at hand to push vigorously all military operations as will assist this road project. Mountbatten's plan and extent of operations depend in large measure, as you are aware, upon support from Yunnan. I know that you are in agreement therefore that it is most important that all possible pressure with available means be exerted by your Yunnan forces in coordination with Admiral Mountbatten's operations from India. If the Yunnan forces cannot be employed it would appear that we should avoid for the present the movement of critical materials to them over the limited lines of communication and curtail the continuing build-up of stockpiles in India beyond that which will be brought to bear against the enemy.³

The President's messages and Hearn's comments on them made their impression on Madame Chiang. On 7 January she remarked to Hearn that the Generalissimo had not answered the President's December messages because Roosevelt had not yet agreed to the Generalissimo's request that the United States lend China one billion dollars in U.S. currency or pay for the Cheng-tu airfields at the 20 to 1 rate. General Hearn at once concluded that the Chinese were linking financial aid with operations in Burma.⁴

General Hearn was not alone in thinking so. In faraway Washington, the memorandums that passed among the Treasury, War, and State Departments as

² (1) Ltr, Hearn to authors, 16 Feb 50. OCMH. (2) Rad RELOT OT 80, Hearn to Stilwell, 21 Dec 43; Memo 104, Hearn for Mme. Chiang, 29 Dec 43. Items 1552, 1585, Bk 5, JWS Personal File. (3) Memo, Stilwell for Hearn, 11 Jan 44. Item 263, Bk 3, JWS Personal File. Hearn permitted Madame Chiang to read this memorandum.

³ CM-OUT 4277, Roosevelt to Generalissimo, 14 Jan 44. Item 1629, Bk 5, JWS Personal File. The text of this message was presented to the Generalissimo as Memorandum 118 on 15 January 1944.

⁴ (1) See Ch. II, above. (2) Rad RELOT 9, Hearn to Stilwell, 9 Jan 44. Item 1608, Bk 5, JWS Personal File.

they followed the negotiations of their Chungking representatives revealed similar reactions, and disclosed a growing feeling among their authors that the Chinese, by placing a dollar value on their share in the war, were overreaching themselves. Many of these officials believed the President shared their views.⁵

The Generalissimo's response to Roosevelt's December messages (the President's latest having crossed it in transmission) confirmed the impressions mentioned above. In tone, it was a virtual ultimatum. The Generalissimo stated that unless the billion dollars was forthcoming or unless the United States agreed to finance the Cheng-tu project at the rate of 20 to 1, the Chinese would no longer provide food and housing to the U.S. forces in China after 1 March 1944. The Generalissimo told the President that he had "even gone to the length of delaying the reopening of the Burma route so that essential amphibious equipment should be diverted to the European theater, thereby disappointing all classes of my countrymen."⁶

Sent to Washington through State Department channels, the Generalissimo's message met a mixed reception in Washington. The first draft of the United States answer, as prepared by Somervell, assured the Generalissimo that contrary to his charge the exchange transactions proposed by the United States were not commercial in nature; that while the United States was prepared to pay all expenses incurred by the U.S. Army it refused to do so at a fixed rate of 20 to 1 in a money market that was racing upward; that any such insistence by the Chinese would not be understood by the American people nor by the Congress; and that the President must insist on some reasonable arrangement for Chinese currency, either by outright donation or some form of reverse lend-lease.

The draft was shown to Marshall and Arnold on the ground that its dispatch might well lead to a break in Sino-American relations and the withdrawal of the United States forces from China. Marshall and Arnold approved the paper. It then went to the President who also approved, subject to the later concurrence of the Secretary of State, Cordell Hull.⁷ Hull demurred, urged the President to reconsider, and his more cautious approach carried the day. The President and his advisers drew back from risking an open breach with China, but that the highest political and military authorities in the United States were

⁵ (1) Teletype Transcript, Conv between Morgenthau and Somervell, 15 Jan 44. Memo with incls, Somervell for McNarney, 15 Jan 44; Rad, Morgenthau to Adler, Treasury Dept Representative in Chungking, 15 Jan 44. Somervell File, Vol IV, CBI 1944. (2) Memo, Somervell for Marshall, 15 Feb 44, sub: Exchange Policy With China. Somervell China File, A47-81. In this memorandum, Somervell reviews problems of the exchange rate.

⁶ (1) Rad STATE 105, Generalissimo to Roosevelt, 16 Jan 44 ABC 336 (China) 26 Jan 42, Sec 1A, A48-224. (2) Rad RELOT 26, Hearn to Stilwell, 18 Jan 44. Item 1640, Bk 5, JWS Personal File.

⁷ (1) Draft, Suggested Msg from President to Generalissimo, undated. Somervell China File, A47-81, and Somervell File, Vol IV, CBI 1944. (2) CM-OUT 8054, Somervell for Marshall to Stilwell, 20 Jan 44. (3) CM-OUT 8256, Somervell to Stilwell, 21 Jan 44. (4) Memo, Lt Col Paul G. Pennoyer, Asiatic Sec OPD, for Col Charles H. Caldwell, Asiatic Sec OPD, 20 Jan 44, sub: Chinese Currency Negotiations. ABC 336 (China) 26 Jan 42, Sec 1A, A48-224. Colonel Pennoyer followed the financial negotiations for OPD.

willing to contemplate such action dramatically illustrated the change in China's diplomatic position vis-à-vis the United States.

An anxious ten-day interval followed while the United States and China considered their next moves. The silence was broken by Ambassador Gauss's delivery of the U.S. reply to the Chinese ultimatum. In it, the President remarked that he could not ". . . escape the feeling that because of the distance between us there may be danger that we may fail adequately to work out our common problems and may rush into decisions which would not be in the interests of either of our peoples." Roosevelt suggested that the Chinese send a representative to Washington to discuss the exchange rate with Treasury officials. There was no mention of the billion-dollar loan. Then came an indication of the President's attitude towards China. Roosevelt flatly stated that beginning 1 March 1944 U.S. Army expenditures in China would be limited to U.S. \$25,000,000 a month.⁸

As of 15 March 1944, the open-market rate for the U.S. dollar in Kunming (rates varied from city to city) was 230 to 1. If the Chinese Government insisted on making its dollars available at only 20 to 1, U.S. expenditures in March, for example, would be equal to what would be permitted by purchasing U.S. \$2,000,000 worth of currency in the open market. Since the actual exchange rate was working ever upward, Chinese insistence on 20 to 1 would ultimately force American units limited to U.S. \$25,000,000 a month to withdraw from China. Conversely, if the United States acquiesced in the Chinese demand for the 20 to 1 rate, while the Chinese continued to finance their war by paper money, and the Chinese banks continued to lend to speculators who drove up the price level, the United States would ultimately be spending its dollars by the billion merely to clothe and feed a few thousand Americans in China.⁹

When the Generalissimo replied to the President, his message of 2 February linked China's financial and military problems:

I have received your message dated twenty-sixth January transmitted by Ambassador Gauss and I am deeply appreciative of your efforts to help me and my government. I have consulted with Dr. Kung [Minister of Finance] regarding the suggestions contained therein and have requested him to acquaint the Ambassador and General Stilwell's representatives with the decisions he and I have agreed upon [the Chinese were now offering 30 to 1]. I

⁸ Messages exchanged during this ten-day period among State, Treasury, and War Department representatives in Chungking and officials in Washington, including the President, are in Somervell's China File, A47-81. The contents of Somervell's file suggest that it was his job to co-ordinate all policy statements among the interested departments after they had received and circulated the Generalissimo's ultimatum of 16 January 1944. Though the President's reply was sent to Chungking on 20 January 1944 as CM-OUT 8054, it was subsequently altered and was given to the Generalissimo on 26 January by Ambassador Gauss. Two days later Gauss, Hearn, and Treasury representatives were received by H. H. Kung, who had been designated by the Generalissimo to discuss the details of President Roosevelt's proposals. The 20 January text of the President's message and subsequent changes are in CM-OUT 8054, Roosevelt to Generalissimo, 20 January 1944, and CM-OUT 9567, Somervell to Hearn, 24 January 1944.

⁹ Memo, Dr. Edward C. Acheson, Financial Adviser to CG, USAF CBI, for Director of Material, Hq ASF, 20 Mar 44, sub: Course of Financial Negotiations in China, Rpts 3 & 4 (Feb-Mar 44). Somervell China File, A47-81.

trust that very shortly a solution satisfactory to both our countries may be reached. I wish to assure you that Dr. Kung and I have exerted our utmost to meet your wishes short of jeopardizing China's economic front to the breaking point, and short of endangering the morale of our people in the prosecution of continued resistance.

I wish also to acknowledge your telegram sent through General Stilwell's headquarters dated fifteenth January. I appreciate your desire to open up the Ledo Road, a desire which is also my great concern since it is only through the opening of this land route that China may quickly obtain the heavy equipment much needed by her army. You doubtless recall that at Cairo I reiterated and emphasized the fact that I am ready to send the Yunnan troops to Burma at any moment that large-scale amphibious landing operations can be effected at strategic points. I stand ready to adhere to this decision, and hope that we can carry out operations even before November of this year, which date you mentioned as possible and probable for the diverting of the amphibious equipment to Burma.

I am leaving for the Hunan front tomorrow and shall be away for a fortnight. Any message will be forwarded. I know you realize that the year will prove a most critical period for China both in the economic and military sense, but I am confident that with your help we shall pull through. . . .¹⁰

The President's acknowledgement of this message was limited to assurances that the United States would continue to study both exchange rates and U.S. military expenditures in China.¹¹

The foregoing communications from Washington had their effect within the Chinese Government. Apparently on his own authority as Minister of Finance, Dr. H. H. Kung undertook to advance Chinese National currency (CN) \$15,000,000,000 to CBI Theater headquarters to cover U.S. expenditures for March, April, and May 1944. The credit was extended with no stipulation as to the rate of exchange for repayment. Of this credit, Hearn received an immediate grant of CN \$500,000,000 for the Cheng-tu fields. There was, however, one obstacle to the prompt use of these funds. The actual currency involved was Chinese paper money, engraved in the United States and stock-piled in India. It would have to be flown over the Hump, like everything else the U.S. forces in China used.

The need of allocating Hump tonnage for these currency advances brought now familiar repercussions in China. Where air cargo was concerned Chinese currency was measured as tonnage rather than by dollar value. The bills in India were of small denominations lest they add to the general inflationary psychology. Experience revealed that a ton of currency might vary in value from CN \$7,000,000 to CN \$100,000,000. The Fourteenth Air Force complained that 4,500 gallons of gasoline were used in one day's lift of Chinese currency. Hearn tried to placate the Fourteenth by explaining that the chore was a necessity,

¹⁰ Rad AGWAR 79, Generalissimo to Roosevelt, 2 Feb 44. Item 1697, Bk 5, JWS Personal File. Hearn and Gauss doubted that the Generalissimo was touring the "Hunan front" since they believed none existed. Hearn reported that the Generalissimo and his wife desired to vacate Chungking for Hunan for a short rest and to avoid decisions on the exchange rate. CM-IN 3024, Hearn to Somervell, 5 Feb 44.

¹¹ Rad WAR 4457, Roosevelt to Generalissimo, 7 Feb 44. Item 1714, Bk 5, JWS Personal File.

that each haul had to be charged against operational tonnage. Casting his eye on some of the less apparent aspects of war in China, he remarked to Chennault: "Money is the root of all our trouble."¹²

American Military Observers in North China

On 9 February 1944, the President raised a point with the Generalissimo which was part of an issue whose eventual outcome was possibly beyond the power of any man then living to foresee. And it was to grow until it dominated the diplomacy of the Pacific Ocean as once the problem of Japanese imperialism had done. This was the Chinese Communist issue. The episode began quietly enough, with a suggestion by Stilwell's political adviser, John P. Davies, Jr.

In 1943, on 24 June, Davies had suggested to the State Department that a consulate general be opened in the territory of the Chinese Communists, and that a military mission be sent to them.¹³ Stilwell's papers do not mention the project; his attitude then is unknown.

At the SEXTANT Conference, Davies had been present when Stilwell attempted to get some policy guidance from the President. It may be that Davies remembered the President's reaction to Stilwell's warning that a repetition of the Japanese Tung-Ting Lake operations of May 1943 might overthrow the Generalissimo: "Well, then we should look for some other man or group of men, to carry on."¹⁴ In any event, twenty-five days later Davies began to send Hopkins a series of memorandums on Chinese domestic matters, which Hopkins in turn relayed to the President.

In his first memorandum, of 31 December 1943, Davies began by observing, "The Generalissimo is probably the only Chinese who shares the popular American misconception that Chiang Kai-shek is China." He closed with the recommendation: "A realistic policy towards Chiang would be based on (1) recognition by us that the Generalissimo is highly susceptible to firm co-ordinated American pressure, (2) stern bargaining (in consultation with American representatives in China), and (3) readiness to support a strong new coalition offering cooperation mutually more beneficial to China and the United States."¹⁵

Davies a fortnight later returned to the suggestion he had made in June

¹² History of CBI, Sec. III, Ch. XI, China Exchange.

¹³ Memo by Davies, Second Secy of Embassy detailed to Gen Stilwell, 24 Jun 43, sub: The American Stake in Chinese Unity: Proposals for Preliminary American Action. History of CBI, Sec. III, Ch. I, Item VI.

¹⁴ (1) See Ch. II, above. (2) *The Stilwell Papers*, on page 252, quotes Roosevelt to that effect.

¹⁵ Memo, Davies, New Delhi, 31 Dec 43, sub: Chiang Kai-shek and China. On 7 February 1944 Hopkins sent the memorandum to the President with the note: "Here is another interesting letter I got from John Davies Jr., who was with our Embassy in China and is now with Stilwell and Mountbatten." Bk IX, Hopkins Papers. Hopkins' note would suggest that Davies had written even earlier. However, such correspondence was not seen by the authors, and Davies' own covering letter suggests this is the first of a projected series. See Ltr, Davies to Hopkins, 31 Dec 43. Bk IX, Hopkins Papers.

1943, of a U.S. military mission to the Chinese Communists. After drafting his suggestions on 15 January 1944, he made a visit to Stilwell's headquarters in north Burma on the 20th. What Stilwell thought of the project Davies did not record, but presumably he approved. On 23 January Davies suggested to Hopkins that the President arrange for Stilwell's headquarters to send U.S. observers to Communist China. Davies offered Hopkins several reasons for the presence of such a mission in and around the Communist base at Yen-an:

We need to despatch immediately while it is still welcome, a military and political observers' mission to Communist China to collect enemy information, assist in and prepare for certain limited operations from that area, obtain accurate estimates of the strength of Communist Armies, report on Russian operations in North China and Manchuria should Russia attack Japan, and assess the possibility of North China and Manchuria developing into a separate Chinese state—perhaps even as a Russian satellite. Chiang's blockade of the Communists and their consequent isolation, are forcing them toward dependence upon Russia. An American observers' mission would break this isolation, reduce the tendency toward dependence upon Russia and, at the same time, serve to check Chiang's desire to attempt liquidation of the Communists by civil war. The Generalissimo will naturally be opposed to the dispatch of American observers to Communist China. His permission cannot be obtained through ordinary diplomatic and military channels. The request should come to him directly from the President, who can overcome any initial refusal by exercise of our ample bargaining power.¹⁶

A contemporary example of such a mission to a Communist faction within an Allied state existed, for when Davies wrote his letter a British military mission under Brigadier Fitzroy Maclean had been for several months with Marshal Josip Broz Tito in Yugoslavia, and Maclean had been at SEXTANT when Davies was there.¹⁷

Apparently the President liked the suggestion, for on 9 February he asked the Generalissimo if an American observer mission might go to north China.¹⁸ The request arrived at an inauspicious moment. It nearly crossed a report from Stilwell to Marshall that a crisis in Nationalist-Communist relations might be at hand. Stilwell understood that the Nationalist armies facing the Communists in north China had been built up to 500,000 men, that the Nationalists were accumulating supplies for this force, while the Communists for their part were reinforcing. Stilwell thought it unlikely that there would be a civil clash before the end of the war with Japan. Reminding Marshall that this mutual hostility in north China was hindering the war against Japan, he reported that for obvious reasons the Japanese Domei News Agency was goading both sides.¹⁹

As predicted by Davies on 23 January, the Generalissimo refused the

¹⁶ Ltr, Davies to Hopkins, 23 Jan 44, with Incl, Memo, 15 Jan 44, sub: Observers' Mission to North China. Bk IX, Hopkins Papers.

¹⁷ Fitzroy Maclean, *Escape to Adventure* (Boston. Little, Brown & Company, 1950).

¹⁸ (1) A copy of the original 9 February radio is in Book IX, Hopkins Papers. (2) In Chungking, the President's radio was copied as a memorandum from General Hearn to Madame Kung on 19 February 1944, and presented to her with the request that she give the President's radio to Madame Chiang for the Generalissimo. Item 1726, Bk 5, JWS Personal File.

¹⁹ CM-IN 2373, Stilwell to Marshall, 4 Feb 44. (Probably originated by Hearn.)

President's request, in polite terms, by agreeing that such an American military mission might visit any territory in north China which acknowledged the authority of the Nationalist Government. The President accepted gracefully and stated that such a mission would be dispatched in the near future to north China.²⁰ The President's reply did not mention the Generalissimo's limits on such a mission's movements, and very tactfully he soon began to persuade the Generalissimo to remove them.²¹

An indication of the attitude the Generalissimo's government might contemplate adopting toward the Chinese Communists was offered when his Chief of Ordnance, Gen. Yu Ta-wei, asked Hearn if lend-lease arms could be used against the Communists. Hearn was understood by Ambassador Gauss to have replied that the Chinese could not successfully explain such an action to the people of the United States.²²

SEAC and Stilwell Obtain Pressure on Chiang

Though after January 1944 there were several major points at issue between them regarding Allied strategy for Southeast Asia, Mountbatten and Stilwell agreed that Y-Force should hasten to join the Burma campaign, and both wanted the President and the Prime Minister to put pressure on the Generalissimo to that end. Mountbatten and Stilwell had discussed their personal relationship on 4 March and patched up their differences. Then the long-expected Japanese attack on India had begun. The diversion of Hump transports it had caused and the obvious menace which it posed placed new strains on Anglo-American strategy in Southeast Asia.

Stilwell responded to the situation by suggesting to Mountbatten that an advance by Y-Force would create a major diversion in the Japanese rear area which would be the answer to SEAC's problems, and, by implication, to Stilwell's immediate troubles as well. Could not Mountbatten place the matter before his superiors and ask them to use their good offices with the Chinese?²³ A day later Stilwell sent a similar request to the Operations Division of the War Department, with an information copy to General Marshall. Vividly and strongly, he told the War Department that if ever he needed help, now, right now, was the time. Pressure on the Generalissimo to move, pressure from the highest quarters, was desired. If the Y-Force took the old jade center of Teng-

²⁰ Memo, Generalissimo to Hearn for President, 22 Feb 44; Memo, Hearn to Generalissimo for President, 2 Mar 44. Items 2023, 2054, Bk 6, JWS Personal File.

²¹ Memo, Hearn to Generalissimo for President, 22 Mar 44. Item 2126, Bk 6, JWS Personal File.

²² Copy, Memo for Admiral Leahy, no date, sub: U.S. Observers Mission to North China. Initialed "VE" (Vernon Evans), this copy was in the G-3 files of Hq CBI Theater, and was brought back to OCMH with other miscellaneous documents by Col. Harry L. Mayfield, former India-Burma Theater Historian, in August 1946. KCRC.

²³ (1) See Ch. IV, above. (2) Rad FG 63, Stilwell to AMMDEL, 16 Mar 44. Item 71, Bk 6A, JWS Personal File.

chung, well north of the Burma Road, the Ledo Road could take that route and bypass the heavy Japanese concentration on the Burma Road.²⁴

Stilwell's suggestion met with Mountbatten's hearty approval. General Sultan, Stilwell's deputy in New Delhi, was asked to relay SEAC's approval to Stilwell, while down in Ceylon the SEAC staff began to prepare an appropriate message to London and Washington.²⁵ As sent, the SEAC radio placed Mountbatten's command squarely behind Stilwell's views on Y-Force:

I have discussed with General Stilwell question of advance by Chinese forces in Yunnan. We agree immediate advance would be of value because it will contain *56 Division* and may cause diversion of other troops which would otherwise be used against Wingate or Stilwell or support offensive against 4 Corps front. We both feel that only a personal approach from the Prime Minister and the President through their representatives in Chungking is likely to succeed with Generalissimo. Line might be taken that Ledo Force is already achieving great success, while presence in Burma of Wingate's forces opens up possibility of victory in Imphal area where enemy may find himself committed to an offensive which he cannot sustain with his rear threatened. Participation of Chinese from Yunnan in victory which it is hoped to achieve would be of great value to morale of Chinese Army and people. Their chance of success is considerable since they will initially only have to overcome one division, at present holding a very extended front, and reinforcements can only be provided by Japanese at expense of forces already committed on other fronts. On the other hand position of China in eyes of the world is bound to suffer if only Chinese force which has taken part in victory is that trained and led by Americans. I should be most grateful if an approach could be made with extreme urgency.²⁶

Mountbatten's urgings brought a quick response, for the President addressed the Generalissimo two days later, and used all of Mountbatten's arguments. In sequence, Roosevelt reviewed the "magnificent" pounding the Chinese Army in India was giving the Japanese *18th Division*, the implications of the Arakan and Imphal fighting in tying down the major portion of the Japanese strength, and the Chindits' threat to the Japanese supply lines. The President warned that if the Allies failed to seize the opportunity thus presented, the Japanese might recover and take the offensive. Showing his grasp of the North Burma Campaign, the President predicted that the *18th Division* would require reinforcements and that they would be obtained by withdrawing a regiment from the *56th Division* along the Salween. The President wanted the Generalissimo to have these views "at length and in considerable detail in the hope that you will give orders to the commander of your Yunnan force to cooperate in developing what appears to be a great opportunity."²⁷

After presenting the President's message to the Chinese, Hearn urged Stilwell to fly to Chungking because there appeared to be signs the Chinese

²⁴ CM-IN 11455, Stilwell to Marshall, 17 Mar 44.

²⁵ Rad RE 473, Sultan to Stilwell, 17 Mar 44. Item 75, Bk 6A, JWS Personal File.

²⁶ Rad SEACOS 116, Mountbatten to COS and JSM, 17 Mar 44. SEAC War Diary.

²⁷ CM-OUT 4762, Roosevelt to Generalissimo, 17 Mar 44. Hearn relayed this message as Memorandum 163 to the Chinese. Item 2109, Bk 6, JWS Personal File.

were willing to send two divisions to reinforce the Chinese Army in India.²⁸ When he conferred with the Generalissimo on 28 March, Stilwell found the Chinese had answered the President.

The Generalissimo Warns of Trouble

By coincidence, the Generalissimo had chosen to address the President on 17 March, and naturally his radio crossed the President's response to Mountbatten's pleadings. The Chinese leader told Roosevelt:

For your personal information, I should like to advise you of recent significant developments which are matters of grave concern to the prosecution of the war in the Far East.

First, on the 11th instant while Chinese troops stationed at Sinkiang were engaged in suppressing bandits at Hopan, a place situated between Chengkwa and Kitai about 70 kilometers from the borders of Outer Mongolia, they were bombed and machine-gunned twice by planes which flew over from the direction of Outer Mongolia. The first batch consisted of two planes and the second ten. They all bore the soviet red Star insignia. On the 12th, planes bearing the same insignia came twice and dropped bombs. On the 13th, they re-appeared and machine-gunned. This cannot be construed as a local incident, but is a very significant indication of the Soviet Far Eastern policy both now and in the future.

Second, though the Chinese Communist party have outwardly professed support of the Chinese Government's policy of resistance against Japanese aggression, since February they have been secretly assembling their guerrilla units from various places and concentrating them in North Shensi, evidently preparing for an opportune moment to rise in revolt and take Sian [Hsian], the base of our operations in the Yellow River valley. The indications are manifest. Considering the matter objectively, it does not seem likely that the Chinese Communist party would dare to make such a move without some understanding having been reached between the Soviet and the Japanese.

Third, I have information that the Japanese in the near future will launch a large-scale offensive in the Chengchow-Loyang area on the Hankow-Peiping railroad line. The enemy is moving troops from Manchuria for this purpose.

Fourth, regarding definite intelligence reports of the Japanese navy, I shall shortly forward same to you.²⁹

Having dispatched this warning, the Generalissimo then found himself obliged to answer the President's 17 March radio. This he did on the 27th. He said bluntly that American observers could not visit Communist territory, and said it was "impossible" to have an offensive from Yunnan. In his previous discussion of affairs in China, the Generalissimo had referred to a Japanese ground offensive in muted tones. Now, the topic disappeared into the general assertion that China should not launch an offensive into Burma because she was too weak:

The situation in China theater has recently become so grave that I deem it imperative to acquaint you with it. The state of affairs in Sinkiang has become very tense since its invasion by Soviet planes and Outer Mongolian troops about the middle of this month, with the result that our army and people's belief in concerted action by the United Nations has been

²⁸ Rad CFB 15004, Hearn to Stilwell, 19 Mar 44. Item 2117, Bk 6, JWS Personal File.

²⁹ Rad AGWAR 184, Generalissimo to Roosevelt, 17 Mar 44. Item 2110, Bk 6, JWS Personal File.



C.A. Frost

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somewhat shaken; in other words, our army and people are beginning to ask themselves whether the United Nations' pledges and declarations still hold good.

At the present moment what China can possibly do to fulfill her obligation to the Allies as well as to discharge her duty to herself are: (1) to devote all her energy and resources to the maintaining of the various fronts in the China theater against any surprise attack by the enemy, this theater being the only land base from which to bomb Japan Proper on a large scale and with certain effect; and (2) To prepare herself for the day—may it not be distant—when Allied land and naval forces can be dispatched to the China coast and the Chinese Army can co-operate with them in consolidating our position in East Asia, which will be an important base for the invasion of Japan. These are the most important tasks which have devolved on China today and which constitute at the same time an obligation she has assumed to the Allies.

In this connection it may be observed that seven years of war have taxed China's material and military strength to such an extent that to insist upon her doing something beyond her power would be to court disaster, the consequences of which would seriously affect not only Yunnan and Szechwan, but also the whole situation in this theater of war. Should this happen, the Japanese would invade Yunnan and Szechwan, the revolt in Sinkiang and the communists activities in Shensi would assume a new aspect in furtherance of their plan of bolshevizing [*sic*] this country so that our Government would not be in a position to do its part in this global war, and the Allies in East Asia would be deprived of a base of operations against Japan.

For these reasons, and bearing in mind our obligation to the Allies and our duty to ourselves, I am of the opinion that as long as our line of defences has not been adequately strengthened, it is impossible for our main forces to undertake an offence from Yunnan. In the course of our conversations at Cairo I told you that as soon as the British began large scale amphibious operations along the Burma coast, our main forces would launch a vigorous attack on Burma with all their might. That promise will be made good when the time comes. I realize that reinforcements should be sent to Burma in view of the military situation there and that although this does not fall within scope of our work, still we should do what we can in compliance with your request. I have therefore decided to dispatch to India by air as many of our troops in Yunnan as can be spared in order to re-enforce the troops in Ledo, thus enabling the latter to carry on their tasks of defeating the enemy.

In conclusion I may add that so far as land operations in East Asia are concerned, China bears a very heavy responsibility; and, appreciative of the kind and sympathetic assistance you have been rendering her all these years, she is determined to discharge that responsibility to the best of her ability. I have explained to you quite frankly the present situation in this theater of war and the plan of coping with it, in the hope that you will continue to place confidence in my country and in one who is your good friend. China, on her part, will not fail to do her utmost in the discharge of her responsibility vis-à-vis the Allies.³⁰

It must be noted that the Generalissimo's objections were of the most general nature. Possibly he felt that his 29 April 1943 pledge to the President—"The Generalissimo also wishes me [T. V. Soong] to transmit to you his personal assurance that in the event the enemy attempts to interrupt the air offensive by a ground advance on the air bases, the advance can be halted by the existing Chinese forces"—would cause an intolerable loss of face if for any reason he hinted that he could not defend the east China airfields.³¹ Or again

³⁰ (1) CM-IN 21368, Stilwell to Marshall, 30 Mar 44. (2) Msg, Generalissimo to Roosevelt, 27 Mar 44 (sent as Rad CFB 15407, 29 Mar 44). Item 2145, Bk 6, JWS Personal File.

³¹ *Stilwell's Mission to China*, Chapter IX, quotes the full text of the Generalissimo's 23 April 1943 pledge to Roosevelt.

it may be that he saw no specific reasons for alarm. Certainly a SEAC amphibious assault on the Arakan coast could not remedy a crisis in east China.

Whatever his reasoning, the Generalissimo's radio was not well received in Washington. The President had been following the course of the North Burma Campaign with close attention in the White House map room. He saw the pins that marked the Chinese Army in India move deeper into Burma. On the far side of the map he saw the massed array of pins that represented the Y-Force along the Salween. Facing the Y-Force were the few scattered red pins that marked the Japanese *56th Division*. The President saw a great strategic opportunity, and simply could not understand why the Generalissimo was so hesitant to attack one Japanese division.³²

When in December 1941 Churchill had come to Washington, he found the President and his closest advisers believing that China was a great military power and classing her armies with the Russian.³³ Now, in 1944, the Generalissimo was reluctant to send a whole group of these armies, which the President had rated on a par with the Russian, against the *56th Division*.

What the map room pins did not show, but what the Generalissimo may well have had in mind, was the current state of the Y-Force. In the last year, considerable progress had been made in supplying artillery and ammunition to that force, and by 20 April the Chinese had been given, for example, 244 75-mm. pack howitzers. But the Chinese had never brought the Y-Force divisions up to strength, either by supplying replacements or by merging understrength units. With regard to the intangible but vital elements of training and morale, the picture was uncertain. The Chinese staffs and services of supply did not inspire confidence in those Americans who worked with them, for they did not appear up to their professional responsibilities. The underlying reality of the situation was that the Generalissimo was being urged to attack about 11,000 well-trained and well-led Japanese and 36 guns with 72,000 Chinese of indifferent quality whose several headquarters had been issued 244 American cannon in addition to their Chinese ordnance.³⁴

The President Demands Action

The first reaction from the President to the Generalissimo's excusing China from any offensive effort was a mere formal acknowledgment. Then in the next few days a message from Stilwell to Marshall arrived in Washington describing the situation created by the Japanese attack on India in somber tones to prepare higher authority for a possible success of the Japanese offensive.³⁵ In

³² Marshall Intervs, 6, 13 Jul 49. OCMH.

³³ Winston S. Churchill, *The Hinge of Fate* (Boston. Houghton Mifflin Co., 1950), p. 13.

³⁴ (1) A more detailed description of the Y-Force is given on pages 333-34, below. (2) SNF 215 has several rather disparaging reports on the Y-Force, dated October 1943. (3) The *56th Division* had seven and a half battalions in May 1944. (Japanese Officers' Comments.) Its strength is given in Japanese Study 93, p. 41.

³⁵ (1) Rad CFB 15442, Stilwell to Marshall, 30 Mar 44. Item 2146, Bk 6, JWS Personal File. (2) Rad, Stilwell to Marshall, 31 Mar 44; Rad TK 24, Stilwell to Marshall, 4 Apr 44. Items 98, 103, Bk 6A, JWS Personal File.

all probability, the grave prospects for the Allied cause in Asia which this message placed before the Chief of Staff and the President led to the drafting of a note from the President in language that showed Mr. Roosevelt's attitude had completely changed from his complaisance of March 1943. His radio of 3 April 1944 said:

The present offensive by the Japs in the Imphal area is directed primarily against the line of communication which makes possible the transportation of materials to China. If the Japanese succeed in their intentions in this drive, they can then concentrate against and destroy the Ledo Force and turn against your YOKE Force at their leisure.

The British are ably meeting the strong Japanese threat to the line of communication to China and the supply route which supports your troops in the Mogaung Valley.

While heavy fighting is in progress in West Burma and on the Arakan Coast, the Salween front has remained quiet and as a result the Japanese have been able to divert elements of the *Fifty-sixth Division* to meet Stilwell's thrust down the Mogaung Valley and the threat of the Long Range Penetration Groups in North Burma. It is inconceivable to me that your YOKE Forces, with their American equipment, would be unable to advance against the Japanese *Fifty-sixth Division* in its present depleted strength. To me the time is ripe for elements of your Seventy-first Army group to advance without further delay and seize the Tengchung-Lungling areas. A shell of a division opposes you on the Salween. Your advance to the west cannot help but succeed.

To take advantage of just such an opportunity, we have, during the past year, been equipping and training your YOKE Forces. If they are not to be used in the common cause our most strenuous and extensive efforts to fly in equipment and to furnish instructional personnel have not been justified. They should not be held back on the grounds that an amphibious operation against the South Burma coast is necessary prior to their advance. Present developments negate such a requirement. The Jap has deployed the bulk of seven divisions in his operations on the Arakan, the Chindwin, and in the Mogaung Valley.

I do hope you can act.³⁶

In this radio the President did not refer to the question of the American military mission to north China, and the subject was dropped for the time being. The War Department believed it was far less important than persuading the Generalissimo to send his armies across the Salween and to permit the Chinese Army in India to continue its advance down the Mogaung valley of north Burma.³⁷

When the President's strong message arrived in Chungking, the Generalissimo was ill, so Hearn gave it to Madame Chiang for delivery. At a tea party in honor of U.S. Army Day, Madame Chiang called General Hearn to one side and expressed her concern over the tone of the President's message. She feared that such a communication from Roosevelt would jeopardize rather than improve the chances of moving the Y-Force across the Salween River. As Madame Chiang continued, Hearn concluded that the message had not been

³⁶ (1) *Stilwell's Mission to China*, Ch. VIII. (2) Rad WAR 17956, Roosevelt to Generalissimo, 3 Apr 44. Item 2164, Bk 6, JWS Personal File. Hearn relayed this message as Memorandum 175 to the Generalissimo on 4 April 1944.

³⁷ (1) CM-OUT 25588, Marshall to Stilwell, 20 Apr 44. (2) The President renewed his proposals for a mission to north China during Vice-President Henry A. Wallace's mission in late June 1944. See Chapter X, below.

delivered. He so reported to Marshall who relayed Hearn's impressions to Roosevelt.³⁸ The President immediately ordered that future messages from him to the Generalissimo were to be delivered in person to the Generalissimo by the senior U.S. Army officer present in Chungking. The English text was to be accompanied by a translation.³⁹

Within a few days after the President had rejected the Generalissimo's protestations of 27 March 1944, fresh warnings of trouble in China were delivered, this time by Chennault to Stilwell. Where the Generalissimo had spoken in general terms, Chennault was specific. Sharing the general unawareness that the Japanese since the summer of 1943 had moved five good divisions from China to face the Allies elsewhere, and looking rather at the new and menacing Japanese concentrations to the north and south of Honan Province, Chennault put his warnings in the dramatic phrase that the disposition of the Japanese ground forces was the most menacing since Pearl Harbor. He believed that they had planned two offensives, one to overrun the Honanese link of the Peiping-Hankow railroad, the other to take Changsha. "In considering the likelihood of effective resistance to these anticipated offensives," wrote Chennault, "I need not point out to you the underlying weakness of the Chinese Armies." Chennault did not believe he could meet a determined Japanese air offensive and still give proper air support to the Chinese Armies.

General Chennault argued that his problems were basically those of logistics. His supply level in east China was but 40 percent of that necessary, and the eastern line of communications could deliver but 2,500 tons a month. Chennault suggested the following steps: (1) deliver 8,000 tons of aviation supplies to China in May 1944 and build up thereafter to 10,000 in July; (2) give fullest support to improvement of the eastern line of communications; (3) establish first reserves of 10 percent of total air strength in China and an equal amount in India. If these steps, or a massive diversion of supply tonnage from the B-29's, could not be taken, then there was nothing left but to tell Washington the security of the China base was in doubt, and to tell the Generalissimo he could not have effective air cover for his armies.⁴⁰

³⁸ Rad CFB 15828, Hearn to Stilwell, 7 Apr 44; Rad CFB 15835, Mme. Chiang to Stilwell, 8 Apr 44; Rad CFB 15917, Hearn to Marshall, 10 Apr 44. Items 2179, 2181, 2194, Bk 6, JWS Personal File.

³⁹ (1) Memo, Roosevelt for Marshall, 3 May 44; Memo, Gen McNarney for Roosevelt, 8 May 44, sub: Delivery of Msgs to Generalissimo from President. Item 58, Folder 1, Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek (GMO CKS), OPD Exec 10. (2) CM-OUT 33493, Marshall to Stilwell, 7 May 44.

⁴⁰ (1) Rad CAK 456, Chennault to Stilwell, 6 Apr 44. Item 2174, Bk 6, JWS Personal File. (2) Ltr, Chennault to Stilwell, 8 Apr 44; Rad CAK 595, Chennault to Stilwell, 10 Apr 44. Ltr, Chennault to Wedemeyer, 6 Jul 45 (hereafter, *The Chennault-Wedemeyer Letter*), Items 25, 26. WDCSA 091 China, 15 Aug 45. (3) Gen. Yasuji Okamura differed with Chennault's estimate of the Japanese situation on the ground that between summer 1943 and April 1944 the Japanese transferred four good divisions from China to Pacific areas and replaced them only with raw brigades. Okamura apparently forgot the *15th Division*, which left China for Burma in summer 1943. Japanese Officers' Comments, Incl 3, Okamura. (4) Japanese Study 129, map facing page 30, shows the concentrations that Chennault referred to. Page 11 of the monograph lists Japanese troop movements in China.

Chennault's requests reached Stilwell at an awkward time. The Japanese were placing heavy pressure on India, and Mountbatten, who was Stilwell's superior, had diverted twenty transports from the Hump only three weeks earlier. If the Japanese went on to Assam, all would be over in CBI. In his reply, therefore, Stilwell stated that until the Imphal situation improved he saw no possibility of increasing the flow of supplies to Chennault. In Stilwell's opinion, the Combined Chiefs of Staff would not give priority to meeting an anticipated Japanese offensive in China when there was an actual and current crisis in India. "You will simply have to cut down on activity to the point where you can be sure of reasonable reserves for an emergency." Chennault's 8 April letter did not reach Stilwell until about 21 April. Meanwhile on 12 April, Stilwell warned Chennault (presumably because of the current attempts by the President to persuade the Generalissimo to commit the Y-Force) not to send a gloomy estimate of the situation to the Chinese leader.⁴¹

The Chinese Decide To Cross the Salween

No formal reply was ever sent by the Generalissimo to the President's final demand that China attack. However, over the next ten days, the members of the National Military Council argued the merits of crossing the Salween River among themselves and with General Hearn. Hearn ordered Dorn, chief of staff of the American personnel working with the Y-Force, to come to Chungking to present the latest and most complete data on Y-Force's state. Dorn in turn persuaded Gen. Wei Li-huang to include Gen. Hsiao I-hsu, chief of staff of the Chinese Expeditionary Force, in a Chinese deputation.

During the first few days of the discussions it seemed obvious to the Americans that even the Chinese senior officers closest to the Generalissimo were not familiar with the contents of the President's 4 April message. However, the gist of a subsequent message of 10 April from Marshall to Hearn was given to the Chinese staff. Making a logical extension of the President's views, the radio from Marshall told CBI Theater authorities that unless the Y-Force moved, lend-lease shipments for it should end. Stilwell instructed Hearn to comply at once. Accordingly, Hearn told the War Department that he proposed to transfer the Y-Force's April allocation of Hump tonnage, 734 tons, to the Fourteenth Air Force. Furthermore, he planned to cancel the China National Aviation Corporation's contract to fly lend-lease to China and return the corporation's lend-lease aircraft to the Air Transport Command.⁴²

⁴¹ (1) See Ch. V, above. (2) Rad SH 7, Stilwell to Chennault, 9 Apr 44. Item 112, Bk 6A, JWS Personal File. (3) Rad SH 18, Stilwell to Chennault, 12 Apr 44. SNF 31. (4) Rad SH 19, Stilwell to Chennault, 12 Apr 44. Item 2205, Bk 6, JWS Personal File. Chennault received Stilwell's message on 13 April 1944.

⁴² (1) CM-OUT 20146, Marshall to Stilwell, 7 Apr 44. (2) Rad CRA 966, Sultan to Hearn, 8 Apr 44; Rad CFB 15917, Hearn to Marshall, 10 Apr 44; Rad CHC 192, Stilwell to Hearn, 11 Apr 44; Rad CFB 15985, Stilwell to Marshall, 11 Apr 44; Rad CFB 15986, Hearn to Chennault, 11 Apr 44; Rad CFB 16010, Hearn to Stilwell, 12 Apr 44; Rad CFB 16029, Hearn to Stilwell, 12 Apr 44. Items 2185, 2194, 2195, 2196, 2197, 2201, 2203, Bk 6, JWS Personal File.

Word of Hearn's intentions soon reached Gens. Ho Ying-chin, Lin Wei, and Liu Fei, whom the members of Stilwell's staff had long believed to be opposed to the Burma campaign. Meanwhile, General Hsiao, who realized the implications of Hearn's intended action, was urging the principal Chinese military personages, including the Generalissimo, to order an advance by Y-Force. On 12 April, Gen. Lin Wei asked Hearn to hold back orders on the tonnage cut for Y-Force because he was sure that there would be "positive action" on the use of Wei's troops within forty-eight hours. Hearn of course agreed to wait for two days, but, considering that the Chinese tended to vacillate and delay, he meanwhile insisted that the Chinese agree among themselves on a definite plan of attack, a command arrangement, and a date.⁴³

On the evening of 12 April, Dorn held a dinner party for the various Chinese dignitaries present for these exchanges over the Y-Force. He may well have had in mind the ancient practice of the Persian general staff, which, it has been said, offered the advantage of combining the impetuosity of youth, the genius of experience, and the caution of maturity by the simple device of considering a plan in all stages of intoxication and sobriety. As Dorn and Hsiao moved about the room, the trend of the guests' comments was all toward an offensive. At the end of the evening, General Ho was willing to confer with the Generalissimo about the matter. Next morning, Ho was still sure that matters could be arranged.

True to his promise, General Ho, as Minister of War and Chief of Staff, gave formal approval to the Salween crossing on 14 April. In accord with Chinese custom, he gave the word before witnesses and made it binding by stamping his chop on the order. But before he placed the irrevocable seal in place, Ho made what Dorn thought a final attempt to block the operation.

At the last moment, Ho asked Dorn for his personal assurance that the American Y-Force Operations Staff (Y-FOS) would assume four responsibilities during the early phase of the campaign: (1) to ferry 50,000 Chinese troops across the Salween; (2) to give air support; (3) to co-ordinate the American-trained artillery battalions; (4) to share Wei Li-huang's command responsibility of feeding and supplying munitions to the Chinese Expeditionary Force. Dorn was intimately aware of the neglected state of Wei's forces, and he believed that he would have to act for Stilwell in agreeing. Dorn surmised that Ho expected him, a junior staff officer, to decline, thereby excusing the Chinese from the operation. Ho pressed his seal upon the paper; the operation was formally agreed to.⁴⁴

Having promised to attack the *56th Division*, General Ho hastened to assume for China full responsibility for the decision to cross the Salween River. Ad-

⁴³ (1) Rad CFB 16029, Hearn to Chennault and Stilwell, 12 Apr 44; Rad SH 23, Stilwell to Hearn, 13 Apr 44; Rad 16021, Hearn to Stilwell, 13 Apr 44. Items 2203, 2209, 2210, Bk 6, JWS Personal File. (2) Stilwell Diary, 12 Apr 44.

⁴⁴ (1) Ltr, Dorn to Stilwell, 16 Apr 44. SNF 35. (2) Interv with Dorn, May 48.

dressed to Marshall, his radio of 14 April was understood by the Americans to be China's reply to the President's 4 April message:

China has been working on plans for offensive action against Japanese with full intention to put them into effect, using troops which have not received American equipment as well as YOKE Force. China has always realized her position with regard to offensives by United Nations, and it has only been because of time and lack of essential equipment that such action has not taken place before this time. You can rely on China doing her share, but it is hoped that you understand her difficulties. Decision to move part of YOKE Force across Salween was made on initiative of Chinese without influence of outside pressure, and was based on realization that China must contribute its share to common war effort.

Marshall acknowledged Ho's pledge, and promised to relay the good news to Roosevelt at Warm Springs, Georgia. Meanwhile, Hearn restored Y-Force's full tonnage allocations.⁴⁵

Chennault Renews His Warnings

Immediately after the Chinese agreed to drive across the Salween toward Burma, Chennault again warned that the Japanese were about to move in east China, and by implication urged cancellation of the Salween offensive. On 15 April, at the Generalissimo's request, Chennault as Chief of Staff, Chinese Air Force, submitted to the Generalissimo an estimate of the situation with respect to the air war in China. Chennault's air estimate was very similar to his 8 April letter to Stilwell, but with some significant additions. It will be recalled that on 12 April Stilwell had ordered Chennault not to submit such a paper to the Chinese leader.⁴⁶

General Chennault wrote to the Generalissimo: "It is unnecessary to point out that all the new military equipment brought into China in the past two years has been assigned to the Chinese Armies on the Salween Front. Both equipment and many tens of thousands of troops have actually been borrowed for the Salween front from the Chinese forces which must meet the enemy offensives in Central and East China." In his next paragraph Chennault continued "In addition to resisting the two enemy offensives [which he was predicting], it is desired that the Chinese ground forces assume the offensive themselves, with the objective of taking Ichang, Shasi, and perhaps Hankow."⁴⁷ Chennault therefore in mid-April 1944 set a very high rating on the capabilities of the Chinese forces, for the Japanese held Hankow with eight divisions. A Chinese attack on eight Japanese divisions was of a different order of magnitude from one across the Salween on the *56th Division*.

After listing for the Generalissimo the logistic difficulties that hobbled the Fourteenth Air Force, Chennault closed with the warning:

⁴⁵ Rad CFB 16100, Ho for Hearn to Marshall, 14 Apr 44; Rad CFB 16145, Hearn to Marshall, 15 Apr 44; Rad WAR 23478, Marshall to Ho, 15 Apr 44; Rad CFB 16384, Ho for Hearn to Marshall, 21 Apr 44. Items 2214, 2220, 2225, 2250, Bk 6, JWS Personal File.

⁴⁶ (1) Lt. Ferris to Chennault, 8 May 44, with 1st Ind, Chennault to Ferris, 14 May 44, sub: Info for Theater Comdr. SNF 31. (2) Stilwell's order is radio cited in note 41(4).

⁴⁷ Memo, Chennault for Generalissimo, 15 Apr 44, par. 4. SNF 31.

Under the circumstances, therefore, it is necessary to inform your Excellency that the combined air forces in China, excluding the VLR [B-29] project, may not be able to withstand the expected Japanese air offensive and will certainly be unable to afford air support to the Chinese ground forces over the areas and on the scale desired. In order to put the air forces on a footing to accomplish these missions, drastic measures to provide them with adequate supplies and adequate strength must be taken. As the Japanese threat appears to be immediate, such measures should be taken without further delay.⁴⁸

On completing his study, Chennault tried to give a copy to General Hearn. Hearn was ill, so without further delay, Chennault presented his estimate to the Generalissimo. The following day a copy was left with General Ferris, who was acting as chief of staff vice Hearn. Circulated among Stilwell's principal staff officers in Chungking, Chennault's estimate drew emphatic dissents. G-2 stated that while officially the Chinese professed great fear of an offensive by the Japanese, Chinese intelligence saw no indications and was unconcerned. G-3 rejected Chennault's statement that the Chinese divisions in Yunnan had been borrowed from other fronts in China, observing: "The implication of this paragraph is that China will fall because the ground forces are employed in the wrong place."⁴⁹ Apparently, Chennault's 15 April estimate was about three weeks in coming to Stilwell's attention.

At this time, informational copies of the 8 and 10 April 1944 exchanges between Chennault and Stilwell were circulating among interested headquarters all the way up to General Arnold of the AAF in Washington. Throughout April, and indeed later, Chennault believed his warnings were being ignored. Actually they caused serious concern all along the chain of command. General Stratemeyer in India was alarmed because final preparations were being made for reception of the B-29's in China. MATTERHORN would be useless if Stratemeyer and his staff read Chennault's radios correctly. Other echelons reacted similarly. Headquarters, CBI Theater, considered curtailing Chennault's operations so that there might be ample fighter cover for MATTERHORN against the Japanese air offensive Chennault was predicting. Arnold suggested that the Fourteenth Air Force receive the major share of all Hump tonnage. Operations Division was so alarmed that it persuaded the AAF to delay MATTERHORN until Stilwell was sure the B-29's could be safely based in China. Stratemeyer immediately queried Chennault on this point and suggested a conference at Dinjan, India, to cover the entire matter with Stilwell.⁵⁰

On 16 April Chennault declined to meet Stilwell and Stratemeyer. He as-

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ (1) Ind cited n. 46(1). (2) The comments of Stilwell's Chungking staff are on the covering slip with which Ferris circulated Chennault's estimate to G-2, G-3, G-4, and the air officer. SNF 31.

⁵⁰ (1) Ltr and Rad cited n. 40(2). (2) Rad CAK 879, Chennault to Stratemeyer, 16 Apr 44; Rad SH 58, Stilwell to Chennault, 21 Apr 44; Memo, Stratemeyer for Chennault, 20 Apr 44, sub: VLR Opns from China; Rad CAK 1215, Glenn to Chennault, 24 Apr 44; Rad CAK 1284, Chennault to Stilwell, 26 Apr 44; Rad CHC 1016, Stilwell to Chennault, 30 Apr 44. The Chennault-Wedemeyer Letter, Items 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33. (3) Memo with Incls, Arnold for Handy, 17 May 44, sub: Opns of U.S. AAF Units from China. Case 375, OPD 381, A47-30.

sured General Stratemeyer that he could defend the Cheng-tu B-29 base. Claiming that his 8 April letter had been misunderstood, Chennault explained his "intentions were to acquaint and point out the increased danger of hostile air attack if Peking-Hankow Railroad is held by Japs." Chennault, therefore, saw grave danger, but now appraised it as "increased danger of hostile air attack."⁵¹

Operation ICHIGO

The planning for Japan's 1944 offensive in China, an operation whose opening phases would form an ominous background to the Chinese offensive across the Salween, began in the fall of 1943. Japanese staff studies then weighed the advantages to be gained by taking the east China airfields and preventing air raids on Japan, the disruption of Chinese activities in south China, the opening of secure land communications to *Southern Army* via Indochina, and the overthrow of the Nationalist regime. Further study focused on one objective that would satisfy the concern felt by *Imperial General Headquarters* about the menace of the B-29's, and meet the situation that faced *China Expeditionary Army* as a result of the Fourteenth Air Force's attacks on its lines of communications. This objective was the east China airfields, the current base for Chennault's tactical aircraft, and a potential base for the B-29's.⁵² (*Map 18**)

In the later opinion of General Okamura, who in January 1944 commanded *North China Area Army* and subsequently assumed command of all the Japanese forces in China, the "extremely effective" attacks of the Fourteenth Air Force made it very difficult to supply the Japanese forces in the Hankow area. Because the Japanese air force was unable to check Chennault's airmen, the Japanese had no alternative "but to plan to destroy Chennault's bases of operation from the ground."⁵³

On 17 January 1944 *Imperial General Headquarters* resolved to order *China Expeditionary Army*, Gen. Shunroku Hata commanding, to seize the east China airfields, and take the Hunan-Kwangsi, Canton-Hankow, and Peiping-Hankow railways. After the war, General Okamura recalled that the Peiping-Hankow line had to be taken over by the Japanese because the Fourteenth Air Force attacks on Japanese river shipping along the Yangtze River were making that line of communications "extremely unsafe."

ICHIGO, therefore, had its limits. It did not at any time aim at taking China's capital, Chungking, or the Hump terminal, Kunming. Nor was there any co-ordination between *ICHIGO* and the Japanese drive on Imphal. Looking back on the war years, Hata thought it unfortunate that *Imperial General*

⁵¹ Rad CAK 879, Chennault to Stilwell and Stratemeyer, 16 Apr 44. The Chennault-Wedemeyer Letter, Item 29.

⁵² (1) See Ch. I, above. (2) Japanese Study 45, p. 109.

⁵³ Japanese Officers' Comments, Incl 3, Okamura.

*For an explanation of enemy unit symbols, see note 82(3), page 42, above.

Headquarters had given no instructions about co-ordination or co-operation between the two operations. Hata's staff paid little attention to Stilwell's operations in north Burma and did not consider that the Japanese offensive against Imphal concerned them:

That is, it believed that the operational objectives of the U.S. forces were to reopen the North Burma land route to support Chiang Kai-shek's forces and to check Japanese forces' advance on India and it thought very little of them. It did not have the acute perception to see that the U.S. forces operations in Burma were a part of the India-Burma-China-Pacific Operation.⁵⁴

The reinforcements that *Imperial General Headquarters* sent to China seem to have been planned to provide artillery and service troops for Hata's divisions, most of which had little of either and so were ill adapted to active campaigning. From Manchuria there came one division, the 27th, four battalions of field artillery, four battalions of mobile antiaircraft artillery, two mortar battalions, three battalions of engineers, four field replacement units, six animal transport companies, and fifteen motor transport companies. Three air regiments were also transferred. These were all to return to Manchuria by the beginning of 1945. From Japan *Imperial General Headquarters* sent one independent infantry brigade, two battalions of mobile antiaircraft artillery, two companies of antiaircraft machine guns, four field replacement units, plus signal, road construction, transport, and medical units. In China Hata organized two regiments of engineers, two battalions of artillery, and signal units.

Since a number of Hata's divisions were organized as Class C units, and therefore had no artillery, *Imperial General Headquarters* intended to raise some to B standard, with six batteries of artillery, and others to A, with three battalions.⁵⁵ It may be assumed the artillery reinforcements were for that end. But since the 32d and 35th Divisions were to be sent out of China in the spring of 1944, obviously Hata was not going to receive major reinforcements for *ICHIGO*. And, after the completion of *ICHIGO*, two more divisions were to be sent from China to Manchuria, and three from China to French Indochina.⁵⁶

Imperial General Headquarters also ordered Hata to make maximum use of local resources. All that was sent to China to augment Hata's supplies were 10,560,000 gallons of gasoline for trucks and 2,640,000 gallons of aviation gasoline, plus enough ammunition, as a postwar Japanese account rather vaguely put it, to sustain four divisions in one engagement. In 1943 Chennault and his adherents had argued that the Japanese could find troops to overrun the east China airfields only by withdrawing garrisons from the Pacific and thereby

⁵⁴ (1) Japanese Studies 78, 129. (2) *Stilwell's Mission to China*, Ch. IX. (3) *IGH Army Order* 921, 17 Jan 44. (4) Japanese Officers' Comments, Incls 2, 3, Hata, Okamura.

⁵⁵ (1) Japanese Study 129, p. 22. (2) Contemporary U.S. divisions all had thirty-six 105-mm. howitzers and twelve 155-mm. howitzers as an organic part of the division. This was regarded as the absolute minimum for operations against a weak adversary. Normal practice, on entering combat, was to attach added battalions of artillery.

⁵⁶ Japanese Study 29, p. 22.

sacrificing their conquests. But when the time came for their major effort in China, the Japanese continued their policy of transferring veteran divisions from China to face the Allies elsewhere.⁵⁷

Beginning in early February 1944 the significant Japanese redeployments for *ICHIGO* were made south of the Great Wall, within Hata's command. Japanese units from north China moved south and east, leaving vacuums into which it seems reasonable to assume Communist guerrilla units moved. Thus, the *Mongolia Garrison Army* (Lt. Gen. Yoshio Kozuki) lost the *3d Tank Division*. The *North China Area Army* (General Okamura) reassigned the *110th Division*. In all, 7 of the 23 divisions of the Japanese military establishment in China were involved in such shifts. On the eve of its last offensive, *China Expeditionary Army* had 24 divisions, 12 independent mixed brigades, and 14 independent infantry brigades, plus 230 aircraft of the newly activated *5th Air Army* (Lt. Gen. Takuma Shimoyama). Total personnel numbered approximately 820,000 men.⁵⁸ From the above, fifteen divisions, four independent mixed brigades, and one independent infantry brigade were ultimately to take part in the *ICHIGO* operation.⁵⁹

General Hata divided *ICHIGO* into two major parts. The first, *KOGO*, was a preliminary to his major effort, *TOGO*. *KOGO* was to clear the Chinese off the railway lines that ran north to the Yellow River from Hankow. For the operation, *North China Area Army*, to drive south across the Yellow River, would use the *12th Army* (one armored and three infantry divisions, one independent mixed brigade, one cavalry brigade, and one independent infantry brigade), under Lt. Gen. Eitaro Uchiyama, and would feint toward the west with some elements of the *1st Army*, commanded by Lt. Gen. Teiichi Yoshimoto. About six weeks were allowed for the operation.

After *KOGO* had scattered the Chinese forces between the Yangtze and the Yellow River, "particularly the Nationalist," cautioned *Imperial General Headquarters*, and had cleared the rail lines from Peiping to Hankow, *TOGO* would unfold in three phases. Capture of Heng-yang was to be first. Kweilin and Liuchow were to be taken in the second. Phase three would include capturing Nan-ning, opening the Canton-Hankow railroad, and overrunning the Fourteenth Air Force's fields at Sui-chuan and Nan-hsiung. For *TOGO*, *11th Army* (Hankow) would have nine divisions, the *23d Army* (Canton), under Lt. Gen. Hisakazu Tanaka, would have two divisions for its drive north to meet the *11th Army*, and one or two divisions would be in central reserve. *TOGO* was to begin in the summer and be completed in five months.⁶⁰

To protect the great Japanese supply center at Hankow, General Hata

⁵⁷ Bks VII, IX, Hopkins Papers. (2) *Japanese Studies* 78, 82, 129.

⁵⁸ (1) *Japanese Studies* 78, 82, 129. (2) *Japanese Officers' Comments*, pp. 23-24. (3) *IGH Army Order* 928, 1 Feb 44; *Order* 933, 5 Feb 44; *Order* 945, 15 Feb 44. (4) Ltr, Murphy to Ward, 18 Nov 52. OCMH.

⁵⁹ *Japanese Officers' Comments*.

⁶⁰ (1) *Japanese Studies* 78, 129. (2) *IGH Army Dirs* 1810, / Jan 44; 1830, 1 Feb 44.

formed the *Wuchang-Hankow Defense Army*, and to it allotted the *39th Division*, one independent mixed brigade, four independent infantry brigades, and three field replacement units. Up the river from Hankow, in order to protect Chungking from a drive up the Yangtze, the Generalissimo had the V and VI War Areas with forces that in October 1943 the Japanese had estimated at eleven armies. The size of the garrison the Japanese left at Hankow suggests a high degree of confidence that these eleven Chinese armies would not attack Hankow while *ICHIGO* was under way.⁶¹

East China's Defenders on the Eve of ICHIGO

The exact strength and quality of the Chinese forces that faced Hata were unknown to either Stilwell's or Chennault's headquarters.⁶² In Hata's path lay the IX War Area (Gen. Hsueh Yueh), and the IV War Area (Gen. Chang Fa-kwei). In Kweilin was the headquarters of Li Chi-shen (who bore the honorary title of marshal). He held powers of command over the east China war areas that the Americans believed to be nominal and purely honorary, though they regarded him as a powerful politician. Kweilin was also important as the headquarters of Gen. Pai Chung-hsi, who in the Nationalist Government hierarchy held the post of head of the Board of Training. He was important in his own right in that he commanded the loyalty of a group of divisions in east China whose exact strength was unknown but whose ability was highly rated by Americans and Chinese both. After the war the Japanese wrote they had expected to find the Changsha area held by 13 to 14 Chinese armies totaling perhaps forty divisions, and that about 20 Chinese armies numbering perhaps fifty-five divisions had been committed to the defense of Heng-yang.⁶³

These forces had been little improved by the ZEBRA Force project, Stilwell's effort to build thirty good divisions in east China. As graduates of the Kweilin Infantry Training Center had begun to rejoin their units, Stilwell had wanted to capitalize on their training. By organizing Americans into traveling instructional groups and sending them into the field he hoped to create the beginnings of a liaison system such as that with the Y-Force on the Salween.

Accordingly, on 1 January 1944, a Z-Force Operations Staff, modeled on the Y-Force Operations Staff, was organized. As he had with the Y-FOS American staff, Stilwell kept command of the little group of Americans and named Brig. Gen. Malcolm F. Lindsey as chief of staff.⁶⁴

⁶¹ Japanese Studies 77, 78, 129, 130.

⁶² See notes 64(2) and 84(2), below.

⁶³ (1) See section "The East China Crisis Grows," Chapter XI, below. (2) Japanese Study 78.

⁶⁴ (1) See Ch. I, above. (2) History of Z-FOS, 1 Jan-31 Oct 1944. (Hereafter, History of Z-FOS.) OCMH. (3) Stilwell's keeping command of the Y-Force and Z-Force Operations Staffs was interpreted by Dorn as largely motivated by personnel problems within the American organization in CBI, not by any plans of personal advancement in China Theater. Moreover, correspondence from Dorn and Lindsey to the Chinese would then be by Brigadier Generals Dorn and Lindsey on behalf of Lieutenant General Stilwell so that the relatively junior Dorn and Lindsey would not be as it were directly addressing very senior Chinese officers.

General Lindsey set up a headquarters in Chungking, assembled his aides, and began work. Discussions with General Ho and the Chinese General Staff soon suggested to Lindsey and the Americans that the War Department decision to limit ZEBRA Force to 10 percent of its full complement of lend-lease had had an adverse effect on the Chinese. As the weeks went by, Lindsey and his staff received the very strong impression that so far as the Chinese were concerned lend-lease in quantity must precede any action on their part. The Chinese would not set up an over-all command structure for the ZEBRA divisions, and American hopes for an improved Chinese force in east China rapidly faded.⁶⁵

After weeks of conferring, Lindsey's G-4, Col. Frederic W. Boye, on 26 March 1944 in effect urged scrapping the plan to build a second thirty divisions and accepting instead a Chinese suggestion:

1. As has been and as will be brought out at G-4 conference, equipment for both Chinese and Americans will be meager. . . . It is to be noted however that we are getting *some* equipment which can be put to immediate use. . . .

3. Personnel ordered to the [CBI] theater for Z Force has been cut on two occasions and is being side-tracked on all sides with the approval of the Theater Commander [Stilwell] was using Z-Force personnel in Burma since the Chinese were not offering a great deal of co-operation to Z-Force]. In effect, therefore, we do not have sufficient for our initial essential group for our second 30 divisional installation. . . .

5. The National Military Council has designated 30 divisions which are to comprise the Z Force. [Boye's marginal notes located these as eight in the Kweilin area, six along the Yangtze, and 16 near Hsian.] These divisions are so widely separated and so distant from possible supply bases that it would be impossible to maintain supply and communications to them under the limitations in this [China] theater. . . .

6. The Chinese are *reluctant* to have Americans go empty-handed to their units to take over any training without equipment. If the equipment which will be available within the next year [under the War Department's 10 percent policy] is divided into 30 parts each such part will be practically zero. My information leads me to believe that in many divisions there is no training going on at the present time. This fact the Chinese wish to conceal and it is for that reason that they do not wish the Americans there.

7. If we concentrated our Chinese equipment in the hands of a smaller number of units we would have *something* to work on with this fewer number. Likewise, the problem of turning equipment over to the Chinese would be solved in that we would retain American control along established routes to delivery to Army Headquarters. The Depot facilities at Kweilin are adequate to handle the storage and distribution involved. . . .

Conclusion

It is my conclusion and recommendation that we accept the Chinese proposal on the concentration of equipment now available and that we secure approval of the Theater Commander toward concentrating our immediate installations and training attentions to the four Armies generally located at Luichow, Kukong, Hengyang, and Changsha; that as soon as the basic essential equipment is in our hands we dispatch Army and Division teams by rail to those places and otherwise proceed with our training plan; that until other equipment is

⁶⁵ (1) History of Z-FOS. (2) Z-Force Journal. KCRC.

forthcoming we supply no equipment to the other Armies and divisions in the river valley areas and to those further to the north.⁶⁶

The pressure of events eventually began to force American plans into the shape Boye had recommended.

With the arrival in east China by the end of May 1944 of a very meager amount of arms for ZEBRA, the Generalissimo sent Lt. Gen. Lo Cho-ying to Kweilin to accept delivery. General Lo acted as a representative of the National Military Council and was in no sense a commander for the divisions the National Military Council had earlier named. As the Japanese were moving to their assembly areas, Lindsey in mid-April began preparing to move to Kweilin. He probably hoped that since a trickle of lend-lease was actually beginning to flow to east China, Lo might arrange for Lindsey to send U.S. instructional teams to the divisions designated by the Chinese for the ZEBRA project.⁶⁷

On the night of 17 April, the Japanese *37th Division* crossed the Yellow River. Was it one more training expedition, or a rice raid? That day, Headquarters, CBI Theater, radioed G-2 in Washington that recently 239 Japanese troop trains had been reported as passing through Hsinhsiang. Stilwell's staff also reported that the Japanese were building their independent mixed brigades into full-scale divisions, that there were ominous troop movements around Hankow.⁶⁸ On 19 April, the Japanese *110th* and *62d Divisions* began moving south along the Peiping-Hankow railway, and the *KOGO* phase of *ICHIGO* was under way.⁶⁹

Initial Reactions to ICHIGO

While the Japanese waited in their assembly areas along the Yellow River, Stilwell and Stratemyer had been discussing the problem presented by Chennault's warnings of a Japanese air offensive. Obviously, Stilwell took Chennault's warnings at face value, for on 17 April Stilwell directed that Chennault's primary mission be defense of the B-29 fields at Cheng-tu "even at the expense of shipping strikes and support of the Chinese ground forces, dependent upon Japanese reaction to operations from the Chengtu area." The order reached Chennault about 26 April.⁷⁰

Since the Japanese offensive was now under way, and was emphatically a ground offensive, Chennault was startled by a directive that tied him to defense of a remote area in west China. A strong force of fighters was based between

⁶⁶ Memo, Boye for Lindsey, 26 Mar 44, sub: Observations on Z-Force Problems. Boye's italics. OCMH.

⁶⁷ (1) History of Z-FOS. (2) Recordings of Diary of 1st Lt Dwight E. Brewer, Adjutant Gen, Z-FOS. OCMH. (3) Extracts from Col Boye's diary. OCMH. (4) CM-IN 8737, Stilwell to Marshall, 11 Jun 44.

⁶⁸ (1) Japanese Study 129. (2) CM-IN 13041, Hearn to MILID G-2 WDGS, 18 Apr 44.

⁶⁹ Japanese Studies 78, 129.

⁷⁰ (1) See pp. 314-16, above. (2) Memo, Stratemyer for Chennault, 20 Apr 44, sub: VLR Opns From China. The Chennault-Wedemeyer Letter, Item 30.

the Japanese and Cheng-tu. Weighing the problems of giving fighter cover to Cheng-tu against those of helping the Chinese to stop the Japanese drive and preparing to support the steadily approaching Chinese offensive on the Salween front, Chennault assured Stilwell that the defense of Cheng-tu was "child's play" in comparison and asked that Stilwell reconsider his directive.⁷¹

Stilwell replied:

I am glad to hear that the defense of Chengtu is child's play. I had gathered from your letter of April eight that the security of China as a base for MATTERHORN and other military operations against Japan might be in doubt. It is a relief to know that we have no problem at Chengtu and under these circumstances of course the question of action in emergency will not arise. Until it does, there is no intention of limiting the scope of your operations in any way.⁷²

Therefore, Chennault would have operational freedom in meeting the Japanese threat. SOS in China went on with its plans to improve the eastern line of communications to Chennault's bases and approved Colonel Sheahan's recommendations.⁷³ Attempts were made to make up the April shortfalls in tonnage deliveries to the Fourteenth Air Force. However, Stilwell refused to declare that there was an emergency under which he, as U.S. theater commander, could divert the B-29 stockpiles to the Fourteenth Air Force as Chennault had requested on 8 April. Simultaneously, Roosevelt refused a bid from the Generalissimo for command of the B-29's, giving him instead purely honorific control as Supreme Commander, China Theater.⁷⁴

The Japanese launched the *KOGO* phase of their offensive as the Chinese-American Composite Wing was establishing itself on the airfields at Hsian, En-shih, Liang-shan, and Nan-cheng. The wing comprised six fighter and one medium bomber (B-25) squadrons, and its mission was to protect the B-29 fields at Cheng-tu, to destroy the Yellow River bridges in Japanese possession, and to neutralize the railway yards at Cheng-hsien and Kaifeng. The first mission against the Yellow River bridges was therefore flown by the Fourteenth Air Force on 28 April by twenty-seven B-24's escorted by ten P-51's. They found the bridges hidden under a low ceiling, and the mission was not effective. On 5 May a P-40 knocked out one span by dive bombing, but the Japanese quickly repaired it and supplemented the regular bridges with two ponton bridges across the silt flats of the river east of Kaifeng. Throughout the war the duel

⁷¹ Rad CAK 1284, Chennault to Stilwell, 26 Apr 44. The Chennault-Wedemeyer Letter, Item 32.

⁷² (1) Rad CHC 1016, Stilwell to Chennault, 30 Apr 44. The Chennault-Wedemeyer Letter, Item 33. (2) Chennault, *Wav of a Fighter*, page 286, quoted Radio CHC 1016 but eliminated the passage: ". . . and under these circumstances of course the question of action in emergency will not arise. Until it does, there is no intention of limiting the scope of your operations in any way."

⁷³ (1) See pp. 292-93, above. (2) Bykofsky MS.

⁷⁴ (1) Rad CFB 16169, Hearn to Marshall, 15 Apr 44. Item 2224, Bk 6, JWS Personal File. (2) Rad cited n. 72(1). (3) Rad CFB 16433, Generalissimo to Roosevelt, 22 Apr 44. Item 2253, Bk 6, JWS Personal File.



BRIDGES ACROSS THE YELLOW RIVER *were repeatedly bombed by planes of the Fourteenth Air Force.*

between the airmen and the Japanese antiaircraft gunners continued, with the Japanese successful in keeping the crossings open for operation.⁷⁵

As April ended, defense of Honan Province seemed hopeless. The fear of an attack by the Japanese toward Hsian, gateway to Chungking and Cheng-tu, thoroughly alarmed the Generalissimo. His commanders along the Yellow River were ordered to prevent a juncture by the Japanese in Tung-kuan (East Gateway) Pass, whose capture would open the way to Hsian. In turn, Hsian's fall might blow up a storm of dissatisfaction among the Generalissimo's war area commanders south of the Yangtze, for many of them, the Americans reported, were now hinting of their dissatisfaction with his conduct of the war.⁷⁶

At this moment, Stilwell reacted to Chennault's sending the air estimate of 15 April to the Generalissimo. Considering that Chennault had acted in defiance of his explicit orders not to lay such a paper before the Generalissimo, Stilwell demanded an explanation in writing.⁷⁷

⁷⁵ (1) Fourteenth AF History. (2) Japanese Study 82.

⁷⁶ (1) Japanese Study 78. (2) Rad 460, Lindsey to Stilwell, 13 May 44. Item 2534, Bk 7, JWS Personal File. (3) General Okamura stated after the war that the Japanese did not have the resources to attack Hsian. Japanese Officers' Comments, Incl 3, Okamura.

⁷⁷ Ltr cited n. 46(1).

While Chennault drafted his answer, the Generalissimo began applying pressure to bring more U.S. air power to bear against the Japanese. Calling General Ferris, then acting as chief of staff for Stilwell, to meet with him, the Generalissimo on 11 May asked that Stilwell order the fighter aircraft stationed at Cheng-tu to protect the B-29's in moving to Nan-cheng to support the Chinese forces in and around Loyang. He also asked that 500 tons of gasoline from the B-29 stores be diverted to support the fighters. The Generalissimo told Ferris that the next two weeks were vital, that he wanted the Fourteenth Air Force and his armies in close co-operation to try to stop the Japanese.⁷⁸

Promptly transmitted to Stilwell by Ferris, the Generalissimo's request placed before Stilwell the problem of deciding when conditions in China Theater would reach a point that would force him to divert supplies from the B-29 project, MATTERHORN, to which the President attached such importance. Stilwell's remark at TRIDENT that "air coverage over nothing is in my opinion of little value" suggests he now hesitated to divert supplies from MATTERHORN for a tactical air effort because he expected it to be futile in view of the low quality of the troops for whom it was exerted. He may also have recalled Chennault's statement that the greatest danger was from a Japanese air offensive, which would surely strike at the menace to the Japanese homeland which the B-29's presented. But other measures Stilwell could approve. He approved Stratemeier's suggestion that the B-24's of the 308th Bombardment Group haul gas and oil to Chennault, and permitted Chennault to use the Cheng-tu P-47's. Feeling little sympathy for the Generalissimo in a predicament that Stilwell believed the Chinese leader had brought on himself by failing to reorganize his army, he thanked Stratemeier for the suggestion, then added: "We must remember that he [the Generalissimo] has been assured by experts that air power can do the trick, and now he craves to see it done."⁷⁹

On 12 May a radio from Chennault presented the Fourteenth Air Force's reasons for its inability so far to stop the Japanese. Chennault told Stilwell what he had been able to do to meet the Generalissimo's demands for more air support. Three hundred and seventy tons of gasoline had been given to the Chinese Air Force and twelve P-51's had been sent to Liang-shan to reinforce the fighters there. Lack of airfields, limited supplies, dust, and poor communications made it difficult for the Fourteenth Air Force to operate in the Loyang-Cheng-hsien area. Chennault concluded: "lack of tonnage for aviation supplies, and a general disbelief in Japanese offensive plans" handicapped him in his efforts to prepare for the Honan campaign.⁸⁰

Then Chennault's reply to Stilwell's demand for an explanation arrived.

⁷⁸ Memo, Mme Chiang for Stilwell, 5 May 44; Rad CFB 17237, Ferris to Stilwell, 11 May 44. Items 2507, 2525, Bk 7, JWS Personal File.

⁷⁹ (1) Memo 197, Ferris for Generalissimo, 14 May 44. Item 2535, Bk 7, JWS Personal File. (2) Rad CHC 1054, Stilwell to Stratemeier, 13 May 44. SNF 130.

⁸⁰ Rad CAK 1946, Chennault to Ferris for Stilwell, 12 May 44. Item 2531, Bk 7, JWS Personal File.

In it Chennault pointed out that he was chief of staff of the Chinese Air Force, which post gave him direct access to the Generalissimo. He had tried to present the paper to Hearn before giving it to the Generalissimo but Hearn had been ill. Such conflicts as this were perhaps implicit in his dual status as Commanding General, Fourteenth Air Force, and as Chief of Staff, Chinese Air Force, Chennault continued, but he had left a copy of the study with Ferris so that Stilwell would be informed. Weighing this answer, Stilwell found himself far from satisfied with it. He concluded that Chennault had been insubordinate and should be relieved.⁸¹

Looking over Chennault's radios to him and the air estimate to the Generalissimo, Stilwell concluded that Chennault was beginning to prepare a case to which he might appeal in years to come. Taking up his pen, Stilwell poured out the bitterness accumulated in the long feud that had so handicapped his efforts to prepare an effective Chinese Army, and wrote his analysis of Chennault's tactics:

Chennault [stated]: The Chinese ground forces can protect the bases with the help of the 14th AF. . . .

Chennault has assured the Generalissimo that air power is the answer. He has told him that if the 14th AF is supported, he can effectively prevent a Jap invasion. Now he realizes it can't be done, and he is trying to prepare an out for himself by claiming that with a *little more* [Stilwell's italics], which we won't give him, he can still do it. He tries to duck the consequences of having sold the wrong bill of goods, and put the blame on those who pointed out the danger long ago and tried to apply the remedy.

He has failed to damage the Jap supply line. He has not caused any Jap withdrawals. On the contrary, our preparations have done exactly what I prophesied, i. e., drawn a Jap reaction, which he now acknowledges the ground forces can't handle, even with the total air support he asked for and got.⁸²

The East China Army Written Off

Soon after Stilwell angrily penned the analysis quoted above, Chennault on 18 May asked that a directive be issued to meet the increasingly grave situation which threatened to involve loss of the east China bases, that adequate supply tonnage be given the Fourteenth Air Force, that CBI Theater headquarters furnish information on what action it was taking to meet the threat, and that information be furnished as to just what would constitute an emergency justifying Stilwell in using the B-29's and their supplies within China Theater to stop the Japanese.⁸³

⁸¹ (1) Rad CFB 17552, Ferris to Stilwell, 19 May 44. Item 2542, Bk 7, JWS Personal File. (2) Indorsement and Stilwell's handwritten notes attached to letter cited in note 46(1).

⁸² (1) The passage deleted for brevity's sake gives Stilwell's understanding that Chennault had promised 100 fighters, 35 bombers, and 5,000 tons a month of supplies would be enough for him to drive the Japanese from central China. The paper, handwritten in ink, was found in SNF 31, clipped to a radio dated 14 May 1944 and just before a letter from Ferris dated 11 May 1944. (2) Chennault, *Way of a Fighter*, p. 304. (3) *Stilwell's Mission to China*, Ch. IX.

⁸³ Ltr, Chennault to Stilwell, 18 May 44, sub: Estimate of Enemy Intentions in China. SNF 31.

General Chennault supported his request for more supplies and a priority overriding that of the B-29's with an intelligence estimate by his staff that dismissed the Chinese Army as a factor in defending the east China airfields and by clear implication left the Fourteenth Air Force as the only Allied force that might save the situation. Estimating the strengths of the contending ground forces, Chennault's Assistant Chief of Staff, A-2, Col. Jesse C. Williams, set the Japanese strength in north China and in the Yellow River bend as eleven divisions, four independent mixed brigades, four infantry brigades, and one cavalry brigade. The Chinese, Colonel Williams went on, had not been willing to reveal their strength but no less than thirty-four divisions had been mentioned in reports from the front, some of them units with a reputation of being excellent troops.

Colonel Williams was not optimistic about the performance of the Chinese soldiers. He told Chennault: "Only at Szeshui [Ssu-Shui, Honan] have these troops offered advancing Japanese forces substantial resistance. Everywhere else Japanese columns have moved virtually at will. The Chinese have shown only slight evidence of either plan or capability to hamper Japanese movement or to regain lost territory." For the first time, he wrote, the Chinese were faced with Japanese divisions from Manchuria with plenty of mobile artillery and armor. This estimate, as has been noted, was in error, for General Hata had but one division (the 27th) from Manchuria. Because it was the first time since December 1941 that the Japanese had put forth a major effort in China, the contrast with their previous operations led Allied observers to explain it in terms of massive reinforcements from Manchuria.⁸⁴

The speedy initial successes scored by *ICHIGO*, the poor combat performance of the forces of the east China commanders, the acute supply problems of the Fourteenth Air Force, and the discord among the local American headquarters were a somber backdrop to the proposed Chinese effort along the Salween.

Summary

After the conferences at Cairo and Tehran in December 1943, President Roosevelt's attitude toward China changed greatly. The Generalissimo's conduct at Cairo, the Soviet promise to enter the war against Japan, the Generalissimo's linking his request for a loan of \$1,000,000,000 with the cancellation of the Andamans operation (*BUCCANEER*), Chinese insistence on making the Americans literally pay to fight in China, the contrast between Stilwell's defeating the Japanese 18th Division with three Chinese divisions and the

⁸⁴ (1) As a measure of the increased effort that they put forth, the Japanese military expenditures in China jumped 700 percent between 1943 and 1944. USSBS, *Effects of Strategic Bombing on Japan's War Economy*, Table B-2, p. 85. (2) Memo, Williams for Chennault, 18 May 44, sub: Estimate of Japanese Capabilities on the China Front. The Chennault-Wedemeyer Letter, Item 37 with Incl.

Generalissimo's reluctance to engage the weakened *56th* with twelve Chinese divisions, all played their part in the President's appraisal of Chiang Kai-shek as a soldier and as a statesman. The President's messages to the Generalissimo grew steadily harsher in tone, culminating in a threat to cut off lend-lease if the Generalissimo continued his refusal to attempt to break the blockade of China.

While the President's attitude was changing, and as he leaned more toward support of Stilwell's views rather than the Generalissimo's, there were ominous Japanese stirrings in China. The Generalissimo as Supreme Commander, China Theater, had not organized an army able to meet eleven Japanese divisions on even terms, and Chennault's east China bases were now the object of a major Japanese effort. Unfortunately, Chennault blunted the effect of the Fourteenth Air Force's warnings by stressing, now the danger of a Japanese air attack, now the danger of a ground offensive, and by suggesting that the Chinese drive the Japanese from central China. The Japanese opened their own attack in mid-April, just after the Chinese, in response to the President's proddings, finally agreed to attack across the Salween into Burma.

CHAPTER IX

The Chinese Take the Offensive

The Chinese decision of 12 April 1944 to attack across the Salween River came at a time when the Japanese had begun their drive on India, when Stilwell had decided to strike at Myitkyina, and when the Japanese had assembled along the Yellow River. As described by the Chief of Staff of the Chinese Army, General Ho, to General Hearn not later than 14 April, the Chinese plans had for their first objective the city of Teng-chung; for the second, Lung-ling. Their later actions and troop movements, the Chinese added, would depend on how the situation developed.¹ General Marshall, on receiving Hearn's message to this effect, told General Ho that the Chinese move might well be the decisive blow in the campaign to regain control of north Burma.²

The Chinese (and it must be remembered that this campaign would be fought by Chinese armies in China Theater under Chinese leadership) therefore aimed at seizing two key points on the trace of the projected line of communications to China. Teng-chung, an old jade marketing center, lies almost due east and 124 miles from Myitkyina, on a rough but usable trail. Lung-ling is on the old Burma Road. Its capture would split the Japanese positions along the Salween. (*Map 19**)

The specific objectives which Stilwell's officers, working with the Chinese commanders of Y-Force, had recommended on 29 March and which presumably reflected Stilwell's views of that date, had been to "secure and hold the general line: Mongmit-Lashio-Takaw-Monglen" while blocking any Japanese invasion of Yunnan from the direction of French Indochina. The result of success in such a move would be a grand converging attack of Stilwell's five Chinese divisions from India and the Generalissimo's Y-Force from Yunnan that would meet somewhere deep in north Burma south of the Myitkyina-Bhamo area.³ The trace of the Ledo Road would then be free of Japanese.

That the offensive was not ordered until mid-April robbed the decision of some of the significance it might have had if the Chinese had made the decision

¹ Rad CFB 16100, Ho to Hearn for Marshall, 14 Apr 44. Item 2214, Bk 6, JWS Personal File.

² Rad WAR 23478, Marshall to Ho, 15 Apr 44. Item 2225, Bk 6, JWS Personal File.

³ Plan RAINBOW, for the Salween operation, is contained in Incl 1 to Ltr 0, Col Richard M. Sandusky, Deputy CofS, Y-FOS to COs, Traveling Instructional Gps 1, 2, and 3, 29 Mar 44, sub: RAINBOW Opns Plan. OCMH.

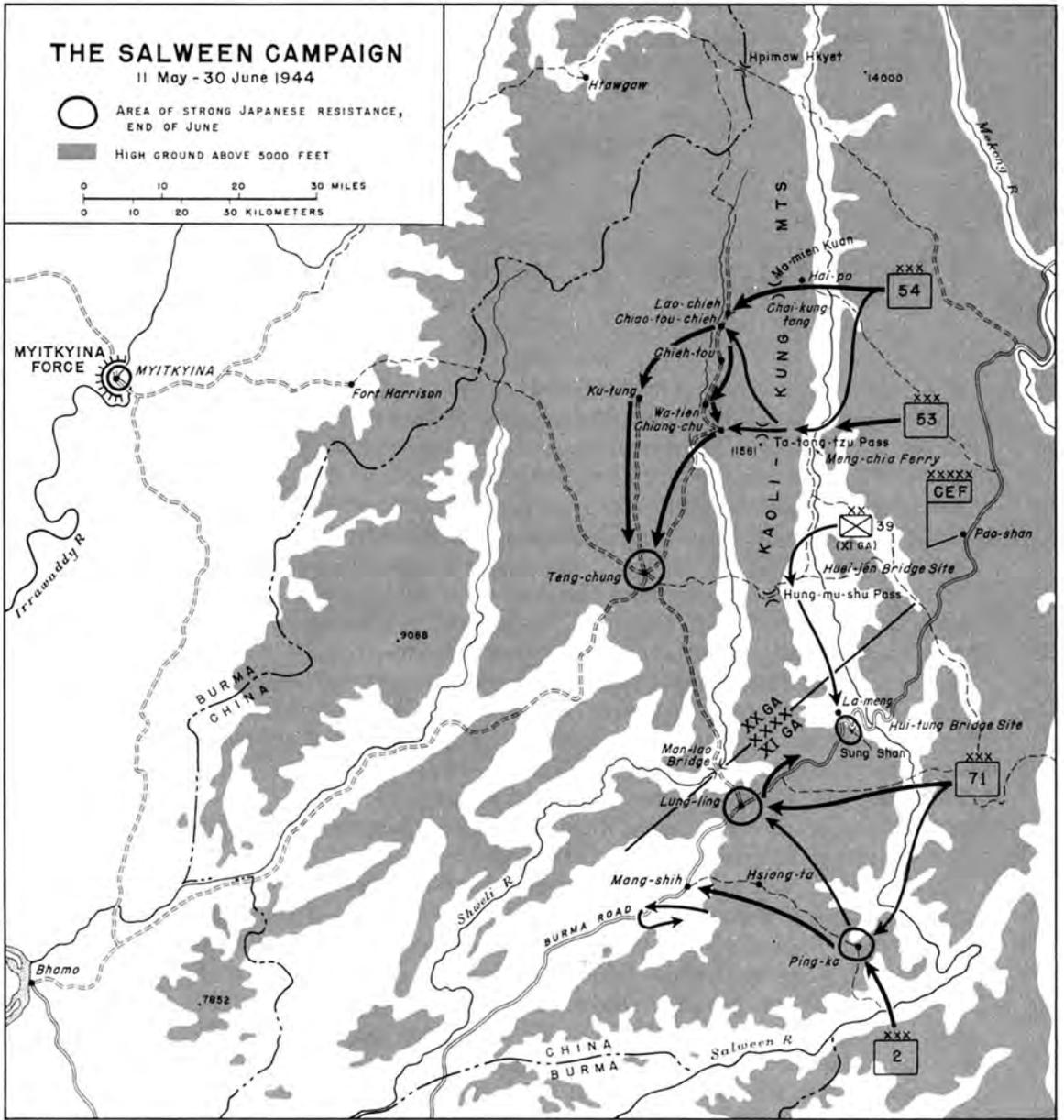
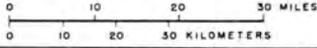
*For an explanation of Chinese unit symbols, see note 7(2) below.

THE SALWEEN CAMPAIGN

11 May - 30 June 1944

○ AREA OF STRONG JAPANESE RESISTANCE, END OF JUNE

■ HIGH GROUND ABOVE 5000 FEET



R. Jones

MAP 19

to cross the Salween in December 1943 or January 1944. At that time about five months of good weather would have lain ahead. In February, Stilwell's mission to Washington told OPD that Stilwell thought a bold attack might lead to the enemy's yielding all Burma north of Mandalay. In that event, with the road open to China, current plans called for adding 1,350 tons of equipment to that already possessed by each Y-Force division. These munitions, mostly trucks and 105-mm. howitzers, would have placed a most formidable group of divisions at the Generalissimo's disposal.⁴ But the months had gone by and in mid-April the monsoon rains were but thirty to forty days away.

In April 1944 the American leadership saw the Salween situation as an opportunity created by the current state of the *56th Division*, its strength depleted by detachments and stretched over 100 air-line miles. A strong Chinese blow at the thin line might crumble it and the Japanese grip on north Burma would be broken.

Battleground Above the Clouds: The Salween Front

The Salween or Lu Kiang (the name *Salween* is of Burmese origin) has cut for itself a deep gorge through land 9,000 feet above sea level. The river is rarely more than 200 feet wide, but its waters race exceedingly swift, deep, and cold through the lower extension of the Himalayas to win for it the Chinese name of "Angry River." During the spring thaw and later in the monsoon season the Salween swells into a torrent almost impossible to cross. During their hasty retreat in May 1942 the Chinese had destroyed the two bridges then crossing the Salween.

If the Japanese *56th Division* was to be driven from its line along the Salween and across the Burma Road, the Chinese would have to be ferried across the Salween at several points. Then the Chinese would have to cross the grain of the Kaoli-kung Mountains, their advance funneled into the mountain passes. Once through the mountains, they would be moving toward their objective, the Myitkyina-Bhamo-Lashio area. Apart from the Burma Road itself, four usable passes through the Kaoli-kung Mountains offer as many gateways to Chinese invaders of Burma. From north to south, these are: Hpimaw Hkyet at 9,000 feet, the northernmost extension of the *56th Division's* front; Ma-mien Kuan at 10,000 feet, thirty air-line miles south of the Hpimaw pass; Ta-tang-tzu and Hung-mu-shu, both at 10,000 feet, are traversed by pack trails between Pao-shan and Teng-chung.

Fifteen air miles west of the Salween and running parallel to it through a valley of the Kaoli-kung Mountains is a similar but smaller stream, the Shweli, whose mountain waters run 6,000 feet above sea level. Between Kaochiao, a

⁴ Min, 4th Conf, USAF CBI Offs with OPD WDGS, Washington, 12 Feb 44. OCMH.

village at the western end of Ma-mien pass, and Chiang-chu, a small settlement at the terminus of Ta-tang-tzu pass, the Shweli cuts through a narrow valley. A secondary road, used for Japanese motor traffic in dry weather, links Kaochiao and Chiang-chu. This road continues to the southwest to become a natural avenue of approach to Teng-chung, the last large town on the China side of the border. West of the Shweli valley the terrain is not so high as that between the Shweli and Salween Rivers, but it is just as hard for any army to cross. A good trail, which offered the possibility of being made into a military road, ran between Teng-chung and Myitkyina, 124 miles north and west of Teng-chung.

While the general ruggedness of the Kaoli-kung area is unbelievable, and the monsoon rains in their proper season greatly increased the difficulties and miseries of the campaign, it was the veterans of the *56th Division* with their skillful deployment over the mountains and along the valleys who were the principal obstacle to the Y-Force in meeting Stilwell near Myitkyina. Elements of three regiments, the *113th*, *146th*, and *148th* of the *56th Division*, plus two companies of the *114th Regiment*, *18th Division*, at Hpimaw pass watched the long front. The commander, Lt. Gen. Sukezo Matsuyama, and *56th Division* headquarters were at Mang-shih on the Burma Road.⁵

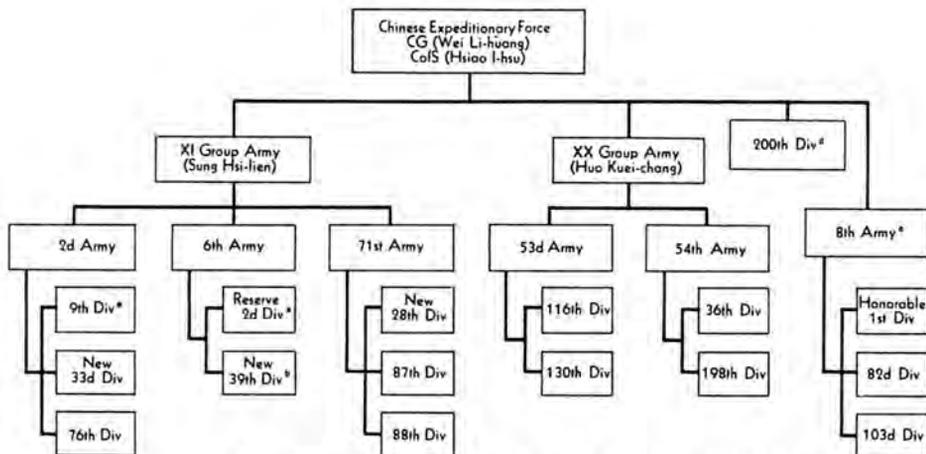
Twelve miles northwest of Mang-shih on the Burma Road was Lung-ling, strongly garrisoned since it controlled trails that branched north and south of the Burma Road. Some forty miles north of Lung-ling, the *148th Regiment* held Teng-chung and turned that old town with its thick walls into a formidable bastion of the Japanese line. From Teng-chung, patrols moved up and down the Shweli valley, watched the passes through the Kaoli-kung, and frequented ferry sites along the Salween. At the center of the Japanese line the *113th Regiment* thoroughly fortified Sung Shan, a multipeaked mountain, which dominated the site of the destroyed Hui-tung Bridge over the Salween and the first twenty-seven miles of the Burma Road west of the Salween River. South of Sung Shan, detachments garrisoned Ping-ka and Hsiang-ta, cholera-plagued villages which controlled trails reaching the first great bend of the Salween before it cuts the Burma border. At Kunlong Ferry, sixty-five air miles away, where two years before the Allies had worked on the Yunnan-Burma Railway, the *56th Division* placed three companies of its reconnaissance regiment to hold the southern end of its line.

The *56th Division* depended on the Burma Road and the trails branching from it to link its forward elements with their principal supply base and headquarters at Lashio. The Japanese trucks were vulnerable to air attack, but throughout 1943 and the first half of 1944 the Fourteenth Air Force was unable to stop Japanese traffic along the Burma Road.⁶

⁵ Although *56th Division* was originally a part of *15th Army*, it was placed directly under the control of *Burma Area Army* on 15 February 1944. Japanese Study 93.

⁶ Japanese Study 93.

CHART 6—SCHEMATIC ORDER OF BATTLE OF THE CHINESE EXPEDITIONARY FORCE



*The numbered designations of the three regiments in a Chinese division can be determined by multiplying the division's designation by three. The product is the number of the third regiment. Thus, the regiments of the 9th Division are the 25th, 26th, and 27th.

* Attached 54th Army.

* Attached 2d Army.

* Assigned Hq CEF, May 44.

* Assigned Hq CEF, Aug 44.

Source: (1) AG (Y-FOS) 381, KCRC. (2) See Stilwell's Mission to China, Table 6 and Chart 7.

The Chinese Plan for the Salween Campaign

The Chinese Expeditionary Force consisted of two group armies, the XI and XX. (Chart 6) The XI Group Army, commanded by Maj. Gen. Sung Hsi-lien, commanded the 2d, 6th, and 71st Armies. Headquarters, 6th Army, remained in the rear while the army's two organic divisions were attached to different group armies, the 2d Reserve Division to the 54th Army, and the 39th Division to 2d Army.⁷ The XX Group Army, under Maj. Gen. Huo Kwei-chang, included the 53d and 54th Armies. Thus, at the start of the Salween campaign, Gen. Wei Li-huang commanded twelve divisions. Unfortunately, the Chinese Ministry of War had not brought these units up to strength, so that Wei's actual strength of 72,000 men was 40 percent below what it should have been.

By the end of February 1944 the five Y-Force armies had each been issued 540 .45-caliber submachine guns, 54 .55-caliber Boys antitank rifles, 162 60-mm. mortars, 72 rocket launchers, 12 75-mm. pack howitzers, and 54 Bren guns. The

⁷ (1) Of the five Chinese armies, the 2d was transferred from west Kweichow Province and the 53d from Hunan. The rest had been stationed in Yunnan. See General Plan of ANAKIM, 19 May 1943, cited note 9(2). (2) A Chinese army may be considered, on the basis of its authorized strength, to be the equivalent of an American army corps and is, therefore, indicated on the maps by a corps symbol. The actual numerical strength of a Chinese army, however, was closer to that of a U.S. division, which it resembled in organizational concept. Its divisions were organic to it, just as three infantry regiments are an organic part of the U.S. infantry division.



GEN. WEI LI-HUANG (seated, center), surrounded by his staff officers, observes the result of Chinese artillery fire on enemy positions across the Salween.

ammunition for these weapons was ample to start the offensive and continued supply presented no problem to Y-FOS supply members.⁸

Estimating that the 56th Division was firmly entrenched along the Burma Road, and that it could easily bring reinforcements up the road to the Japanese forward areas, the Chinese decided to strike first at the flanks of the long Japanese line. When their task forces had successfully made their crossings of the Salween, they would move inland, then close in on the center of the Japanese

⁸ (1) Min cited n. 4. (2) As of 20 April 1944 lend-lease weapons and ammunition issued to the Y-Force by Y-FOS G-4 included:

Weapons		Ammunition	
75-mm. pack howitzers	244	75-mm. high-explosive	378,334
37-mm. antitank guns	189	75-mm. smoke	4,910
Boys antitank rifles (.55-caliber)	536	37-mm. armor-piercing	55,020
60-mm. mortars	1,238	37-mm. high-explosive	11,260
Rocket launchers M1A1	395	.55-caliber armor piercing	623,980
Thompson submachine guns (.45-caliber)	5,631	60-mm. high-explosive mortar	630,037
Bren machine guns (.303-caliber)	603	2.36-inch antitank	2,880
		.45-caliber ball	18,640,400
		.303-caliber ball	25,232,000
		7.92-mm. ball	164,551,500

In addition Y-FOS furnished 475 jeeps, 1,999 radio sets, and 420 pounds of napalm gasoline thickener. Ltr AG (USAF CBI) 400.3591 and Incls, Gen Evans, Deputy CoS, to Stilwell, 15 May 44. Stilwell Documents, Hoover Library.

position from north and south. When the envelopment was judged almost complete, then the Chinese proposed to attack down the Burma Road. It was expected the Japanese would then be forced to retire from Yunnan. In falling back south and west, they would probably yield the town of Teng-chung, opening trails to Myitkyina and Bhamo.⁹

The XX Group Army was assigned the sector north of the Burma Road; the XI Group Army, the Burma Road and the Japanese positions to the south. General Wei's plan called for the XX Group Army to send three reinforced regimental combat teams across the Salween at as many points. When each had made good its foothold, reinforcements would follow and that portion of the attack would be under way.

The northernmost pass, the Hpimaw pass, was left by the Chinese to the irregulars who had harassed the Japanese there since February; no effort through it was scheduled. Twenty-five miles to the south was Ma-mien pass. The Chinese ordered the 54th Army to send the 593d Regiment, 198th Division, across the Salween on D Day. The 593d Regiment was to filter through the Ma-mien pass, using secondary trails to avoid Japanese patrols, and enter the Shweli valley which, it will be recalled, was a north-south corridor behind the main Japanese defenses. Once the 593d was in the Shweli valley, the Chinese believed they would be safe from Japanese counterattacks in the Ma-mien pass. Following the 593d Infantry would come the remainder of the 198th Division to clear the Japanese from the Ma-mien pass area and to drive on into the Shweli valley. The 593d Infantry's crossing of the Salween would be aided by the 2d Reserve Division which was to move south and seize the village of Hai-po halfway down Ma-mien pass to the Salween's banks, and thus prevent the Japanese from bringing up reinforcements to oppose the 593d's crossing.

Seventeen miles south of lofty Ma-mien pass, the main force of XX Group Army was to clear the Ta-tang-tzu pass, the third gateway through the Kaoli-kung Mountains. This pass was held by the *148th Infantry* (less the *1st* and *2d Battalions*). At the western end of the pass was the principal Japanese stronghold in the immediate area, the fortified village of Chiang-chu. On D Day, the 36th Division of the 54th Army, plus one regiment of the 116th Division of the 53d Army, was to make the Salween crossing. With the bridgehead established, the rest of the 53d Army would follow. Three Chinese divisions would force their way through Ta-tang-tzu pass. This would place them in the Shweli valley, ready to link with the 198th Division, and to drive south down the Shweli valley as part of a great pincers on the Japanese.

⁹ (1) *Stilwell's Mission to China*, Chart 8. (2) Y-Force, with the advice of Y-FOS, had begun planning for the Salween operation early in 1943. The product of its staff work was Plan RAINBOW, which the Generalissimo never approved. The General Plan of ANAKIM (Y-Force Project), 19 May 1943, OCMH, contains the general scheme for re-equipping the Y-Force divisions from Chinese and U.S. contributions and the initial plan for the conduct and objectives of the Salween operation. See *Stilwell's Mission to China*, Ch. VIII. (3) Plan RAINBOW, Dec 43 and Feb 44 versions, AG (Y-FOS) 381, KCRC.

The shortest route from Pao-shan, the Chinese headquarters and communications center, to Teng-chung is that which crosses the Salween at the site of the Hwei-jen Bridge, but the pass on the Burmese side was so difficult that the Chinese intended to confine themselves to preventing its use by the enemy, rather than attempt to take it as part of their own attack. A regimental combat team reinforced, from the New 39th Division, was ordered to cross the Salween on D Day at three ferry sites three to five miles above the Hwei-jen Bridge, which was firmly held by a Japanese battalion, then swing south on the bridge site. The rest of the New 39th Division would follow the combat team across.

Next in order of the gateways to Burma is that through which the Burma Road passes, but since the Japanese were believed to hold it in force, the Chinese plan called for postponing attack on it until the double envelopment was well under way. Therefore the next Chinese assault was to cross the Salween eleven miles south of the village of Ping-ka. Elements of the 71st and 2d Armies would follow and converge on Ping-ka, whose capture was expected to open the way up the Ping-ka valley into Burma. While Ping-ka was under attack, other elements of the 71st and 2d Armies would bypass it and swing northward toward the Burma Road and the important towns of Mang-shih and Lung-ling. Their capture would clamp a Chinese roadblock firmly on the Burma Road, cutting off some of the strongest Japanese positions. Once these two towns were under attack, the rest of the XI Group Army would cross the Salween.

The success of the operations outlined above would precede General Wei's commitment of his reserve to an attack directly down the Burma Road.¹⁰

Such then was the Chinese Expeditionary Force's plan for an offensive across the Salween, a double envelopment that would scoop out the Japanese from their fortified positions. The plan was good, but the hour was late and this would be a great handicap. As far back as February 1943, the Chinese had agreed to launch their attack in October 1943, thus insuring six months of good weather. Over this same period, Stilwell and his subordinates in China had worked closely with Y-Force to prepare it for its projected role in the North Burma Campaign.¹¹ But the Chinese had let the months slip by and now in May 1944, on the eve of the monsoon rains, Y-Force would demonstrate the extent to which it had profited from American advice and aid.

The American Contribution

The American contribution to China's offensive took two forms, advice and logistical support. The Americans had no command functions in Y-Force, but since April 1943 they had been advising in training, in supply, and in opera-

¹⁰ (1) Japanese Study 93. (2) CM-IN 10243, Ho to Marshall, 14 Apr 44. (3) Rad 313, Dorn to Hearn, 19 Apr 44. Item 2244, Bk 6, JWS Personal File. (4) Ltr, Dorn to Stilwell, 19 Apr 44; Memo, Dorn to Stilwell, 9 May 44. SNF 35.

¹¹ *Stilwell's Mission to China*, Ch. VIII.



AN AMERICAN LIAISON OFFICER *studies Japanese positions across the Salween River before the crossing.*

tions. Studying the terrain, the Japanese positions, and the Chinese capabilities, the American liaison and instructional groups since early 1943 had been urging the Chinese commanders to accept certain basic principles. The first of these reflected the fundamental weakness of the Japanese position, that no matter how devoted the individual Japanese soldier or how skillfully he had fortified his position, the *56th Division* had to guard over 100 air-line miles. Therefore the Americans had been urging the Chinese to prepare to infiltrate through the inevitable gaps in the Japanese line. As the situation suggested, all Chinese units should be prepared to break up into small, highly mobile, self-sustaining combat teams. Each combat team should be prepared to operate independently for several days. Each should be indoctrinated with the principle of moving ahead regardless of Japanese attempts at envelopment. If the Japanese succeeded in placing themselves behind a Chinese unit, that unit should in turn attack the Japanese rear and try to outlast them. In their advance, the Chinese should keep themselves deployed in depth so that there would always be combat units in the rear able to deal with infiltrating Japanese elements.

Warfare on the mountain trails would, the American advisers stressed, limit the Chinese Expeditionary Force to the use of infantry supporting weapons—

mortars, machine guns, and flame throwers—augmented by a few pieces of pack artillery. Weapons and ammunition of this nature could be airdropped to keep the advance under way. Few occasions would arise in which artillery would be used as a battalion to support a Chinese division. This belief led to preaching the use of individual batteries working with mortars and automatic weapons as integral parts of small combat teams.

Pack animals and coolie labor, the Americans foresaw, would provide the greater part of the supply transport in the early phases of the campaign. Carts could assist, but motor vehicles would be confined to a few routes. The Chinese were told that, because of the terrain and the probable possession of air superiority, troops must learn to co-operate with friendly aircraft attacking Japanese positions and in receiving airdrops. The monsoon rains would of course hinder air supply so the Chinese were urged to capture Japanese landing strips and sites adaptable to airdrops.¹²

After General Ho formally undertook to cross the Salween, the American operational staff with the Chinese divisions, or Y-FOS, had three weeks within which to complete its preparations. In making these final arrangements, Dorn stressed again and again the four responsibilities he had accepted. To meet them plus his other missions he devised an organization which closely paralleled that of the Chinese Expeditionary Force. On 21 April, General Wei outlined the liaison mission that Y-FOS would have in relation to his Chinese troops. One point was clear—no American had command over the Chinese. Y-FOS would, however, continue to (1) assist in training, (2) assist in supply, (3) perform its own administration, (4) exchange intelligence with the Chinese, (5) furnish air-ground liaison, (6) report to the Chinese Expeditionary Force “the needs of the Chinese front line troops so that CEF Headquarters may decide something to assist them.”¹³

On 29 April, Dorn established the Field Headquarters, Y-FOS, with a G-2, G-3, G-4, and chief of staff. This group was to accompany General Wei's headquarters. Meanwhile, Y-FOS teams, plus attached medical units, either joined Chinese units or augmented American liaison groups already in the field. Because most of his divisions already had U.S. traveling instructional groups with them, Wei allowed Y-FOS to expand the teams in order to reach the regimental level. Each Y-FOS team varied in size from six to twenty Americans and usually included infantry, artillery, engineer, ordnance, signal, quartermaster, and veterinary personnel. Some 100 signal communication enlisted personnel were among the Y-FOS teams. Portable surgical and field hospitals and veterinary detachments were the major portion of U.S. table of organization

¹² (1) Hist Rpt, Y-FOS (1 Jan-24 Oct 44). (Hereafter, Y-FOS 1944 Hist Rpt.) AG (Y-FOS), KCRC. (2) *Stilwell's Mission to China*, Ch. VIII. (3) Memo, Dorn for Stilwell, 2 Feb 44. AG (Y-FOS) 381, KCRC. (4) Plan cited n. 9(2).

¹³ (1) See Ch. VIII, above. (2) Quotation from Memo, Tsen 2114, Wei for Dorn, 21 Apr 44. AG (Y-FOS) 319.1, KCRC.



AMERICAN ENGINEERS ON THE BURMA ROAD *supervise native laborers (above) and operate heavy maintenance equipment (below).*



units with the Chinese Expeditionary Force. U.S. anti-aircraft batteries were stationed at vital bridges and airfields.¹⁴

In rear areas, G-4 of Y-FOS and SOS expedited delivery of food, ammunition, and equipment. These were received at the Kunming and Yun-nan-i depots, and brought forward from them by trucks along the Chinese portion of the Burma Road, by pack and coolie train over the mountains, and later by airdrop on the battlefield. Because there were no accurate maps of the Salween area, the Fourteenth and Tenth Air Forces flew photo-reconnaissance missions to produce aerial mosaics. American engineer troops, always convinced that the D-Day crossings could be successfully made, planned to ferry the five assaulting task forces over the river and gave Chinese engineers intensive training in the use of rubber boats. Daily practice was conducted across the turbulent Mekong River.¹⁵

Reconstruction and improvement of the Burma Road from Kunming to Pao-shan was a major preoccupation, and Y-FOS engineers were detailed to co-operate with a Chinese agency, the Yunnan-Burma Highway Engineering Administration, in planning the work. On 1 May SOS assumed this responsibility from Y-FOS, and on 15 June organized the Burma Road Engineers. Enjoying its own table of organization, this unit was attached to SOS. General Dorn gave strong support to every phase of the Sino-American effort to rebuild the vital highway from Pao-shan to the Salween, including plans for reconstructing the destroyed Hui-tung Bridge which had carried the road over the Salween's dramatic gorge. Dorn gave the Burma Road Engineers first priority on Y-FOS personnel for its engineering staff.¹⁶

In working out the details of tactical air support and air supply with the Fourteenth Air Force, Y-FOS received complete co-operation. The 69th Composite Wing had the responsibility of supporting the China Expeditionary Force's ground effort. Sergeant pilots of the 19th Liaison Squadron were attached to Y-FOS for courier service in their little L-5's. Since he had felt obliged to assure the Chinese that the United States would contribute the factor of air supply to their offensive, Dorn asked Stilwell for a C-47 squadron plus necessary personnel. Though the request could not be filled at once, the 27th Troop Carrier Squadron joined the Fourteenth Air Force in late May.¹⁷

Beginning the Offensive

Following the preparations from afar, the Generalissimo telephoned General Wei on 27 April to make a few last-minute changes in the Chinese order of battle and to set D Day. The Generalissimo also demanded that his com-

¹⁴ (1) GO 3, Hq Y-FOS, USAF CBI. (2) Y-FOS 1944 Hist Rpt.

¹⁵ Y-FOS 1944 Hist Rpt.

¹⁶ (1) SOS in CBI, App. 1, SOS in China, Burma Road Engrs. (2) Interv with Col Robert F. Seedlock, former CO, Burma Road Engrs, Dec 1950.

¹⁷ Y-FOS 1944 Hist Rpt.

manders "succeed—or else!" On 9 May Dorn notified Stilwell that the Salween crossings were to be made on the night of 10 or 11 May, that hopes were high of reaching Myitkyina before Stilwell did.¹⁸

The crossing of the Salween River, an operation the Chinese had regarded with justified apprehension, since Japanese machine guns and artillery might turn the Salween line into a most formidable obstacle, went with clocklike precision. The Japanese had decided not to defend the crossing sites, but to place their main line of resistance along the main ridge line some ten miles west. From decoded Chinese radio messages and from the forward movement of Wei's headquarters, the Japanese had concluded the offensive was imminent, and made their last-minute preparations, but these did not include contesting the landings.¹⁹

Assembling ten miles east of the Salween, the 198th Division (Ma-mien pass sector) received an army order on 9 May to move up to the crossing site. During the night of 11 May, Chinese engineer companies, supervised by seventeen Y-FOS soldiers, commenced the ferrying operation. Throughout the moonlit night and on until noon of the following day, engineers shuttled the rubber boats, bamboo and oil-drum rafts, and similar expedients across the Salween's swirling eddies and currents. So strong were the Salween's currents that it took four engineers to paddle but four infantrymen and their impedimenta across the river at a time. Larger ferry boats carried pack animals and artillery. During late afternoon of 12 May this force of Chinese attacked its first objective.²⁰

On 11–12 May, the three regiments of the 36th Division plus the 346th Regiment of the 116th Division (Ta-tang-tzu pass sector) successfully crossed the Salween at Meng-ka ferry. From D Day on, the ferrying operations went smoothly, "elements behaved quietly and obeyed instructions . . . throughout."²¹

The regimental combat team assigned to hold the Hwei-jen Bridge area, which comprised the 115th Infantry Regiment, plus a battalion of the 116th with artillery and service troops, was ferried across the Salween without incident on the night of 10–11 May. The Chinese did not receive heavy fire until morning.²²

The southernmost crossings, those near Ping-ka, were rather elaborate in conception. Before D Day, four companies of the 9th Division, 2d Army, slipped across the Salween and moved close to the village of Ping-ka to keep Japanese patrols from leaving it to go to the river's edge. On D Day, the

¹⁸ (1) Rad CYF 407, Dorn to Stilwell, 27 Apr 44. Item 2273, Bk 6, JWS Personal File. (2) Memo, Dorn for Stilwell, 28 Apr 44. SNF 35. (3) Memo cited n. 10(4).

¹⁹ Japanese Officers' Comments, p. 27; App. 1, Col Fujiwara.

²⁰ Y-FOS 1944 Hist Rpt, App. V, Rpt, U.S. Detachment, 54th Army Engr Co, 18 Aug 44.

²¹ (1) Ltr, Col John H. Stodter, CO, U.S. Ln Gp, 53d Army, to CG, Y-FOS, 15 Oct 44, sub: Opns of 53d Army. (Hereafter, Stodter Report.) OCMH. (2) Interv with Col Stodter, 11 Apr 47.

²² Rpt, Maj Lawrence W. Beilson to Dorn, 10 Aug 44, sub: Rpt on Opns of 39th Div. AG (Y-FOS) 317.1, KCRC.



CHINESE TROOPS CROSS THE SALWEEN, *in rubber boats (above), and by means of a ferry constructed from oil drums (below).*



Chinese made two crossings, one in the area eleven miles below Ping-ka, the other, seven miles northeast. Below Ping-ka, the Chinese sent across the 228th Infantry as a regimental combat team reinforced, from the 76th Division, 2d Army. Above Ping-ka, the attack was begun by a similar combat team built around the 264th Infantry, 88th Division, 71st Army. The two task forces were to converge on Ping-ka from north and south. Here as everywhere else fighting did not begin until the Chinese were well over the river.²³

Pushing Through Ma-mien Pass

Fighting in Ma-mien pass, where the Chinese were trying to clamp the northernmost part of their pincers in place, began on the afternoon of 12 May when a battalion on the right flank of the 198th Regiment attacked the first Japanese outpost. Making good progress, by dark the battalion had occupied several Japanese pillboxes and part of the trench system. All that night, the Japanese quietly filtered down from a nearby ridge and assembled near the Chinese position. Attacking at dawn, they surprised the Chinese and almost wiped them out before aid came. The Chinese battalion commander was killed, also 2d Lt. Kirk C. Schaible, the first Y-FOS liaison officer to die in action. Seeking to cover an exposed flank and find a better field of fire, Lieutenant Schaible left cover and was instantly killed by a Japanese rifleman. Chinese reinforcements restored the situation, and Japanese resistance in the immediate area ceased on the next day, 13 May.²⁴

The Japanese defenders at Ma-mien pass had been the *2d Battalion, 148th Regiment*, under a Colonel Kurashige. Kurashige had moved his men into the pass in January. He had relied on patrols to watch the ferry sites, while small garrisons in strongpoints held the mountain trails.²⁵

The Chinese established their line of communications across the Salween on 29 May, when a footbridge was repaired to permit supplies and pack animals to cross the river. Telephone wire had been strung across the river two days earlier. The Chinese were then no longer dependent on their first means of communication with the rear, L-5 liaison aircraft operating from a landing strip which Chinese engineers had hacked from the mountainside between 12 and

²³ (1) Memo cited n. 10(4). (2) U.S. liaison reports on 2d Army's role in the Salween campaign consist of the following: Rpt, Col Robert C. Lutz, CO, U.S. Ln Gp, 2d Army, to CG, Chinese Combat Comd, USFCT, 5 Feb 45, sub: Opns of 2d Army During Salween Campaign; Rpt, Capt Eugene D. Hill, 2d Army Ln Gp, 26 Aug 45, sub: Brief History of 2d Chinese Army; Rpt, Maj Thomas G. Maris, Jr., CO, U.S. 76th Div Ln Team, 16 Dec 44, sub: Opns of 76th Div; Rpt, Maj William L. Lowry, CO, U.S. 9th Div Ln Team, 1945, sub: Opns of 9th Div. AG (CCC) 314.7, KCRC.

²⁴ (1) GO 69, Hq Chinese Combat Comd USFCT, 7 Nov 45. (2) The best U.S. Army source for a detailed combat story of the Salween offensive is a daily G-2, G-3 Journal kept by Headquarters, Forward Echelon Y-FOS, at Pao-shan between 11 May 1944 and 28 February 1945. The journal consists of two volumes. A carbon copy is filed with ZEBRA Force Records, KCRC. (Hereafter Y-FOS Journal.)

²⁵ Japanese Study 93.



FOOTBRIDGE ACROSS THE SALWEEN *at the Hui-tung Bridge site.*

20 May. Unfortunately the footbridge proved inadequate to sustain the Chinese in Ma-mien pass, and air supply was required.

Having beaten off the first Japanese counterattack, the 592d and 594th Regiments of the 198th Division began clearing out Japanese strongpoints while the 593d moved west over mountain byways to emerge into the Shweli valley on 16 May, near the village of Kaochiao. Promptly, the Chinese attacked the Japanese garrison of Chiao-tou-chieh which, surprised and momentarily panicked, took to its heels. But the Japanese panic was of brief duration, and stouter resistance kept the 593d from moving farther south and down the Shweli valley. The 593d Regiment halted, posted guards to close off the western end of Ma-mien pass, and waited for the main strength of the 54th Army to arrive.

Within Ma-mien pass itself, the survivors of the 2/148 fell back on the fortified village of Chai-kung-tang. Already present were the 2d and 3d *Battalions* of the 113th *Infantry*, rushed north from Ping-ka and Bhamo as soon as the 56th *Division* had made its estimate of the Chinese intentions. Chai-kung-tang, while the Japanese held it, would close the narrow Ma-mien pass to Chinese traffic.

Well fortified, the Japanese resisted staunchly, and only desperate fighting

by the Chinese cleared them from the pass by 13 June. When the Chinese could not take a bunker by their usual technique of frontal attack, they would request the American air liaison officer to call up support from the 51st Fighter Group of the AAF at Yun-nan-i. Y-FOS personnel taught the Chinese how to prepare ground indicators to guide the P-40's on their target runs. Using rockets and fragmentation and demolition bombs, Chennault's pilots acted as artillery for the Chinese and flew close support missions as often as weather permitted.

The weather grew progressively worse as the monsoon rains closed in. In those high altitudes the rains became blinding sleet and fog, an added misery of war for the poorly clad Chinese soldiers. The rains threatened to wash away the Chinese line of communications, and as the siege of Chai-kung-tang went on day after day, the coolie pack trains proved incapable of keeping the 54th Army's supplies from nearing the starvation level. Fortunately, the 27th Troop Carrier Squadron arrived at Yun-nan-i on 26 May and was in action two days later dropping tons of ammunition, rice, and much-needed raincoats. This was a welcome relief, but a brief one, for the weather from 3 to 10 June was so bad that flying was impossible. Chinese and Americans did what they could on what was left of their rations, supplementing them by bamboo shoots and unwary Burmese livestock. On one occasion, the American liaison team was able to supplement its rations by shooting a mountain tiger and converting it into steaks.

With TNT charges dropped by the 27th Troop Carrier's C-47's when the weather cleared, the Chinese blew up the last pillboxes at Chai-kung-tang on 13 June. When the last shots had been fired and the Chinese farmer boys of the 54th Army reported the area secure, there was bewilderment at finding only 75 Japanese bodies in defenses that must have been manned by at least 300 men, and shock and nausea when the Japanese kitchens revealed how the defenders had been able to prolong their stay. Pitiful and ghastly evidence showed that the Japanese had resorted to cannibalism when their rations failed.

With their food stocks exhausted, the defenders had been ordered by Colonel Kurashige to escape at night and to fall back into the valley of the Shweli. Annihilation was inevitable if the Japanese garrison clung longer to its defenses, and Kurashige wanted its survivors to live and fight another day.

With Chai-kung-tang firmly in Chinese hands, with clearing skies permitting the C-47's to return again with their cargoes of food and bullets, the 54th Army, victors of Ma-mien pass, began moving on into the Shweli valley.²⁶

Clearing Ta-tang-tzu Pass, 11 May-12 June 1944

The mission of the 53d Army was to drive through Ta-tang-tzu pass and unite with the 54th Army coming down from Ma-mien pass in the north. As

²⁶ (1) Y-FOS Journal. (2) Rpt, Capt Arthur M. Murphy, U.S. Ln Off, 592d Inf, 198th Div, 26 Jul 44. AG (Y-FOS) 371.1, KCRC. (3) Hist Rpt, Hq 69th Composite Wing, Fourteenth AF, 29 Jun 44. USAF Hist Div. (4) Memo, Col Frederick W. Hein, CO, U.S. Ln Gp, 54th Army, for CG, Y-FOS, 17 Oct 44, sub: Ln Off Rpts on Salween Campaign. OCMH. (5) Japanese Study 93.

the 53d Army moved over the Salween, American liaison personnel with it were dismayed to learn that XX Group Army had ordered no Japanese position was to be bypassed. This meant that every Chinese unit north of the Burma Road would be forced to dig the stubborn Japanese from their mountain strongholds rather than move past them on into Burma. This order from XX Group Army had grave implications for the success of the Chinese effort.

By dusk of 12 May the 36th Division had surrounded the Japanese outposts in the eastern end of the pass. When darkness came, the 36th went into bivouac. That night, the Japanese attacked vigorously, overrunning the division command post and causing the flustered 36th Division to fall back to the Salween. At dawn, the 53d Army commander, Maj. Gen. Chou Fu-cheng, pushed a regiment across the Salween and restored the situation by attacking the Japanese flank. General Chou was an aggressive and tenacious fighter, whom his Manchurian soldiers had nicknamed Old Board-Back, and who had the reputation of never having yielded an inch to the Japanese. But even Chou could not immediately restore the morale of the 36th Division, which for some weeks took no further part in the Ta-tang-tzu fighting, and the rest of the 53d Army had to bear the burden of clearing the pass.

Though the smoothness with which the 53d Army brought its reinforcements across the Salween drew praise from American observers, its assaults in the eastern part of the pass fortifications were praiseworthy only for the wasted courage of its troops:

In view of the enemy's defensive attitude and our superior strength, American liaison officers urged the use of a small continuing force and a strong encircling movement to cut the trail . . . behind the Japs. Nevertheless orders were received for direct attacks on the prepared positions . . . the 116th Div. to attack from the north and the 130th Div. from the south. Several days were wasted and heavy losses incurred . . . in suicidal charges by a succession of squads against enemy pillboxes. Teamwork in use of weapons and supporting fires and the use of cover were conspicuously lacking . . . most casualties resulted from attempts to walk or rather climb up through inter-locking bands of machine gun fire. As a demonstration of sheer bravery the attacks were magnificent but sickeningly wasteful. Some platoon leaders were killed within one or two meters of the enemy embrasures and several of the best company and battalion commanders were killed and wounded in personal leadership of their troops. A general coordinated assault might have overrun the positions by sheer esprit and weight of numbers but adjoining or supporting units would idly watch some single squad or platoon get mowed down in a lone advance then try it on their own front. . . .²⁷

On days when the overcast disappeared the 51st Fighter Group struck at the Japanese bunkers, but the aerial artillery was not too effective against the Japanese bunkers of logs and concrete. Meanwhile, in order to support the valiant Chinese frontal assaults, Y-FOS personnel radioed American depots at Yun-nan-i for more ordnance matériel, for Chinese crews sometimes wrecked their weapons through misuse or lack of maintenance. Because of Chinese

²⁷ (1) Stodter Rpt. (2) Interv cited n. 21(2).



AIR-SUPPLY DROPS like the one shown above were the key to success in Burma operations.

advances some miles to the north, the Japanese decided to thin out their garrison and constrict their holdings in the Ta-tang-tzu pass area. Their withdrawal on the night of 22–23 May permitted an eight-mile advance by the Chinese.

Over 28–31 May the 27th Troop Carrier Squadron replenished the 53d Army's stocks. Deliveries were made at so fast a rate that the airdropping crews were sometimes obliged to assist the packers, who found themselves unable to keep pace.

To clear the remaining Japanese from Ta-tang-tzu pass, the 116th and 130th Divisions continued the attack. The 36th Division, which had been so roughly handled in the opening days of the campaign, was ordered to bypass the Japanese in the Ta-tang-tzu area, and to make its way sixteen miles northwest, to where the 54th Army, after clearing Ma-mien pass, was stalemated in the upper Shweli valley. The 36th Division found its way open because early in June Colonel Kurashige had been ordered by the 56th Division to send the 3/148th to the Japanese northern flank.

Behind the front, Chinese and Americans worked at communications and supply. Chinese engineers laid lend-lease telephone wire to open communications with General Wei's Pao-shan headquarters. At the pace of the coolie's

slow climb, supplies and pack artillery began to filter through to the upper Shweli. The efforts of the coolies, strenuous though they were, could not yield results comparable to the thirteen C-47's, whose crews began to feel they knew the Kaoli-kung peaks and valleys as well as they knew their hometown corner drugstores. Numbered airdropping sites were now well past the twenty mark.

In addition to the obvious contribution of air supply, the Americans found themselves making two other important contributions to the campaign. Liaison radio teams forwarded considerable intelligence, air target, and supply data to Pao-shan, helping Wei and Dorn co-ordinate the Sino-American effort. Y-FOS liaison officers also reported tactical and logistical mistakes the Chinese made so that Wei and Dorn could take remedial action. Gradually, Sino-American co-operation in the field began to grow effective.

But at this early stage of the campaign, reports from the American liaison teams were not always cheerful. Americans observing the Ta-tang-tzu and Ma-mien actions found that Japanese fire was accurate and economical, and that the enemy's use of camouflage and concealment approached perfection. The Japanese revealed no disposition to surrender though they were heavily outnumbered, often surrounded, and had neither air support nor air supply. On the other hand, the Americans reported that the Chinese endlessly wasted manpower and ammunition in costly frontal attacks. They reported that relations with the Chinese were not always as friendly as had been hoped, and they believed there would have to be better co-operation between Chinese and Americans if the Japanese were to be defeated. The Chinese were described as merely tolerating the Americans' presence and as paying little attention to their advice. The liaison personnel freely admitted their own shortcomings, and by their reports suggested that patience was the most important quality for a liaison officer to cultivate when dealing with the Chinese.

Most Americans liked the aggressive spirit and tenacity of General Chou, the 53d Army's commander of picturesque nickname. To Chinese officers like Chou, the offensive was theirs to plan and to fight, and the Americans were merely guests to be shielded from harm. While liaison officers appreciated the kindness of the Chinese in giving them the status of guests with all this implied of concern for their safety and comfort, they were appalled to observe the degree to which these same Chinese commanders considered their soldiers expendable. Liaison officers were horrified to learn that a company commander could execute a soldier but that it took a group army order to shoot a horse or mule.²⁸ A month's experience with the way the Chinese proposed to fight the Salween campaign provided a clue to the difficulties the Chinese and Americans would have to face and surmount before General Wei's soldiers could meet with General Stilwell's.

²⁸ (1) Hist Rpt, 27th Tr Carrier Sq, Fourteenth AF, May-Oct 44. USAF Hist Div. (2) Stodter Report. (3) Y-FOS Journal. (4) Ltr with atchd rpts, Col Harry A. Buckley, CO, U.S. Ln Gp, XX Group Army, to CG, Y-FOS, 1 Nov 44. OCMH. (5) Japanese Officers' Comments, p. 29.

Securing the Hwei-jen Bridge Area, 11 May-14 June 1944

The regimental combat team of the 115th Regiment reinforced by a battalion of the 116th Regiment, which was to take and hold the Hwei-jen Bridge area for the Chinese, made its crossing at sites five to nine miles above the bridge. From the crossing site, the Chinese task force swung south to drive the 1/113, commanded by its regimental commander, from the immediate area of the Hwei-jen Bridge. Behind it came the rest of the New 39th Division. By 17 May advance elements of the combat team were in the village of Hung-mu-shu, well behind the Japanese, and only twenty air-line miles from the key city of Teng-chung.

The Japanese soon recovered from the initial surprise of the Chinese offensive and the 1/113 drove the Chinese from Hung-mu-shu. The Japanese exploited their success and pushed the entire New 39th Division back against the Salween. The Chinese collected themselves, renewed the attack, and by 27 May had one element back within five miles of Hung-mu-shu, while the 115th Infantry took hill positions overlooking the enemy's defenses at the bridge site and engaged the Japanese artillery. The monsoon rains seemed to the Chinese and American liaison officers to be confining both sides to their positions. In reality, the Japanese, in line with their tactics of a mobile defense, withdrew most of the 1/113 and sent it north to attack the Chinese 53d Army near Ta-tang-tzu pass, leaving only a few men behind.

The pressure exerted by the 53d Chinese Army in the north in effect ended the Japanese defense of the Hwei-jen Bridge area, for the Japanese were not able to return the 1/113. On 12 June the Chinese 115th Infantry was back in Hung-mu-shu, after killing thirty of the Japanese rear guard. Pushing west, Chinese patrols occupied a pass on the Hung-mu-shu-Teng-chung trail, opening a route to the Shweli valley.

Instead of being directed on Teng-chung, the New 39th Division was sent south on a trail paralleling the Salween. Its orders were to unite with elements of the New 28th Division, 71st Army, that were attacking the Japanese stronghold of Sung Shan, which controlled the Hui-tung Bridge area.²⁹

Driving the Japanese Rear Guards From the Shweli Valley

The Japanese withdrawal of several units from the northern flank in the upper Shweli valley to bolster the southern flank near Lung-ling left Colonel Kurashige's Japanese less able to hold the 53d and 54th Armies in the north. As the Japanese positions at Chieh-tou, Chiao-tou-chieh, Wa-tien, and Chiang-chu, along the upper Shweli, began to fall, prospects of a more speedy capture of Teng-chung by the Chinese began to appear. On 1 June units of the 54th

²⁹ (1) Rpt cited n. 22. (2) Y-FOS Journal. (3) Japanese Study 93. (4) Japanese Officers' Comments, p. 31.

Army, from the 2d Reserve and 36th Divisions, emerged in the Shweli valley from Ta-tang-tzu pass to join the 593d Regiment from the Ma-mien pass. Next day the Chinese occupied Chieh-tou village and invested Chiao-tou-chieh with two regiments of the 36th. Once 53d Army patrols commenced operations in the Shweli valley, they took the advice of Y-FOS officers and donned Burmese clothes. So disguised, they found it easy to enter Japanese-held villages. When taken by surprise, the Japanese were willing to abandon many of their outer defenses. On 14 June the Japanese quit Chiao-tou-chieh, leaving many stores to the 2d Reserve and 36th Divisions.

The garrison of Chiao-tou-chieh retreated in two columns, each pursued by a Chinese regiment. One Japanese column crossed to the west of the Shweli valley and marched westward to reach a trail that would take it to Teng-chung. The other Japanese column, its strength raised to perhaps 500 by patrols and outposts it picked up as it went, withdrew southward on Wa-tien, twenty-five air-line miles above Teng-chung. The Chinese snapped at its heels until it entered the defenses of Wa-tien, then began to prepare another siege.

At this point the *56th Division* ordered the *2/148th* to fight a delaying action toward Teng-chung and to release the *3/148th* to meet the growing Chinese threat toward the *56th Division's* southern flank. The next Chinese objectives in the Shweli valley were Wa-tien and Chiang-chu, four miles southeast of Wa-tien.

On 18 June the 36th Division opened the attack on Wa-tien as the 116th and 130th Divisions arrived before Chiang-chu. While the 53d Army prepared to attack Chiang-chu, the 4th Infantry marched southward toward Ku-tung on the road to Teng-chung. Ku-tung fell on 19 June, and Wa-tien on the 20th. Both Chinese and Japanese converged on Chiang-chu. Luckily for the Chinese, monsoon rains that for a fortnight had greatly hampered air support now lifted. The transports quickly completed airdrops to each Chinese division, while fighter bombers pounded the Japanese around Chiang-chu. The Japanese yielded Chiang-chu on 22 June, and the 51st Fighter Group profited by the break in the weather to strafe and bomb a long column of Japanese with animal transport caught on the trail to Teng-chung.

With the fall of Chiang-chu, the Japanese had been forced to abandon the upper Shweli valley, and were now moving in some disorder toward Teng-chung over three excellent trails. In Chiang-chu, they left behind large quantities of ammunition and a few pieces of artillery, suggesting a disorganized withdrawal. One hundred and fifty dead Japanese were found in Chiang-chu itself; more than 300 Chinese gave their lives for the village. South of Chiang-chu, the Japanese hastily destroyed their ponton bridge to slow the Chinese pursuit.

On reaching the Chiang-chu-Wa-tien-Ku-tung line, XX Group Army had wrested 4,000 square miles from Japanese control in forty days of fighting. The advance had been made over the precipitous ranges of the Kaoli-kung Moun-

tains in an almost constant rain, a downpour sometimes heavy, sometimes light, rarely abating, and always turning to fog and sleet in the higher altitudes. More than 150 coolie supply porters fell to their deaths from the narrow, slippery trails that snaked precariously over the mountains.

Once solidly established in the Shweli valley, XX Group Army lost no time in ordering an advance on Teng-chung. The 2d Reserve Division plus elements of the 36th Division advanced southwest along the Ku-tung-Teng-chung trail. Advance patrols of the 198th Division proceeded directly south from Wa-tien while the rest of the division stayed to reorganize after its grueling advance through Ma-mien pass. The 53d Army was ordered to move from Chiang-chu and across the Shweli for an eventual concentration on the east side of Teng-chung. By 25 June General Wei received a personal order from the Generalissimo to take Teng-chung. A few days later, XX Group Army, though delayed by the need to rebuild bridges over each of the swift mountain streams that crossed its advance, had pressed the Japanese rear guards back to the hills that surrounded Teng-chung at a distance of two to three miles from the formidable walled town itself. Meanwhile, the Fourteenth Air Force was trying to soften Teng-chung by daily attacks with bomb and machine gun.

During the clearing of the Shweli valley and the approach to Teng-chung, Y-FOS personnel with XX Group Army sent back a number of critiques of that force in action, reports which suggested the Chinese advance might have gone more swiftly and cheaply had American techniques and advice not been disregarded by the Chinese on entering battle. Y-FOS observers wrote that Chinese regimental commanders could not ask directly for support from their attached artillery, but had to route their requests through division headquarters. When artillery support was granted, it was almost worthless. Targets were not bracketed, and delay between rounds was often as long as five minutes. Artillery observers were sometimes two miles behind the front. The Chinese gunners disdained cover and concealment, drawing on themselves accurate Japanese counterbattery. Chinese pack artillery did not march in orderly fashion but straggled into position. Battery positions were occupied in daylight with individual pack sections arriving at half-hour intervals. The Chinese neglected to maintain their pieces, which quickly grew rusty during the rains.

To the Americans, the Chinese seemed equally indifferent toward proper care and use of infantry supporting weapons. Chinese mortar crews dismissed their American-taught techniques. The firing batteries in rocket launchers were kept in place during the rains, which ruined them in twenty-four hours. The Chinese infantryman raised the hair on the Americans' heads by casually using the ring of the hand grenade to hang the weapon from his belt. Between all units, wire laying was bad. At night, an entire Chinese regiment would open up on a Japanese patrol. Ammunition was wasted endlessly, and weapons soon grew unserviceable from constant use and lack of maintenance. Such practices on a battlefield, far removed from supply depots and over 12,000 miles from

the makers of critical parts, reduced the fighting power of General Wei's 72,000 men far below what it should have been. Y-FOS personnel recommended that a strict inspection system be established to make spot inspections and corrections. They urged that a high-ranking Chinese officer be present at every such inspection to follow through on recommendations and insure their performance.³⁰

Gradually, the Chinese came to be more receptive to U.S. advice than they had been. In retrospect, it might seem that Wei's troops had appeared to accept U.S. teachings in the training centers only through Chinese courtesy, but with no notion of losing face by actually applying what they had heard from a foreigner. Then came combat, and standing side by side American and Chinese officers could see what results the Chinese attitude yielded. The senior U.S. liaison officer with XX Group Army wrote:

As a result of the lessons of this campaign, I believe that Commanders of all ranks in the 20th Army Group [*sic*] are in the most receptive state of mind as pertains to American supervised training. The fact that American and Chinese officers stood side by side and watched excessive casualties pile up day after day, chiefly as a result of violations of proper tactical and technical procedure, furnishes a common ground of ideas for improved training. These same Chinese officers saw important objectives taken and held, at comparatively small cost, by troops following American training doctrines. There can be no doubt but that the American Liaison Team concept has been justified. The Chinese have acquired a new respect for the American Liaison Officer who shared with them the dangers and hardships of campaign, and a new confidence and understanding of the American training methods that proved their correctness in the final test—battle.³¹

The Southern Flank, 11 May–30 June 1944

To insure its hold on the key Burma Road towns of Lung-ling and Mang-shih, the 56th Division had occupied most of the larger villages lying south and west of Lung-ling. Lung-ling was vital to the Japanese because a fair road ran north from it to Teng-chung. If Lung-ling fell the whole Japanese position would be unhinged and would have to move many miles west. This would probably make Teng-chung untenable, while the momentum of the Chinese coming into Burma along the Burma Road might be enough to carry them into the vital area around Lashio. Lung-ling, therefore, was a prize worth striving for. When the Chinese first struck, the 56th Division judged the greatest danger to be in the upper Shweli valley, and so weakened its southern flank to aid Colonel Kurashige. Therefore in the opening phases of their operation the two Chinese task forces of XI Group Army that were attempting to converge on Ping-ka from the north and south made excellent progress.

Eleven miles below Ping-ka a task force of the 76th Division crossed the

³⁰ (1) Ltr with atchd rpts cited n. 28(4). (2) Rad CFB 18989, Ferris to Stilwell, 22 Jun 44. Item 2641, Bk 7, JWS Personal File. (3) Y-FOS Journal.

³¹ Quotation from Col Buckley's ltr cited n. 28(4).



CHINESE 2D ARMY ARTILLERYMEN *prepare to fire their 75-mm. pack howitzer in the Ping-ka valley area.*

Salween on D Day, while one from the 88th Division crossed seven miles above. Three days after the crossings, the 76th Division met outposts of the 1/146 and forced them back to the heights overlooking Ping-ka. Meanwhile the 88th Division from the north was fighting through a series of fortified villages as it headed south to join the 76th Division. By 16 May thirteen villages were occupied in the area northeast of Ping-ka, but the Japanese, as they withdrew, received reinforcements. Strengthened by the 2/113 the Japanese did not attack the Chinese who were pursuing them, but moved south and hit the Chinese 228th Regiment south and west of Ping-ka. On 23 May the Chinese were forced to yield hill positions. Next day the Chinese 226th and 228th Regiments tried to force a way across the ridge which forms the southeastern edge of Ping-ka valley. Not waiting to co-ordinate their efforts with the 88th Division coming down from the north, and deprived of air support by inclement weather, the Chinese found their efforts futile. The 1/146 had carefully selected mortar and machine gun positions, and had cleared fields of fire by burning away the brush. Each Chinese frontal attack failed with heavy losses.

After 25 May the 2d Army could not hope to co-ordinate its efforts with the 88th Division since the latter was ordered to rejoin the 87th and New 28th

Divisions (71st Army) in a drive on Lung-ling. Therefore, 2d Army assumed responsibility for the conduct of operations in the area Ping-ka-Hsiang-ta-Mang-shih. It ordered the 76th Division to bypass Ping-ka, leaving the 226th Regiment to besiege the valley. With only enough men to place forty to fifty soldiers on every mile of the twenty-four-mile semicircular front, the 226th Regiment remained before Ping-ka until the Japanese yielded the valley in late September. Tragedy and comedy alternated in the long three months' trial of endurance. The Chinese regiment faced a Japanese battalion, the 1/146, and the Japanese easily filtered through the thin Chinese line. When, at night, the Japanese found it hard to locate Chinese positions, they could stir the Chinese into revealing themselves by uttering weird cries and slapping their rifle butts. Then bursts of fire would spread back and forth across the front as the Chinese blazed away at the noises. But the Japanese paid for their tenacity. Cholera and malaria plagued the Ping-ka valley, and the Japanese twice had to reinforce the 1/146. Finally, on 22 September, the Japanese sent a rescue column to evacuate Ping-ka and bring out what disease and malnutrition had left of a first-rate fighting team.

On 1 June 2d Army brought two regiments of the 9th Division across the Salween and sent patrols of the 76th Division probing toward the Burma Road. The 9th Division isolated the Japanese in Ping-ka valley when it cut supply lines running from the road junction town of Hsiang-ta that lay between Lung-ling and Ping-ka. Hopes of American liaison officers with the 2d Army that a speedy victory on the Salween front might be in the making soared when a unit of the 9th Division put a block across the Burma Road itself on 9 June, at a point four miles south of Mang-shih. These hopes promptly foundered on the hidden rocks of Chinese Army politics. The 2d Army suspended its operations and complained bitterly that it was being discriminated against in supply. Investigating the charge, Y-FOS found that there was an old feud between Headquarters, XI Group Army, and Headquarters, 2d Army. American attempts to point out the results that might flow from holding a block on the Burma Road were not enough to close the breach. The 2d Army took its block off the Burma Road and contented itself with holding what it had and with brushing off Japanese patrols.³²

71st Army and the Fight for Lung-ling, 28 May-15 July 1944

Aware that the 56th Division had withdrawn troops from its southern flank to meet XX Group Army, Gen. Wei Li-huang decided to exploit the situation by throwing in the rest of his forces. At the end of May he ordered the remainder of the 71st Army to cross the Salween below the Hui-tung Bridge to

³² (1) Rpts cited n. 23(2). (2) Y-FOS Journal. (3) Rpt, 2d Lt Raymond D. Ashman, Jul 44, sub: Action of 226th Regt, 76th Div, at Ping-ka. AG (Y-FOS) 371.1, KCRC. (4) Japanese Study 93.

seize Lung-ling while a containing force attacked the strong Japanese position on Sung Shan. Thus, hoping to gain an early victory over the *56th Division*, Wei decided to commit his entire force, save the 8th Army then en route from the Indochina border, on three widely separated sectors.

G-4, Y-FOS, had argued against the decision. G-4 questioned Sino-American ability to sustain a twelve-division offensive. It pointed out that the abandonment of the original concept of using small, highly mobile task forces and the decision to reduce every Japanese position in turn was placing a heavy burden on the long-neglected Chinese services of supply. Moreover, the 27th Troop Carrier Squadron was complaining about having to support four Chinese armies on a hundred-mile front with but thirteen C-47's. G-4 suggested that attention should now be given to bringing forward replacements. The methods of attack to which the Chinese had reverted were steadily reducing the combat strength of their units. Replacing these losses was a major task requiring early planning and constant attention, for the nearest Chinese troop pool was 516 miles from Lung-ling and Chinese transport to the front was not in shape to move forward a mass of replacements on short notice. The Fourteenth Air Force added its objections by stressing the difficulty in giving air support to so many Chinese units with its few available aircraft.³³

Stilwell, however, on learning of Wei's decision, joined Dorn in welcoming it. Current reports on the progress of the fighting at Myitkyina were most encouraging, and so, addressing Dorn by radio on 3 June, Stilwell directed him to encourage Wei. Stilwell was most anxious to join his forces with Wei's for he wished then to move the Chinese Army in India and Wei's forces to east China to meet the Japanese threat. "Impress on all concerned the vital importance of getting forward on your front. I refer to what may happen soon in central and south China. It would be wise to establish early contact with X-RAY [Chinese Army in India]. Then your boys could at least eat. You had better arouse them to realization of future possibilities. How are you doing?"³⁴

General Wei's decision to commit the 71st Army (less the 88th Division which had already crossed near Ping-ka) came just as a sudden and heavy rain caused the Salween to rise sharply. On 28 May the first elements commenced preparations for the ferrying operations west of Shih-tien, eight miles south of the Hui-tung Bridge. Three days later, the Y-FOS liaison team with XI Group Army left Pao-shan to assist. Under the direction of Y-FOS engineers, 20,000 troops reached the west bank of the Salween by 5 June. Unopposed by the Jap-

³³ (1) Rpt, Col Walter S. Wood, CO, U.S. Ln Gp, XI Group Army, to Hq USAF CBI, Jan 45, sub: Salween Campaign. (Hereafter Wood Report.) OCMH. (2) Memo, Col Reynolds Condon, G-4, Y-FOS, for Dorn, 2 Jul 44, sub: Supply of Opns. Y-FOS 1944 Hist Rpt. (3) Memo, Dorn for Stilwell, 25 May 44; Ltr, Col Clayton B. Claassen to Chennault, 17 Jul 44, sub: Rpt, Conf, Fourteenth AF Personnel with Dorn. SNF 35. (4) Memo, Dorn for Chennault, 13 Jul 44. AG (Y-FOS) 381, KCRC. (5) Memo, CO 27th Tr Carrier Sq to CO, 69th Composite Wing, 22 Jun 44, sub: Air Supply Opns. AG (Y-FOS) 373, KCRC.

³⁴ (1) Rad CHC 1141, Stilwell to Dorn, 3 Jun 44. Item 198, Bk 6A, JWS Personal File. (2) Ltr, Dorn to Ward, 2 Jun 52. OCMH. (3) Stilwell Diary, 2 Jun 44.

anese, 71st Army climbed up and out of the Salween gorge and started north and west toward the Burma Road. Since its pack artillery was carried by coolies, but few rounds of ammunition were with the pieces.

At La-meng village, four miles west of the Salween, the New 28th Division attacked the outposts of the *Sung Shan Defense Unit*, forcing it to abandon the village on 4 June and to fall back into the mountain fortress of Sung Shan. While the New 28th Division deployed to contain the 900 effective troops of the Sung Chan garrison, the 87th Division kept on toward Lung-ling. There it would meet the 88th Division which, supplied by air during its march from Ping-ka, had arrived outside the east gate of Lung-ling on 7 June. The Japanese still held onto the Burma Road east of Lung-ling, but as of 7 June the 87th Division had covered about two thirds of the distance along the Burma Road from the river to Lung-ling. The Chinese had to deal with small Japanese tanks, which had some moral effect but failed to halt the Chinese advance. Indeed, the latter had been fairly swift, for the Chinese had surprised the Japanese, and had been able to ease their supply problems by the capture of some Japanese rice depots. The scale of the fighting down the road to that point is suggested by the figure of known Japanese dead, 150 during the first week.

The 88th Division deployed its troops along the eastern and southeastern heights overlooking Lung-ling and broke through the outer Japanese defenses on 8 June. That same day its sister division, the 87th, reached Lung-ling's North Gate. By sending the 261st Regiment off to the north, XI Group Army took control of the Man-lao Bridge on the Teng-chung-Lung-ling road, thus blocking that important Japanese supply route.³⁵

If the Chinese could take Lung-ling and break the center of the Japanese line on the Salween front, the five crack Chinese divisions under Stilwell and the twelve under Wei would be very near to meeting. The whole Japanese position in north Burma might crumble, and the blockade of China would then be broken. After a brief period for resting, refitting, and recuperating, the divisions of the Chinese Army in India could be flown to east China from the Myitkyina air strips to stiffen the defense of that area, if the Generalissimo, as Supreme Commander, China Theater, should so order, and if the local war area commanders should desire the presence of central-government troops.³⁶ Wei's twelve divisions would be in position to cover this airlift. When the ground dried in October, a line of communications over existing and usable roads would be open from the Myitkyina-Mogaung area to Kunming. Over it, Wei's divisions could receive lend-lease equipment, and from Kunming, replacements, always assuming the Chinese Ministry of War so desired. Then,

³⁵ (1) Wood Report. (2) Notes, Maj Herbert E. Feldman, U.S. Ln Off, New 28th Div, 1944. OCMH. (3) Japanese Study 93.

³⁶ General Merrill was convinced that Stilwell would have airlifted the Chinese 38th Division to east China. One may speculate that others would have followed, as they were to do in late 1944-early 1945. Interv with Merrill, 20 Apr 48. OCMH.

if the military situation in Burma and the political situation in China permitted, units of the twelve divisions could be moved to east China, and there receive a measure of logistical support made possible by taking north Burma. The intervention of any or all of Wei's divisions might have been ineffective, for their performance against one Japanese division does not, in retrospect, suggest they could have halted Hata's eleven divisions. But the five divisions under Stilwell's command had proved their efficiency, and the opportunity to move them to east China was a prize worth grasping. It was the only combat force Stilwell could offer to defend Chennault's airfields. Therefore, a victory at Lung-ling might offer the chance to save the day in east China.

From the body of a dead Japanese officer, the Chinese took a map showing Lung-ling's defenses and the strength and composition of the garrison. Three 5,000-foot hills dominated the surrounding town and suburbs. A Japanese battalion held Lao Tung-po hill while a company of engineers and the garrison's few artillery pieces were on Shu Tung-po. The remaining 800 troops manned a central hill almost in the middle of town.

Personally led by Gen. Sun Hsi-lien, XI Group Army commander, the youngest group army commander in the Chinese Army, 71st Army attacked the two outer heights from three sides on 9 June, in accord with the classic Chinese custom of leaving an escape route to a surrounded enemy.³⁷ By 10 June, the 87th Division had greatly reduced the volume of Japanese fire from Lao Tung-po, but despite some attacks by night the 88th was not able to silence a lone battery on Shu Tung-po. Inclement weather prevented tactical air support; 436 parachute loads dropped some 75-mm. ammunition for the Chinese, little enough to reduce the Japanese positions. Nor were 600 pack animals plying between the Shih-tien ferry over the Salween and Lung-ling able to keep pace with the expenditure of ammunition. Four days of un-coordinated infantry attacks, with little artillery support, failed to carry the three mountains inside Lung-ling, and there was nothing to show for the heavy drain on the 71st Army's ammunition stocks.

Despite numerous reports that the *56th Division* was gathering reinforcements for a counterattack, 71st Army did not consolidate and concentrate its available forces. Early on 14 June, 2d Army elements south of Lung-ling were attacked by Japanese patrols probing toward Lung-ling. That same morning, 400 Japanese of the *113th Regiment* who had been rushed south from Teng-chung crossed the Shweli west of the Chinese position at the Man-lao Bridge and attacked the outposts of the 261st Regiment. At dusk, 200 more Japanese ferried the Shweli, and at 1900 about one battalion of Japanese drove the Chinese off the bridge (which the latter did not destroy), and brought a small motorized column across the river. The Japanese inside Lung-ling counterat-

³⁷ (1) Wood Report. (2) Ltr. Col John K. Sells to authors, 1 May 47. OCMH. Colonel Sells was Commanding Officer, U.S. Liaison Team, 71st Army. (3) Dr. Ho Yuug-chi in *The Big Circle*, page 130, explains the escape route device.



THE SUNG SHAN MOUNTAIN AREA. *Lao Tung-po hill is shown above; below, American road building equipment moves past former Japanese defensive positions.*



tacked vigorously, and when 16 June ended, the 87th Division had been pushed back three miles from Lung-ling.

The following day, Gen. Sun Hsi-lien ordered the 88th Division to abandon its positions near Lung-ling and retire on a line with the 87th, eight miles to the northeast. Repeated attempts by American liaison personnel with the 71st Army to learn how a small Japanese garrison could drive back a Chinese group army only brought embarrassed smiles from Chinese officers. Knowing by now what was prescribed by Chinese etiquette for facing the unpleasant, the Americans feared the worst. The Chinese finally related on 25 June that the 261st Regiment had bolted, and that the commanding general of the 87th Division had attempted suicide. Hopes somewhat revived that same day when reports came that the Honorable 1st Division (8th Army) ³⁸ was arriving to reinforce, but in fact it was too late. So passed a brilliant opportunity; General Wei's attempt to exploit his initial successes by committing his reserves had been shattered by Sun's withdrawal before the counterattack of 1,500 Japanese. Meanwhile, in Burma, a major effort to take Myitkyina between 13 and 16 June had brought no gains of great importance.

When fuller details of the fighting around Lung-ling were available anger and annoyance spread from Y-FOS to the Generalissimo himself. Y-FOS personnel considered the Chinese decision to withdraw from Lung-ling inexcusable because XI Group Army had sent forward no reinforcements to meet the initial Japanese counterattacks. Of twenty-one battalions that XI Group Army had in the vicinity of Lung-ling on 14 June, only nine took part in the fighting.³⁹ The Japanese thus had been able to drive back 10,000 Chinese effectives by an attack with 1,500. In describing the defensive attitude of the 259th Regiment, as an example of the conduct that had cost the chance of a speedy breakthrough into Burma, one American liaison officer wrote: "From the time that we crossed the river until we reached Lung-ling, the regimental commander continually had his troops in the rear digging emplacements and trenches in the fear that they would have to retreat."⁴⁰

When later reports on the Lung-ling battle filtered in to Dorn they were moderate in tone, and blamed faulty leadership and lack of training for the loss of the Chinese grip on the vital communications center. The Generalissimo was extremely angry when word reached him. Harsh orders from him, the arrival of the Honorable 1st Division, and a heavy raid by twenty-four B-25's on Lung-ling were all instrumental in halting the Japanese attempt to exploit their success. At Hwangtsoapa the Chinese forced the Japanese to fight for

³⁸ This division and one other, the Honorable 2d Division, received the honorific title of *Honorable* because they were made up of men who had been wounded and then returned to battle.

³⁹ (1) Wood Report. (2) Y-FOS Journal. (3) Ltr cited n. 37(2). (4) Ltr, cited n. 34(2). (5) Japanese Officers' Comments, p. 32. (6) For details of the fighting at Myitkyina, see Chapter VI, above.

⁴⁰ Memo, Capt Frederick E. Van Tassell, CO, U.S. Ln Team, 259th Regt, for Dorn, 29 Jun 44. AG (Y-FOS) 319.1, KCRC.

every foot of ground, though they were handicapped by especially inclement weather that interfered with air supply and air support. The Generalissimo intervened again with orders to General Wei to report all commanders who had shown themselves incompetent, and to spare no effort in eliminating Teng-chung and Sung Shan so that there might be a new effort from two directions against Lung-ling.⁴¹ But the lost opportunity was past, and months of slow battering against Teng-chung and Sung Shan could not replace it.

Summary

In mid-May, the Chinese crossed the Salween toward Burma. The crossing was unopposed, but hopes of a speedy break into Burma began to dwindle when the Chinese insisted on reducing Japanese strongpoints in turn, and disregarded the long-standing American advice that they should infiltrate through the scattered Japanese and move on into Burma. Nevertheless, considerable progress was made, and in late May Gen. Wei Li-huang decided to commit his central force to an attack straight down the Burma Road. After initial successes, the Chinese were thrown back from the key point of Lung-ling by a counter-attack of 1,500 Japanese and the middle of June found the Chinese with no hopes of a speedy break-through into Burma, while in east China the Japanese seemed to be moving at will.

⁴¹ (1) Wood Report. (2) Memo, Dorn for Ho Ying-chin, 5 Jul 44. AG (Y-FOS) 381. (3) Rad cited n. 30(2).

CHAPTER X

Facing the Command Problem

The relationships of command within the Generalissimo's China Theater had not been thoroughly explored by the President and the War Department in concert since China Theater had been set up in January 1942, when the United States feared China might make a separate peace. What attention had been given to the command situation since then had been in the nature of specific responses to specific pressures from the Chinese or Chennault. The lack of harmony between the President and the War Department had not permitted continuing attention and close supervision. Therefore, no agency of the U.S. Government ever inquired as to why the Chinese had not been willing to set up an Allied staff for China Theater, as they had pledged themselves to do in 1942, or, of course, sought to hold the Chinese to their promise. The issue of whether the Chinese would let Stilwell command any Chinese troops in China had been dropped by the Chinese as soon as he arrived in Chungking. The Soong-Stimson accord of January 1942, and the Generalissimo's reply to the inquiry of John J. McCloy, then Assistant Secretary of War, had implied such an intent on the part of the Chinese, but the U.S. Government had never pursued the matter.¹

The impending Japanese offensive, threatening the Chinese Government with defeat, revived the command question. The Generalissimo's China Theater was an Allied theater, for two American air forces operated in it. Had all gone well in China Theater, probably the command situation would have stayed as it had for two years, with the question of Stilwell's exact powers and duties in that theater undefined.

If the Generalissimo could hold east China, there would be no one to question his conduct of affairs. In 1937-38, when China's armies lost the Yangtze valley, the sea ports, and the key centers of north China, the loss could be ascribed to various causes beyond Chinese control, and since no American forces were involved, the U.S. Government could not concern itself with the quality of Chinese leadership. The events of 1944 followed on two years in which one group of American officers had predicted them, and threatened to affect the American effort in the Pacific. Moreover, they contrasted with the

¹ *Stilwell's Mission to China*, Ch. V.

unbroken chain of successes in north Burma, where Chinese troops under Stilwell's command had defeated some of the best units in the Japanese service.

Stilwell's Mission Laid Aside

At the Cairo Conference, Stilwell had sought for a directive from the President on China policy, but had received none. After Cairo, the President in effect took the conduct of American military relations with China in his own hands, but on an improvised, *ad hoc* basis with no attempt to keep Stilwell informed of the President's goals. Then came the 2 May 1944 JCS directive, with its order that Stilwell stockpile supplies in China to support Pacific operations, at a time when Hump tonnage could not even support existing U.S. activities in China.² From SEAC, the AXIOM Mission had visited Washington to urge Mountbatten's views. Moreover, on 1 May 1944, as noted above in Chapter VI, Stilwell had told his deputy theater commander, General Sultan, that he could not carry out his mission of opening a land line of communications to China unless CBI Theater was reinforced by U.S. combat troops.

As he was accustomed to do, Stilwell on 24 May turned to Marshall for guidance, reviewing his missions as he saw them and asking Marshall to correct him where he was wrong. Stilwell saw his duties with the British as being to co-operate generally in furthering the war against Japan. As for the Chinese, Stilwell said he understood:

My mission vis a vis the Chinese is to increase the combat efficiency of the Chinese Army. The basic plan is to equip and train a first group of thirty divisions, followed by a second group of thirty. To get this mission accomplished I have never had any means of exerting pressure. I am continuing to work on the problem as I have from the beginning,— by personal acquaintance and influence, by argument and demonstration. This is a slow process, so slow as to require evaluation from the point of view of time available, and possible results to be obtained.

Commenting on his relations with the British, Stilwell revealed how the irritations and fatigues of the campaign in north Burma, then at its height, were pressing on him, for he judged the British with extreme harshness. He doubted that the help they were giving in the war against Japan was worth the American logistical support currently being extended to SEAC. He rated the RAF in India as far from impressive, and the Indian Army as being even less so. Unless there was a wholesale shake-up in the British command in India, Stilwell saw no chance of an effective attack on Burma from India in the fall of 1944. In his opinion, "The British simply do not want to fight in Burma or reopen communications with China."

Turning to affairs in China, Stilwell revealed by his comments that he wanted the President to apply the *quid pro quo* approach not only to the ques-

² CM-OUT 31202, JCS to Stilwell, 2 May 44. For details of the JCS directive, see pages 201-02, above.

tion of whether the Chinese should join in operations in Burma, as he had, but also to the problems of making the Chinese Army a more effective fighting force. Stilwell had well-nigh ended his personal share in this activity, but it was, as this radio showed, still close to his heart:

CKS will squeeze out of us everything he can get to make us pay for the privilege of getting at Japan through China. He will do nothing to help unless forced into it. No matter how much we may blame any of the Chinese government agencies for obstruction, the ultimate responsibility rests squarely on the shoulders of the G-Mo. If he is what he claims to be, he must accept the responsibility. In spite of delays, evasions, broken promises and double crossing, we have accomplished something. By fall we can have five fairly dependable divisions, with corps troops, in the CAI [Chinese Army in India]. We have partially trained and equipped twenty-six divisions in Yunnan. Some of these are now getting tested in combat, and we shall soon know how much good we have done them. We have conducted schools at Ramgarh, Kunming, and Kweilin that have made a great impression on a large number of Chinese officers of all grades. We have U.S. instructors in all divisions of the Y-Force, and we are ready to start a similar system in the second group of thirty divisions. This foundation could produce a big improvement in China's ground forces, if we could deliver the necessary equipment and get the sincere cooperation of the G-Mo. Up to date we have not had it, nor will we get it except through pressure.

So with the Chinese the choice seems to be to get realistic and insist on a quid pro quo, or else restrict our effort in China to maintaining what American aviation we can. The latter course allows CKS to waltz on his agreements. It also lays the ultimate burden of fighting the Jap Army on the U.S.A. I contend that ultimately the Jap Army must be fought on the mainland of Asia. If you do not believe this, and think that Japan can be defeated by other means, then the proper course may well be to cut our effort here to the A.T.C. and the maintenance of whatever air force you consider suitable in China. If on the other hand you think it worth while for me to continue on my original mission of increasing the combat effectiveness of the Chinese Army, that is still feasible, but it can be accomplished only if and when we get on a realistic basis with the G-Mo, or whatever passes for authority in China.

As to present and future possibilities, as I see them, the maximum that I can reasonably hope to accomplish with the present British and Chinese high command working under their present policies, and with the American resources now available to me, is to hold the Myitkyina area as an air base, with supply by road, air, and pipe-line. To insure the reopening of communications with China, I still need an American corps and more engineers.

I request your decision. Is my mission changed, or shall I go ahead as before?³

Marshall's reply on 27 May made it clear that Stilwell was primarily a U.S. theater commander, made his mission to China for the present definitely subordinate to supporting U.S. operations in the Pacific, and stated that the United States wished to avoid a major effort in Asia. Marshall did not mention the crisis in China, nor the post of chief of staff to the Generalissimo in the latter's role of Supreme Commander, China Theater.

Your mission with respect to the British as stated in your radio DTG 240240Z May twenty-fourth is correct. Your mission with respect to the Chinese as stated by you is your primary mission and has the President's approval. Decisions taken at QUADRANT and SEXTANT Conferences especially those contained in CCS 319/5, CCS 417, and CCS 397, set up

³ Rad DTG 240240Z, Stilwell to Marshall, 24 May 44. Item 2740, Bk 7, JWS Personal File.

requirements for your accomplishment which for the time being interfere with your primary mission.⁴ Decision has been made for example that operations in China and Southeast Asia should be conducted in support of the main operation in the Central and Southwest Pacific.

Japan should be defeated without undertaking a major campaign against her on the mainland on Asia if her defeat can be accomplished in this manner. Subsequent operations against the Japanese ground army in Asia should then be in the nature of a mopping up operation.

Timely support for Pacific operations requires that priority be given during the next several months to a buildup of our air effort in China.

The heavy requirements for our operations against Germany and for our main effort in the Pacific, preclude our making available to you the American corps you request to assist you in the reopening of ground communications with China. We are forced therefore to give first priority to increasing the Hump lift.

Accordingly the U.S. Chiefs of Staff are about to propose to the British Chiefs of Staff that Mountbatten's directive be changed. . . .

Our view is that your paramount mission in the China Theater for the immediate future is to conduct such military operations as will most effectively support the main effort directed against the enemy by forces in the Pacific. In order to facilitate timely accomplishment of this mission, for the present you should devote your principal effort to support of the Hump lift and its security, and the increase in its capacity with the view to development of maximum effectiveness of the Fourteenth Air Force consistent with minimum requirements for support of all other activities in China. In pressing the advantages against the enemy you should be prepared to exploit the development of overland communications to China.⁵

Stilwell Called to China

As May melted into the hot, damp June of east China summer, Japanese actions made it unmistakably clear that *ICHIGO* was not another foray, but a major effort. Chennault and the Generalissimo grew steadily more alarmed. But even as Stilwell moved to place what resources he had in China behind the Fourteenth Air Force, he sought to end the long-standing differences between himself and Chennault by asking Marshall to relieve the Fourteenth Air Force commander. Concluding that Chennault's action in submitting his "air estimate" to the Generalissimo after Stilwell had specifically told him not to was insubordination calculated to embarrass Stilwell in his relations with the Generalissimo, he asked Marshall to relieve the air commander of all responsibility for the Fourteenth Air Force's operations and relegate him to training and leading the Chinese Air Force.⁶

General Marshall was traveling when Stilwell's communications arrived, and Lt. Gen. Joseph T. McNarney, Deputy Chief of Staff, answered for him.

⁴ (1) CCS 319/5, 24 Aug 43, sub: Final Rpt [QUADRANT] to President and Prime Minister. See *Stilwell's Mission to China*. (2) CCS 417, 2 Dec 43, sub: Plan for Defeat of Japan. (3) CCS 397 (Revised), 3 Dec 43, sub: Specific Opns for Defeat of Japan, 1944. See p. 75, above.

⁵ (1) For background on the JCS proposal to change Mountbatten's directive, see Chapter V, above. (2) Rad WAR 42202, Marshall to Stilwell, 27 May 44. Item 2562, Bk 7, JWS Personal File.

⁶ (1) See Ch. VIII, above. (2) Japanese Study 129. (3) Ltr, Stilwell to Marshall, 27 May 44, sub: Discipline. SNF 31. (4) Rad CHC 1123, Stilwell to Marshall, 30 May 44. SNF 131.

Because of the current situation in China and because of the political aspects of the case, the War Department thought it best not to take action. McNarney pointed out that if Chennault was removed and central China then lost to the Japanese, responsibility for that loss would of course be placed on Stilwell. As McNarney wrote this, the British and American forces under Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower were battling to make good their foothold in Normandy after successfully crossing the Channel. Conceding the force of McNarney's advice, Stilwell asked him to return the papers and forget the incident, for "with the performance going on in the main tent you can't be bothered with side shows."⁷

Just after Stilwell asked Marshall to relieve Chennault, the latter in a most urgent radio followed by a clarifying letter warned that the Japanese were again on the move, this time south from Hankow. This offensive was the second or *TOGO* phase of Operation *ICHIGO*. Describing the situation as one of the "utmost gravity" Chennault predicted the Japanese would take their objectives in east China unless the Chinese were powerfully assisted. He believed that given a minimum of 10,000 tons a month for operations in north China, east China, and from Kunming, the Fourteenth Air Force could stop the Japanese. Chennault asked again that he be allowed to draw on the *MATTERHORN* stocks at Cheng-tu, and that he have almost all the ATC tonnage entering China.⁸ With Chennault's radio Stilwell received word that the Generalissimo wanted him to come to Chungking as soon as possible.⁹ Stilwell felt the critical situation around Mogaung and Myitkyina, where the fighting was growing steadily heavier, would not permit him to leave for a week or ten days.¹⁰

Chennault's warnings were immediately reinforced by others from the Chinese and from Stilwell's own staff which confirmed the impressions given by Chennault. On 31 May, as it began to seem Myitkyina would not soon fall, Ho Ying-chin, the Minister of War and Chief of Staff of the Chinese Army, called in General Ferris and Maj. Gen. Adrian Carton de Wiart (SEAC's liaison with the Chinese). General Ho believed that a recently concluded Russo-Japanese fishing pact had secret annexes, permitting the Japanese to withdraw troops from Manchuria. Ho feared that the Russians, the Chinese Communists, and the Japanese were working together. He warned that the Japanese manpower situation might permit the raising of thirty-five new divisions. General Ho believed the Japanese held the great arc of their Pacific perimeter from Burma through the Bonin Islands with forty-three divisions, and that they planned to fight the decisive naval battle for mastery of the Pacific somewhere along the line Kuril Islands-Hokkaido-Bonin Islands-Formosa.

⁷ Rad WAR 47843, McNarney to Stilwell, 8 Jun 44; Rad CHC 1175, Stilwell to McNarney, 9 Jun 44. SNF 31.

⁸ (1) Rad CAK 2773, Chennault to Stilwell and Stratemeyer, 29 May 44. The Chennault-Wedemeyer Letter, Item 39. (2) Ltr, Chennault to Stilwell, 29 May 44. SNF 31.

⁹ Rad CFB 17887, Ferris to Stilwell, 28 May 44. Item 2565, Bk 7, JWS Personal File.

¹⁰ Rad, Stilwell to Ferris, 28 May 44. Item 2584, Bk 7, JWS Personal File.

General Ho entertained the liveliest fears in regard to China, for he told Ferris and Carton de Wiart that the Japanese were trying to drive China out of the war. To support this view Ho offered detailed information on Japanese troop movements and construction projects in China. To meet the emergency, Ho asked that the United States urge the Russians to contain the Japanese in Manchuria, and that Chennault be given the means to attack the Japanese supply centers in Hankow and the enemy's Yangtze shipping. Ferris relayed the warning to Stilwell with the comment that the Chinese were definitely concerned, that though they might have somewhat overestimated Japanese strengths it was reasonable to assume that Chinese intelligence sources were good.¹¹

That same day of 31 May, Gen. Shang Chen, head of the Chinese Military Mission in Washington, delivered a similar warning to the President on behalf of the Generalissimo. The Generalissimo believed that the Japanese were moving six divisions from Manchuria to China, and that they aimed to seize the entire Hankow-Canton rail line and the airfields at Kweilin and Heng-yang. To meet this threat the Generalissimo asked that:

(1) The 14th U.S. Army Air Force should be strengthened. With the exception of whatever small amount that is absolutely necessary, the air tonnage between India and Kunming should all be allocated for the shipment of gasoline and spare parts for the said Air Force. It is therefore urgently requested that the total tonnage for shipment of supplies to the 14th U.S. Army Air Force be increased to at least ten thousand (10,000) tons.

(2) . . . the entire stock of gasoline, spare parts and aircrafts [*sic*] stored in Chengtu [for the B-29's] be immediately turned over to the 14th U.S. Army Air Force to be concentrated for operation along the Peiping-Hankow Railway.

(3) It is also requested that the Chinese Air Force be strengthened, if possible.

(4) The ground troops should also be strengthened. Request is made to have eight thousand (8,000) launcher rockets, each with one hundred (100) ammunition, delivered as soon as possible in order that the fire power of the Chinese troops in the various war areas may be effectively increased.¹²

The Generalissimo also called in Chennault and Stilwell for conferences. In Chennault's 29 May warning to Stilwell, he mentioned that he had received such an order. Probably as a result of this meeting, Chennault radioed Stilwell that his June Hump allocation of 6,700 tons was "hopelessly inadequate," that 10,000 tons delivered was the minimum.¹³ A day or so later Stilwell received direct word from the Generalissimo that his presence in Chungking was urgently desired.¹⁴

¹¹ Rad CFB 17969, Marshall and Sultan from Ferris signed Stilwell, 31 May 44. Item 2571, Bk 7, JWS Personal File. The gist of Ho's warning was repeated by him in Ltr, Ho to Stilwell, 31 May 44. Item 2574, Bk 7, JWS Personal File. Ho added a prediction that the Japanese would attack in India and Burma, at which Stilwell snorted: "Ask him for me how he intends to defend Changsha and Hengyang and I will tell him how we will defend Mogaung." Rad CHC 1136, Stilwell to Ferris, 2 Jun 44. Item 2581, Bk 7, JWS Personal File.

¹² *Aide Mémoire* to President Roosevelt (delivered by General Shang, 31 May 1944). China File (Hurley), Item 61, OPD Exec 10.

¹³ Rad CAK 2981, Chennault to Stilwell, 2 Jun 44. Item 2583, Bk 7, JWS Personal File.

¹⁴ Memo, Generalissimo for Stilwell, 3 Jun 44. Item 2584, Bk 7, JWS Personal File. The memorandum went out at once to Stilwell as an "eyes alone" radio.

Probably the same day that he received the Generalissimo's request, Stilwell had word from Ferris that the Japanese "move south from Hankow has actually started."¹⁵ It was time for Stilwell to visit China.

Chennault Given 10,000 Tons

On the eve of his departure from his Burma headquarters, Stilwell received from Dorn a pessimistic account of how the Fourteenth Air Force and the Chinese were reacting to the Japanese drive. Dorn reported that officers of the Fourteenth Air Force were complaining to newspapermen of lack of support from theater headquarters, and that Chennault was charging that supplies had been diverted from him to support other U.S. activities. In that connection, Dorn asked Stilwell to recall that in April 1944 two thirds of the Y-Force Hump tonnage had gone to Chennault and in May more than half. Dorn charged that of 30,000,000 rounds of rifle ammunition allotted to the War Ministry in November and December 1943, the Chinese had taken delivery of but 7,000,000 rounds and now stated they did not know where the 7,000,000 rounds were. Radio sets and antitank rifles turned over to the Chinese at the end of 1943 were still in Chungking the last Dorn knew of them. Dorn reported that only a few days before 4 June 1944 the Chinese had in Kunming equipment and ammunition for five battalions of field artillery, plus considerable stocks of anti-tank ammunition. The only recent arms shipment to east China had been equipment for a battalion of field artillery, which U.S. Army authorities had sent to the Kweilin training center.¹⁶ This report, with others which came in from American liaison personnel as the fighting progressed in east China, may have reinforced Stilwell's conviction that merely giving arms and ammunition to Chinese authorities was not the solution to China's military problems.

In writing to Mrs. Stilwell on 2 June, the general offered a brief analysis, in language cryptic but still capable of translation in the light of Stilwell's relations with the Generalissimo and the President in 1942 and 1943. Stilwell wrote that the Generalissimo had been offered "salvation," that is, a modernized and re-equipped Chinese Army, but had rejected it. Now, with the Japanese driving through east China, it was "too late" to create the powerful ground force which, in Stilwell's repeatedly expressed opinion, was the only thing that could save China. "This [the crisis in China] is just what I told them [the Generalissimo and the President] a year ago," he added, "but they knew better."¹⁷

On 5 June 1944 Stilwell conferred with the Generalissimo. The Chinese leader began by questioning Stilwell as to the progress of the Chinese Army in India. He seemed dissatisfied with the performance of the Chindits but appeared to accept Stilwell's reassurances. Then the Generalissimo turned to China,

¹⁵ Rad CFB 18134, Ferris to Stilwell, 3 Jun 44. Item 2587, Bk 7, JWS Personal File.

¹⁶ Rad, Dorn to Stilwell, 4 Jun 44. SNF 31.

¹⁷ *The Stilwell Papers*, p. 301.

saying matters there were so serious that the entire air effort should be used to stop the Japanese—"the situation was one to be solved by air attack." Stilwell agreed with the Generalissimo that affairs were indeed serious but added that all ground and air resources in China Theater should be used. The Generalissimo, consistent with his 31 May request to the President, then asked Stilwell to give Chennault the B-29 supplies and to suspend transport of arms and ammunition over the Hump.

Stilwell replied that he was diverting 1,500 tons a month from the B-29 share of Hump tonnage, that he had asked JCS permission to use B-24's as flying fuel tankers. With these measures, the Fourteenth Air Force would get the 10,000 tons a month that Chennault had said would be enough. This did not satisfy the Generalissimo, who asked that the B-29 stocks at Cheng-tu be turned over to Chennault. Stilwell demurred, saying that he thought instead of suspending all Hump tonnage to Z-Force, to the unengaged portion of Y-Force, and to the U.S. Navy personnel in China. In the light of this he suggested that China National Aviation Corporation (CNAC) aircraft, which were under contract to the Chinese Government, should devote their entire capacity to Chennault's supplies. The Generalissimo objected, for he felt that the paper money CNAC craft flew in was essential to the war. Stilwell replied that Chiang could hardly ask for the B-29 tonnage if the Chinese did not use all their resources. Stilwell was applying the bargaining technique that he always sought to use with the Chinese. The Generalissimo then agreed to consider use of the CNAC transports and Stilwell promised to ask for permission to use the B-29 stocks if the situation grew worse.¹⁸

True to his word, Stilwell on 6 June shifted Hump allocations all across the board, cutting all other activities to raise the Fourteenth Air Force's allocation to 8,425 tons. With 1,500 tons from the B-29 allocation Chennault would have his 10,000 tons.¹⁹ To Marshall, Stilwell radioed that the Generalissimo and he had talked things over, listed the diversions he was making for Chennault, and as an "ace in the hole" requested that he be granted permission to use the B-29 stocks though he would not touch them save as a last resort.²⁰ Then at Kunming Stilwell met with Chennault and the latter's key staff officers.

Stilwell rather chilled his audience by saying he could spare only thirty minutes for their problems, but as the meeting went on he appeared receptive to Chennault's plan to use the B-29's against Hankow, and then stated that he was, as Chennault's minutes put it, "willing and anxious to do everything possible to assist." Stilwell described what he was doing to divert Hump tonnage to Chennault's support. But Stilwell was not optimistic over the east

¹⁸ (1) Memo for Record, 5 Jun 44, sub: Conf between CKS and Stilwell. Stilwell Documents, Hoover Library. (2) *The Stilwell Papers*, p. 302.

¹⁹ Rad CFB 18251, Stilwell from Ferris to Fwd Ech NCAC, Hq Rr Ech, Hq AAF India-Burma Sec, ATC Chabua, Humpco Chabua, Fourteenth AF, Kweilin Z-Force, Kunming Y-Force, Delhi SOS, Ramgarh, and Chabua SOS, 6 Jun 44. Item 2595, Bk 7, JWS Personal File.

²⁰ Rad CFB 18238, Stilwell to AGWAR for Marshall, 6 Jun 44. Item 2600, Bk 7, JWS Personal File.

China situation for he thought there was "nothing to stop" the Japanese. "General Chennault countered with the statement that he felt confident that with the help of the VLR [B-29's against Hankow] he could stop the drive, but emphasized the necessity for immediate action." Chennault impressed Stilwell with the need to use the B-29's at once, and Stilwell implied that it would be done. When the meeting ended, Chennault presented Stilwell with his plan for current operations, and Stilwell took it with him.²¹

The logistical aspects of Chennault's plan were the important ones from the point of view of Headquarters, CBI Theater, for the airman was a free agent in his tactics. The plan Chennault now gave Stilwell asked for 4,823 tons for north China—of which the Chinese-American Composite Wing was to get 3,097 tons—4,283 tons for east China, and 2,546 tons for the Kunming area.²²

The answer the War Department almost immediately returned to Stilwell's request for permission to use the B-29 stocks in an emergency was a refusal in terms that placed Stilwell effectively between the upper and nether millstones of pressure from Chennault and the Generalissimo to use the B-29 stocks in the current critical situation and the determination of General Arnold and the Army Air Forces to use the B-29's only against Japanese industry.

With reference to your 18238 of 6 June regarding VLR stocks in China these are not to be released to the Fourteenth Air Force without express approval from the Joint Chiefs of Staff. It is our view that the early bombing of Japan will have a far more beneficial effect on the situation in China than the long delay in such an operation which would be caused by the transfer of these stocks to Chennault. Furthermore, we have positive evidence in Italy of the limiting [*sic*] delaying effect of a purely air resistance where the odds were nearly 7,000 planes on our side to 200 on the German. Furthermore, the Twentieth Bomber Group represents a powerful agency which must not be localized under any circumstances any more than we would so localize the Pacific Fleet. Please keep this in mind.²³

Surely here was faith in strategic bombardment at its highest pitch, while the comment on the probable worth of Chennault's efforts suggests that Stilwell had gone to the limit of his discretionary authority in giving Chennault such priority on Hump tonnage. In reply, Stilwell said: "Instructions understood, and exactly what I had hoped for. As you know, I have few illusions about power of air against ground troops. Pressure from G-MO forced the communication."²⁴

At the time Stilwell replied to Marshall, the B-29's had just completed their shakedown attack on railway workshops in Bangkok, Thailand. On 15 June came the long-awaited attack on the Japanese homeland for which the President entertained such high hopes. About 221 tons of bombs were dropped on the Imperial Iron and Steel Works' Yawata plant, on Kyushu Island. Before the

²¹ Memo, sgd E.G., 6 Jun 44. The Chennault-Wedemeyer Letter, Item 44.

²² (1) Plan for Defense of East China. The Chennault-Wedemeyer Letter, Item 45. (2) Table 5 shows Fourteenth Air Force aircraft inventory for this period.

²³ Rad WAR 47296, Marshall to Stilwell, 7 Jun 44. Item 2603, Bk 7, JWS Personal File.

²⁴ Rad CHC 1173, Stilwell to Marshall, 8 Jun 44. SNF 131.

TABLE 5—FOURTEENTH AIR FORCE AIRCRAFT INVENTORY BY TYPE OF AIRCRAFT:
MARCH 1943—DECEMBER 1944

End of month	Total	Fighter	Medium bomber	Heavy bomber	Other *
1943					
March	162	107	12	34	9
April	158	110	12	30	6
May	174	118	16	33	7
June	176	119	16	35	6
July	182	123	11	35	13
August	180	117	14	34	15
September	193	127	15	36	15
October	247	183	15	35	14
November	303	209	29	43	22
December	285	188	23	51	23
1944					
January	349	212	63	46	28
February	351	209	65	49	28
March	421	257	73	55	36
April	447	287	74	47	39
May	547	377	82	36	52
June	547	339	79	39	90
July	614	388	86	45	95
August	541	323	81	48	89
September	690	433	102	43	112
October	777	524	109	43	101
November	793	531	106	49	107
December	902	531	104	73	194

*Includes Photo, Liaison, Transport, Utility Cargo, and Trainer Planes.

Source: Black Book, prepared for Lt. Gen. A. C. Wedemeyer, 1945, OCMH.

end of October 1944 attacks followed at intervals on the Showa Steel Works at An-shan, Manchuria, again on Yawata, on the Plajoe Refinery at Palembang, Sumatra, on the Okayama aircraft assembly plant, Takao harbor, and Heito airfield on Formosa, and on the Omura aircraft factory on Kyushu. In 1944 the China-based B-29's dropped a total of 3,623 tons, with no discernible effect on the east China crisis. Of the attack on Japanese steel production, which it was hoped the B-29's would cut in half, the Strategic Bombing Survey concluded: "The reduction in ingot steel supply, excluding electric steel, was not over 2 per cent and in finished steel less than 1 per cent."²⁵

²⁵ (1) Quotation is from the United States Strategic Bombing Survey, *The Effects of Strategic Bombing on Japan's War Economy*, p. 45. (2) The figure on tonnage dropped is from the survey's *The Strategic Air Operation of Very Heavy Bombardment in the War Against Japan* (Washington, 1946), Chart 8. (3) The B-29 missions are listed in Chapter VI, Section Two, History of CBI.

The Japanese Drive Rolls On in East China

The Japanese had been very pleased with the success of their Honan operations, which had cost them but 869 dead and 2,280 wounded.²⁶ Promoted to field marshal on 2 June, Hata now aimed to take the two communication centers of Changsha and Heng-yang. (See Map 18.) The initial attack would be launched by the 40th, 116th, 68th, 3d, and 13th Divisions, which were stretched along the south bank of the Yangtze in that order from west to east. The 58th, 34th, and 27th Divisions would follow as a second echelon.

The Chinese troops facing them were those of the IX War Area, mostly southern Chinese divisions under a Cantonese, Gen. Hsueh Yueh. After the war, the Japanese estimated Hsueh's strength at about forty divisions. In addition to Chennault's airmen, there were a few other American resources capable of being committed to the campaign, namely, the personnel and the matériel accumulated at Kweilin for the Infantry Training Center. As the Japanese menace grew, the time for training seemed to Stilwell's headquarters to have passed, while the need for accurate and timely information about the Chinese and technical aid to them was steadily more acute. In the first weeks of June, CBI Theater headquarters radioed that Chinese permission in principle had been received to send observer teams to the IX War Area. A party under Col. Woods King was promptly sent to join Hsueh Yueh and his XXVII and XXX Group Armies. When the teams joined their respective Chinese units they found that General Hsueh had established his headquarters at Lei-yang, 100 miles south of Changsha, and they understood that Hsueh would be directly responsible for operations east of the Hsiang River. At Pao-ching (Shao-yang), 120 miles southwest of Changsha, Hsueh's deputy, Maj. Gen. Liu Chi-ming, was reported to have control of operations against the Japanese west of the river.²⁷

The American observer group with Hsueh Yueh, which had been most coolly received, radioed to General Lindsey that the Chinese badly needed arms and ammunition. A special train was then dispatched on 13 June from Kweilin to Heng-yang, with 9 37-mm. antitank guns and 3,000 rounds, 200 Boys anti-tank rifles and 6,080 rounds, 20 Chinese Maxim machine guns with 218,600 rounds, 26 Bren guns and 13,728 rounds, and 2 rocket launchers with 20 rounds. Their arrival cheered General Hsueh, and his attitude was more cordial. Other observer and artillery teams went out, until by mid-July there were sixteen with Chinese armies south of the Yangtze River.

U.S. Army liaison teams were sent to the headquarters of the IX and IV War Areas, the XXIV and XXVII Group Armies, and the 31st, 37th, 46th, 62d, 64th, 79th, and 100th Armies. The three battalions of the Chinese 29th Field Artillery Regiment were equipped with U.S. 75-mm. pack howitzers and aided

²⁶ Japanese Study 78.

²⁷ (1) Japanese Studies 78 and 129. (2) History of Z-FOS.

by American liaison teams. These three battalions were then attached to the 31st, 46th, and 64th Armies. Another battalion of Chinese artillery, supporting the 10th Army at Heng-yang, also had U.S. pack howitzers and training.

The action of CBI Theater in giving arms and ammunition to General Hsueh was strongly protested by the Generalissimo's representatives in Kweilin. They said shipments to Hsueh Yueh might fall into the hands of bandits who would use them against the central government. Z-Force Operations Staff headquarters interpreted these protests and warnings as hints that the Generalissimo feared Hsueh Yueh might revolt.²⁸

To meet the problem of giving effective tactical air support despite the handicaps of language problems and poor communications, Chennault had requested and obtained permission on 26 April to expand his air-ground liaison net with General Hsueh's troops. When the Japanese drove for Changsha the 5329th Air Ground Force Resources Technical Staff (Provisional) (AGFRTS) was in the field with thirty-five officers and sixty-five enlisted men.²⁹

The *3d* and *13th Divisions* on the eastern side of the Hsiang River began moving south 27 May, on a course that would permit them to cut off Changsha from a Chinese force at Liu-yang. The next day the *40th*, *116th*, and *68th Divisions* moved south, directly on Changsha. In the last Japanese drive on Changsha, in December 1941-January 1942, the Japanese motive had been to distract the Chinese from operations to relieve Hong Kong. The 1941 drive on Changsha had been stoutly resisted by the Chinese, and when the Japanese, their mission accomplished, began to pull back north, the Chinese and their sympathizers concluded that a great victory for China had been won. Earlier Japanese operations against Changsha had been to disperse threatening Chinese concentrations, and Japanese withdrawals had been followed by claims of Chinese victories. So, to the Chinese and their friends, Changsha was a name with which to conjure. In 1944 the Japanese were determined to hold what they might win.

In the first days of the drive, the Japanese met resistance only in the Ta-mo Shan hills, where the 99th Army held stubbornly on the west flank of the Japanese advance. The Japanese finally contained it and resumed their southward drive. By 10 June, the *58th*, *116th*, *68th*, *3d*, and *13th Divisions* were lined up along the Liu-yang Ho, the last geographic barrier north of Changsha. Next day they attacked. The *58th* and *116th Divisions* found little resistance in front of them. The *3d* and *13th Divisions*, driving the Chinese from steep hillside positions to take Liu-yang on 14 June, cut off Changsha from the east.

The key Chinese strongpoint at Changsha was a mountain just north and

²⁸ (1) Memo, G-4, Z-FOS, for CofS, Z-FOS, Jun 44. AG (Z-FOS) 337, KCRC. (2) History of Z-Force. (3) Hq Kwangsi Comd, Chinese Combat Comd (Prov), U.S. Forces, China Theater, Campaign in Southeastern China, MS in possession of Brig Gen Harwood C. Bowman, USA (Ret), Montgomery, Ala. (hereafter cited as Campaign of Southeastern China), p. 4.

²⁹ Summary of Data; Memo, Chennault for Stilwell, 20 May 44, sub: Activation of AGFRTS. The Chennault-Wedemeyer Letter, Incl I, par. 22, and Incl II, Item 4.



EVACUATION OF KWEILIN. *Refugees at the Kweilin railroad station wait for transportation.*

west called Yueh-lu Shan on which General Hsueh, IX War Area commander, had massed his artillery. The *34th Division* began attacking it on 16 June while the *58th Division*, which had so easily crossed the Liu-yang Ho, swung west to attack Changsha itself that same day. Changsha's garrison, the 4th Army, abandoned the town over the 16th and 17th and marched toward Pao-ching to the southwest. Changsha was occupied by the Japanese on 18 June.³⁰

On 23 June an American liaison team attached to Hsueh's deputy met the 4th Army near Pao-ching. Some of the Chinese officers and men stated they had been attacked by gas sprayed from Japanese aircraft, whose effects, as described by them, seemed like tear gas, though none of the wounded showed signs of it. The 4th Army's commander, a General Chin, was voluble in saying that gas bombs and gas shells had forced them to yield Changsha. On the night of 23 June an American air force sergeant, who had been an air-ground liaison radio operator at Changsha, walked into Pao-ching. He had awakened a few days before to find the Chinese had quietly walked out of Changsha, and hastily followed. Present in the town throughout the engagement, he had heard nothing of gas attacks. The sergeant had observed some Japanese artillery fire

³⁰ Japanese Studies 78 and 129.

around Changsha; there had been quite a few Japanese air attacks, but he knew nothing of any heavy fighting. Inspecting the 4th Army troops, the American liaison team thought they were fresh, in good condition, and found nothing to suggest that they had just emerged from a bitter defeat. The Japanese postwar account makes no mention of any heavy fighting.³¹

With Changsha in Japanese hands, Stilwell's staff feared the Japanese might enter Kweilin in another seven days, and so began moving British and American nationals from the Kweilin area. Hospital patients, missionaries, Red Cross workers, and teachers began moving out by air around 21 June. Surplus personnel of the Infantry Training Center and Z-FOS began leaving by truck on 27 June. Obviously, CBI Theater headquarters thought the Japanese would shortly take the key points in east China.³²

Vice-President Wallace Suggests Stilwell's Recall

On 19 May, General Ferris had told Stilwell and General Sultan, Stilwell's deputy theater commander in India, that he had learned from the U.S. Embassy of a forthcoming visit of the Vice-President of the United States, Henry A. Wallace, and that Wallace wanted to see something of the U.S. Army.³³

Mr. Wallace arrived at Chungking on 20 June and was met by a suitable delegation, including Generals Ferris and Chennault. On leaving for his Kunming headquarters, Chennault left behind him 1st Lt. Joseph W. Alsop to be "air aide" to the Vice-President. Before the war, Lieutenant Alsop had been a nationally syndicated columnist and had known Mr. Wallace both socially and professionally. Stilwell's staff feared that Chennault had stolen a march on the theater commander.³⁴

A report from General Ferris, summarizing "the views of the American Government to be communicated to President Chiang Kai-shek," gave an idea of what the State Department thought the Vice-President should discuss with the Generalissimo, and this seems to have been the only attempt by an agency of the U.S. Government to effect any co-ordination between the Vice-President and the CBI Theater commander. The suggestions for Wallace's guidance referred several times to the desirability of the Nationalist and Communist forces fighting the Japanese rather than one another, and hinted at the lifting of the blockade that the Generalissimo maintained against the Communists. The need for better Sino-Soviet understanding was stressed. The message struck

³¹ (1) Rpt, Col Thomas J. Heavey, U.S. Observer, IX War Area, to Gen Lindsey, 26 Jun 44. AG (Z-FOS) 210.684, KCRC. (2) Japanese Study 78.

³² (1) For details of the movement of U.S. personnel from the Kweilin area, see Z-FOS Journal. KCRC. (2) Rad CFB 19135, Ferris to Stilwell, 26 Jun 44. The Chennault-Wedemeyer Letter, Item 51. (3) Rad CFB 19119, Ferris to Sultan, 25 Jun 44. Item 2653, Bk 7, JWS Personal File.

³³ Rad CFB 17559, Ferris to Stilwell and Sultan, 19 May 44. Item 2544, Bk 7, JWS Personal File.

³⁴ Rad CFB 18945, Ferris to Stilwell, 21 Jun 44. Item 2634, Bk 7, JWS Personal File.



VICE-PRESIDENT WALLACE is greeted on his arrival at Chungking by a delegation of military and civilian dignitaries.

a chilling note, given emphasis by the current background of crisis in east China, that "China must depend upon herself at the moment rather than to look for major assistance from the outside," which latter would not be forthcoming until after the defeat of Germany.³⁵

Over the next few days, the Generalissimo in Chungking and Chennault in Kunming absorbed Wallace's time and energies, so that Stilwell's staff found little opportunity to present the theater commander's point of view, nor did Wallace feel that he could spare the time to visit General Stilwell in Burma. Reporting on his efforts to place Stilwell's case before the Vice-President, Stilwell's political adviser, John P. Davies, wrote to Stilwell:

Now for the Jones-Davies conducted tours angle. It was a flop because (1) we arrived late (2) we had no letter of introduction to Mr. W. saying we were Theater Commander's Reception and Itinerary Committee until after Alsop had presented a letter from himself to the VP stating that Chennault had appointed him Air Aide to the VP (3) in Kunming Wallace was for three days Chennault's guest with the result that Jones and I were given the best job of run-around I have ever been up against. It was done by two of Claire's boys. I blew up with Chennault about it, uttering a few homely truths about the damage done by

³⁵ Memo, Ferris for Stilwell, 23 Jun 44. Item 299, Bk 3, JWS Personal File.

the Chennault-Stilwell feud. To his juniors I read the same line and added that I had as little use for Chennault disciples who needled Chennault on Stilwell in the belief that they thereby won Claire's gratitude as I had for Stilwell enthusiasts who did the same thing to the Theater Commander. It seemed to jar them somewhat so that on the night of June 26 when Wallace, Chennault, Glenn, and the two stooges discussed with me the possibility of the VP visiting you in the Valley, Chennault and Co. were very reasonable and decent, with the exception of [individual's name deleted] who is, of course, congenitally conspiratorial. Decision by VP was against because of weather uncertainty and tight future schedule.³⁶

In the conversations between Wallace and the Generalissimo, General Ferris and John S. Service of the State Department, who was with the Chungking headquarters as a political adviser to General Ferris, were allowed to present themselves on 23 June to support the project of sending an observer group to the Chinese Communists to collect Japanese order-of-battle and target information and to aid search and rescue of Air Forces personnel shot down over north China. After stating the position of CBI Theater headquarters on this matter they withdrew. Headquarters, CBI Theater, was not invited to join in Wallace's discussions of the Communist problem, and Wallace did not try to obtain General Stilwell's views on anything.³⁷

Wallace's advocacy of the observer group project was successful. The Generalissimo agreed that a small party could go, that they could communicate directly with theater headquarters, and that they would be free of Nationalist control.³⁸ The directive from theater headquarters ordered the commanding officer, Col. David D. Barrett, to devote himself to ". . . intelligence concerning both our allies and the enemy, and affording assistance to downed pilots. . . . (Under no circumstances will you engage in discussions or make commitments of any kind pertaining to political, economic, sociological, or military [*sic*]. All matters of policy and commitments remain responsibility of theater commander.)" The project received the code name DIXIE Mission. Personnel included sixteen officers and enlisted men, plus two U.S. Foreign Service officers, John S. Service and Raymond P. Ludden, who had been assigned to theater headquarters as political advisers.³⁹

After weighing the Generalissimo's and Lieutenant Alsop's comments on General Stilwell, Wallace decided to recommend that Stilwell be recalled. Many years later, Wallace testified that his first impulse had been to suggest Stilwell's replacement by Chennault, but that Lieutenant Alsop had persuaded him that the War Department would not approve, and that Chennault could not leave the campaign he was then directing. On the ground that the Generalissimo had stated that Stilwell could not grasp what the Chinese statesman

³⁶ Rpt, Davies to Stilwell, undated. SNF 31.

³⁷ (1) U.S. Department of State, *United States Relations with China*, pp. 556-57. (2) Wallace-Alsop Testimony, U.S. Senate Judiciary Subcommittee, Senator Pat McCarran, Chm, 17-18 Oct 51.

³⁸ U.S. Department of State, *United States Relations with China*, pp. 556-57.

³⁹ Ltr O, Hq Fwd Ech USAF CBI to Barrett, 21 Jul 44, sub: Dispatch Observers Sec to Areas Under Control of Chinese Communists. DIXIE Mission, Vol. I, Sec VI, Item 73. OCMH.

called "political considerations," Wallace told President Roosevelt that he considered Stilwell unsuited to his post.

Wallace recommended that another general officer of the highest merit be appointed who could win the Generalissimo's confidence, command all U.S. forces in China Theater, and co-ordinate the Sino-American military effort in China. He added that the Generalissimo had been favorably impressed by General Wedemeyer, who had recently visited Chungking on behalf of SEAC. As an alternative, Wallace suggested the appointment to China of a presidential representative with considerable independent powers, with the right to approach the President directly, and with an official position as Stilwell's deputy.

Wallace believed that the President should take determined steps to stop the steady deterioration of the east China situation or be prepared to accept the loss of China as a base from which to support U.S. operations in the Pacific. He stated that a Sino-American offensive, in its first phase primarily a guerrilla attack, should be launched in east China to avert the loss of Chen-nault's fields. Wallace insisted that the military situation in China was not hopeless and that the present crisis might even improve American prestige in the Far East since the Generalissimo seemed very eager for military aid and guidance, and, if wisely approached, would probably inaugurate reforms in China's internal political structure.⁴⁰

Far to the south and west of China, the steady progress of Stilwell's operations in Burma was affecting the command structure within SEAC. Ever since March 1944 Mountbatten had been anxious to see Stilwell transferred from SEAC to China Theater.⁴¹ Observing Mountbatten's problems with his subordinates, Wedemeyer told Marshall that SEAC's commanders in chief resisted Mountbatten as Supreme Commander. It was notable, added Wedemeyer, that Stilwell, though often "cantankerous," co-operated promptly as soon as he had a clear-cut directive from Mountbatten.⁴² Moreover, when Stilwell had solved the command problem presented by his having to act as a corps commander in north Burma under operational control of General Slim, whom he out-ranked, Stilwell had stipulated that this arrangement would endure only until his Chinese troops reached Kamaing. (*See Chart 1.*) At that point he would insist on being released from Slim's control, to pass directly under Mountbatten, for he then could reasonably anticipate a speedy meeting with Chinese troops from China and the reassembling of the Chinese Army in India and the Y-Force into an elite force, the Thirty Divisions, under the Generalissimo, for service in China. On 20 May Stilwell had given notice to SEAC that it would soon be time for him to leave Slim's control. Mountbatten therefore thought

⁴⁰ (1) Rad New Delhi 472, Wallace to Roosevelt, 28 Jun 44. Item 58, OPD Exec 10. (2) Wallace-Alsop Testimony, cited n. 37(2).

⁴¹ (1) See p. 119, above. (2) Rad 155, F.M.D. [Field Marshal Dill], JSM to Mountbatten, 10 Mar 44; Rad SAC 1022. Mountbatten to COS and JSM, 13 Mar 44. Item 66, OPD Exec 10.

⁴² Ltr, Wedemeyer to Marshall, 9 Jul 44. Item 57, OPD Exec 10.

it opportune to ask the British Chiefs of Staff to take up with the Joint Chiefs of Staff the appointment of an officer to fill Stilwell's place in SEAC.⁴³

Currently, Mountbatten was moving toward a complete rearrangement of the higher officers in SEAC. From the time of his arrival in the Far East, he had had trouble with his three commanders in chief. When the Imphal crisis arose, Mountbatten was dissatisfied with Gen. Sir George Giffard's conduct of operations, and when later the Supreme Allied Commander found Giffard taking what Mountbatten considered a highly negative approach toward an aggressive conduct of operations he resolved to ask for Giffard's relief. Mountbatten's relations with Admiral Somerville had been equally difficult. Somerville had refused to treat him as a Supreme Commander and in Mountbatten's opinion tried to make of him simply the chairman of a commanders-in-chief committee. As for the RAF commander, Air Chief Marshal Peirse, Mountbatten was not seeking his relief because he did not wish to change all of his principal subordinates simultaneously.⁴⁴

In June 1944 General Marshall was in London. There were meetings of the Combined Chiefs of Staff and after one of them General Brooke, Chief of the Imperial General Staff, took Marshall aside, thanked him for his many kindnesses to Field Marshal Dill, who was very sick, then startled Marshall by saying that Stilwell would have to be recalled because he did not get along with Mountbatten's commanders in chief or the British in Burma.

General Marshall found this difficult to understand, and asked Brooke why the only aggressive and successful commander in chief Mountbatten had should be singled out for recall. Brooke replied that the British planned to relieve Giffard, Somerville, and Peirse, which to Marshall put a different light on the situation. On Marshall's return to the United States the Joint Chiefs of Staff began to study the question of sending Stilwell up to China Theater.⁴⁵

No new CCS directives to SEAC resulted from those June meetings of the Combined Chiefs of Staff. The CCS were satisfied that their current policy in regard to Burma operations was clearly understood. The main object of current operations was to send the maximum flow of supplies over the Hump. The Kohima-Imphal road had to be cleared, Myitkyina taken, and a defensive position held in the Mogaung-Myitkyina area. There were no comments about any exploitation of possible victory at Imphal by the Fourteenth Army.⁴⁶

Advised by Marshall that the CCS talks at London had discussed the problems of obtaining the maximum flow of supplies to China, Stilwell commented that such would not be realized by a defensive attitude at Myitkyina or anywhere else and that it would not be realized without bringing in most of it on the ground. He thought it was too bad the Burma campaign had not been

⁴³ Mountbatten Report, Pt. B, pars. 171, 172.

⁴⁴ Ltr, Mountbatten to Dill, 26 Jun 44. Item 57, OPD Exec 10.

⁴⁵ Interv with Marshall, 6 Jul 49.

⁴⁶ CM-OUT 53610, 20 Jun 44. Case 404, OPD 381, A47-30.

launched in October 1943, for he believed in that case the Allies would now hold north Burma, and by implication a new line of communications to China.⁴⁷

Stilwell Nominated for Command

The situation within China Theater in June 1944 was such that the President was now ready to go beyond the positions he had taken in March and April and put the full weight of his support behind Stilwell, accepting the Joint Chiefs' analysis of the state of affairs in China and their suggestions for a drastic remedy. Contributing to the choice of Stilwell rather than Chennault was the Army Chief of Staff's conclusion that Chennault's air offensive and the massive ATC structure erected to support it had been a waste of the nation's resources. Marshall thought that "it was not yielding any dividends in China," and was hobbling the war in Europe. The Allies had been handicapped in exploiting the Rome break-through in June 1944 because transport aircraft and crews were in India to support Chennault in his attempt to stop eight Japanese divisions by tactical air.⁴⁸

Explicitly facing the issues created by Mountbatten's proposal that Stilwell be transferred to China and the Wallace suggestion that Stilwell be recalled, Maj. Gen. Thomas T. Handy of OPD recommended to Marshall on 30 June 1944 that as "the most effective answer" Stilwell be promoted from lieutenant general to general. In supporting his suggestion, Handy presented an eloquent eulogy of Stilwell's North Burma Campaign.

Handy wrote that no general of modern times had faced and overcome the obstacles that Stilwell had. "Against the initial apathy on the part of both our Allies, General Stilwell has welded an effective Chinese Army in Burma." Chinese tactics under his command had been superb, and the campaign for Myitkyina a masterpiece. "Beset by a terrific struggle with the jungle, the monsoons, the Japanese, logistics, to say nothing of mite typhus complications, he has staged a campaign that history will call brilliant."⁴⁹

After studying Handy's memorandum, Marshall on 1 July placed the matter before Stilwell for his comments, in a radio embodying many of Handy's phrases. Saying that he had waited until Stilwell had consolidated the Mogaung-Myitkyina area before raising the matter, the Army Chief of Staff told Stilwell that the British were pressing for a command rearrangement, and that, of far greater importance to Marshall, things were steadily getting worse in China. He asked Stilwell for a candid opinion on whether the latter thought he could do some good by taking an active part in operations in central China. Marshall remarked that "the pressure" was on to get more tonnage over the

⁴⁷ Rad CHC 1215, Stilwell to Marshall, 22 Jun 44. SNF 131.

⁴⁸ (1) Quotation from Interv cited n. 45. (2) See General Okamura's comments, p. 316, above, and Japanese Officers' Comments, Incl 3.

⁴⁹ Memo, Handy for Marshall, 30 Jun 44. Item 869, Msg Bk 20, OPD Exec 9.

Hump to Chennault, "an immense effort in transportation" that possibly would be completely wasted. He asked what Stilwell would think of transferring his principal efforts to "the rehabilitation and in effect the direction of the leadership of the Chinese forces in China proper," with Sultan commanding in Burma.⁵⁰

Stilwell's reply began by surveying the India-Burma side of his several positions. He assured Marshall that his present position as acting Deputy Supreme Allied Commander need not stand in the way of his going to China Theater. There was need for a vigorous deputy to Mountbatten, but he doubted that anyone would be allowed to go about SEAC as a trouble shooter for no one would be permitted to dismiss any of SEAC's general officers, even for gross incompetence.

Then Stilwell turned to the China problem, and in his discussion revealed no enthusiasm for the role of field commander of the Chinese forces. After explaining for Marshall some of the personnel problems involved in finding someone to replace him as commander of the Chinese Army in India, Stilwell offered his comments on the situation in China Theater:

Second, the China situation. If I go to China, I could detail Sultan to take over this command during my absence and I believe the Chinese would offer no objection. But if Sultan is made deputy we have the same old situation as soon as he takes command here. Merrill could, but he is physically out of the picture. . . . It is a difficult matter to find a man to command US, British, and Chinese units acceptably. Supposing a steady, seasoned, senior man can be found for this job, and I go to China. The G-Mo is scared, but he is still driving from the back seat, both on the Salween and Hunan. If the President were to send him a very stiff message, emphasizing our investment and interest in China, and also the serious pass to which China has come due to neglect of the Army, and insisting that desperate cases require desperate remedies, the G-Mo might be forced to give me a command job. I believe the Chinese Army would accept me. Ho Ying-chin would have to step out as Chief of Staff, or if he kept the title, give up the power. Without complete authority, over the Army, I would not attempt the job. Even with complete authority, the damage done is so tremendous that I can see only one chance to repair it. This is to stage a counter-offensive from Shansi, and attacking through Loyang toward Chengchow and Hankow. There are units in West Hupeh that could help. The Communists should also participate in Shansi, but unless the G-Mo makes an agreement with them, they won't. Two years ago they offered to fight with me.⁵¹ They might listen now. Time and space factors are against us, even if we had good will and full cooperation. You can readily imagine what is involved in organizing and moving such a scattered and loose-jointed force but outside of this one shot I see no chance to save the situation. The units on the Salween should not be withdrawn and cannot be withdrawn in time. The garrison on Indo-China border must stay there, or Kunming is open to attack. I refrain from any comments about the efficacy of air power because you have heard them before. The case is really desperate. The harvest of neglect and mismanagement is now being reaped and without very radical and very quickly applied remedies, we will be set back a long way. These matters must be put before the G-Mo in the strongest terms or he will continue to muddle along and scream for help without doing any more than he is doing now which is nothing. To sum up, there is still a faint chance to salvage something in China

⁵⁰ Rad WAR 59012, Marshall to Stilwell, 1 Jul 44. Item 2674, Bk 7, JWS Personal File.

⁵¹ The authors could find no trace of the offer to which Stilwell refers here.

but action must be quick and radical and the G-Mo must give one commander full powers. If the President can get this idea across, we can at least try hoping that a weak and disjointed effort, by dint of numbers and determination, might stop the Japs before they finish breaking up all resistance. The chances are definitely not good, but I can see no other solution at the moment.⁵²

Satisfied with Stilwell's answer, Marshall accepted Handy's suggestion that Stilwell's promotion be recommended and fitted into the solution to China's problem that the Joint Chiefs of Staff were about to propose to the President. In drafting their proposal, the Joint Chiefs were candid almost to bluntness in reminding the President of their own long-held views on China, which hitherto he had disregarded. As Marshall remarked later, the JCS placed Chennault's promises in one column, then pointed out how Chennault had failed on each. Against them they placed Stilwell's predictions and related the fulfillment of each.⁵³

4 July 44

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT:

The attached memorandum from the Joint Chiefs of Staff with a proposed message to Chiang Kai Shek are for your consideration.

We are in full agreement that this action is immediately necessary to any chance to save the situation in China.

For the Joint Chiefs of Staff,

(Signed) WILLIAM D. LEAHY
Admiral, U.S. Navy,
Chief of Staff to the Commander in Chief
of the Army and Navy.

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT FROM THE U.S. CHIEFS OF STAFF:

The situation in Central China is deteriorating at an alarming rate. If the Japanese continue their advances to the west, Chennault's 14th Air Force will be rendered ineffective, our very long-range bomber airfields in the Chengtu area will be lost and the collapse of China must inevitably result. Whether or not there is a possibility of our exerting a favorable influence on the chaotic condition in China is questionable. It is our view, however, that drastic measures should be taken immediately in an effort to prevent disaster to the U.S. effort in that region.

The Chinese ground forces in China, in their present state of discipline, training and equipment, and under their present leadership, are impotent. The Japanese forces can, in effect, move virtually unopposed except by geographical logistic difficulties.

From the beginning of the war, we have insisted on the necessity for building up the combat efficiency of the Chinese ground forces, as the only method of providing the necessary security for our air bases in China. The pressure on us from the Generalissimo throughout the war has been to increase the tonnage over the Hump for Chennault's air in particular, with the equipment and supply for the ground forces as incidental only. This presents the problem of an immense effort in transportation, with a poorly directed and possibly completely wasteful procedure. Chennault's air alone can do little more than slightly delay the Japanese advances. We have had abundant proof of this in our operations against the German army.

⁵² Rad CHC 1241, Stilwell to Marshall, 3 Jul 44. SNF 131.

⁵³ (1) *Stilwell's Mission to China*. (2) Interv cited n. 45.

Our experience against both the Germans and the Japanese in theaters where we have had immensely superior air power has demonstrated the inability of air forces alone to prevent the movement of trained and determined ground armies. If we have been unable to stop the movement of German ground armies in Italy with our tremendous air power, there is little reason to believe that Chennault, with the comparatively small air force which can be supported in China, can exert a decisive effect on the movement of Japanese ground forces in China. The more effective his bombing of their shipping and the B-29 operations against Japan the more determined will be the Japanese thrusts in China.

Under the present leadership and organization of the Chinese armies, it is purely a question of Japanese intent as to how far they will advance into the interior of China. The serious pass to which China has come is due in some measure to mismanagement and neglect of the Army. Until her every resource, including the divisions at present confronting the communists, is devoted to the war against the Japanese, there is little hope that she can continue to operate with any effectiveness until the end of the war.

The time has come, in our opinion, when all the military power and resources remaining to China must be entrusted to one individual capable of directing that effort in a fruitful way against the Japanese. There is no one in the Chinese Government or armed forces capable of coordinating the Chinese military effort in such a way as to meet the Japanese threat. During this war, there has been only one man who has been able to get Chinese forces to fight against the Japanese in an effective way. That man is General Stilwell.

The British are pressing for a readjustment of command relationships in the Southeast Asia Command, maintaining that General Stilwell's position as Deputy Supreme Commander and that of the Commander of the Chinese Corps in India are incompatible. The British would undoubtedly concur in the relief of General Stilwell from his present assignment.

After full consideration of the situation in China, we recommend:

- a. That you dispatch to the Generalissimo the attached message, urging him to place General Stilwell in command of all Chinese armed forces.
- b. That you promote General Stilwell to the temporary grade of General, not only in recognition of his having conducted a brilliant campaign with a force, which he himself made, in spite of continued opposition from within and without and tremendous obstacles of terrain and weather, but in order to give him the necessary prestige for the new position proposed for him in China.

We are fully aware of the Generalissimo's feeling regarding Stilwell, particularly from a political point of view, but the fact remains that he has proved his case or contentions on the field of battle in opposition to the highly negative attitudes of both the British and the Chinese authorities. Had his advice been followed, it is now apparent that we would have cleared the Japanese from northeast Burma before the monsoon and opened the way to effective action in China proper. Had his advice been followed the Chinese ground forces east of the Hump would have been far better equipped and prepared to resist or at least delay the Japanese advances.

c. That in case Stilwell goes to China, we propose the following arrangements in the Southeast Asia Command to the British Chief of Staff:

(1) Sultan to command the Chinese Corps in Burma under the general direction of Stilwell.

(2) Wheeler, now senior administrative officer on Mountbatten's staff, to succeed Stilwell as Deputy to Mountbatten.⁵⁴

The President accepted the recommendations of the Joint Chiefs of Staff,

⁵⁴ (1) Item 57, OPD Exec 10. (2) For details of use of superior air power in Italy, see Sidney T. Mathews, *The Drive on Rome*, a volume in preparation for this series.

and the message which they had prepared for his signature was quickly sent to General Ferris for personal presentation to the Generalissimo. To Stilwell at his jungle headquarters, Marshall sent extracts of the key passages from the President's radio to the Generalissimo so that Stilwell would know what was to come, then read him a homily on why, in Marshall's opinion, the President's support, and that of the Generalissimo, had been so long withheld: ". . . the difficulty has been the offense you have given, usually in small affairs, both to the Generalissimo and to the President." At Cairo, Marshall had cautioned Stilwell that the President disliked his frequent loosing of barbed shafts at the Chinese leader. Now, Marshall warned him again that he must do all in his power to avoid offending the Generalissimo. Marshall also remarked that had Stilwell personally, or some member of his staff, devoted more attention to establishing good relations with the President, Mr. Roosevelt's support would have been forthcoming long before.⁵⁵ Stilwell replied:

Your messages and instructions are unmistakably plain. If this new assignment materializes, I will tackle it to the best of my ability. I am keenly aware of the honor of the President's confidence and of yours, and I pledge my word to him and to you that I will "consistently and continuously avoid unnecessary irritations" and get on with the war. I fully realize that I will have to justify that confidence, and I find it even in prospect a heavy load for a country boy.⁵⁶

The American attempt to persuade the Generalissimo to accept Stilwell as his field commander began with a radio sent by the President on 6 July 1944. As the President had directed in May 1944, after hearing that the Chinese were rephrasing his messages to the Generalissimo to make them read more agreeably to that dignitary, General Ferris, the senior American officer in Chungking, delivered the message in person:

The extremely serious situation which results from Japanese advances in Central China, which threaten not only your Government but all that the U.S. Army has been building up in China, leads me to the conclusion that drastic measures must be taken immediately if the situation is to be saved. The critical situation which now exists, in my opinion calls for the delegation to one individual of the power to coordinate all the Allied military resources in China, including the Communist forces.

I think I am fully aware of your feelings regarding General Stilwell, nevertheless I think he has now clearly demonstrated his farsighted judgment, his skill in organization and training and, above all, in fighting your Chinese forces. I know of no other man who has the ability, the force, and the determination to offset the disaster which now threatens China and our over-all plans for the conquest of Japan. I am promoting Stilwell to the rank of full general and I recommend for your most urgent consideration that you recall him from Burma and place him directly under you in command of all Chinese and American forces, and that you charge him with the full responsibility and authority for the coordination and direction of the operations required to stem the tide of the enemy's advances. I feel that the case of China is so desperate that if radical and properly applied remedies are not immediately effected, our common cause will suffer a disastrous set-back.

⁵⁵ (1) See Ch. II, above. (2) CM-OUT 61514, Marshall to Stilwell, 7 Jul 44.

⁵⁶ CM-IN 7045, Stilwell to Marshall, 9 Jul 44.

I sincerely trust that you will not be offended at the frankness of my statements and I assure you that there is no intent on my part to dictate to you in matters concerning China; however, the future of all Asia is at stake along with the tremendous effort which America has expended in that region. Therefore I have reason for a profound interest in the matter.

Please have in mind that it has been clearly demonstrated in Italy, in France, and in the Pacific that air power alone cannot stop a determined enemy.

Matter of fact, the Germans have successfully conducted defensive actions and launched determined counter-attacks though overwhelmingly outnumbered in the air.

Should you agree to giving Stilwell such assignment as I now propose, I would recommend that General Sultan, a very fine officer who is now his deputy, be placed in command of the Chinese-American force in Burma, but under Stilwell's direction.⁵⁷

As a concrete expression of the United States gratitude for the victories in north Burma, as a sign of the special trust and confidence which the President now reposed in him, and to give him a rank suitable for the great responsibilities which, it was confidently expected, would soon be his, Stilwell was promoted to full general on 1 August 1944.⁵⁸ He then shared the rank with only Generals Marshall, MacArthur, Eisenhower, and Arnold.

The Generalissimo Agrees "in Principle"

After two years during which the United States for a variety of reasons had been content to let Stilwell's position in China Theater be nebulous and ill-defined, it was now moving to undo the decision of the ARCADIA Conference of December 1941 and make Stilwell in effect responsible for the conduct of operations against the Japanese in China Theater. One may doubt that this development was pleasing to the Generalissimo. Stilwell's aggressiveness was well known. If Stilwell took command, he would surely try to devote more of the military resources of Nationalist China to the east China campaign. The current Japanese offensive had been aimed at the east China airfields rather than at the Generalissimo's strongholds of Kunming and Chungking, and the Generalissimo's national troops, as distinguished from the troops of the war area commanders, had taken no part in the east China fighting.⁵⁹ If Stilwell as field commander directed the Generalissimo's own troops against the Japanese the enemy might well turn his attention to Chiang himself. Moreover, moving major elements of Nationalist forces to east China would affect the Generalissimo's position in Chinese politics in relation not merely to the Communists but also to the several war area commanders.

There may well have been a personal factor. Ever since 1937 propaganda

⁵⁷ (1) Received in Chungking as a radio, WAR 6080, Roosevelt to Generalissimo, 6 July 1944, this message was presented to the latter as Memorandum 214, Stilwell for the Generalissimo, on 6 July 1944. Item 2676, OKLAHOMA File, JWS Personal File. (2) See Ch. VIII, above.

⁵⁸ WD SO 109, 9 Aug 44, par. 1. Stilwell's date of rank in the Army of the United States was 1 August 1944.

⁵⁹ On 4 December 1944, the Generalissimo stated that national troops had taken no part in the east China fighting. Min, 12th Mtg. Wedemeyer with Generalissimo, 4 Dec 44. Bk 1, Generalissimo Minutes, 1-69, 13 Nov 44-15 Jul 45, Job T49-20 CBI.

had hailed the Generalissimo as a military genius who had kept the Japanese at bay, who had outfought and outmaneuvered them and needed only modern weapons to drive them into the sea. Now that eight Japanese divisions were racing through east China, the United States was asking the Generalissimo to drop his military role and let Stilwell, a foreigner whom he remembered as a colonel riding perched on top of a boxcar with the humble Chinese soldiery—the same Stilwell who called him “Peanut” and giped at him as an incompetent dilettante—take command under the Generalissimo of both the Generalissimo’s forces and those of his deadly enemies, the Communists.

Later events suggest that the Generalissimo resolved that Stilwell should on no account hold command in China Theater, and that he rallied all his diplomatic resources to the task of avoiding any such outcome of the crisis. At first glance, a diplomatic struggle between China and the United States in 1944 would have seemed a most unequal one. The Generalissimo wanted lend-lease, credits, and air support, and the United States was the only likely source. The longer China was isolated, the more desperate would be her need for help. If the United States was to insist on a *quid pro quo*, how could China refuse?

But the Generalissimo had advantages and allies of the greatest usefulness: First, during 1944 the Generalissimo and T. V. Soong, who had quarreled in the fall of 1943, had been reconciled. Soong’s assistance brought his great knowledge of the U.S. scene and his influential connections to the Generalissimo’s side. Second, the Americans were not united among themselves. Harry Hopkins, though no longer wielding the power he once did, was an intimate friend of Soong’s and had long opposed Stilwell.⁶⁰ Lieutenant Alsop, of Chennault’s staff, was Soong’s adviser.⁶¹ And third, the President was preoccupied with many things and gave the China Theater command question only a fraction of his attention, whereas for the Generalissimo it was a matter that received the fullest exercise of his diplomatic talents.

After weighing the President’s message, the Generalissimo adopted a tactic that he had used before, most notably in the winter of 1941–42 when the American Military Mission to China was trying to integrate the American Volunteer Group into the Tenth Air Force. The Generalissimo on 8 July agreed in principle but found a major obstacle to carrying out the President’s suggestion at once:

Chungking
July 8, 1944.

My dear Mr. President:

I have much pleasure in acknowledging receipt of your telegram which came on July 7, conveying to me your deep concern over the war situation in China and your effective suggestion to meet it.

⁶⁰ (1) *Stilwell’s Mission to China*, Ch. X. (2) For the Soong-Hopkins relationship, see Books VII and IX, Hopkins Papers.

⁶¹ In the *Washington Post*, July 25, 1951, Alsop stated: “[John P.] Davies was the political adviser of Gen. Joseph W. Stilwell; I was the adviser of Dr. T. V. Soong and Maj. Gen. C. L. Chennault.”

While I fully agree with the principle of your suggestion that directly under me General Stilwell be given the command of all Chinese Army and American troops in this theater of war, I like to call your attention to the fact that Chinese troops and their internal political conditions are not as simple as those in other countries. Furthermore, they're not as easily directed as the limited number of Chinese troops who are now fighting in north Burma. Therefore, if this suggestion were carried out in haste it would not only fail to help the present war situation here but would also arouse misunderstanding and confusion which would be detrimental to Sino-American cooperation. This is the real fact of the situation and in expressing my views on your exacting and sincere suggestion, I have not tried to use any misleading or evasive language. Hence, I feel that there must be a preparatory period in order to enable General Stilwell to have absolute command of the Chinese troops without any hindrance. In this way I shall not disappoint you in your expectation.

I very much hope that you will be able to despatch an influential personal representative who enjoys your complete confidence, is given with full power and has a far-sighted political vision and ability, to constantly collaborate with me and he may also adjust the relations between me and General Stilwell so as to enhance the cooperation between China and America. You will appreciate the fact that military cooperation in its absolute sense must be built on the foundation of political cooperation.

Our people have an unwavering faith in your friendship and sincerity towards China. I had already explained in detail to Vice President Wallace on this subject and I trust he will transmit my views to you.

I shall much appreciate it if you will discuss directly with Dr. Kung on any important question of this nature whenever it should arise in the future. If you have any telegram for me you can give it to him for transmittal.

With my warmest personal regards.

Yours truly,

CHIANG KAI-SHEK⁶²

When the Generalissimo's answer came to Washington, the President was preparing to visit General MacArthur and Admiral Chester W. Nimitz at Honolulu, there to discuss major questions of Pacific strategy. The President was apparently pleased with the Generalissimo's answer for he wrote to Admiral Leahy on 13 July: "Can you get this to the Joint Staff before we leave? There is a good deal in what the Generalissimo says." OPD drafted an answer for the President urging speed, but having been impressed by the Generalissimo's views, the President greatly modified it.

The President was happy to note that the Generalissimo agreed in principle. He urged the Chinese leader to have in mind the importance of speed and remarked that "some calculated political risks appear justified when dangers in the overall military situation are so serious and immediately threatening." Roosevelt then said he accepted the Generalissimo's suggestion about an American political representative in Chungking. The right man had to be chosen for the job, the difficulties had to be explored, and "in the meantime I again urge you to take all steps to pave the way for General Stilwell's assumption of command at the earliest possible moment."⁶³

⁶² Item 60, OPD Exec 10.

⁶³ (1) Memo, Roosevelt for Leahy, 13 Jul 44. Item 59, OPD Exec 10. (2) Rad WH 25, Roosevelt to Generalissimo, 13 Jul 44, presented as Memo 215, Ferris for Generalissimo, 15 Jul 44. Item 2677a, OKLAHOMA File, JWS Personal File.

Thus in the President's answer Stilwell's assumption of command became second to the careful choice of a political representative. Mr. Roosevelt then departed Washington for a prolonged trip through the Pacific.

The Generalissimo's preparatory period, of unspecified length, would presumably be inaugurated with the arrival in China of a Presidential representative previously agreed on as satisfactory to both powers. The arrival of the proposed emissary, and the solution of the command question, were now postponed many weeks while the President visited San Francisco, Alaska, and Hawaii. The Generalissimo had won the first skirmish.

The Ledo Road Project Reduced

In the four-week interim during which the command question awaited the President's convenience, the carrying capacity of the great Ledo Road project was finally set by the War Department at a point which revealed that it was losing importance. General Pick was building the road as a two-way, graveled highway. Its capacity would depend on whether it was brought to two-way, all-weather standard all the way to China and whether enough men, vehicles, and operating facilities were assigned to it to permit fullest exploitation of its capacity. The QUADRANT Conference (Quebec, August 1943) had directed that it be able to transport 30,000 tons a month by January 1945, with an ultimate capacity of 96,000 tons a month.

As early as March 1944, the Asiatic Section of OPD had proposed that the building of the road stop at Myitkyina and that traffic from there simply use the existing road from Myitkyina to China after it had been brought to one-way, all-weather condition with a gravel surface.⁶⁴ The proposal was shelved for the time being, but in July, with an American landing in the Philippines an ever more likely possibility, Brig. Gen. Patrick H. Tansey, Chief, Logistics Group, OPD, revived it, for he believed that by setting operation of the Ledo Road at a lower level than that originally intended, 35,000 men would be made available for use in the Philippines.

A variety of other arguments presented themselves to General Tansey. He believed that the trucks operating on the Ledo Road would lower by some 26,000 tons the amount of gasoline and lubricants otherwise available to the air force in China, that too many dry stores would be transported, that a great amount of shipping space would be wasted, all of which could be avoided if first priority went to maintaining and increasing air deliveries, building three pipelines to China, and simply improving the existing road from Myitkyina to Bhamo to permit movement of trucks and artillery.⁶⁵

⁶⁴ (1) See Ch. I, above. (2) Memo, Chief, Asiatic Sec, Theater Gp, OPD, for Chief, Logistics Gp, OPD, 25 Mar 44, sub: Opn Plan, Burma-Myitkyina-Kunming Road, Project TIG-IC. ABC 384 Burma (8-25-42) Sec 7, A48-224.

⁶⁵ Memo, Tansey for Handy, 16 Jul 44, sub: Projects TIG-IA and TIG-IC, Ledo Road—Construction and Opn Phases. ABC 384 Burma (8-25-42) Sec 7, A48-224.

The AAF informally approved Tansey's suggestion on the ground that the principal advantage of the Ledo Road was that it permitted re-equipping the Chinese Army, which in the light of current plans could not be done in time for the Chinese to co-operate with the U.S. forces in the Pacific.⁶⁶

These recommendations were strongly opposed by Army Service Forces. Consistent with the support for the Ledo Road always expressed by General Somervell, Maj. Gen. LeRoy Lutes, then Acting Chief of Staff, ASF, and Col. Carter B. Magruder, Acting Deputy Director, Plans and Operations, ASF, denied that the effort involved in bringing the road to two-way, all-weather standard from Ledo to Kunming was out of step with Pacific strategy or would waste American resources.

ASF's planners pointed out that strong Japanese resistance in the Pacific could throw off the whole timetable of Pacific operations. They believed that Japanese resistance on Saipan, where the Americans had landed on 15 June 1944, had already delayed contemplated operations by a month. If the American cross-Pacific advance was to be seriously delayed at any point, then the best possible line of communications to China might be of urgent importance and could not be improvised on the spur of the moment. Only 45,000 tons of equipment remained to be shipped to India, they argued, while maintenance personnel would be needed to keep even a passable trail from Myitkyina east.⁶⁷

General Lutes doubted that any great savings in manpower would follow from limiting the capacity of the road beyond Myitkyina to one-way traffic. He believed that many of the men needed to build and operate the road at two-way standard beyond Myitkyina would be required to protect and operate the pipeline even though the road was limited in capacity. There were already enough troops allocated to CBI Theater, Lutes thought, to complete the road on the basis originally contemplated.⁶⁸

OPD did not adopt ASF's point of view but recommended to General Marshall that the Ledo Road be strictly limited. Marshall's advisers told him that if the Ledo Road was opened to one-way traffic enough equipment to meet the minimum needs of the U.S.-sponsored Chinese divisions could be delivered. OPD, though relaying ASF's fear that the Pacific operations timetable was too optimistic, did not share that view. It argued that by the end of 1945, which was the earliest date given for the completion of the road to a two-way standard, the United States would have either occupied Formosa or bypassed it and be operating well beyond, in either case thus being free of any great dependence on operations from Chinese bases.⁶⁹

⁶⁶ Memo, Col Donald W. Benner, Chief, Air Services Div, Office Asst Chief of Air Stf, Matériel and Services, for Tansey, 25 Jul 44, sub: Projects TIG-IA and TIG-IC, Ledo Road—Construction and Opn Phases. ABC 384 Burma (8-25-42) Sec 7, A48-224.

⁶⁷ Memo, Somervell (sgd by Magruder) for ACofS, OPD, 24 Jul 44. ABC 384 Burma (8-25-42) Sec 7, A48-224.

⁶⁸ Memo, Actg CofS, ASF, for ACofS, OPD, 29 Jun 44. ABC 384 Burma (8-25-42) Sec 7, A48-224.

⁶⁹ Memo, Handy for Marshall, 14 Aug 44. ABC 384 Burma (8-25-42) Sec 7, A48-224.

Marshall approved the OPD study, and CBI Theater was told that it would receive no increase in personnel to build the road. Therefore, the radio went on, development of land communications to China should be limited to building a two-way, all-weather gravel road to Myitkyina and opening the existing trail from Myitkyina to China. Beyond Myitkyina it was thought desirable to improve the one-way, dry-weather trail so far as practicable with minimum essential permanent bridge construction and transport necessary to install and maintain one 6-inch and two 4-inch pipelines to China and to deliver trucks and artillery. The War Department would supply whatever CBI Theater lacked in resources to meet these goals.⁷⁰ Thus the War Department, to conserve men for Pacific operations, sharply limited the tonnage that the Ledo Road would ultimately deliver to China.

Within Burma, however, the Ledo Road during 1944, at the very beginning of the year supporting the advance of the Chinese Army in India, carried hundreds of thousands of tons, the bulk of them in vehicles belonging to tactical and service units. In 1944 Advance Section received at Ledo 497,590 tons, and forwarded only 224,804 tons, the difference being carried by organizational vehicles. Of the 224,804 tons forwarded by Advance Section, about half went by road and half by air, so that the Ledo Road was the means of transporting about 75 percent of the supply tonnage for the North Burma Campaign.⁷¹ (*Chart 7*)

Slow Progress Across the Salween

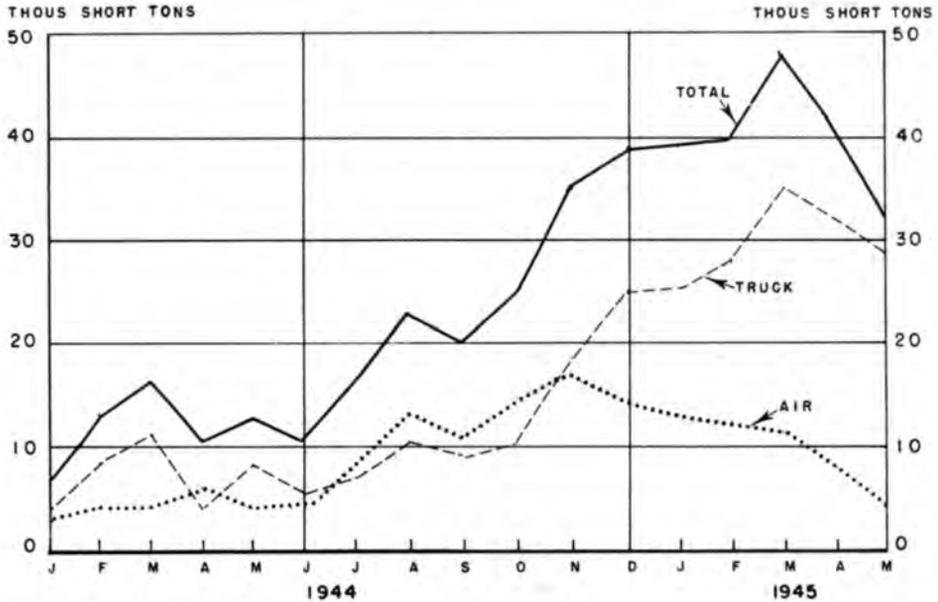
Whatever the War Department in Washington might contemplate in the way of any future development of the Ledo Road, that development necessarily waited on driving the Japanese from north Burma. The Generalissimo's resolution to continue his part in the attempt might not hold against a crisis in east China. It was perhaps significant that he was not sending any replacements to keep the Y-Force up to strength. As for Stilwell, from May to August, he did not attempt to take any part in the Salween campaign, for as will be recalled, he had no command powers over any Chinese troops in China; along the Salween front Gen. Wei Li-huang might well resent any guidance from Stilwell. But Stilwell could not escape the consequences of what happened on the Salween or in east China, for events in those areas would be the background to President Roosevelt's attempt to put Stilwell in command of the Chinese Army.

After the Chinese fell back from Lung-ling in late June, XX Group Army on the north and XI Group Army on the south were faced by one minor and two major strongpoints. (*See Map 19.*) Northernmost of these was the old

⁷⁰ CM-OUT 85479, OPD to Stilwell 23 Aug 44.

⁷¹ Rpt, Gen Pick, CG, Advance Sec USF IBT, to Gen Wheeler, CG, USF IBT, 9 Aug 45; sub: Rpt on Stilwell Road, pp. 97-102. OCMH.

CHART 7—TONNAGE FORWARDED BY USAF SOS CBI ADVANCE SECTION TO NORTH BURMA: JANUARY 1944—MAY 1945



SOURCE: PICK REPORT, p. 99.

walled city of Teng-chung, with some 20,000 inhabitants. The configuration of the land would permit building a road from China to Myitkyina via Teng-chung, and the Burma Road Engineers had such plans prepared. In the center of the Salween front, Japanese artillery on Sung Shan, or "Pine Mountain," commanded the Burma Road's descent into the Salween gorge. In their initial drive on Lung-ling the Chinese had bypassed Sung Shan and relied on air supply. Failure to take Lung-ling had left a considerable Chinese force in an uncomfortable position on the Japanese side of Sung Shan. If the Japanese could be driven off Sung Shan, supplies could roll right down the Burma Road. Twenty-five miles southeast of Lung-ling was Ping-ka, the obscure valley where cholera lay in wait, and where a Chinese regiment and a Japanese battalion waited out the war in endless small bickerings. Ping-ka was obscure, but the *56th Division* had far fewer battalions than General Wei had regiments and had committed one of these few to Ping-ka.

Since General Wei had left a containing force below Sung Shan while he tried to take Lung-ling, there had been an artillery duel between the Japanese guns on Sung Shan and the Chinese since early in the campaign, while the Chinese had launched unsuccessful attacks in regimental strength. As June 1944 ended, this situation continued while Dorn and Wei considered the problems presented by the setback at Lung-ling. To the north, at Teng-chung, a new

phase in the campaign was clearly opening, for the Chinese patrols were closing the exits from Teng-chung valley as XX Group Army deployed before the wall of that strong city.⁷²

The outer defenses of Teng-chung were pillboxes covering every avenue of approach, supported and covered by the 6,500-foot-high, fortified mountain peak of Lai-feng Shan, "The Place Where the Birds Come." Here were 600 or more Japanese with most of the garrison's artillery. Teng-chung itself was girdled by a massive wall of earth that in some places was forty feet high and sixty feet thick at the base, faced throughout with great slabs of stone. Chinese necromancers had carefully laid out the wall in a great square to cut the cardinal points of the compass. Each side had a gate, and each gate now had a Japanese command post, while Japanese machine guns and rifles swept the approaches to the wall, its face, and its parapets. Within the city were about 2,000 Japanese. In all, Colonel Kurashige, who had defended the Kaoli-kung mountains, had about 1,850 Japanese, a heavily reinforced battalion combat team built around the 2/148. Kurashige's orders were to hold Teng-chung until the Chinese threat to Lung-ling passed.⁷³

The XX Group Army's five divisions fanned out around Teng-chung by occupying the heights. With them were the 40th, 47th, and 48th Portable Surgical Hospitals of the U.S. Army. The attack began on 26 June when B-25's of the 341st Bomb Group flew from Yun-nan-i in an attempt to breach the wall. This and subsequent attempts at medium-level bombing, though wreaking severe damage on the residential area—after a bombing on 14 July fires could be seen for thirty-five miles—merely piled rubble around the Japanese positions in Teng-chung. Secure in their dugouts, the Japanese were unshaken, and the airmen turned to skip bombing, trying to hurl their bombs directly against the face of the wall.⁷⁴

The Chinese infantry attack began on 2 July, when the 116th Division moved against the northwest side of the Japanese defenses. Making the assault in a torrential monsoon downpour, the 348th Infantry, 116th Division, took seven pillboxes on a height four and a half miles northwest of the city. From here the 348th Regiment looked down on the Japanese positions between it and the city. By the end of the first week of July the five Chinese divisions had Teng-chung encircled. Several days later, when a Chinese patrol from XX Group Army made contact with scouts from XI Group Army at the Man-lao Bridge, Teng-chung was again cut off from the Japanese at Lung-ling. Off to the northwest, Chinese guerrillas working for Y-Force occupied a village

⁷² (1) See Ch. IX, above. (2) Y-FOS Journal.

⁷³ Japanese Study 93.

⁷⁴ Apart from using the Y-FOS Journal, Y-FOS 1944 Historical Report, and Japanese Study 93, this portion of the Salween campaign is based on the following sources: (1) War Dept Combat Film 26, Signal Corps Film Library, Washington. (2) Stodter Report. (3) Hist Rpt, Hq 69th Composite Wing, 27th Tr Carrier Sq, and 19th Ln Sq, Fourteenth AF. USAF Hist Div. (4) SOS in CBI, App. I, History of Burma Road Engineers.



CHINESE INFANTRYMEN REST ON LAI-FENG SHAN *after an attack on Japanese dugouts.*

twenty-six miles from Teng-chung and only the same small distance from Kachin tribesmen, fighting for Stilwell, who had occupied Fort Harrison (Sadon) in Burma.

A week of perfect weather in mid-July permitted XX Group Army to seize an airstrip southwest of Teng-chung, to restore its supplies by air delivery, and to move its lines on the southeast up to easy pack howitzer range of the walls. Here the advance was slowed by fire from Colonel Kurashige's howitzers atop Lai-feng Shan. The Chinese turned to reconnoiter the mountain more carefully and discovered the Japanese had sited their defenses on the slopes facing Teng-chung. The reverse side had much defiladed ground and no entrenchments.

Since Gen. Huo Kwei-chang of XX Group Army had the bulk of his strength on the high ground to the south of Teng-chung valley, he found it comparatively easy to mass three divisions against the weak side of Teng-chung, while one more division was to get a foothold in the city itself. Then the rain closed in again and operations had to await clearing weather. In a week the storms lifted, and at noon of 26 July the first of four waves of P-40's and B-25's hit the northeast wall of Teng-chung and the summit of Lai-feng Shan.

The Chinese attack that followed revealed that previous experiences with



THE WALLED CITY OF TENG-CHUNG *after an air attack that breached the wall (arrow).*

Japanese positions had not been wasted. The Chinese infantry moved off quickly, on time, and as whole regiments rather than squads committed piecemeal. Mortar and artillery fire was brought down speedily on suspected Japanese positions, and the infantry took full advantage of it by advancing again the minute it lifted. Having taken one pillbox, the Chinese infantry kept right on going rather than stopping to loot and rest. At nightfall they were on top of the mountain and had taken a fortified temple on the summit. After mopping up the next day, the Chinese tallied about 400 Japanese dead. They themselves had lost 1,200. Nevertheless, the speedy capture of Lai-feng Shan was a brilliant feat of arms and dramatic evidence of the capabilities of Chinese troops when they applied proper tactics.

The simultaneous attack on the southeast wall of Teng-chung did not carry across the massive wall, but the Chinese had a firm foothold in the scraggly collection of mud huts just outside the wall which an ancient Greek, a Roman, or a medieval townsman would recognize at once as the sort of suburb so many of his cities had. The Japanese fought stubbornly in defense of these tenements, but making bold use of their lend-lease 37-mm. antitank guns the Chinese knocked down one hut after another at point-blank range. Casualties mounted in this bitter infighting; American medical aid was of great utility. The commander of the 130th Division, who had seen considerable action against the

Japanese, remarked that at Teng-chung his men seemed to fight harder because they knew they would have good medical attention if they were wounded.

Configuration of the ground suggested the southeast as the most logical avenue of approach and the principal Chinese effort was now directed there. On 2 August twelve B-25's breached the southeast wall in five places. Direct hits hammered out a gap fifteen feet wide, but the displaced earth and rubble were still a strong barrier and the Japanese did their best to mend the breach and cover it with machine gun fire. The Chinese needed something more and this was supplied by five waves of P-40's and P-38's which strafed the wall at twenty-minute intervals. This permitted the Chinese to place their scaling ladders against the wall. By this means, one company from the 107th and 348th Infantry Regiments reached the top of the wall just east of the south corner at 1500 hours on 3 August. The Japanese strove to drive them out but the Chinese clung to their advantage, and one lone platoon held fast all during the night. Next morning, Chinese reinforcements moved through the breaches, entered Teng-chung, and took a pillbox inside the city. Barring an attempt at rescue by other elements of the *56th Division*, or a change of heart by the Chinese, the capture of Teng-chung was inevitable. The important question was, as General Huo's men crossed the walls on 4 August, how long would it take to capture Teng-chung?

The Battle for Sung Shan

Since the Chinese attempt to cut the center out of the Japanese position on the Salween by taking Lung-ling had failed, the attention of the Chinese commanders had shifted from Lung-ling to Sung Shan.⁷⁵ The hill mass of Sung Shan dominated the area where the Burma Road crosses the Salween and so barred the direct approach from China down the Burma Road. The Chinese had invested it with a containing force in their initial drive on Lung-ling. That drive had been supplied by air, and now that the Chinese were stalled between Lung-ling and Sung Shan, air supply was not too adequate, and clearing the Japanese from Sung Shan appeared essential.

Sung Shan (the name Pine Mountain applies to its highest peak) is an intricate hill-mass rising to 3,000 feet above the Salween gorge. It is roughly triangular in shape. The Burma Road, in climbing out of the Salween gorge, runs along the northeast side of the triangle, angles sharply round its northern tip, then runs back down along the northwest side of the triangle. In all, thirty-

⁷⁵ In addition to the Y-FOS Journal, Y-FOS 1944 Historical Report, Japanese Study 93, and Japanese Officers' Comments, sources consulted for this section are: (1) Rpt, Col Carlos G. Spaht, CO, U.S. Ln Gp, 8th Army, to Dorn, 29 Jul 44. AG (Y-FOS) 319.1. (2) Interv with Spaht, Baton Rouge, La., 1 Oct 48. (3) Of the six Chinese Armies to participate in the Salween campaign, the 8th Army prepared the only detailed and frank account of its role. This translated history, including tactical maps, is among the papers of Colonel Spaht. (4) Ltrs, Spaht to authors, 24 May, 29 Jul, 24 Sep, 2 Oct, and 28 Oct 47. OCMH.

six miles of the Burma Road were dominated by the Japanese guns on Sung Shan. Time did not permit building a cutoff road to bypass Sung Shan. The Japanese defensive system, manned by some 1,200 men under Maj. Keijiro Kanemitsu, was built around elements of the *113th Infantry*, supported by a battalion of mountain artillery, some transport troops, and some engineers. Of the 1,200, only 900 were effective.

In June, during the containing phase, the Chinese had assembled seven 150-mm. howitzers, two 75-mm. howitzers, and two 76-mm. field guns. Later joined by some pack artillery, and directed by an American artillery observer in a liaison plane, the Chinese cannoners duelled with Major Kanemitsu's gunners. Finally, the Japanese howitzers ceased to fire on the Burma Road Engineers and the Chinese who were preparing to rebuild the Burma Road bridge over the Salween. Now safe, the engineers proceeded with their rebuilding. During this same containing phase, the Chinese New 28th and New 39th Divisions had made attacks in regimental strength against Sung Shan. On 15 June, they succeeded in taking a peak at the southeast corner of the triangle, but failed to take its twin at the southwest corner, two miles away. Other Chinese attempts failed, though heavy casualties were taken in the attempt.

- As the period of containment merged into one of preparation for all-out attack, General Wei's hand was strengthened by the arrival of the 8th Army (the Honorable 1st, the 82d, and 103d Divisions). Originally stationed on the Indochina border, it had begun to arrive in battalion increments at the time of the Chinese setback at Lung-ling. The 8th Army had some lend-lease equipment, but only two thirds of its officers had been exposed to Y-FOS training efforts. The relief of the New 28th Division by the 3d Infantry, Honorable 1st Division, on 27 June was not well co-ordinated, for the Japanese were able to reoccupy the positions the New 28th Division had taken in June. Japanese also filtered through the Chinese lines to reinforce Sung Shan, and as further evidence of Japanese determination, on 28 June Japanese aircraft for the first time appeared over the Salween front. A reconnaissance aircraft, three fighters, and two transports circled Sung Shan and made a supply drop, some of which fell in the Chinese lines.

Accompanied by Y-FOS personnel under command of Col. Carlos G. Spaht, the 8th Army assembled east and south of Sung Shan and set 5 July for the attack. The Chinese artillery fired a nightlong preparation, and at dawn of 5 July two Chinese regiments attacked but not in strength. A few positions were overrun, the Japanese counterattacked, and at nightfall the Chinese were back in their initial positions, minus seventy dead. Colonel Spaht reported to Dorn that teamwork between the demolition squads and the assault teams had left much to be desired, that further training was badly needed.

The 8th Army's next attempt was made by the 246th Regiment the night of 7-8 July. It was directed against the southwest corner of the triangle and surprised the Japanese defenders of Kung Lung-po peak. By midnight the



CHINESE TROOPS ON KUNG LUNG-PO PEAK

Chinese had all Japanese strongpoints in their hands, but shortly after midnight the Japanese counterattacked over what was for them familiar terrain and drove off the 246th Regiment, inflicting more than 200 casualties. Y-FOS' observers reported that the Chinese grew quite confused during the night fighting and often shot at one another. The 246th Regiment had to be replaced by the 307th Regiment. The 307th faced what was for them a new Japanese defensive tactic between 10 and 12 July. Since the Chinese in climbing up the hills tended to bunch along the easiest routes to the top, the Japanese used their machine guns to keep the Chinese huddled down in the natural cover the hill afforded, then hurled grenades and mortar shells into the parties of Chinese. Such tactics were of deadly efficiency, and so the 8th Army brought up another regiment to reinforce the battered 307th.

Two weeks passed before the 8th Army again essayed an attack on Sung Shan. This time, instead of piecemeal attacks by a regiment or two, 8th Army prepared the attack by moving its howitzers up to pound Japanese positions at from 1,500 to 3,200 yards with direct fire. When the Chinese attacked with three regiments, on the morning of 23 July, the division commander of the 103d personally directed the 75-mm. fire, and on occasion placed shells twenty-five to forty feet in front of the assaulting Chinese. Captured Japanese diaries

contained praise of the artillery and of the 103d Division's valiant infantry. This well-led, co-ordinated attack succeeded and by dawn the Chinese were in Japanese positions almost at the crests of the two peaks Kung Lung-po and Tayakou. Alarmed by the successful Chinese artillery fire, Major Kanemitsu on 26 July pleaded for Japanese air support to attack the Chinese batteries, which had been emplaced in the open to use direct fire. Japanese fighters promptly responded, and machine-gunned the Chinese cannon and crews. The damage plus the moral effect halted the Chinese attack for a week, until 3 August.

When the 308th Regiment resumed the advance on 3 August it had flame throwers which it used with devastating effect to take the crest of Kung Lung-po. There the Chinese found several Japanese tankettes, which had been dug in for use as pillboxes. When the Japanese failed to make their usual prompt counterattack Y-FOS personnel surmised they might be short of ammunition. This was so, and Major Kanemitsu decided to raid the 8th Army's artillery positions and supply dumps to replenish his supply. Seven parties of Japanese volunteers struck during the night of 9 August, destroying several howitzers and taking away all the light weapons and ammunition they could carry.

At this time, Burmese civilians, who had been impressed into the Japanese service as laborers and who were found hiding in Japanese dugouts, estimated that Kanemitsu had 700 men, most of them wounded or starving. Actually, he now had but 300, including sick and wounded.

Having tried attacks by night, during rainstorms, and by surprise, none of which had quite succeeded and all of which had taken precious time, the Chinese now decided on a return to more formal siegecraft. With technical advice from Y-FOS engineers, the Chinese on 11 August began digging under what seemed the key to the Japanese positions that remained in the Sung Shan triangle. Significant of the closeness of the fighting, the tunnels needed to be but twenty-two feet long to put the mines in place under the Japanese pillboxes. One mine held 2,500 pounds of TNT, the other 3,500 pounds.

The mines were fired on 20 August at 0905 and the resulting destruction was quickly exploited by engineers armed with flame throwers. In one pillbox forty-two Japanese were buried alive, of whom five were rescued. The prisoners stated that they had been asleep and had never suspected that they were being undermined. At 0920 the 3d Regiment against light opposition took the few strongpoints that remained on Sung Shan proper. Kanemitsu's men still held out in scattered pockets about the triangle. These launched desperate counterattacks on 21 and 22 August. That of the 22d produced particularly bloody fighting in which the Chinese lost many company grade officers.

After the failure of these counterattacks there was nothing left but mopping up. Actually, since the completion of the new Salween bridge on 18 August and the mine blast on the 21st, the rest was anticlimax, even Major Kanemitsu's death on 6 September, and the macabre ceremony the next day when the

Japanese burned their colors and slew their wounded. Of the 1,200 Japanese on and around Sung Chan, 9 were captured, and 10 were believed to have escaped. The significance of Sung Shan lay in that it had cost the Chinese 7,675 dead to clear that block from the Burma Road, of which some 5,000 were from the 8th Army, leaving it but two understrength regiments fit to fight for Lung-ling.

Summary

As August waned, the Generalissimo was committed "in principle" to giving Stilwell command in China. Events along the Salween did not suggest there would be any speedy relief for China by a victory on that front, while in east China the Japanese had not as yet met effective resistance. Delay in breaking the blockade of China and in setting up an effective barrier to Operation *ICHIGO* in east China meant still further deterioration in China's military and political situation. Defeats in the field place great strain on coalitions; events on the Salween and south of Changsha would be felt as far away as Washington.

CHAPTER XI

The China Crisis of 1944

The Generalissimo's agreement in principle that Stilwell should command in China and the tenacity with which the Japanese clung to their grip on the Burma Road meant that events in China would soon take the spotlight. The Generalissimo's conditional agreement required that sooner or later a Presidential representative would arrive in Chungking for the delicate and historic negotiations on Stilwell's assumption of command, while the continuing blockade of China suggested that the Japanese pressure in east China would put more and more strain on the Sino-American alliance and on the Nationalist regime itself. The President's request that Stilwell take command would therefore be an added factor in a scene both complex and alarming to the Americans.

The Defense of Heng-yang

After their easy capture of Changsha on 18 June, which so alarmed Stilwell's staff in Chungking, the Japanese sent the *116th* and *68th* Divisions against the walled city of Heng-yang. Heng-yang airfield fell on the 26th, and two days later the Japanese, confident and flushed with success, opened their attack on the city itself.¹ (*See Map 18.*)

Changsha had fallen like a ripe plum, but in Heng-yang General Hsueh had a commander, Maj. Gen. Fong Hsien-chueh, and an army, the 10th, that held firm. The Chinese fought well and a Japanese attempt to overrun Heng-yang failed. Japanese casualties were heavy. The division commander and chief of staff of the *68th Division* were wounded in the first day's fighting. The commander of the *116th Division* was placed in operational control of the Japanese attack against Heng-yang. The Japanese tried again and failed.

After the war, Hata remarked that "supply conditions chiefly embarrassed the Japanese Forces during the Ichi-go Operation." He explained that long stretches of the railway south from Hankow had been torn up, and could not be repaired because of the floods and attacks of the Fourteenth Air Force. The Hsiang River, parallel to the Japanese advance, could not be fully exploited because the Fourteenth Air Force limited travel on it to the hours of darkness. One Japanese officer recalled that motor vehicles were the most successful

(1) Japanese Study 78. (2) Rad CFB 19107, Ferris to Stilwell, 25 Jun 44. Item 2651, Bk 7, JWS Personal File.

means of transportation, though the combined efforts of all agencies produced only a trickle of supplies.²

In concrete terms, this constriction of their supply lines meant that no supplies reached the Japanese forces before Heng-yang until the first series of Japanese attacks had failed. By 2 July a few items began to reach the front, and a week later the Japanese were able to maintain daily average deliveries of ten tons. This was a very meager allotment of ammunition, and as for food the Japanese were obliged to live off the country.³

The tremendous supply problem faced by the Japanese reflected great credit on the 68th Composite Wing, under Brig. Gen. Clinton D. Vincent. Vincent's men drove the Japanese to cover during the day, for they were machine-gunning even individual Japanese soldiers. Daring pilots went out at night to attack Japanese motor transport. Thanks to the impact of the efforts of the Fourteenth Air Force on their supply lines, the Japanese were stalled before Heng-yang.

Chennault and his staff had the liveliest appreciation of the Japanese problems, and hoped the Chinese would make a stand that would force the Japanese to attempt supply movements at a level greater than would be permitted by the Fourteenth's steady attacks.⁴

When the fighting before Heng-yang died away, the Chinese waited apprehensively for it to resume. After several days had passed with no further attacks, the Chinese and General Vincent's headquarters concluded the Japanese had stopped, and that their next move would be in retreat. Vincent issued an order of the day on 7 July, saying that victory was in sight, and all hands joined to toast it. "Hissing sky rockets and fiery flares split the warm gloom of Kwangsi nights," Chennault recalled after the war. "Merchants of Kweilin loaded trucks with gifts of ivory, silk, jade, and lacquerware and drove them to the airfields for presentation to American airmen." But all the while the Japanese were moving up their artillery and ammunition. By 10 July their preparations were complete, and the attack on Heng-yang was resumed the next day.⁵

From within their walled city the defenders of Heng-yang resisted as manfully as before, with what assistance the 68th Composite Wing could give them. Pilot fatigue, accumulating maintenance difficulties further compounded by lack of adequate facilities, and an ever-worsening fuel situation combined to reduce that support steadily. But while his resources permitted, Vincent kept his fighters over Heng-yang to hold the Japanese in their trenches during day-

² Japanese Officers' Comments, Incl 2, Hata; Incl 9, Maj Kanetoshi Mashida.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ (1) Japanese Officers' Comments, Incl 7, Col Takeharu Shimanuki. (2) Japanese Study 129, pp. 42-43. (3) Japanese Study 130, pp. 3-8. (4) Chennault, *Way of a Fighter*, p. 296, (5) G-3 Rpt 6, 2-8 Jul 44. Z-FOS G-3 File, KCRC.

⁵ (1) Fourteenth AF History, p. 439. (2) Chennault, *Way of a Fighter*, p. 299. (3) Japanese Studies 78, 129.

light hours. Fighter-bomber sorties pounded Japanese strongpoints. American aircraft went up and down the Hsiang River, a major Japanese line of communications to the siege, to interdict Japanese supply movements. From 68th Composite Wing's own meager ammunition stores, Vincent took 75-mm. shells and .50-caliber ammunition and dropped them into Heng-yang.⁶

The combined efforts of the Chinese infantrymen and General Vincent's gallant pilots again disrupted the Japanese plans: ". . . the subsequent combat situation became confused and our operation did not progress according to plan." Once again the Japanese had to halt and reorganize. But Chennault and Vincent could not exploit the situation; from 17 to 24 July lack of fuel grounded the bulk of the 68th Composite Wing.⁷ The Japanese reorganized once more, brought up the *58th Division*, and the siege of Heng-yang went on into the third week of July. To 20 July, Japanese operations cost the enemy 3,860 dead, 8,327 wounded, and 7,099 sick.⁸

That *ICHIGO* had been stalled by the 10th Army opened several opportunities to the Chinese and their allies. Since the Japanese had bypassed major Chinese troop concentrations, these latter could attack the lines of communications that fed the Japanese siege. The Chinese could gather reinforcements and proceed to the relief of Heng-yang. The Japanese lines of communications would give Chennault profitable targets, and since he had air superiority he could supply the Heng-yang garrison until it was relieved. So might run an armchair analysis. But events in China moved according to causes that lay below the surface.

Japanese Successes and Chinese Politics

On 20 July, General Hearn, who had returned from medical treatment in the United States to again become Stilwell's chief of staff, began to press the east China situation on his commander's attention. Stilwell was then at his headquarters in Burma. Hearn radioed that Gen. Pai Chung-hsi was predicting that Heng-yang would fall in two days more. Through General Lindsey of Z-FOS, General Pai was asking for six division sets of equipment on the Y-Force scale to prepare the 46th and 64th Armies to defend Kwangsi Province,

⁶ (1) Thanks to the interchangeability of U.S. 75-mm. shells, ammunition for the 75-mm. gun M4 mounted in a few of Vincent's B-25's could be used in Fong's old French 75's, a type the U.S. Army had used as the 75-mm. gun, M1897. Interv. with Dr. Constance Green, Ordnance Sec. OCMH, 15 Aug 51. (2) That Vincent dropped .50-caliber ammunition strongly suggests General Fong had some U.S. lend-lease .50-caliber machine guns. No other nation made them; the ammunition could not have been used in another piece. Chennault, *Way of a Fighter*, page 300, describes the air supply, but charges on page 306 that Fong received no lend-lease aid. As noted above, page 372, the manuscript Campaign of Southeastern China states that Fong was supported by a battalion of U.S.-equipped artillery. The apparent contradiction may reflect nothing more than the fact that Headquarters, Fourteenth Air Force, was not always kept informed on Stilwell's several major projects.

⁷ (1) Japanese Studies 78, 129. (2) Fourteenth AF History, p. 435.

⁸ Japanese Study 78.

Pai's own bailiwick. "These are all Chang Fah-Kwei's and Pai Chung-hsi's favorite troops," noted Hearn, who suggested further that these two potent war lords wished to hedge their own positions against the loss of Heng-yang. He went on to say that Stilwell's headquarters now faced what he called an "enigma"—whether to deny help to the ground forces in order to supply Chennault to the utmost. Hearn had checked with Chennault who was willing to give up tonnage to supply the troops covering his airfields. Hearn suggested, therefore, a shipment of infantry weapons and three units of fire to Kweilin, about 200 tons in all. Stilwell's chief of staff appraised it as a "piddling contribution" and a "token effort" to the troops defending the airfields, but suggested it in the manner of one willing to grab at straws.⁹

Next day General Lindsey himself sent a radio to Stilwell illuminating the tangled command and political situation in which the Generalissimo and the east China war lords were involved:

Observer from Zebra Force to Ninth War Zone arrived this headquarters on 20 July to present a request from General Hsueh Yueh that we assist him in reequipping and training the 4th Army now in Chenhsien. This assistance to consist of using our influence to have Chinese turn over the part of equipment which is now in Kweilin for this area and to obtain additional equipment from you.

General Hsueh Yueh will not make this request of National Military Council as he states it will be refused. This matter was discussed by me with General Pai Chung-hsi who stated he would not transmit this request to Chungking and that, if the matériel were made available, it could not be sent to that area at this time. It is my opinion that Ninth War Zone is not receiving equipment which is available to Chinese here. Information from reliable sources is that there is a group consisting of Marshal Li Chi-sheng [Li Chi-shen], General Chang Fa-kwei, Yu Han Mo, Hsueh Yueh, Governor Lung Yun [of Yunnan], and a group of dissenters in Szechwan who have been negotiating to set up an autonomous government in Southeast China if communications with Chungking should be cut off. Marshal Li would head this government. I believe present difficulties on equipment are results of Central Government fear of this clique.¹⁰

Therefore, after 21 July 1944, Stilwell was in receipt of a warning from one of his principal subordinates that the senior Chinese officers in east and south-east China, plus the authorities in Szechwan and Yunnan Provinces, whose relative freedom from Chungking control was well known to Stilwell, were contemplating revolt. Hearn's message may have presented an enigma, but Lindsey confronted Stilwell with a dilemma.

Since 7 July, the United States Government had been on record as desiring that the Generalissimo appoint Stilwell to command the Chinese Army, as Stilwell knew. If Stilwell was to defy the Generalissimo's order of 5 June that all Hump tonnage should go to Chennault, and give arms to a subordinate of one of the principal east China war lords, and these men were then to turn against the Generalissimo, Stilwell would be in a position too obviously em-

⁹ Rad CFB 20147, Hearn to Stilwell, 20 Jul 44. Item 2701, Bk 7, JWS Personal File.

¹⁰ Rad CCA 71, Lindsey to Hearn, 21 Jul 44. Item 2703, Bk 7, JWS Personal File.

barrassing to require elaboration. Stilwell approached the problem by referring the question of tonnage distribution to the Generalissimo.

Stilwell's reply to his chief of staff on 22 July was characteristically terse and left it to Chennault and the Generalissimo to arrange any supply of arms to east China.

Here is my slant. QUADRANT and SEXTANT turned down help for ground forces and accepted Chennault's plan for beating Japs with air alone. Generalissimo was sold on this plan and has insisted on full tonnage for air force. Chennault has stated that with ten thousand tons he could stop the Japs. He had twelve thousand last month. If he now realizes he cannot do it, he should so inform the Gissimo, who can then make any proposition he sees fit. Pai obviously cannot have equipment for six divisions, and as you say the allotment of equipment proposed in lieu of it will have no appreciable effect. I do not see how we can move until a certain big decision is made. You can tell the Chinese we are doing our best to carry out the plan the Gissimo insisted on.¹¹

When Hearn paraphrased the 22 July radio for the information of General Sultan, the deputy theater commander in New Delhi, his text showed he clearly grasped Stilwell's point that if Chennault believed he could not stop the Japanese by air power alone he should tell the Generalissimo, who could then propose any revision of Hump tonnage allocations he desired to give tonnage to the Chinese forces in east China.¹² While Stilwell's radio was circulating among his subordinates, he received a plea direct from Chennault to assign a troop carrier flight to China for air supply of Fong's heroic garrison. Stilwell refused on 23 July, saying: "As it would in any case set up precedent for further demands which would not be met, cannot stretch our present facilities to include the proposed commitment."¹³

Then Stilwell's 22 July radio, with its significant proposal, was given to Hearn's staff in Chungking to serve as the basis for CBI Theater policy on supplying arms to the east China commanders. But as written by the staff, the radio that went to Chennault and Lindsey for action, and Stilwell and Sultan for information, omitted any reference to Chennault's approaching the Generalissimo. The radio stated that at a recent conference the Generalissimo had insisted that all eastbound tonnage must go to the Fourteenth Air Force, that unless the Generalissimo reversed himself, no tonnage could be given to the Chinese ground forces. The message paraphrased the Generalissimo's note to the President of 29 April 1943 by remarking that the Chinese "contribution is the ground forces as now organized and equipped; ours is the air force and such aid as you are able to render the ground forces with practically no tonnage in sight."

¹¹ (1) *Stilwell's Mission to China*, Ch. VII. (2) Rad CHC 3019, Stilwell to Hearn, 22 Jul 44. Item 2704, Bk 7, JWS Personal File.

¹² Rad CFB 20274, Hearn to Sultan, 23 Jul 44. Item 2705, Bk 7, JWS Personal File.

¹³ (1) Rad CAK 5180, Chennault to Stilwell, 20 Jul 44; Rad CHC 3023, Stilwell to Chennault, 23 Jul 44. The Chennault-Wedemeyer Letter, Items 53, 54. (2) Compare the text of radio CHC 3023 with Chennault, *Way of a Fighter*, lines 10 and 11 on page 300.

The radio went on to say that the problem of Headquarters, CBI Theater, was to know how far the situation could be allowed to go before "pressing CKS for more drastic and effective action." So Lindsey and Chennault were to advise CBI Theater headquarters on what action to take if (1) Heng-yang held, (2) Heng-yang fell and the Japanese advance resumed, or (3) Heng-yang held and the Japanese drove north from Canton.¹⁴

Stilwell duly received his copy of the 24 July radio at his Burma headquarters. Almost all of his papers and diary entries for these days deal with the siege of Myitkyina and the misunderstandings over the Chindits, which is suggestive of his major concerns, though not conclusive. If he noticed how his staff had shifted the emphasis of the message from that in his basic radio of 22 July, he did not object.¹⁵

Chennault's answer to the 24 July radio drifted still farther from the point of Stilwell's 22 July radio. Replying to the question on the conditions under which the Generalissimo should be approached, Chennault said that under any conditions he should be asked to improve the efficiency of the eastern line of communications to Chennault's advance bases. As for questions of tonnage and allocations, Chennault said only that a minimum of 6,000 tons a month had to be received by him every month in east China, after which all tonnage above 6,000 should go to the ground forces. Thus in moving from one level of staff and command to another, Stilwell's 22 July proposal was altered beyond recognition and the moment passed.

The Chinese gathered considerable forces near Heng-yang, including the XXVII and XXIV Group Armies (seventeen divisions). American observer groups were with most of Hsueh's divisions but sensed that American matériel would have been regarded as preferable to their presence. Gen. Wang Hou-wu, XXIV Group Army, made a good impression on the men of his American team but they feared that General Wang's telephoned exhorting of his subordinates to attack lost effect in the eighty miles that separated him from the front.¹⁶

However, General Wang faced command problems. For example, the Americans learned that Wang's 79th Army almost always broke communications with XXIV Group Army on the eve of an attack, and that Wang placed no credence in reports from them.¹⁷ The American-equipped Chinese artillery units were disappointing. Fearing the personal consequences if they lost their fine new howitzers, Chinese artillery commanders took but a few forward into action and left the rest miles to the rear.¹⁸

¹⁴ (1) *Stilwell's Mission to China*, Ch. IX. (2) Rad CFB 20318, Hearn to Lindsey and Chennault, info Stilwell and Sultan, 24 Jul 44. Item 2710, Bk 7, JWS Personal File. The message form shows that Brig. Gen. Thomas S. Timberman wrote it for Hearn's signature.

¹⁵ Stilwell's copy is in SNF 121.

¹⁶ (1) Memo, Heavey for Lindsey, 30 Jul 44. AG (Z-FOS) 210.684. (2) G-3 Per Rpt 9, 23-30 Jul 44. Z-FOS G-3 File, KCRC.

¹⁷ Memo, Heavey for CofS, Z-FOS, 10 Aug 44. AG (Z-FOS) 210.684.

¹⁸ Memo, Col Albert G. Stackpole, CO TIG, 62d Army, for CofS, Z-FOS, 31 Jul 44. AG (Z-FOS) 210.684.

Chinese forces stood along the flanks of the long Japanese line of communications all the way back to the Yangtze River and pecked away at the Japanese intermittently. One attack even carried them into Changsha, but the Japanese promptly expelled them. Around Heng-yang itself, the Chinese armies were in a great semicircle, but the Japanese were able to keep them at arm's length and proceed with the siege. On one occasion the Chinese 100th Army moved to within five miles of Heng-yang, but the Japanese lines held firmly. The American staff of Z-Force understood from liaison reports that the 62d, 79th, and 37th Armies and the New 19th Division took heavy losses in the attempt to relieve Heng-yang; the 58th, 72d, and 20th Armies, in attacking the Japanese line of communications.¹⁹

When July came to an end, the Fourteenth Air Force, looking back on its efforts, tallied 4,454 sorties flown in support of General Hsueh's men between 26 May and 1 August 1944.²⁰

The East China Crisis Grows

Heng-yang finally fell on 8 August. Immediately thereafter, the east China crisis intensified for the Chinese and Americans. For the Japanese, victory at Heng-yang brought no solution to problems that by the summer of 1944 were growing ever worse. Both parties to the Heng-yang battle soon found their local struggle part of a much larger crisis, which for Chinese and Japanese alike seemed to involve the great issues of national survival.

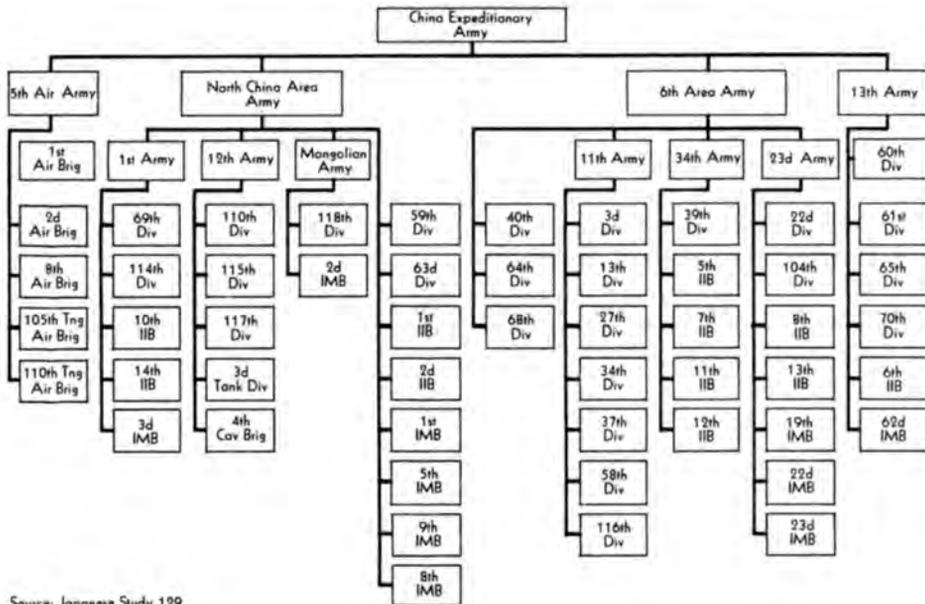
The summer of 1944 was a black one for the Japanese Empire. The island of Saipan in the Mariana group, which lies within bombing distance of Japan, was invaded by American amphibious forces on 15 June. Japan's *Combined Fleet*, which had been husbanded as jealously as the *China Expeditionary Army*, was committed on 18 June in an effort to stop the American amphibious attack on Saipan. The effort had failed with losses to the Japanese carrier air groups that left them impotent. Having completed occupation of Saipan by 8 July, the Americans proceeded to lay out B-29 bases. The long accumulation of Japanese defeats that began at the Battle of Midway in June 1942 finally brought a cabinet crisis in Japan, and Gen. Kuniaki Koiso succeeded Hideki Tojo as premier.

Events in Europe were also going badly for Japan's sole ally, Nazi Germany. OVERLORD had been a complete success, and on 23 June the Russian summer offensive had begun. It went well, and a few days later the Red Army was in Minsk. On 20 July there came unmistakable evidence of dissent in Germany, for an attempt was made to assassinate Chancellor Adolf Hitler. Five days later the Americans broke out of the Normandy lodgment area and, while the British sped up the Channel coast and into Belgium, began a sensational sweep across France.

¹⁹ (1) G-3 Per Rpts 8 and 9, 16 and 30 Jul 44. Z-FOS G-3 File, KCRC. (2) Fourteenth AF History, pp. 444-45. (3) Japanese Study 78. (4) Campaign in Southeastern China, p. 3.

²⁰ Fourteenth AF History, p. 446.

CHART 8—ORGANIZATION OF THE CHINA EXPEDITIONARY ARMY:
15 SEPTEMBER 1944



Source: Japanese Study 129.

Imperial General Headquarters, examining the critical situation, decided on Operation *SHŌ*, a massive counterattack on the American forces making the central Pacific offensive to be launched when the Americans attempted an attack within the area Philippines-Formosa-Ryukus-Japan-Kuriles. Since *SHŌ* was to be the decisive operation, Marshal Hata and *China Expeditionary Army* received new orders. Just as the JCS had ordered Stilwell to subordinate all else to support of U.S. operations in the Pacific, so *Imperial General Headquarters* in late July ordered Hata to make preparations to support the first-priority *SHŌ* operation. Two of Hata's twenty-four divisions, the 26th and 62d, were earmarked for *SHŌ*.²¹ The 26th Division went to the Philippines, the 62d to Okinawa. Most of the reinforcements for the *SHŌ* operation came from Manchuria.²²

ICHIGO was necessarily involved in the general examination of Japanese strategy that preceded issuance of the directive for the *SHŌ* operation. Nothing in the postwar Japanese studies and comments suggests that abandonment of *ICHIGO* was considered, but *China Expeditionary Army* was given an added

²¹ (1) Japanese Study 72, p. 135. (2) IGH Army Order 1050, 4 Jul 44. (3) See pp. 362-64, above.

²² (1) Japanese Study 6. (2) Japanese Study 72, p. 148. (3) Roy E. Appleman, James M. Burns, Russell A. Gugeler, and John Stevens, *Okinawa: The Last Battle*, UNITED STATES ARMY IN WORLD WAR II (Washington, 1948), p. 85.



FIELD MARSHAL SHUNROKU HATA



GEN. YASUJI OKAMURA

objective, "to establish an operational linking with French Indo-China by opening a road network. By doing so, the *Imperial General Headquarters* hoped to maintain only a liaison connection with the *Southern Army* forces to the south. It did not plan to open a line of communication to the south by reopening the Hankow-Canton Railway as a substitute for sea transport. The reason why the *Imperial General Headquarters* did not plan to reopen the Railway was simply that Japan at that time had no railway material reserve for that purpose."²³

The Japanese command structure in China was reorganized. (*Chart 8*) To conclude *ICHIGO*, in late August 1944, General Okamura was placed in command of a new headquarters, *6th Area Army*, so that the former commander of the *North China Area Army* became responsible for Japanese operations in east China, while Hata was free to concentrate on the problems of meeting the feared American landings on the China coast. Under *6th Area Army* were placed the *11th*, *23d*, and *34th Armies*, plus the *27th*, *40th*, *64th*, and *68th Divisions*, stretching from Hankow to Canton inclusive. Four independent infantry

²³ Japanese Officers' Comments, p. 34. The Japanese staff, Historical Section, Far East Command, explicitly rejected a suggestion by the authors that opening a land line of communications to the south was contemplated by *Imperial General Headquarters*.

brigades were brought up to division strength as the *114th*, *115th*, *117th*, and *118th Divisions*. Organization of Okamura's new command was completed on 10 September. In mid-October, *Headquarters 20th Army* (Lt. Gen. Ichiryo Banzai) was brought down from Manchuria to command the Japanese units between Changsha and Heng-yang.²⁴

After the Chinese lost Heng-yang, a lull of about thirty days followed in east China. The Japanese had to stop their advance because the Fourteenth Air Force was making their supply situation extremely difficult. To renew their offensive, and attack Kweilin and Liuchow, the Japanese wanted to accumulate the extremely modest sum of 400 tons of supplies in newly captured Heng-yang. Though they made the most strenuous efforts to bring up supplies, and though they halted for a month, they could not reach their goal. Some ammunition did come forward; the divisions to make the attack got from thirty to fifty tons each. But clothing and food could not be brought up. In retrospect, it would seem that if the Chinese had stood firm, and forced the Japanese to expend their supplies, *ICHIGO* would have died of simple starvation.²⁵

The fall of Heng-yang also marked a new phase in the complicated politics of the Chinese defense of east China, no less than the beginning of a new phase of *ICHIGO*. Perhaps the fall of Heng-yang on 8 August was the signal, or perhaps the timing was coincidence, but one day later a Chinese believed to be an associate of Marshal Li Chi-shen walked into the American consulate in Kweilin with a request that a message from Marshal Li be forwarded "to the highest American authorities concerned":

In order to cope with the critical situation with which China is confronted at present, a provisional government known as the Southwestern Government of Joint Defense, will be established in the near future. This Government will be participated in and supported by the Provinces of Kwangtung, Kwangsi, Hunan, Fukien, Anhwei, Szechwan, Yunnan, and Sigang [Sikang], and a great number of military and political leaders. It will have the following aims: (1) To substitute the present one-party and one-man dictatorial government at Chungking with a democratic form of government under the leadership of the Kuomintang; (2) to bring about the national unity, and to affect a general mobilization in order to cooperate with the Allies in crushing the Japanese; and (3) to obtain a better understanding and a closer cooperation with the Allied countries. Simultaneously with the instigation of this government, there will be sent out a telegram, jointly signed by all the leaders who advocate this movement, demanding the resignation of President Chiang Kai-shek; it is expected that this can be obtained without armed conflict. The provisional government will be headed by Marshal Li Chi-shen, President of the Military Advisory Council of Chungking, and former Chief of Staff to Chiang Kai-shek when the latter commanded the revolutionary army in the famous Northern Expedition of 1926.²⁶

²⁴ Japanese Studies 78, 129, and 130.

²⁵ Japanese Officers' Comments, App. 8, Col Imoto Kumao.

²⁶ (1) Rad CCA 205, Arthur R. Ringwalt, U.S. Consul, to Hearn, info American Embassy, sgd Lindsey, 9 Aug 44. Item 2718, Bk 7, JWS Personal File. (2) Graham Peck, *Two Kinds of Time* (Boston, 1950), pages 578-80, has a summary of the Li Chi-shen affair, which suggests it must have been fairly common knowledge in Kweilin at the time.

Stilwell's first reaction to this news, which he received while vacationing in Ceylon, was joyful. "Hooray for crime!" he wrote in his diary, hoped that perhaps now the Generalissimo would have to act, and added cryptically, "Lucky I prepared the ground months ago." Seeking more information, Stilwell ordered Brig. Gen. Thomas S. Timberman to contact General Pai, and there the topic disappears from his diaries.²⁷

The immediate reaction from the American Embassy was cautious and discreet. On 9 August State Department personnel at Kweilin were ordered by Ambassador Gauss to act with the utmost discretion and to deal with local Chinese authorities simply as local Chinese authorities.²⁸ As for General Stilwell's further and official reaction, after a day's reflection he made his stand unmistakably clear. In December 1942, Foreign Minister T. V. Soong had hinted that Stilwell might play a tremendous role in China Theater, and Stilwell had rejected the offer. Now, in August 1944, trouble was brewing in east China, and if Stilwell intended to meddle in Chinese politics, here was his opportunity. But the orders he now sent Hearn were: "Our policy is to lay off the internal affairs of China but we now have a big stake in this business and must keep ourselves informed. Listen to any propositions that may be made, but do not make any commitments nor even express any opinion. Just say you will forward any messages proposed."²⁹ Stilwell meanwhile attempted to ascertain the reaction of the Communists and the northern war area commanders to the threatened coup.³⁰

From Kweilin, Consul Arthur R. Ringwalt on 10 August relayed information which he presumably obtained from Marshal Li's clique, and which made serious charges against the Generalissimo. Ringwalt reported that in April 1944 the Japanese and the Generalissimo had agreed on a line delimiting the Japanese sphere of influence in China. The line was said to run from the Communist border region due south through Tung-kuan to the Yangtze River, thence westward along the Yangtze through Tali to Burma. The Japanese were said to have assured the Generalissimo he would not be molested west and north of that line so long as he (1) did not compromise with the Communists or any other dissident faction, (2) co-operated with the United States only to such an extent as not to lose the support of that Government, (3) ordered his personal forces outside his zone of influence to offer only token resistance to the Japanese, and (4) gave no support to armies outside his territory. Ringwalt reported further that in May the Generalissimo had become seriously concerned

²⁷ (1) Stilwell Diary, 10 Aug 44. (2) Rad TST 592, Stilwell to Hearn, 10 Aug 44. Item 2722, Bk 7, JWS Personal File.

²⁸ Rad CFB 20964, Hearn to Lindsey, 9 Aug 44. Item 2720, Bk 7, JWS Personal File.

²⁹ (1) *Stilwell's Mission to China*, Ch. VIII. (2) Rad TST 591, Stilwell to Hearn, info Sultan, 10 Aug 44. Item 2721, Bk 7, JWS Personal File. The statement that "we now have a big stake in this business" probably refers to the pending command question.

³⁰ Rad TST 601, Stilwell to Hearn, 10 Aug 44. Item 2723, Bk 7, JWS Personal File.

at the attitude of Gen. Hsueh Yueh and had asked the Japanese to disperse General Hsueh's troops.³¹

After the war, Marshal Hata denied that any such agreement existed, and suggested that the report of such an agreement might have originated with the Chinese Communists. Hata and his successor Okamura were quite familiar with the intricacies of Chinese politics. In 1952 they discussed at some length the relationships between the various war area commanders and the Generalissimo, as well as between several war area commanders plus one of the provincial governors with the Japanese. They also stated that Marshal Li was in touch with the Japanese at the same time he was seeking U.S. aid.³²

In compliance with Stilwell's orders, Hearn gave General Lindsey, who, as the senior U.S. ground force officer in east China, would be deeply concerned if the east China war lords revolted, clear orders on CBI Theater and U.S. policy in regard to internal Chinese politics:

We have referred URAD CCA 205 to General Stilwell. This headquarters has no authority to enter into discussions or make arrangements for negotiation with any party except that of the Central Government which has received for several years the backing of the United States Government. Our concern in political factions is limited to the manner and degree in which they affect our mission in China, viz., to promote the war against Japan. Therefore, it is desired that you observe closely the situation and keep this headquarters informed of developments especially those which affect our war effort. Be careful not to express any opinions or make any comments which may be interpreted as an indication of our being for or against such a movement. Work closely with Ringwalt and comment for our info only on his messages where such is applicable.³³

Ambassador Gauss believed that without substantial encouragement from the United States Marshal Li would not go further. Gauss did not intend to furnish such encouragement, but decided to adopt Stilwell's policy of listening and saying nothing in reply.³⁴

The next development was a report from an officer described to Stilwell as being in close touch with Li's circle, and with Communist forces in south China. This man said that Pai Chung-hsi had broken with Li, moved his family from Kwangsi, and would have nothing to do with the proposed coup. He also believed that Li had Communist support, which might soon reveal itself as a Communist drive to link forces with Li. He went on to depict Marshal Li as engaged in setting up his new government and named certain Chinese as potential cabinet ministers.³⁵

Stilwell promptly reported the projected coup to Marshall. He described it

³¹ History of China Theater, Ch. II, The Political Scene in China, pp. 4, 8, citing, Rpt, Ringwalt, 10 Aug 44. OCMH.

³² Japanese Officers' Comments, Incls 2, 3, Hata, Okamura.

³³ Rad CFB 20970, Hearn to Lindsey, info Stilwell and Sultan, 10 Aug 44. Item 2724, Bk 7, JWS Personal File. For text of Rad CCA 205, see p. 408, above.

³⁴ Rad CFB 21023, Hearn to Stilwell, 11 Aug 44. Item 2726, Bk 7, JWS Personal File. Hearn was keeping in close touch with Gauss and was relaying Gauss's point of view.

³⁵ Rad CFB 21092, Hearn to Stilwell and Sultan, 12 Aug 44. Item 2733, Bk 7, JWS Personal File. In writing the radio Hearn was careful not to betray his source.

as Ringwalt had reported it to Headquarters, CBI Theater, but deprecated any attempt by Marshal Li to supplant the Generalissimo. Wrote Stilwell:

There is only one outstanding man in China who could handle the proposed transitions without too much confusion. He is Pai Chung Hsi. Pai has character and ability as well as common sense and has always been most cooperative with us. In case this matter reaches a more serious stage, I strongly recommend that he be kept in mind as the one man best suited to take over. We are trying to get more definite information and will transmit promptly any news of development.³⁶

A few days later Stilwell modified his 10 August radio by reporting that as yet neither Pai Chung-hsi nor Gen. Li Tsung-jen was openly identified with the movement. If they stayed loyal to the Generalissimo, Stilwell believed the Generalissimo had a chance and observed that since the same east China war lords had betrayed Pai and Li in 1930 and 1936 the latter were probably waiting for solid guarantees. Then came the topic always close to Stilwell's heart. He had been informed that the Generalissimo had held an important conference where sweeping reforms of the Chinese Army were considered, the sort Stilwell had been urging for two years. If the report was correct, said Stilwell, it showed the importance the Generalissimo attached to U.S. support.³⁷

In compliance with Stilwell's order, Timberman had gone to Kweilin and begun conversations with General Pai. Initially, Timberman received the impression that Pai knew nothing of the plot, and so did not discuss it with him lest Pai inform the Generalissimo.³⁸

Then General Pai became more communicative. A day or so later he told Timberman that Marshal Li and three war area commanders, Gens. Hsueh Yueh, Chang Fa-kwei, and Yu Han-mou, were contemplating a separatist movement. Pai believed that the movement was largely the work of the Chinese Communists, that the east China war lords had little real support, and that any coup they might attempt would fail. In the light of his talks with Pai, Timberman reached an opinion which Hearn relayed to Ambassador Gauss in Stilwell's name: "Li's group now control the area but it will take U.S. backing to influence the overall picture. I believe this the reason for the approach to us. CKS will be influenced by a local coup and undoubtedly know we have been approached. The whole thing looks too small for us to do more than continue our present policy of receptive observation."³⁹

³⁶ CM-IN 8690, Stilwell to Marshall, 10 Aug 44.

³⁷ CM-IN 12022, Stilwell to Marshall, 13 Aug 44.

³⁸ Rad CCA 229, Timberman to Stilwell and Hearn, sgd Lindsey, 12 Aug 44. Item 2734, Bk 7, JWS Personal File.

³⁹ Memo, Hearn for Gauss, 15 Aug 44. This is a paraphrase of Timberman's last paragraph which read: "If Li does take over out here, it will probably be bloodless as all partners to the crime (who have the troops) are running things as they please now. Such a local coup might conceivably have beneficial effect on CKS particularly as he no doubt will know U.S. has been following same. However, the potential of this group from overall point of view is so small it does not warrant that U.S. go beyond maintaining constant touch with the movement." See Rad CCA 245, Timberman to Hearn, sgd Lindsey, 14 Aug 44. Item 2739, Bk 7, JWS Personal File.

In conversations between Timberman, U.S. Consul Ringwalt, and Marshal Li himself, on 15 August, the Americans made it clear that the United States was maintaining a "hands-off policy" but wanted to know what was happening because of its great interest in the early defeat of Japan. Marshal Li was bitter in his denunciations of the Generalissimo's regime, which had, he thought, failed the defenders of east China. Li made no promises as to when his coup would be launched but left the impression it would be within thirty days. At the end of the meeting, Li asked Timberman point-blank if the United States would support him and received the answer that such matters were for Washington to decide, that Timberman could say nothing.⁴⁰

In Yen-an, headquarters of the Chinese Communists, Mr. Service, Hearn's political adviser, made repeated attempts to learn whether the Chinese Communists supported Marshal Li. Service concluded that if the Chinese Communists knew anything of Li's plans, they were not interested. He also decided that the northern war area commanders were solidly behind the Generalissimo.⁴¹

While CBI Theater headquarters and the American Embassy were studying Marshal Li's threatened coup in east China, Chennault on 17 August raised anew the issue of American supplies for General Hsueh, whom so many reports had mentioned as one of Li's principal supporters. In his request, Chennault showed himself fully aware that Hsueh was not in the good graces of the Generalissimo but suggested to Hearn that Stilwell ignore the Generalissimo's government and give arms to Hsueh directly:

With Timberman in conference discussing ways and means of materially assisting the Chinese ground armies in retaking Hengyang I stated that I would be willing to contribute one thousand tons my tonnage for bringing light machine guns, grenades, demolitions and so forth as would contribute to the effectiveness of General Hsueh Yueh's army. I would not be interested in turning this over to the Minister of War because the chances are great that it would never reach Hsueh Yueh whom I believe will fight if given the bare essentials. Suggest that you discuss this with Timberman who gave me the impression that he was convinced we must do something quick right.⁴²

Hearn relayed the suggestion to Stilwell, who, weighing the matter in the light of the still-pending command question, answered: "The time for half-way measures has passed. Any more free gifts such as this will surely delay the major decision and play into the hands of the gang. The cards have been put on the table and the answer has not been given. Until it is given, let them stew."⁴³

On the basis of Stilwell's reply, Hearn's staff prepared and sent the following answer to Chennault:

⁴⁰ Rad CCA 251, Timberman to Hearn, Stilwell, and Sultan, 15 Aug 44. Item 2742, Bk 7, JWS Personal File.

⁴¹ Memo, Hearn for Gauss, 17 Aug 44. Item 2745, Bk 7, JWS Personal File.

⁴² Rad CAK 6394, Chennault to Hearn, 17 Aug 44. Item 2753, Bk 7, JWS Personal File.

⁴³ Rad TST 765, Stilwell to Hearn, info Sultan, 21 Aug 44. Item 2756, Bk 7, JWS Personal File.

Your proposition to divert one thousand tons from air force allotment to ground force supplies in order to retake Hengyang has been given the best treatment in the shop. We find after investigation that one thousand tons is sufficient to equip only one army with a very limited quantity of infantry weapons, two and one half units of fire for infantry weapons, a small amount of signal and demolition equipment with sufficient transportation to haul but one unit of fire.

Stilwell also sent us his views on your proposal. He agrees, in order to restore the situation in the east, an operation is required. He is working on a proposition which might give this spot a real face lifting and is loath to commit himself to any definite line of action right now.

Consequently we must hold off in making any proffers of help to the ground troops until things precipitate a bit more.

Realizing the press of time sorry had to hold up on this non-committal answer until heard from boss man.⁴⁴

The exchange of radios between Chennault and Stilwell's headquarters showed how the pressure of events since 1943 had persuaded Chennault to change his views. In sharp contrast with his attitude then, Chennault was now asking Stilwell to take Hump tonnage from the air arm so that the east China ground forces might have supplies. That the loyalty to the Generalissimo of the senior Chinese officers in east China was a matter for open speculation, and that Stilwell in accord with his long-held bargaining approach was reluctant to give arms to the Chinese without concrete evidence that they would be used against the common foe rather than in domestic squabbles, combined to make Stilwell refuse Chennault's suggestion. It is interesting to note that Chennault's and the Generalissimo's views had so far diverged by spring 1944 that the Generalissimo was insisting that all supplies go to the Fourteenth Air Force while Chennault was pleading for arms for the east China commanders.⁴⁵

The Hurley-Nelson Mission

While Stilwell and Chennault were, in their separate ways, seeking an answer to the east China crisis, the United States Government was about to intervene directly to place responsibility for the solution on Stilwell's shoulders. Whenever the President turned his attention again to the command problem,

⁴⁴ (1) Rad CFB 21565, Hearn to Chennault, info Sultan and Merrill for Stilwell, 23 Aug 44. Item 2763, Bk 7, JWS Personal File. This radio was drafted by Timberman. (2) Compare the text above with Chennault, *Way of a Fighter*, p. 301.

⁴⁵ The question of the quantity of munitions China itself produced for the forces of the Chinese Nationalist Government during the China Incident, the Pacific war of 1941-45, and the subsequent Chinese civil war has been the subject of intense discussion. In the first volume of this series, *Stilwell's Mission to China*, the authors, in commenting on one aspect of the problem—munitions production in Chinese arsenals in 1941—expressed the conclusion that the output of Chinese arsenals was a trickle. This opinion was based on the reports of the Magruder mission to China, in the fall of 1941.

As part of the program of lend-lease to China, nonferrous metals were flown into that country over the Hump. Possibly reflecting that effort, or perhaps other factors, Chinese arms production from the date of the lend-lease program to June of 1945 was a considerable national achievement in view of the difficulties that confronted the Chinese arsenals.

A systematic survey of Chinese industry was made by an American economic mission under

he would find waiting for him a memorandum from the Generalissimo, dated 23 July 1944. In it, the Generalissimo again accepted "in principle" Stilwell's command of "China's forces directly under the Generalissimo," then proceeded to lay down three conditions which would have to be met before Stilwell could take up his new duties. The provisions would be necessary, wrote the Generalissimo, because of the political circumstances in China and the psychology of the Chinese Army and people.

The Generalissimo's three conditions were: (1) the Chinese Communists could not be under Stilwell's authority until they agreed to obey the "administrative and military orders of the Chinese Government"; (2) Stilwell's functions, authority, title, and relationship to the Generalissimo should be clearly defined; and (3) "The distribution and disposal of all military supplies under the lend-lease arrangements should, in accordance with the spirit underlying the Lend-Lease Act, be placed entirely under the authority of the Chinese Government or its commander-in-chief. The Generalissimo, however, is prepared to delegate authority to certain officers of the United States Army to supervise over the disposal of such supplies."⁴⁶

To his agent in the United States, Dr. H. H. Kung, the Generalissimo sent instructions for the conduct of the forthcoming negotiations, describing the Generalissimo's political position in China as he himself saw it, and as he feared Stilwell's proposed appointment might affect it. The Chinese leader said that he himself was "responsible to the end for China," so that if transfer of power over the Chinese Army to a foreigner was not carefully regulated, the Chinese Army and people might think the Generalissimo no longer so responsible. Japanese and "subversive elements" might then exploit the resulting situation. He stressed the financial preconditions to Stilwell's having command powers in China: China must control lend-lease and the United States must give generous financial aid. That command over the Chinese Army

Donald M. Nelson, in 1944-45. Working with Headquarters, U.S. Army Forces in China, under Lt. Gen. Albert C. Wedemeyer, the Nelson mission obtained data which General Wedemeyer used as the base of his programs. These figures on Chinese arsenal production, March 1941-June 1945, suggest that the Chinese themselves, had the situation between the central government and the east China commanders permitted, could have made a greater contribution to the defense of the east China airfields:

Rifles	263,735
Light machine guns	33,076
Heavy machine guns	11,642
60-mm. mortars	5,150
82-mm. mortars	5,242
7.92-mm. ammunition	609,000,000
60-mm. ammunition	1,110,000
82-mm. ammunition	2,650,000
Hand grenades	16,620,000

These figures cover a period beyond August 1944, but there is no reason to believe production increased substantially after that date. The sharp increase in Hump tonnage which began in August 1944 was used to support the U.S. forces in China.

Hq U.S. Army Forces, China Theater, Historical Summary of Activities in G-5 Section, MS, 15 Dec 45, p. 3. OCMH.

⁴⁶ Memo, Generalissimo for President, 23 Jul 44, with Covering Ltr, Kung to President, 15 Aug 44. Bk IX, Hopkins Papers.

which the Generalissimo had agreed in principle to give Stilwell was most narrowly defined by the Chinese leader. Stilwell could command the troops actually fighting the Japanese, but not those in reserve or in training. The Communist forces would be discussed in special negotiations.⁴⁷ In effect the Generalissimo was proposing that Stilwell assume command of the Y-Force, plus a few divisions of Gens. Hsueh Yueh and Chang Fa-kwei, and with them stop Marshal Hata's offensive.

Pending the President's return the Secretary of War, Henry L. Stimson, and the Army's Chief of Staff did considerable spadework toward establishing the post of Presidential representative on which first Vice-President Wallace and then the Generalissimo laid such stress. The President had sent many special emissaries to troubled spots overseas. Several had gone to China, and of them it seemed to Stimson that only the commander of the Army Service Forces, General Somervell, had been "truly helpful." So Stimson and Marshall sought to find another Presidential emissary who might duplicate Somervell's success.⁴⁸

Their thoughts turned to Maj. Gen. Patrick J. Hurley. General Hurley had had a long and distinguished career in politics, corporation law, and diplomacy. After reaching the rank of colonel in World War I, Hurley had resumed the practice of law. From law he entered politics and was Secretary of War in President Herbert C. Hoover's administration, 1928-32. Returning to his law practice in 1933, Hurley scored his greatest legal success by negotiating in 1940 an agreement between the Republic of Mexico and five American oil corporations regarding the latter's expropriated Mexican holdings. Though Hurley was a corporation lawyer, his work on the Richfield Oil Company reorganization and the Mexican oil tangle had led the public to think of him as an oil man. Immediately after Pearl Harbor, Hurley had offered his services to the War Department. By his efforts to run supplies through the Japanese blockade of the Philippines, and by his later work as U.S. Minister to New Zealand in the spring of 1942, he had won the confidence of the President, who thereafter entrusted Hurley with a series of diplomatic missions, to the Soviet Union in November and December 1942, and then to the countries of the Middle East. While in Iran Hurley drafted the Declaration of Tehran and secured the signatures of Churchill, Roosevelt, and Stalin.⁴⁹ In the fall of 1943 General Hurley went to China to arrange the Generalissimo's presence at the Cairo Conference, November-December 1943. He made an excellent impression on both the Generalissimo and Stilwell.

Inviting Hurley to a conference in July 1944, Marshall and Stimson turned the conversation to China and the problems of CBI. Years later Hurley recalled Marshall and Stimson asking him if he thought that Chennault should be

⁴⁷ Telg 3, Generalissimo to Kung, 23 Jul 44. Item 5, Bk 1, Hurley Papers.

⁴⁸ (1) Henry L. Stimson and McGeorge Bundy, *On Active Service in Peace and War* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1948), p. 536. (2) See *Stilwell's Mission to China*, Ch. X.

⁴⁹ For the text of the Declaration, see Motter, *The Persian Corridor and Aid to Russia*, page 444.

theater commander. He answered in the negative and believed later that his answer pleased the two men.⁵⁰ Marshall for his part soon concluded that Hurley would like to be the President's special envoy to China. Marshall asked Stilwell's reactions to having Hurley sent to China to be the President's representative and act as a buffer between Stilwell and the Generalissimo, whose personal relations had so sadly deteriorated during the years since January 1942.⁵¹

Stilwell was pleased with Marshall's nomination of Hurley, raised no objection to the fact that Hurley as a Presidential emissary would be in some respects his superior, and closed his reply with a jest: "It takes oil as well as vinegar to make good French dressing."⁵²

Acting for the President, Marshall then placed Hurley's name before the Generalissimo on 10 August,⁵³ and with it that of Donald M. Nelson, former chairman of the War Production Board, as a Presidential agent to study China's fast-deteriorating economy. Nelson's mission to China did not arise from the command question, but rather reflected a situation which had arisen within the Roosevelt administration, involving the War Production Board and the forthcoming Presidential election.⁵⁴ The Generalissimo accepted Hurley and Nelson, with the now familiar stipulation that there had to be thorough preparation and mature consideration before Stilwell was actually given command.⁵⁵

Therefore when the President returned to Washington on 17 August he found H. H. Kung ready with the Generalissimo's detailed preconditions and Marshall and Stimson with the Generalissimo's agreement to Hurley's mission. The President talked to Kung, heard the Generalissimo's preconditions, and brushed them aside. In answering the Chinese leader's memorandum and several radios, the President urged the importance of speed in setting up Stilwell's command, and said that Kung had informed him the Generalissimo would take the administrative steps necessary to carry out his agreement to put Stilwell in command.

General Hearn presented the message on 23 August:

I am glad that you find General Hurley and Mister Nelson acceptable for the important missions they will perform for us. Now that my personal representatives to you have been decided upon, I think we should proceed immediately to take the positive steps demanded by the military situation. I urge that you take the necessary measures to place General Stilwell in command of the Chinese force, under your direction, at the earliest possible date.

⁵⁰ (1) Interv with Hurley, Jan 49. (2) Stimson and Bundy, *On Active Service*, p. 538.

⁵¹ CM-OUT 75342, Marshall to Stilwell, 4 Aug 44.

⁵² CM-IN 3986, Stilwell to Marshall, 5 Aug 44. Stilwell's old Army nickname, dating back to his tour of duty at the Infantry School, was Vinegar Joe.

⁵³ Rad WH 39, Roosevelt to Generalissimo, 9 Aug 44. Item 59, OPD Exec 10.

⁵⁴ Bk IX, Hopkins Papers. Also see Sunderland notes on the Hopkins Papers. OCMH.

⁵⁵ Memo, Marshall for President, 12 Aug 44, with Incl, Ltr, Generalissimo to Roosevelt, 12 Aug 44. China File (Hurley), Item 61, OPD Exec 10.

Extended deliberations and perfection of arrangements may well have fateful consequences in the light of the gravity of the military situation.

In my position I can well appreciate your political problems and particularly the political difficulty of installing an American officer in the desired command position. I feel certain, however, that between General Hurley and General Stilwell there will be an adequate comprehension of the political problems you face. I am urging action in the matter of Stilwell's appointment so strongly because I feel that, with further delay, it may be too late to avert a military catastrophe tragic both to China and to our Allied plans for the early overthrow of Japan.

As to matters of detail which Doctor Kung presented: I do not think the forces to come under General Stilwell's command should be limited except by their availability to defend China and fight the Japanese. When the enemy is pressing us toward possible disaster, it appears unsound to refuse the aid of anyone who will kill Japanese.

I am not suggesting Stilwell's title but I think it ought to imply that directly under you he commands the armed forces in China—that of the head of the state with his commander in the field.

I feel sure that General Hurley will be highly useful in promoting relations which will facilitate General Stilwell's exercise of command and his understanding of the related political problems, and that it will not be necessary to delay matters until each detail is considered and settled.

I propose proposing a new arrangement for handling lend-lease matters, relieving General Stilwell of his burden, and will communicate my proposal to you later.

Doctor Kung informs me that you will take the necessary administrative steps to implement our agreement. In this message I have been most frank, my sole effort being directed toward the freedom of China and the complete defeat of Japan at the earliest possible moment. General Hurley and Mister Nelson will leave here about August twenty-third.

I had a most successful inspection trip in Hawaii and the Aleutian Islands and Alaska. I think we have Japan very much worried and that by continuing the pressure every day her position will become still worse.

My warm regards,

ROOSEVELT ⁵⁶

The President having accepted Hurley as his representative, the two men proceeded to discuss his mission. The President ordered that Hurley's principal mission be to promote efficient and harmonious relations between the Generalissimo and Stilwell and to facilitate Stilwell's exercise of command of the Chinese armies to be placed under his direction.⁵⁷ Hurley was ordered to Chungking via Moscow, to discuss Sino-Russian relations with the Soviet Government. During Vice-President Wallace's trip to Chungking, Mr. Wallace and the Generalissimo had discussed the Chinese Communist issue, and the

⁵⁶ Memo, Hearn for Generalissimo, 23 Aug 44. Item 7, OKLAHOMA File, JWS Personal File. The original memorandum, initialed by Stimson and Marshall, and showing the two minor changes made by Roosevelt, is in China File (Hurley), Item 61, OPD Exec 10.

⁵⁷ (1) Memo, President for Hurley, 17 Aug 44. Item 6, Bk 1, Hurley Papers. (2) See also a letter, Roosevelt to Chiang, 19 August 1944, which states: "[Hurley's] principal mission is to coordinate the whole military picture under you as Military Commander-in-Chief—you being, of course, the Commander-in-Chief of the whole area—to help to iron out any problems between you and General Stilwell who, of course, has problems of his own regarding the Burma campaign and is necessarily in close touch with Admiral Mountbatten." Elliott Roosevelt, ed., *F.D.R.: His Personal Letters, 1928–1945* (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1950), II, 1530.

Generalissimo on other occasions had expressed to the President his concern over the attitude of the Soviet Union. Having been ordered to concern himself with the political aspects of military operations, Hurley would need the widest understanding of the forces playing upon China if he were to obtain the co-operation of the central government's forces with those of the Chinese Communists.⁵⁸

General Hurley received a briefing from the War Department which presumably did not cover the evolution of the views of the Joint and Combined Chiefs of Staff on the North Burma Campaign, for Hurley took up his mission unaware that Stilwell had begun the North Burma Campaign in compliance with orders from Southeast Asia Command based in turn on directives of the Combined Chiefs of Staff approved by the President and the Prime Minister.⁵⁹

Washington Plans To End Stilwell's Lend-Lease Powers

While Hurley and Nelson were en route to China, the Operations Division of the War Department suggested that the China, Burma and India Theater be split to create a U.S. theater of operations in each of the two geopolitical areas, China and India-Burma, and that Stilwell be divested of his responsibilities for lend-lease. Such an arrangement would go far to smooth Stilwell's path. Ever since the summer of 1942, Chinese impatience with the lend-lease allocations of the Munitions Assignments Board had taken the form of accusations that Stilwell was somehow to blame, accusations which derived an air of reality from the fact that he controlled the time and place of delivery. OPD's suggestion would free Stilwell of concern for the major logistical problems of the CBI Theater, and would give the Generalissimo's government a much greater voice in lend-lease matters. Stilwell could then concentrate on troop command in the field, and on support of the U.S. drive across the Pacific.

For the proposed India-Burma theater, OPD suggested that it be commanded by some other general, who would discharge his responsibilities in India via a deputy while he served in person as Deputy Supreme Allied Commander of SEAC. Command of the Allied forces in north Burma would be given to another American officer directly under Admiral Mountbatten. OPD expected that SEAC, in accord with the CCS June 1944 directive, would continue operations to secure the trace of the Ledo Road. The Commanding General, India-Burma Theater, who would probably be Lt. Gen. Daniel I. Sultan, Stilwell's deputy, would inherit the delicate problem of co-ordinating American operations in India with those of the Government of India and India Command, while at the same time he would be responsible for logistical support of Stilwell

⁵⁸ (1) CM-IN 6517, Hurley to Roosevelt, 8 Sep 44. (2) U.S. Department of State, *United States Relations with China*, pp. 549-60. (3) For the Generalissimo's apprehensions of Soviet intentions, see Chapter VIII, above.

⁵⁹ (1) Interv with Hurley, Mar 50. (2) See *Stilwell's Mission to China*, Chs. IX and X, and Chs. I and II, above.

in China and of the Allied forces in north Burma.⁶⁰ The Joint Chiefs of Staff would set broad policy on the allocation of airlifted tonnage to China, and in so doing would be guided by Stilwell's wishes. As of 26 August, JCS policy on Hump tonnage allocation gave first priority to the tonnage necessary to maintain, develop, broaden, and secure the air link to China to insure adequate air bases there.⁶¹ The projected India-Burma theater would have the policy-making authority inherent in its role of logistical support. If the new theater and Stilwell disagreed, then the matter would be referred to the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Acting for General Marshall, General Handy accepted the OPD proposal and relayed it to Stilwell for his comment, ending his radio with the remark: "As in the past most of the foregoing is an irregular arrangement, but between the Government of India, SEAC, the Hump problem, the Chinese Ledo Road Force, the Generalissimo's position and personality, and your dominating mission to save the military situation in China, nothing less than the complicated setup will meet the various requirements of the situation. . . ." ⁶²

Stilwell at first did not like the proposed command setup, saying that it would be more complicated than the old. If the present arrangement was continued, he thought the only irritating factor would be lend-lease:

If I have nothing to do with that, I will report with an empty satchel. At Cairo, the President told Chiang Kai-shek, as I remember it, that he would equip 60 Chinese divisions, and even 30 more if necessary. CKS will be looking for deliveries. We are now restricted to 30 divisions plus 10%. The question is: How do I play it? I can tell him that 30 plus 10% is the limit, or that we will make good on the other understanding. In either case, it does not make any difference who administers lend-lease because the Chinese will expect me to be able to influence it. The basic question is whether or not we will make good, and this will be very important in Chinese eyes. In brief, Sultan can handle everything except lend-lease and I will be blamed for that anyway.

After offering some comments on command relations and assignments in SEAC, Stilwell stated:

I should welcome a more definite and less complicated mission. Your proposal accomplishes this as far as I am concerned, but I believe it weakens our position here generally. If you leave the present set-up in India, I can go to China with very little on my mind. If I can get definite guidance on how far we are prepared to go with lend-lease I can do better than if I shrug my shoulders and tell them someone else is responsible. The only concern then is command of the CAI [Chinese Army in India]. . . .⁶³

In reply, the War Department reminded Stilwell that SEAC might argue that the Chinese were responsible for defending the trace of the Ledo Road once it was opened. Therefore, were Stilwell to command the Chinese Army

⁶⁰ Sultan became a lieutenant general, AUS, on 2 September 1944.

⁶¹ Memo for Record, citing WAR 87083, JCS to Stilwell, 26 Aug 44. Case 557/5, 21 Nov 43, OPD 381 Security, A47-30.

⁶² (1) CM-OUT 89892, Handy (sgd Marshall) to Stilwell, 31 Aug 44. (2) See pp. 379-80, above.

⁶³ Rad CRA 12616, Stilwell to Marshall, 2 Sep 44. SNF 218.

he would have to reach some agreement with SEAC on Chinese operations in Burma. Concerning lend-lease, the reply stated that two problems faced the War Department as it weighed the increase in shipments to China that would follow the opening of a land route: (1) the commitments made at Cairo; (2) administration of lend-lease to a Chinese Army which might include both Nationalist and Communist troops, if the two did unite to war against Japan. Captured German matériel would offer one source of supply. The Department stated that it was exploring every possibility of creating a new arrangement that would relieve Stilwell of all responsibility for the troublesome problems of lend-lease so that he might devote his time to commanding troops. The War Department had in mind establishment of a Sino-American board in Chungking making its requests direct to Washington. Once decisions were reached by higher authority in Washington, the U.S. Army would deliver supplies to the Chinese at the front. Such a procedure, the Department hoped, would give the Chinese a status like that enjoyed by the Great Powers, while the United States' interests would be safeguarded in that title would not pass until the arms were literally in the soldiers' possession.⁶⁴

After weighing the War Department's comments, Stilwell withdrew his objections to the proposed split in the CBI Theater. If the War Department could find good men to fill the new command posts that would be created, Stilwell believed the solution would be sound. He believed too that the new lend-lease arrangement (relieving him of responsibility) would be a great improvement over the old (under which he controlled time and place of delivery). Though the use of captured German matériel would multiply the types of weapons and ammunition in China, and create a new spare parts problem, as a stopgap until U.S. matériel could be provided it would be acceptable.⁶⁵

In none of these exchanges did Stilwell reveal any enthusiasm for essaying the role of commander of the Chinese Army. The initiative had come from the War Department, and he had responded dutifully, first from Burma, and then from Ceylon, where as deputy he was substituting for Mountbatten. During these latter weeks of pleasant interlude Stilwell had enjoyed himself immensely, and his diaries suggest that his interests were those of any holiday seeker to whom the telegram from the office comes as an interruption.

At this same time, his political adviser, John Davies, was of the opinion that Stilwell would be skeptical of any command post he might receive in China. On 4 September, in faraway Washington, Davies carefully recorded a long discussion he had had with Harry Hopkins, who was an enthusiastic partisan of Chennault's, and sent a copy to Stilwell.

After a few remarks about Madame Chiang, Donald Nelson, and H. H. Kung, Hopkins turned to the command question. Davies recalled his saying:

⁶⁴ CM-OUT 25105, Marshall to Stilwell, 4 Sep 44.

⁶⁵ CM-IN 6882, Stilwell to Marshall, 8 Sep 44.

The Generalissimo's latest messages seemed to indicate that he is willing for General Stilwell to assume command of all Allied troops in China, including the Chinese. He [Hopkins] suggested that it was felt that only a foreign commander such as General Stilwell could command both Central Government and Communist troops. I remarked that in view of his experiences in the first Burma campaign I found it hard to believe that General Stilwell would not be skeptical of the degree of control which he could exert over Chinese army commanders. I said that I foresaw his authority being undercut at every turn.

This comment apparently came as a surprise to Mr. Hopkins. He declared that General Stilwell had not indicated any doubt of his ability effectively to command Chinese troops. He asked whether or not the American command of Chinese forces in north Burma had not been a success. I replied that it had been but that in India and Burma we had far more control over Chinese units than we have had or will have in China. I went on to say that General Stilwell might successfully exert command but that all of the way it would be a hard battle against Chinese recalcitrance, lethargy, and indifference, and that I was sure General Stilwell would be the first to admit this. Nevertheless, full of pitfalls as such an arrangement might be, it seemed to me that the alternative—which was to leave the Chinese to liquidate the Japanese armies in China—was a pretty hopeless solution, and I thought that General Stilwell felt the same way.

Mr. Hopkins stated that General Stilwell would have a great deal of power because the White House would in this arrangement work directly through General Marshall to General Stilwell.

In the course of this discussion Mr. Hopkins commented explosively on the inefficacy of the Chinese army. He quoted the Russian criticism—if Tito with his small forces and resources could perform effectively, why was Chiang Kai-shek unable to do likewise?⁶⁶

The conversation left the command question, and both men agreed that civil war in postwar China was inevitable; that if the Generalissimo did not suppress the Communists, the Chinese Communists would remove him. The conversation drifted to Europe, then back to China, more specifically, to the Stilwell-Chennault feud.⁶⁷

Apparently quite a few of General Chennault's boy colonels have called at the White House. Mr. Hopkins was tremendously impressed by their youth, their adventures, and their fanatical devotion to Chennault. He remarked that Chennault is one of the most remarkable characters he has met, that the General is highly disliked within the Army but (and this he said with vehemence) the Army does not dare and will not be able to purge Chennault. He intimated that one reason is that Chennault will not remain in the Army after the war and may be expected to speak frankly and publicly. He concluded that events, however, had proved that General Stilwell's and not General Chennault's strategy with regard to China was correct. Mr. Hopkins believed that Chennault's position with the Generalissimo and leading Chinese officials had been impaired by their realization of this.⁶⁸

On the same day that Davies and Hopkins talked together in Washington, Hurley and Nelson arrived in India after a brief stay in Moscow. There the Soviet Foreign Minister, Vyacheslav M. Molotov, had assured General Hurley that the Chinese Communists were not true Communists at all, an assurance that Hurley accepted and relayed to Washington. Stilwell was waiting for the

⁶⁶ Memo of Conv. Hopkins with Davies, 4 Sep 44, Washington. Stilwell Documents, Hoover Library.

⁶⁷ See *Stilwell's Mission to China*, Chs. VIII and IX.

⁶⁸ Memo of Conv cited n. 66.



CHUNGKING CONFERENCE. Surrounded by Chinese officers, General Stilwell is photographed with Donald Nelson (left) and General Hurley (right).

American emissaries in New Delhi, because on 26 August he had received word that the Generalissimo wanted him to accompany Hurley and Nelson to Chungking for "important discussions."⁶⁹ There were some informal, unrecorded conferences on 4 and 5 September, then the Americans left for Chungking to confer with the Generalissimo.⁷⁰

The Talks Begin

Arriving at Chungking with a minimum of ceremony on 6 September, Stilwell and Hurley conferred with Ambassador Gauss and discussed the political crisis in China. Early the next day the Generalissimo's headquarters called, summoning Stilwell to meet with the Generalissimo at 0930. Hurley and Nelson were to see the Generalissimo at 1100. When Stilwell arrived, the Generalissimo was pleasant in manner and businesslike in approach.

Remarking that in the past Stilwell's work had been 100 percent military,

⁶⁹ (1) Msg cited n. 58(1). (2) *The Stilwell Papers*, p. 314. (3) Rad CFB 21690, Hearn to Stilwell, 26 Aug 44. Item 2769, Bk 7, JWS Personal File.

⁷⁰ *The Stilwell Papers*, p. 314.

the Generalissimo said that now as commander of the Chinese Army Stilwell's work would be 60 percent military and 40 percent political, that Stilwell would receive orders from him through the National Military Council. If Stilwell used the Communists, those troops would have to acknowledge the authority of the National Military Council.⁷¹

When Hurley and Nelson saw the Generalissimo at 1100, the Chinese statesman told the American negotiators that he would give Stilwell full command of all Chinese forces in the field, and with it his full confidence. In reply, Hurley said that the President proposed that Stilwell's new command be modeled on the integrated Anglo-American command that General Eisenhower had set up in Europe, and that Stilwell must have the Generalissimo's full authority and confidence in undertaking his new assignment.

The Generalissimo's comments suggested to Hurley that he did not understand how Eisenhower's headquarters functioned, but the Generalissimo was emphatic in his desire for a new Chinese services of supply staffed by Americans. The Chinese leader added that any Communists serving under Stilwell would have to submit to Chiang's control.⁷²

When Stilwell returned to his desk he found a radio from Lindsey's headquarters in east China, sketching the situation there in drab colors. A Z-FOS observer, who had just returned from XXVII Group Army, reported that XXVII, now whittled down to 8,000 effectives, was falling back steadily from Heng-yang with no attempt to contact or delay the Japanese. Its automatic weapons, small arms, and ammunition were described as "surprisingly adequate." This group army had two batteries of 75-mm. howitzers with American liaison officers attached, but "their use of these guns has been tragically ineffective. Old story of using one gun with remainder kept back for safekeeping." The 93d, 31st, and 46th Armies were appraised as comparatively well equipped and supplied. The trouble, in American eyes, lay in the command situation, which to Z-FOS appeared as follows:

46th Army is out of the picture because of its location. Similarly other armies on the flanks of the salient [which the Japanese had driven through east China from north to south] will not influence the situation because of their reluctance or inability to attack. Armies listed above are under 4th War Zone control with Chang Fa-kwei in command. Actually he has little or no control of them due to his persona non grata status with Chungking. Hsueh Yueh cannot or will not exercise command in 4th War Zone and he will stay by 9th War Zone. An outsider from Chungking would be a figure head. . . . No one here in power can tell us whether a stand will be made, who controls communications, when demolitions are planned on routes, or where 14th Air Force should best be used. With no real authority here we are just floundering. . . .⁷³

There was also trouble on the Salween front. Unknown to the Allies, the

⁷¹ Stilwell Diary, 7 Sep 44.

⁷² (1) CM-IN 6498, Stilwell to Marshall, 7 Sep 44. (2) Msg cited n. 58(1).

⁷³ Rad Kweilin 40356, Lindsey to Stilwell, 7 Sep 44. SNF 30.

Japanese *Burma Area Army*, after giving up the attack on India, planned a limited offensive on the Salween front to re-establish a firm grip on the Burma Road. The *2d Infantry Division* and a regiment of the *49th Division* were moved to north Burma from the Irrawaddy Delta of south Burma.

On 23 August the Japanese commander at Lung-ling had notified the *56th Division* that his situation was hopeless. Next day the division commander sent the *3/148* forward from Mang-shih to reinforce. On the 26th the *56th Division* intervened in strength to drive the Chinese off the Burma Road south of Lung-ling and save its besieged garrisons. Some 6,000 Japanese struck the road-block the Chinese had set up below Lung-ling to isolate the town. The Chinese began to fall back. Meanwhile, the *2d Division* was hurrying toward the scene of action.⁷⁴

Because all of his immediate reserves had been drawn into the fight for Lung-ling, and considering that the Chinese Government had ignored his earlier pleas, Wei Li-huang asked General Dorn to present his further requests for 20,000 trained replacements (Wei had not received one since the offensive began); for two more divisions; for permission to use the 5th Army's tank battalion; and for Pao-shan to be developed as a supply base. Dorn was partially successful in that the National Military Council renewed its promises to send replacements.

Meanwhile, in Burma, the Japanese were bringing up the *2d Division*. On 5 September the *2d* and *56th Divisions* opened their counteroffensive, the *DAN* operation, with 12,000 men. The *56th Division* struck the northern arc of the Chinese positions around Lung-ling on the 8th. The Chinese Honorable 1st Division resisted stoutly, and the battle began to grow in intensity, the Chinese greatly handicapped by the gaps in their ranks.⁷⁵

On 8 September Hurley took up his role as negotiator. With Stilwell and Nelson he visited a session of the National Military Council, and Stilwell entertained Gen. Ho Ying-chin, Chinese Army Chief of Staff, and a group of senior Chinese officers. From Gen. Yu Ta-wei, chief of Chinese ordnance, he learned that the Generalissimo wanted the Chinese Army in India to leave at once from Myitkyina, which the Chinese had held since 3 August, and attack toward Lung-ling.

Hurley was closeted with the Generalissimo, and later with T. V. Soong. Restored to the Generalissimo's favor after a long hiatus that followed the abortive attempt to have Stilwell recalled in October 1943, Soong was now to play a prominent part in the negotiations. Soong restated the Chinese conditions for Stilwell's actually taking up his new duties, among them, control of lend-lease, and Hurley demurred emphatically. The Generalissimo made a constructive suggestion, that Hurley and Stilwell prepare an agenda for the

⁷⁴ Japanese Officers' Comments, p. 36.

⁷⁵ (1) Y-FOS 1944 Hist Rpt. (2) Wood Report. (3) Japanese Studies 93, 148. (4) Japanese Officers' Comments, p. 37.



GENERAL STILWELL ENTERTAINS AT LUNCHEON. *Stilwell is shown with Vice Adm. Yang Hsuan-cheng and General Hurley.*

talks. The Generalissimo proposed to meet the Communist troop issue by incorporating the Communists into the Chinese Army if they would submit to his command.⁷⁶

In compliance with the Generalissimo's suggestion, Hurley, after consulting Stilwell, began drafting an agenda. The Generalissimo's 7 September hint, that he would like his services of supply reorganized, also resulted in action, as General Sultan and General Covell, Commanding General, SOS in CBI Theater, arrived in Chungking. Over 9, 10, and 11 September, Stilwell, Sultan, and Covell conferred with the Chinese military on supply matters, and Hurley completed the agenda. With this preliminary spadework done, Hurley and Stilwell returned to confer again with the Generalissimo on 12 September, and the pace of the command discussions now began to quicken.

The agenda Hurley presented on 12 September covered ten points:

1. The paramount objective of Chinese-American collaboration is to bring about the unification of all military forces in China for the immediate defeat of Japan and the liberation of China.

⁷⁶ (1) Stilwell Diary, 8 Sep 44. (2) *Stilwell's Mission to China*, Ch. X. (3) Rad CFB 22988, Hurley to President, 23 Sep 44. China File (Hurley), Item 61, OPD Exec 10.

2. To cooperate with China in bringing about closer relations and harmony with Russia and Britain for the support of the Chinese objectives.
3. The unification of all military forces under the command of the Generalissimo.
4. The marshaling of all resources in China for war purposes.
5. Support efforts of Generalissimo for political unification of China on a democratic basis.
6. Submit present and postwar economic plans for China.
7. Definition of the powers of General Stilwell as Field Commander.
8. Definition of General Stilwell's powers as Chief of Staff to the Generalissimo.
9. Prepare for presentation a diagram of command.
10. Discuss future control of lend-lease in China.

At Soong's suggestion, the phrase "on a democratic basis" was struck from point 5. The Generalissimo agreed to the "objectives" in the first six points; then, coming to Stilwell, said that Stilwell's powers would have to be defined in an international agreement.⁷⁷

After the conference, Stilwell recorded his understanding that the Generalissimo would give him command:

Gmo, Hurley, and I. Gmo said: Reds must obey NMC. Have you (JWS) inspected the Reds? In the past your work has been 100% military, now it will be 60% military and 40% *political* [Stilwell's italics]. We must reorganize our SOS. ("Will appoint JWS to command the field forces, and with the appointment goes my full confidence.")⁷⁸

Therefore the time seemed ripe for Stilwell to suggest, and Hurley to frame, the American proposals for Stilwell's command role.

American Proposals, 12-13 September 1944

The draft outlines of Stilwell's new powers, and for his exercise of those powers, which Stilwell and Hurley shaped over 12 and 13 September fall into three groups. First were those that Stilwell sketched for his own guidance, his estimates of what he would do on assuming command. Second, were Stilwell's suggestions to Hurley for the paper that Hurley would place before the Generalissimo. Third, and last, were the actual proposals as Hurley wrote them for the Generalissimo's consideration.

For his own personal guidance, Stilwell roughly outlined a draft of a circular telegram to be issued by him to all war area and group army commanders when he assumed command:

To War Zone and Group Army Commanders:

G-Mo has — — — [dashes and blank space left by Stilwell]. Lacking in ability, etc. My need for your assistance and cooperation is great. Without it can't accomplish anything. With your help we can do much. I hope you will look upon me as a true friend of China. My only thought is to defeat the Japanese and have China take her place with the Great Powers, strong and free. To do this we must make every effort to strengthen and improve the Army. I am asking for your full support in this endeavor.

⁷⁷ Rad cited n. 76(3).

⁷⁸ (1) This brief note, in Stilwell's hand, is dated "12 Sept" in the upper right hand corner, and was in the command folder that Stilwell accumulated on the fall 1944 crisis. Stilwell Documents, Hoover Library. (2) Stilwell Diary, 12 Sep 44.

There may be some of you who say: "What is this foreigner doing here?" I ask you not to think of me in that way. I have spent many years in China. I have travelled all over the country, I respect the Chinese people and their character, I have seen the Chinese soldier fight, and I have always stood up for him and the Chinese people. I hope that you will believe I am China's true friend.

Now the G-mo has honored me by appointing me to command the Field Forces. This great honor makes me very conscious of my shortcomings. The responsibility is great and my ability small. To accomplish anything I must have the support and cooperation of you all. Only in this way can I hope to *tui te ch'i Kuo Chia, tui te ch'i* [unify and save China for] the Generalissimo.

As I see the situation, China is close to exhaustion after her long struggle of 7½ years. The Army needs supplies and weapons, and it is to open a road from India and get them in that I have been working for 2½ years. The air ferry is not enough. We must have a road in order to bring in what we need. Even that will not be enough. We need a port on the sea so that American ships can deliver to us by a shorter route in less time and in greater quantity.

We cannot expect our Allies to do this unaided. We must still depend on ourselves. The G-mo has said that the brunt of the effort in Asia must still be borne by China, and it is our task to prepare for that effort. We have the means to do it. We have the manpower, and we can get the weapons. I know the Chinese soldier. I have seen him fight, and he is as good as any in the world. China's army can make her strong and keep her free. We must make every effort to rebuild the Army. It is for this I need your support and ask your cooperation. It can be done, but only if all of us work together in harmony with our eyes on our goal.⁷⁹

The steps that Stilwell contemplated after formally assuming command he listed as follows:

- Gmo public announcement. Radios to WZ etc. JWS to WZ CG's, repeat Gp A's.
- Conf. [with] Reds—Ch'en Ch'eng—Hsueh Yueh—Chang Fa-kwei.
- Select training area and concentrate.
- Orders to 14th AF.
- Allocate tonnage and items.
- Get money in rupees.
- Set up med. estab. (Armstrong) [medical establishment under the theater surgeon].
- Set up attacks on Ichang—Loyang—Shansi.
- Planes to supply Reds from Chengtu. Dump at Chengtu.
- US appts [appointments] as *fu shih* [temporary] changes.
- ACTION in NMC.
- Consolidation of Units.
- Relief and appt, reward and punish, promotion and demotion.
- Get the art. [artillery] together.
- Replacement centers. Inspect and reorganize.
- Pull in units from East.
- Take over provincial troops.⁸⁰

⁷⁹ JWS Misc Papers, 1944.

⁸⁰ Note in Stilwell's hand, undated, in manila envelope with September 1944 papers. Stilwell Documents, Hoover Library. It seems safe to date this paper and the preceding as 12 or 13 September 1944 because earlier the Generalissimo was not sufficiently committed to Stilwell's assuming command to make it worth while for Stilwell to make such studies. On 13 September Stilwell flew to east China and was busy there for several days. On his return to Chungking he found the situation so completely changed that the papers he then wrote, which he dated, are entirely different from the earlier papers in subject, tone, and outlook.

Writing to Hurley on 13 September, Stilwell pointed out that the title and role of Joint Chief of Staff meant little until other Allied forces were in China Theater. Therefore he suggested that his new title be Field Commander of the Chinese Army with no reference to the chief of staff function. Then he added: "If General Stilwell is to work satisfactorily he should get his orders direct from the Generalissimo. A copy of these orders should go to the National Military Council, and the Council should work with General Stilwell ways and means of putting them into effect."⁸¹

On the several issues involved in command of the Chinese Army, Stilwell offered six points which faithfully reflected the War Department's views as expressed to him on 31 August and 4 September 1944:⁸²

1. General Stilwell's function must be primarily command and operational with no responsibility for administration beyond general supervision. The situation is too critical to attempt any changes in procedure. The present machinery should not be disturbed. Any malfunctioning should be corrected by changes in personnel rather than by changes in organization.

This is true of all supply agencies. Different methods can perhaps be suggested to improve the system, but the system itself should not be disturbed.

2. The National Military Council must give its full support and cooperation to General Stilwell. He will not attempt anything beyond its capabilities, and will consult on plans.

3. All the Chinese Armed Forces, air as well as ground, are included in General Stilwell's command.

4. General Stilwell must have the authority to support his responsibility. This must include the right to reward and punish, to relieve and appoint officers, all in conformity with Chinese law.

5. The Generalissimo must announce General Stilwell's appointment and authority and direct all concerned to act suitably. The Generalissimo must give General Stilwell a suitable authenticating seal and a written commission and directive, setting forth his powers and limitations.

6. Lend-lease will be handled by an American commission sitting in Chungking, with a Chinese representative. The assignment of materiel will be in conformity with accepted plans for the first two groups of 30 Divisions each.⁸³

In his comments on supply, Stilwell was reflecting the advice of his SOS commander, General Covell. After conferring with the Chinese Covell had recommended no material change in the Chinese SOS organization, but rather a clearer definition of official responsibilities and centralized control of transport and communications.⁸⁴

In an earlier draft of the memorandum to Hurley, Stilwell indicated his conception that any arrangements with the Chinese Communists should be

⁸¹ One copy of this memorandum is Item 14, Book 1, Hurley Papers; the other is an unsigned memorandum, dated 13 September 1944, in type and Stilwell's hand, in the Stilwell Command File, Stilwell Documents, Hoover Library.

⁸² Rads cited ns. 62(1) and 64.

⁸³ Memo, Stilwell for Hurley, 13 Sep 44, Stilwell Command File, Stilwell Documents, Hoover Library. General Hurley's copy is Item 16, Book 1, in the Hurley Papers.

⁸⁴ Memo, Covell for Stilwell, 13 Sep 44, sub: SOS of Chinese Army, Stilwell Documents, Hoover Library.

purely military in nature and limited to the current crisis. He wrote: "3. The 18th Group Army (Reds) will be used. There must be no misunderstanding on this point. They can be brought to bear where there will be no conflict with Central Government troops, but they must be accepted as part of the team during the crisis."⁸⁵ (Nowhere in the War Department files or in Stilwell's private papers were there found any suggestions from Stilwell that the Chinese Communists should enter the Generalissimo's Government, nor are there any indications that he was ever given any orders to propose such an arrangement to the Generalissimo.)

Hurley weighed Stilwell's suggestions and, with Stilwell's approval, drafted two papers for the Generalissimo. One was an order of appointment, the other a proposed directive from the Generalissimo to Stilwell. Both were in the Generalissimo's hands before 16 September, probably a day or two before. Hurley's proposed order of appointment ran:

I, Chiang Kai-shek, by virtue of the authority vested in me as President and Commander in Chief of the armed forces of the Republic of China, with the advice and approval of the National Military Council, do hereby appoint General Joseph W. Stilwell, Field Commander, of the Ground and Air Forces of the Republic of China. He will be responsible directly to me for the operations of these forces.

The National Military Council will give its full support to operations of the Ground and Air Forces of the Republic of China. General Stilwell will consult with the National Military Council in the preparation of plans of operation, for coordination of supply and administration.

General Stilwell is hereby authorized to reward and punish, to appoint and relieve officers, all in conformity with Chinese law.

General Stilwell is hereby authorized to issue orders for the operations of the Ground and Air Forces of the Republic of China over an authenticating seal, an impression of which appears below.

This order will be published to all commanders and units of the Ground and Air Forces of the Republic of China. . . .

The proposed directive from the Generalissimo to Stilwell said:

You will proceed at once with the reorganization and relocation of Ground and Air Forces of the Republic of China and with the preparation of plans for a counter-offensive, by the Allied Forces in the China Theater, to regain the areas of China now occupied by the Japanese.

In carrying out this mission, you are authorized to activate and equip new units; to disband old units; to transfer personnel from one unit to another and to transfer units from one command to another and from one locality to another without regard to the jurisdiction of commanders or of provincial and war area boundaries.

In the course of reorganization, surplus officers will be ordered to report to the Commanding General, Officer Replacement Center, which will be established by the National Military Council.

You will coordinate your plans for reorganization and operations with the National

⁸⁵ Memo in Stilwell's hand, undated, in SNF 30. Because of the changed situation after Stilwell returned from Kweilin on 15 September this paper would appear to belong to the 12-13 September group.

Military Council to insure that the necessary supply and administrative details are coordinated with your plans.

You will initiate at once plans to improve the livelihood (living conditions) of the officers and soldiers of the Ground and Air Forces of the Republic of China so that it will be at least equal to that of the people in the rear areas.

You are authorized to requisition supplies for the Ground and Air Forces of the Republic of China in the areas where they are stationed, giving a receipt for such supplies. Said receipt will show the date and place of requisition, the name of the person from whom requisitioned, the name, quantity and current local price on each item. Receipts as given will be redeemed by the National Military Council.⁸⁶

In the proposed directive may be read what Stilwell thought was wrong with the Chinese Army and what he proposed to do about it: amalgamate units to bring the better ones up to Table of Organization strength, weed out and dismiss surplus officers, move units from one war area to another as the military situation might require, feed the soldier an adequate diet, and pay for what the soldier ate. Here were the Army reforms that Stilwell had urged on the Generalissimo in one memorandum after another in 1942 and 1943, memorandums to which, as a rule, the Generalissimo had not replied.⁸⁷ Now, in September 1944, Stilwell through Hurley was asking for power to put them into effect.

While the Chinese considered their response, Stilwell prepared to go to east China. The military picture appeared gloomy to him, both there and on the Salween, and Stilwell reported as much to Marshall on 12 September. On the Salween, General Dorn was seriously disturbed by the steady Japanese progress at Lung-ling, and Stilwell had come to share his concern. So Stilwell told his superior that there could be a very serious setback at Lung-ling, after which the Japanese might even go on to cross the Salween River itself. If they attempted it, Stilwell did not at the moment know how they could be stopped. As for negotiations with the Generalissimo, they were "dragging along," for "the Gmo meanwhile is using up time in arguments over command and the control of Lend-lease. I will keep you informed."⁸⁸

Stilwell and the Question of the Communists' Role

By 13 September, when Stilwell was ready to visit east China, his American superiors had somewhat clarified their own ideas on the role the Chinese Communists should play in China Theater, and had informed Stilwell accordingly. During Wallace's visit the advantages of having both Communists and Nationalists turn their full attention to the war against Japan had been stressed.⁸⁹ The

⁸⁶ Rad cited n. 76(3).

⁸⁷ See *Stilwell's Mission to China*, Chs. IV, V, VII, X. The Generalissimo did answer two of Stilwell's 19 September 1943 memorandums on Army reform.

⁸⁸ Rad CFB 22467, Stilwell to Marshall, 12 Sep 44. OKLAHOMA File, JWS Personal File.

⁸⁹ *U.S. Relations With China*, pp. 549-60.

President had accepted and relayed to the Generalissimo the Joint Chiefs' suggestion that Stilwell command both the Nationalist and Communist forces.⁹⁰ The War Department had told Stilwell it contemplated giving lend-lease to a Chinese Army that might include Communists as well as Nationalists.⁹¹

What the Chinese Communists thought of the prospect of Stilwell's assuming command, which would mean orders to them to take the offensive against Japan, was another question and one that would have to be answered. Stilwell's diaries and papers show that he and his political advisers had only begun to explore that question before the climax of the command crisis made it irrelevant.⁹²

On 27 July 1944, Chou En-lai, the Chinese Communist representative in Chungking, invited John S. Service, Hearn's political adviser, to call on him and gave him a long presentation of the Communist views on the whole Chinese scene. After the talk, Service reported Chou as taking a line which appears very reminiscent of that of the Generalissimo when questions of command and strategy arose, that is, that they should be discussed in detail after U.S. lend-lease and U.S. troops were present in China in great quantity. Manifestly, Chou would be prepared to drive a hard bargain on the command question.

16. Having in mind [Communist commander in chief] Chu Teh's suggestion to [Gunther?] Stein of an Allied Supreme Commander in China, I asked whether this would be advisable or practical. He replied with a strong affirmative but qualified it by saying that the time for suggestion had not yet come. We should wait until American supplies and men are coming into China in significant magnitude and the counter-offensive is actually in sight. The Commander should be American and would be welcome by the Communists, if agreed to by the Central Government.

17. Regarding the possible enlargement of activities of the present Observer Section, Chou said that such expansion toward active collaboration would of course be welcomed by the Communists but would, unless there was a radical change, be opposed by the Central Government. However, the door was now opened a crack and it might be possible, by following a slow and careful course, to move towards modified collaboration. For this reason the granting of permission for the Observer Group was a milestone. (I was interested that here, as well as in other parts of the conversation, Chou was careful to recognize the authority of the Central Government and the at least potential leadership of the Generalissimo. He obviously had no expectation that we were going to immediately start on a program of direct support of the Communist forces.)⁹³

⁹⁰ See pp. 381-83, 416-17, above.

⁹¹ Rad cited n. 64.

⁹² During the command crisis, John Davies was in the United States and was not in close touch with Stilwell prior to 17 October 1944. Service, though in China, was kept out of the picture by Stilwell, who confined knowledge of the September negotiations to himself and Hurley on the American side. There is no suggestion in the Stilwell papers that he discussed the negotiations with any of the other political advisers attached to the U.S. Army in China.

⁹³ Rpt, Service, 28 Jul 44, sub: Conv with Gen Chou En-lai. Item 17, Sec III, Vol I, DIXIE Mission, OCMH.

Then from Yen-an, on 29 August, Service urged that a program for arming the Chinese Communists with lend-lease weapons be set up. He told Stilwell:

The U.S. Army has made a start in cooperation with the military forces of the Chinese Communists. So far this has been passive on our part—the tapping of Communist intelligence sources and the rescue of American air crews. The obvious success which this half-way cooperation has had should lead logically to the consideration of more active measures.

Such military cooperation would begin with our furnishing basic military supplies now desperately lacked by the Communist forces. It should be supported by training in the effective use of these supplies. It should be planned to lead, as the war in China develops into its late stages, to actual tactical cooperation of Communist with air and other ground forces.

The physical difficulties of supplying the Communist forces admittedly will be great. These difficulties can be overcome. But the decision to start this cooperation will involve questions of both military and political policy. It is sure, to begin with, to meet the strong and obstinate opposition of the Kuomintang. We must decide whether the gains we can reasonably expect from aiding the Communists will justify the overcoming — or disregarding—of this Kuomintang opposition.⁹⁴

By coincidence, as this report was on its way to Stilwell so, too, were the War Department radios of 31 August and 4 September which revealed that the Department was prepared to contemplate giving lend-lease to a Chinese Army that included Chinese Communists, much as it was currently giving arms to the Yugoslav partisans. After Stilwell had had a few days to digest all these matters, as part of his proposals to Hurley for the exact definition of his powers as field commander in China Stilwell gave his views on the distribution of lend-lease. He recommended that it be distributed in accord with “accepted plans for the first two groups of 30 Divisions each,” which made no provision whatever for any Communist forces. With Stilwell recommending such priorities, it would be a long time before the Communists received supplies in the “significant” quantities at which Chou En-lai had hinted.⁹⁵

Such was Stilwell's attitude when Communist emissaries visited him on 13 September, the day he left for Kweilin and east China. All that is recorded of the meeting in his diary is that Stilwell told them he would go to Yen-an, that he would meet again with them after he returned from Kweilin, and that they were much pleased. In the light of events, this suggests that after Stilwell's position had been settled to the mutual satisfaction of the Generalissimo and himself he would go to Yen-an for the bargaining sessions that would precede any exercise of command over Communist forces.⁹⁶ A few weeks later, Stilwell recorded his belief that it was “common knowledge” that all facts about “Communist trouble [were?] aired by Communists” as well as “their statement that they would serve under me.”⁹⁷ Possibly the Chinese Communists were seeking

⁹⁴ Rpt 16, Service to Stilwell, 29 Aug 44, sub: Desirability of American Mil Aid to Chinese Communist Armies. Item 21, Sec III, Vol I, DIXIE Mission, OCMH.

⁹⁵ (1) The War Department radios are discussed on pages 419–20, above. (2) The proposals to Hurley are on page 428, above.

⁹⁶ Stilwell Diary, 13 Sep 44.

⁹⁷ SUP 67. The grammatical construction of this fragment does not make it clear whether the Communists extended this assurance to Stilwell on 13 September, then made it public knowledge, or whether the assurance was given later and gratuitously to third parties.

to improve their bargaining position vis-à-vis the Nationalists by such revelations; possibly the disclosure emerged as part of the gossip and rumor that swirled through Chungking.

Had Stilwell visited Yen-an, his stay might have coincided with a visit by Japanese emissaries, for according to Marshal Hata, both Japanese and Americans were then thinking of reaching an understanding with the Communists. Hata's recollection was that in the last six months of 1944 "the Japanese Forces planned to use the Chinese Communist Forces to suppress the Nationalist Forces. . . ." ⁹⁸

Crisis in the East, Crisis in the West

The Generalissimo's wish that the Chinese troops from Myitkyina intervene in the fighting around Lung-ling on the Salween front had been conveyed to Stilwell on 8 September, and repeated on the 11th. It could not be more than a desire or request, because the Chinese Army in India was under Mountbatten's command, by the Generalissimo's own order, and Myitkyina lay within Mountbatten's theater, Southeast Asia Command. ⁹⁹

Nevertheless, it was an expressed desire of the Supreme Commander, China Theater, to his joint chief of staff, and before departing for Kweilin Stilwell replied.

Stilwell argued that rather than call upon the 38th and 30th Divisions from Myitkyina, who were exhausted by siege, to attack the strongly fortified Japanese position at Bhamo, it would be better to fill the depleted ranks of Wei's divisions. No replacements had reached Wei since the fighting began, and Stilwell stated bluntly that it was the failure to keep the Salween forces up to strength that was responsible for the trouble the Japanese were causing at Lung-ling. He feared too that the Japanese would let their commander at Bhamo meet the 38th and 30th Divisions with his own resources, while continuing their counterattack at Lung-ling. ¹⁰⁰

In east China, phase two of *ICHIGO* was under way again, with the *11th Army* (seven divisions) driving south down the railway from Heng-yang, and the *23d Army* (two divisions and an independent mixed brigade) north from Canton. A meeting of the two forces would pinch out the Fourteenth Air Force's great bases at Kweilin and Liuchow. The *11th Army* began its attack on 29 August with six divisions and about 1 September the Chinese began to retreat. Ling-ling, the next big town south of Heng-yang, fell on 8 September. The whole of the *23d Army* was on the move by the 13th, and so the Japanese were well on their way into Kwangsi Province which contained the air bases. ¹⁰¹

⁹⁸ Japanese Officers' Comments, Incl 2, Hata. The field marshal disparaged Communist operations against the Japanese, dismissing them by saying the "Chinese Communists merely resorted to guerrilla warfare and planned the expansion of the area under their influence and the weakening and disintegration of the Nationalist Forces through the war against Japan."

⁹⁹ See *Stilwell's Mission to China*, Ch. X, and Ch. I, above.

¹⁰⁰ Memo, Stilwell for Generalissimo, 12 Sep 44. Stilwell Documents, Hoover Library.

¹⁰¹ (1) See p. 319, above. (2) Japanese Study 98.

After the war, in discussing the performance of the Chinese divisions supposed to defend Kweilin and Liuchow, the political situation in east China, and the attitudes of the east China commanders, Marshal Hata remarked that in his opinion Li Tsung-jen and Pai Chung-hsi had kept their forces out of serious fighting in order to conserve them "for the future."¹⁰²

Chinese resistance was light, but with its supply situation improved the Fourteenth Air Force again did its best on the Salween as well as in east China. In the week of 13–20 September it dropped 463 tons of bombs and flew 1,469 sorties.¹⁰³ In all September the Fourteenth Air Force dropped 1,897.6 tons of bombs and fired 1,281,382 rounds of machine gun ammunition, some of the latter of course at aerial targets.¹⁰⁴

In early September, Japanese fighter reinforcements from the homeland entered combat. The Japanese were pleased at the performance of the late-model fighters with one of the air regiments they sent to China. Thanks to the air cover thus supplied, for the first time in the east China campaign they found themselves able to move supplies regularly on the Hsiang River, which paralleled their line of advance, and so thought their prospects "brightened."¹⁰⁵

Arriving in Kweilin on the morning of 14 September, Stilwell summoned Gen. Chang Fa-kwei, commander of the IV War Area. General Chang told Stilwell that the Generalissimo had ordered him to defend Kweilin by placing three divisions within that walled town, an order that Chang did not like. Stilwell did not like it either, and hastily sketched out a plan for submission to the Generalissimo when he returned to Chungking.¹⁰⁶

It was necessary to reach painful decisions about the demolition of U.S. installations at Kweilin. Stilwell's solution was to blow up all but one airfield, and to keep it open until the last so that if the Generalissimo approved his plan the means to carry it out might be flown in.

During his stay at Kweilin, Stilwell was told that there had been no co-operation between Gens. Chang Fa-kwei and Hsueh Yueh during the east China campaign, that units from Hsueh Yueh's IX War Area had not fallen back into the IV War Area, and that the Generalissimo had tried to direct the campaign by long distance from Chungking. Having no illusions about Chang Fa-kwei's ability to stop General Okamura short of Kweilin, and hoping only that Chang's troops would not be immured in Kweilin, Stilwell did not interfere with the evacuation of American installations from the area. His notes on this visit record nothing about the political situation in east China.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰² Japanese Officers' Comments, Incl 2, Hata.

¹⁰³ Fourteenth AF History, p. 463-A.

¹⁰⁴ Year Book 1944 Covering Operations of Army Air Forces in India-Burma and China Theaters and Eastern Air Command, Statistics Compiled by 22d Statistical Control Unit. OCMH.

¹⁰⁵ Japanese Study 130, p. 13.

¹⁰⁶ The plan is the part of the diary entry of 14 September 1944 beginning with the word *Orders* and was submitted to the Generalissimo on 18 September 1944.

¹⁰⁷ (1) Stilwell Diary, 14 Sep 44. (2) The loyalty to the Generalissimo of these commanders, notably Hsueh Yueh, seemed uncertain for many more months. See the Chennault-Wedemeyer radios on Hsueh Yueh's loyalty. Items 432-38, Bks 1 and 2, CG USFCT file 06104-B, CBIT 49-20, DRB AGO.

General Stilwell received some good news on the morning of 15 September. Teng-chung was finally in Chinese hands. With that heartening word he returned to Chungking. On his arrival, Stilwell and Hurley were summoned to confer with the Generalissimo.

In this conference it became apparent that the Lung-ling battle which had so disturbed Stilwell was now alarming the Generalissimo, who told Stilwell that if the Chinese divisions that had taken Myitkyina did not attack toward Bhamo within one week, the Generalissimo would pull Wei's divisions back across the Salween to protect Kunming. Stilwell was "appalled" and protested strongly, for this was a major step that would end the North Burma Campaign. It may be surmised that two events made the picture seem a good deal brighter to Stilwell than it had been a few days earlier. One was the capture of Teng-chung, which actually opened a usable route to Myitkyina known as the "Teng-chung cut-off." The other was the fact that an infantry company, reinforced, moving due east from Myitkyina under orders of theater headquarters, had established contact with the Y-Force after a nine-day hike. Moreover, Stilwell believed the situation to be improving at Lung-ling, for just the day before he had written in his diary: "Dorn's situation not so desperate. 36th Division, 200th Division, plus 10,000 fillers may save it."¹⁰⁸

Disgusted and angered, Stilwell said nothing more to the Generalissimo, neither did he consult with Hurley after the conference, but as he had so often done in the past hastened to acquaint General Marshall with the latest development, and sent off his report at 1600 on 15 September:

Returned from Kweilin today. Arrangements made to safeguard American personnel. Situation that area now hopeless. Only remaining reliable Chinese units will defend Kweilin by getting inside city. The place will then become another rat trap, like Changsha and Hengyang. These dispositions are by personal order of Gmo. For defense of Liuchow, there remains the remnant of the 93d Army, which is unreliable, and two regiments of militia. The jig is up in South China. We are getting out of Kweilin now, and will have to get out of Liuchow as soon as the Japs appear there. The disaster south of the Yangtze is largely due to lack of proper command and the usual back-seat driving from Chungking. The trouble continues to be at the top. The Gmo called me in today and proposed a withdrawal from Lungling to the east side of the Salween. I was appalled and protested strongly, pointing out that we are fighting for a road to China, and that with Lungling in our possession we control the entire trace of that road. It made no impression on him. He is afraid the Japs will advance to Kunming if we are beaten at Lungling, but he has failed utterly in keeping the Y-Force supplied with fillers. It is now down to an effective combat strength of fourteen thousand and we are making frantic efforts to get replacements flown in. The Gmo says that if I do not attack from Myitkyina towards Bhamo within a week, he will withdraw the Y-Force, thus throwing away the results of all our labors. He will not listen to reason, merely repeating a lot of cock-eyed conceptions of his own invention. I am now convinced that he regards the South China catastrophe as of little moment, believing that the Japs will not bother him further in that area, and that he imagines he can get behind the Salween and there wait in safety for the U.S. to finish the war. Our conferences on command are drag-

¹⁰⁸ (1) Stilwell Diary, 14 Sep 44. (2) SUP 37. (3) Rad CFB 22638, Stilwell to Marshall, 15 Sep 44. Item 10, OKLAHOMA File, JWS Personal File.

ging, and tomorrow we are going to try some plain talk with T. V. Soong, in the hope of getting to the Gmo some faint glimmer of the consequences of further delay and inaction.¹⁰⁹

Ironically, on 14 September the Japanese headquarters in north Burma, *33d Army*, had halted the Japanese Salween counteroffensive because of the tenacious Chinese resistance at Lung-ling and the fall of Teng-chung and Sung Shan. The *33d Army* had not intended to cross the Salween; the counteroffensive was planned to relieve pressure on the *56th Division* and to bring aid to the Japanese garrisons of Lung-ling, Teng-chung, and Sung Shan. But communications were slow from the Salween front and Stilwell did not know of the withdrawal for several days.¹¹⁰ There was further irony in the fact that the monsoon was about to lift, and that full-scale renewal of the Allied offensive in north Burma was scheduled to begin in a few weeks.¹¹¹

"I Do Not Seek the Job"

The Generalissimo's proposal to withdraw the Y-Force and give up the fight to break the blockade of China, his demands to Hurley that China control the distribution of lend-lease, which to Stilwell suggested that only the Generalissimo's own faction within the Kuomintang would receive arms, made Stilwell believe the time had come for some "plain talk" to T. V. Soong.¹¹² In discussing the prospect of his assuming command with the War Department, Stilwell's radios had revealed no enthusiasm for the role. The first negotiations with the Generalissimo had been encouraging, then the Chinese leader's desire to abandon the North Burma Campaign had come as a shock. Moreover, after his experiences with the Generalissimo's system of command in 1942 and 1944, Stilwell was anxious that there be no misunderstanding about Stilwell's powers as a field commander and prepared to make it very plain that he would now accept command only if his conditions as to freedom and full authority were met by the Chinese. So Stilwell decided to tell Soong exactly how he felt about the matter. As was his custom, he drafted his remarks beforehand, and gave a copy to Hurley.¹¹³

Hurley, General Sultan, Stilwell, and Soong conferred on the afternoon of 16 September. The latter two were old acquaintances now, the indomitable, rough-hewn Stilwell, and the glib, wily Soong, with friends high in the U.S. administration. They had been allies in the winter of 1942-43; then Soong had

¹⁰⁹ Rad cited n. 108(3).

¹¹⁰ (1) Japanese Study 93. (2) Stilwell Diary, 17 Sep 44.

¹¹¹ History of India-Burma Theater, 1944-1945, I, 90. OCMH. The NCAC field order, dated 10 October, set 15 October as D Day.

¹¹² *The Stilwell Papers*, p. 331.

¹¹³ (1) Memo, Stilwell for Soong, 16 Sep 44. Item 24, Bk 1, Hurley Papers. The text was delivered orally to Soong at 1600 on 16 September. (2) A week later, Hurley reported to the President that Stilwell's "chief concern is to avoid having responsibility without adequate authority." Rad CFB 22988, Hurley to President, 23 Sep 44. Incl to Memo, Leahy for Marshall, 25 Sep 44. China File (Hurley), Item 61, OPD Exec 10.

become a powerful advocate of General Chennault and in October 1943 sought to have Stilwell recalled.¹¹⁴

During the conference, Stilwell again defined his conception of the powers he must have as field commander.¹¹⁵ In his draft memorandum Stilwell called it "nothing less than full power, including the right of reward and punishment—(summary punishment)—and of appointment and relief. He [the Generalissimo] must accept the appointment of foreigners in some positions. The commander must be allowed to move units from one war zone to another, combine units, inactivate units, activate new units, make drafts from one unit to another, and change organization as he sees fit." Further, "The Generalissimo must refrain from any interference in operations." Stilwell also suggested major changes in the Chinese military hierarchy, with Gen. Chen Cheng, War Minister, and Gen. Pai Chung-hsi, Chief of Staff.¹¹⁶

After the conference, Stilwell noted that Soong had been taken aback by a concept of command so utterly at variance with what the Generalissimo had in mind. "I know the Generalissimo's mind," remarked Soong, who then told Stilwell what, in Soong's belief, the Generalissimo wanted. Stilwell was indignant when he described it later that day: "What the Peanut wants is an over-all stooge, apparently foisted on him by the US, with a deputy commander for the Chinese Army! T. V. let that cat out of the bag."¹¹⁷

The frame of mind in which Stilwell received this information from T. V. Soong is suggested by a paragraph from the draft memorandum for Soong:

6. . . . These [remedial steps] should include the appointment of Ch'en Ch'eng as Min. of War, of Pai Chung-hsi as C/S, and of an over-all commander in whom he has confidence. Who this is to be is immaterial, but whoever it is has my full sympathy, since he will have to gather up the broken and dispirited remnants of a beaten army, and with antiquated machinery and inefficient personnel, organize a force to oppose a first-class military power. I hope that the Generalissimo will realize that I do not seek the job; I have been delayed, ignored, double-crossed, and kicked around for 2½ years in my attempt to show the Chinese how they can hold up their heads and regain their self-respect. I have looked forward for 44 years to getting a chance to command American troops, and I could have had it if I had not been a real friend of China and the Chinese people. I am still ready to do anything I can, but only under conditions that make a solution possible.¹¹⁸

Therefore Stilwell had told Soong that the Generalissimo's conceptions "would not do—if I could not have authority, I could not accept responsibility. And the Gmo would have to keep his fingers out of the pie. We gave TV quite a shock."¹¹⁹

¹¹⁴ See *Stilwell's Mission to China*, Ch. X.

¹¹⁵ SUP 37, probably written 16 September, since it is a partly chronological account that stops after the conference of that date.

¹¹⁶ (1) Memo, Stilwell for Soong, 16 Sep 44. Item 24, Bk 1, Hurley Papers. (2) *The Stilwell Papers*, p. 331.

¹¹⁷ SUP 37.

¹¹⁸ Memo cited n. 116(1). (2) In his diary for 16 September, Stilwell wrote: "Gave T. V. the works in plain words. I do not want the God-awful job, but if I take it I must have full authority."

¹¹⁹ (1) SUP 37. (2) Apparently Hurley kept no minutes of this conversation.

Stilwell's very recent experiences in attempting to command Chinese troops in north Burma would be fresh in his mind and might well make him profoundly skeptical of any seals, orders, or commissions that the Generalissimo might agree to give him. In December 1943 the Generalissimo had given Stilwell what was represented as unrestricted command of the Chinese Army in India. The appropriate chop had been issued, together with a formal order from the Generalissimo. Then in April and May 1944, the behavior of the Chinese 22d and 38th Divisions in north Burma had suggested to the Americans that they were deliberately disobeying Stilwell's orders to advance. And, senior Chinese officers of the 22d and 38th Divisions had told Stilwell's liaison officers that the Generalissimo was giving secret direct orders to Sun and Liao not to advance, despite his earlier promises that Stilwell could indeed command in north Burma. These experiences, so like those Stilwell had undergone in Burma in 1942, would very likely make him feel that unless the President and the War Department kept constant pressure on the Generalissimo to honor his commitments, a fresh grant of authority from the Generalissimo would prove no more significant than those which the Generalissimo had ostensibly made in December 1943 and April 1942.¹²⁰

Though Stilwell might express private indignation at the Generalissimo's notions of command, and though he had given Marshall an alarming report on the military situation, he proceeded on 18 September to submit to the Generalissimo a plan to save the day in east China. This suggests he had no intention of breaking up the current negotiations, and was ready to do what he could in his dual role of joint chief of staff and U.S. theater commander, however hopeless he might feel. Based on the scheme he outlined in his diary after conferring with Gen. Chang Fa-kwei on 14 September, Stilwell's plan read:

No. 3 Chialing Village
Chungking
September 18, 1944

MEMORANDUM: Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek

For the consideration of the Generalissimo, the following possible plan is presented:

1. It is important to keep pressure on the Japs in South China, to coordinate with the effort in the Pacific. How can this best be done? If the last remaining units are surrounded in Kweilin, it will only be a question of time before the city is taken. The Japs will then have no opposition. General Pai Ch'ung-hsi thinks these units are capable of offensive action. If they are, they could be used in a maneuver battle instead of a static defense, and then even if unsuccessful, they could still be withdrawn towards Liuchow and continue the fight, instead of being completely lost at Kweilin.

2. An alternative plan would be to have the 93d Army dig in at Hsing An and hold that line, to have the 20th Army and any other available troops block off north-east of Kweilin, and then move the Kweilin garrison out of the city to the west and northwest, and attack to the east across the Chuan Hsien road. The move would be a surprise, because the Japs expect a defense at Kweilin. It would protect the airfield at Kweilin, allowing supplies to

¹²⁰ (1) See Ch. V, above. (2) See *Stilwell's Mission to China*, Ch. III.

reach the troops. It would also gain time for a possible move of the 97th Army forward and for assembling replacements drawn from Kwangsi province.

At the same time, the remnants of the troops that have been engaged north of Chuan Hsien could be concentrated in the Kweiyang area, and there re-organized, filled up, trained, and equipped for further use. This group would then safeguard the eastern approach to Kunming in case the Kweilin garrison has to withdraw on Liuchow.

For the Generalissimo's consideration.

JOSEPH W. STILWELL
Joint Chief of Staff
for the Generalissimo¹²¹

The President Replies

General Stilwell's situation report of 15 September was addressed to General Marshall in Washington. The Operations Division of the General Staff marked it for action by General Handy as head of OPD and for the information of General Marshall. A copy was promptly relayed to General Marshall who was then at Quebec, where the President and the Prime Minister were meeting with the CCS in the OCTAGON Conference, the first to be held after the Cairo and Tehran Conferences.¹²²

The impact of Stilwell's 15 September radio on the President and the Army Chief of Staff was in all probability related to the trend of the discussions and the nature of the decisions at OCTAGON. When the CCS at past conferences had directed their attention to the problems of China, Burma, and India, they had had to resolve differences between the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the British Chiefs of Staff as to the intrinsic worth and difficulties of operations in Burma to restore an overland line of communications to China. At the Washington Conference of May 1943 and the Cairo Conference of December 1943 the reluctance of the British Chiefs of Staff to undertake operations in Burma or to make a major commitment of British resources to any operations that might be undertaken seemed apparent to the Americans.¹²³

But the smashing defeats inflicted on the Japanese in May, June, and July 1944 along the Indo-Burmese border and in north Burma were steadily altering the points of view among the British and Americans. Mountbatten pointed out to the British Chiefs of Staff that the British Fourteenth Army had been steadily exploiting the Japanese defeat, and in the pursuit was being led into executing the early phases of one of the then-projected plans for an ambitious operation against central Burma (CAPITAL). He pointed out that to halt pur-

¹²¹ Stilwell Documents, Hoover Library.

¹²² Stilwell's radio was received by the War Department Classified Message Center as CM-IN 14328, 15 September 1944. OPD's message center received it at 1400 on 15 September and gave it limited distribution to the Assistant Chief of Staff, OPD (Handy), to the Theater Group, to the Asiatic Section, to the Strategy and Policy Group, and to Message Center File. Handy's copy became Item 13 in the Stilwell Special Command File, Item 60, OPD Exec 10.

¹²³ See *Stilwell's Mission to China*, Ch. IX, and Ch. II, above.

suit of a beaten enemy would be misunderstood.¹²⁴ Then, on 1 September, the British Chiefs of Staff suggested to the CCS a plan earlier discussed between the British and American chiefs of staff. It proposed an airborne and amphibious assault on the port city of Rangoon (Operation DRACULA). Here was something much to the liking of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, a very welcome compromise between the two differing points of view. It would minimize the amount of jungle fighting, cut the Japanese line of communications to Burma, and would be a long step toward reopening the prewar line of communications from Rangoon north; at the same time it would advance British forces toward Singapore, on whose capture Churchill placed such stress.¹²⁵

Approval of DRACULA would necessitate a new directive to SEAC; in the drafting Marshall and Arnold stressed amending it to emphasize development of an overland line of communications to China, for they were most anxious to bring in trucks to relieve the general shortage of transport in China. With the CCS in such accord and with so hopeful an operation as DRACULA having been proposed by the British Chiefs of Staff, a new directive to Mountbatten was speedily agreed to on 14 September. Marshall promptly informed Stilwell of its substance. Mountbatten was told that recapture of Burma at the earliest date was his primary objective. Security of the airline to China, including Myitkyina, and opening of the land line of communications across north Burma were not to be prejudiced by operations to retake Burma. DRACULA and those portions of CAPITAL needed to secure the air and land route to China were approved. Vigorous prosecution of DRACULA and CAPITAL, with a target date of 15 March 1945, was considered of the utmost importance.¹²⁶

Into this situation of full agreement between the British and Joint Chiefs of Staff on operations to retake Burma was now injected on the 15th the Generalissimo's desire to withdraw his forces across the Salween and end the campaign in north Burma, completely upsetting the CCS strategy for Burma. Marshall's current attitude was perhaps indicated by a promise he made on the 16th to consider sending two U.S. divisions to Burma, an action which would mark a great departure from the past policy of avoiding a major U.S. troop commitment in Southeast Asia. A reply from the President to the Generalissimo was immediately prepared and sent to OPD for dispatch to Headquarters, CBI Theater.

On 16 September, the President and the Prime Minister discussed the final report of the CCS with its authors. The situation in Europe and the Pacific appeared as a bright background that might be taken as vindicating the soundness of earlier planning. On 11 September both U.S. and Russian troops had

¹²⁴ Rad SEACOS 227, SACSEA to COS, 13 Sep 44. SEAC War Diary.

¹²⁵ Rad SEACOS 266, 8 Sep 44. Papers and Minutes of Meetings, OCTAGON Conference, Office, U.S. Secretary of the CCS, 1944, p. 24.

¹²⁶ (1) Min, 1st Plenary Mtg, The Citadel, Quebec, 13 Sep 44. (2) Min, CCS 174th Mtg, 14 Sep 44, Item 4. (3) For the Prime Minister's opposition to a large-scale campaign in the Burmese jungles, see Rad TOO 302330Z, Churchill to Field Marshal Sir Henry Maitland Wilson, JSM, 30 Mar 45. Case 615, OPD 452.1, A47-30. (4) Rad OCTAGON 27, Marshall to Stilwell, 15 Sep 44. Item 2818, Bk 7, JWS Personal File.

begun operations on German soil, and on the 15th the U.S. Marines had gone ashore in the Palau Islands, within easy striking distance of the Philippines.

In their final report, the CCS agreed to define the over-all objective in the war against Japan as forcing Japan's unconditional surrender by lowering Japanese will to resist through blockade and bombardment and ultimate invasion. The CCS agreed to stress naval and air action and to avoid where possible any commitment to costly land campaigns. Both B-29 and tactical air operations would continue in China Theater, pursuant to which "the operations in the Pacific Theater are being conducted to effect the reconquest of the Philippines and the opening of a seaway to China." Indeed, at OCTAGON, the decision was reached to advance the timetable of operations against Japan and to initiate landing operations in the Philippines in late October 1944. Manifestly, American operations *per se* in China would continue to be in support of the main advance across the Pacific.¹²⁷

After the discussion of operations against Japan, the problem raised by the Generalissimo's desire to withdraw the Y-Force from the Burma campaign was brought before the CCS, the President, and the Prime Minister. The CCS minutes state:

At the President's request, General Marshall outlined certain developments with regard to the Chinese forces. The Generalissimo contemplated withdrawing the "Y" Force across the Salween unless General Stilwell advanced on Bhamo with the Ledo Force. No replacements had been provided for the Salween Force, which had now dwindled to 14,000 men. A note had been sent by the President to the Generalissimo pointing out the consequences of the proposed action and stating that the Generalissimo must accept full responsibility therefor.¹²⁸

Arriving in OPD from the OCTAGON Conference, the President's radio caused an immediate discussion of whether in the course of normal message-center procedure in Chungking Stilwell would see the contents of the President's note before delivering it to the Generalissimo. General Handy was most anxious that Stilwell read the message. There was no discussion of the circumstance that the President had Hurley in Chungking as a personal representative who might reasonably be expected to undertake such tasks, for only a week before Stilwell had been called on to deliver a Presidential note asking the Chinese to send General MacArthur 50,000 labor troops.¹²⁹ The discussion assumed that Stilwell would deliver the note in person: the only point at issue was whether he would have a chance to read it before delivering it. Col. Lawrence J. Lincoln, Chief of the Asiatic Section of the Theater Group, OPD, checked the issue with the War Department signal center and was told that either Stilwell or one of his staff would see the message before it was delivered to the Generalissimo. So Colonel Lincoln wrote to Maj. Gen. John E. Hull:

¹²⁷ (1) Min, 2d Plenary Mtg, Quebec, 16 Sep 44. (2) CCS 680/2, 16 Sep 44, sub: Rpt to President and Prime Minister. (3) Memo, Marshall for Dill, 22 Sep 44; Ltr, Dill to Marshall, 4 Oct 44. Folders 57, 66, OPD Exec 10.

¹²⁸ Min, 2d Plenary Mtg, Quebec, 16 Sep 44, par. 26.

¹²⁹ CM-IN 10219, Stilwell to Marshall, 11 Sep 44. See copy in Item 59, OPD Exec 10.

"In view of the above, recommend no further action be taken. An acknowledgment of this message and statement from General Stilwell that he has delivered it to CKS should be received here within forty-eight (48) hours (1653Z, 18 September 1944)."¹³⁰

The President's message itself was, in rough form, a typescript draft prepared by the OPD team at OCTAGON, with penciled changes in General Marshall's hand. Neatly retyped, a copy was sent to Mr. Stimson with the attached note from General Handy dated 18 September: "General Marshall wanted you to see the attached message which the President sent to the Generalissimo on September the 16th. It was in effect an answer to General Stilwell's 'eyes alone' message of the 15th of September."¹³¹

OPD also sent a message to Stilwell, telling him that the President's note would be "in effect an answer to your CFB 22638 of 15 September."¹³²

Summary

After taking Changsha with ease, the Japanese were stalled by a valiant defense of Heng-yang. While the city was still under siege, Stilwell was warned that the Chinese commanders in that area were contemplating revolt. At this point, Chennault urged that his Hump tonnage be cut to fly arms to these same Chinese commanders. Stilwell refused. Heng-yang fell, and Chinese claiming to represent powerful and disaffected elements made overtures for American support. Stilwell adhered to his policy of not intervening in Chinese domestic politics, and contented himself with following the situation closely.

Returning from the Pacific, President Roosevelt turned his attention to China and sent Hurley to China to negotiate the transfer of command. The Generalissimo said he would give Stilwell command, and the complicated question of defining that command was then taken up. While attempts were being made to clarify Stilwell's proposed status and as Stilwell was growing ever more suspicious that he was to be simply "an over-all stooge" for the Generalissimo, a setback on the Burma Road made the Generalissimo threaten to withdraw his Yunnan force from the North Burma Campaign. Stilwell was appalled and reported as much to Marshall.

Stilwell's message reached the President and Marshall at the OCTAGON Conference. The President approved a reply, and it was sent to Stilwell for delivery. The contents of the note, and the Generalissimo's reception of it, would greatly influence the future course of Sino-American relations.

¹³⁰ Memo, Lincoln for Hull, 17 Sep 44, with two incls, recorded telephone conv, Col George A. Lincoln and Col Kenneth W. Treacy, Exec Off, OPD, and copy of President's note, Item 59, OPD Exec 10.

¹³¹ (1) The rough draft is in Item 59, OPD Exec 10. (2) Memo, Handy for Stimson, with atchd Note, President to Generalissimo, Item 14, Stilwell Special Command File, Item 60, OPD Exec 10. Handy's copy of Stilwell's radio is Item 13.

¹³² Rad WAR 32330, Marshall to Stilwell, 18 Sep 44, Item 2841, Bk 8, JWS Personal File. For the text of CFB 22638, see pp. 435-36, above.

CHAPTER XII

The End of CBI Theater

The issue of the wartime relation between China and the United States was now in the hands of the two men who controlled the foreign relations of the two powers, the Generalissimo and the President. Many weeks had gone by since the Generalissimo had promised the President to place Stilwell in command, and now the President was addressing the Generalissimo directly. If the Generalissimo accepted the President's message in good part, then the President could hardly avoid responsibility for what might follow in China Theater. If the Generalissimo did not accept, his refusal, however skillfully executed, would mean that the President was not directly involved in the future conduct of affairs in the China Theater. Such being the case, Mr. Roosevelt might feel under no particular obligation to advance the position and interests of the Generalissimo and his government.

The Note Delivered

After the "plain talk" with Soong on 16 September, Hurley had continued his task of trying to work out the details of the command position which the Generalissimo had agreed, on 12 September, should be given to Stilwell. He was with the Generalissimo a good deal of the time on 17 and 18 September and believed that he had made steady progress toward persuading the Chinese leader to accept the directive and letter of appointment that Hurley had drafted. When they finished their discussion, Hurley arranged to meet again at the Generalissimo's home on 19 September.

At 0945, 19 September, the code machines at CBI Theater headquarters tapped out the last of two messages to the Generalissimo. One was from the President and the Prime Minister, telling the Generalissimo of the plans just made at Quebec. From it the Generalissimo would learn that that the American offensive across the Pacific was aimed at opening a Chinese seaport. This combined message bore directions that Stilwell was to give it to the American and British Ambassadors for joint presentation to the Generalissimo.¹ The other message was from the President alone to the Generalissimo. The radios went to the code room, and by 1100 the President's radio had been decoded and was in

¹ (1) Rad WH 68, Roosevelt to Generalissimo, 18 Sep 44. Item 2850, Bk 8, JWS Personal File. (2) See n. 6 below.

Stilwell's hands. Glancing at it, Stilwell saw that he had an important message that was as "hot as a firecracker."² He also wondered whether he should deliver it personally or whether he should give it to Hurley for delivery. A variety of thoughts probably crossed his mind. Stilwell's analysis of his 16 September talk with Soong suggests a belief that the Generalissimo was negotiating in bad faith. On 18 September he recorded in his diary that Gen. Pai Chung-hsi had told him the Generalissimo's plan was to delay two months at Kweilin until American pressure from the Pacific made itself felt in China, and Stilwell had interpreted this as meaning that the Generalissimo was simply stalling the negotiations. But this message was a very strong note, possibly a turning point, so Stilwell asked counsel of his chief of staff, as to whether he should deliver it. General Hearn six years later recalled saying he did not see how Stilwell could stop a message from the President to the Generalissimo. Hearn was not shown the message, for knowledge of the negotiations was restricted to Stilwell and Hurley.³ The last message from the President to the Generalissimo, only a week before, had been delivered through Stilwell, and Stilwell had so reported to OPD. Such a practice was ordered by Mr. Roosevelt in May 1944, and forty-four years in the Army predispose a man to obey the orders of his superiors. So Stilwell decided to make the deliveries himself. The message about the Quebec decisions he gave to U.S. Ambassador Gaus, at 1400, then drove to the Generalissimo's residence, Huang Shan.⁴

As Stilwell was approaching Huang Shan, Hurley was in conference with the Generalissimo and a group of Chinese personages, including T. V. Soong, Gen. Ho Ying-chin, Gen. Pai Chung-hsi, who had been Stilwell's choice as a potential successor to the Generalissimo, Gen. Chu Shih-ming, and several members of the National Military Council. On the table were the draft commission for Stilwell, the draft directive, and a simple draft diagram of command channels. Hurley believed the Generalissimo was about to place his chop on each in the presence of the gathering.

As General Hurley later recalled the course of events, at about 1730 an orderly came in and spoke to the Generalissimo. Stilwell had arrived. He was invited to come in but it appeared that he wished to see Hurley first. Fearing that Stilwell brought news of a reverse in Burma, Hurley excused himself and left the room.

On the veranda, Stilwell showed Hurley the President's message. Reading it, Hurley remarked that in effect it was an ultimatum, and suggested that

² Stilwell Diary, 19 Sep 44.

³ (1) Interv with Hearn, 17 May 50. General Hearn's recollection was that Stilwell said: "Tom, I have a wire from the President to Chiang, and Hurley doesn't want me to give it to him. What should I do?" This clearly implies that Stilwell saw Hurley before he saw Hearn, which cannot be reconciled with the chronology of Hurley's own recollections. It seems safer to assume that Stilwell and Hearn first discussed the matter at CBI Theater headquarters, after which Stilwell departed for the Generalissimo's residence. (2) SUP 37.

⁴ Stilwell Diary, 19 Sep 44.

Stilwell let him paraphrase the message to the Generalissimo. Briefly, they discussed their respective roles. Stilwell stated that he considered he was under orders to deliver the message personally, and the two men returned to the conference room.

The tea-drinking rite was observed, then Stilwell arose, announced he had a message from the President for the Generalissimo and gave it to Gen. Chu Shih-ming to translate. General Chu prepared to read it to the Generalissimo. This was a tense moment. One of the Generalissimo's greatest assets in Chinese domestic politics was the support he had been able to command from the United States. The President's message was a clear hint that this support might end, and it was about to be read before a powerful Chinese who had impressed Stilwell at least as a potential successor to Chiang Kai-shek.

Hurley remembers rising quickly, taking the note from General Chu, and handing the Chinese portion of it to the Generalissimo with the excuse that it would save time if the Generalissimo read it himself.⁵

Running his eye down the long columns of Chinese script the Generalissimo received the President's demand for action from China:

After reading the last reports on the situation in China my Chiefs of Staff and I are convinced that you are faced in the near future with the disaster I have feared. The men of your "YOKE" Forces crossing the Salween have fought with great courage and rendered invaluable assistance to the campaign in North Burma. But we feel that unless they are reinforced and supported with your every capacity you cannot expect to reap any fruits from their sacrifices, which will be valueless unless they go on to assist in opening the Burma Road. Furthermore, any pause in your attack across the Salween or suggestion of withdrawal is exactly what the Jap has been striving to cause you to do by his operations in eastern China. He knows that if you continue to attack, cooperating with Mountbatten's coming offensive, the land line to China will be opened early in 1945 and the continued resistance of China and maintenance of your control will be assured. On the other hand, if you do not provide manpower for your divisions in north Burma and, if you fail to send reinforcements to the Salween forces and withdraw these armies, we will lose all chance of opening land communications with China and immediately jeopardize the air route over the Hump. For this you must yourself be prepared to accept the consequences and assume the personal responsibility.

I have urged time and again in recent months that you take drastic action to resist the disaster which has been moving closer to China and to you. Now, when you have not yet placed General Stilwell in command of all forces in China, we are faced with the loss of a critical area in east China with possible catastrophic consequences. The Japanese capture of

⁵ (1) Intervs with Hurley, Jan 49. (Hereafter cited as Hurley Interviews.) (2) Stilwell's writings have no mention of the scene on the veranda. The theme of his diary entries and miscellaneous jottings is that he had simply delivered the President's note, and that responsibility lay with the President. His diary for 19 September 1944 states:

. . . Peanut at Huang Shan. Got the letter translated and took it across the river. 5:40 PM handed it to him. The harpoon hit him right in the solar plexus, but, although he turned green, he never batted an eye. He just turned to me and said: "I understand." What! No teapots? No, just a calm silence. I got out promptly and came home. Pretty sight, crossing the river, lights all on in Chungking.

The other letter from FDR and Churchill for Gauss and Seymour . . . I delivered to Gauss at 2:00. GI Movie.

Kweilin will place the Kunming air terminal under the menace of constant attack, reducing the Hump tonnage and possibly severing the air route.

Even though we are rolling the enemy back in defeat all over the world this will not help the situation in China for a considerable time. The advance of our forces across the Pacific is swift. But this advance will be too late for China unless you act now and vigorously. Only drastic and immediate action on your part alone can be in time to preserve the fruits of your long years of struggle and the efforts we have been able to make to support you. Otherwise political and military considerations alike are going to be swallowed in military disaster.

The Prime Minister and I have just decided at Quebec to press vigorously the operations to open the land line to China on the assumption that you would continue an unremitting attack from the Salween side. I am certain that the only thing you can now do in an attempt to prevent the Jap from achieving his objectives in China is to reinforce your Salween armies immediately and press their offensive, while at once placing General Stilwell in unrestricted command of all your forces. The action I am asking you to take will fortify us in our decision and in the continued efforts the United States proposes to take to maintain and increase our aid to you. This we are doing when we are fighting two other great campaigns in Europe and across the Pacific. I trust that your far-sighted vision, which has guided and inspired your people in this war, will realize the necessity for immediate action. In this message I have expressed my thoughts with complete frankness because it appears plainly evident to all of us here that all your and our efforts to save China are to be lost by further delays.

ROOSEVELT.⁶

After reading the message, the Generalissimo remarked quietly, "I understand," and closed the gathering.⁷

The President's message was not immediately recognized as a turning point in the negotiations. Having delivered the message, Stilwell recorded it as evidence that the President's attitude had changed a great deal since 8 March 1943, when Mr. Roosevelt told General Marshall that one could not speak harshly to the Generalissimo nor exact concessions from him. At last, thought Stilwell, the President's eyes had opened.⁸

It may be surmised that Stilwell concluded the President had decided on a new policy toward China, that of insisting on action by the Chinese in exchange for U.S. support, which had long been urged by Stilwell and the War Department. That the President should take so firm a stand without advance warning and with no attempt to tell Stilwell what he had in mind would not by itself be a circumstance to disturb Stilwell, for the President had never made a practice of telling Stilwell what his China policy was. And if the President had indeed begun such a course of action, Stilwell as his subordinate would interfere with or undercut the President's new policy at the peril of later disciplinary action.

⁶ (1) Rad WH 64, President to Generalissimo, 16 Sep 44. Item 11, OKLAHOMA File, JWS Personal File. Sent from Washington on 18 September 1944. (2) General Okamura comments that the Japanese did not relate operations in Burma and China, as the President was assuming. In theory, said Okamura, it would have been "appropriate" to relate the two operations, but in actual practice *China Expeditionary Army* and *Southern Army* had no close co-operation. Japanese Officers' Comments, Incl 3, Okamura.

⁷ Stilwell Diary, 19 Sep 44.

⁸ *The Stilwell Papers*, p. 333.

The Generalissimo's Wrath

Rightly or wrongly, the President and the War Department believed that the Generalissimo's subordinates had carefully edited the President's messages prior to May 1944 to make sure they would be pleasing to Chiang. Consequently, the Generalissimo may not previously have read anything over Mr. Roosevelt's signature that would offend him. When he read the 18 September note, his response was bitter wrath and indignation, and he was later reported to have called in T. V. Soong and told him that the President's message canceled his promise to give Stilwell command.⁹

The remarks of the Generalissimo's close advisers suggest that the Chinese leader thought of another explanation which would square with his belief that the President was his devoted friend who would never address him so harshly. On 16 September Stilwell had spoken very bluntly indeed to Soong. The Generalissimo may have concluded that after speaking to Soong Stilwell had framed a harsh message, sent it to Washington, and arranged for it to be sent back as though coming from the President.¹⁰

Hurley himself came to accept the same interpretation of events. Without any liaison with the War Department, which had simply bypassed him in sending the 18 September note to Stilwell, and receiving no guidance from the President, Hurley was severely handicapped in his efforts to straighten out the tangle. He suspected that Stilwell had no desire to come in at the last minute to take command of a beaten army, and was using this tactic to escape the assignment. He, therefore, began to reach his own conclusions as to the origins of the note and as to Stilwell's motives in delivering it in person. When a few days later Soong asked Hurley point-blank if Stilwell had not arranged the whole episode just to humiliate the Generalissimo, Hurley refused to ask Stilwell.¹¹

If the Generalissimo believed that Stilwell had deliberately engineered an attempt at his public humiliation, this conclusion was some days in making itself felt. Perhaps he hesitated to act on it at once, for on 20 September Gen. Pai Chung-hsi called on Stilwell with good news. The Generalissimo and the National Military Council had approved Stilwell's 18 September plan for the

⁹ (1) See Ch. VIII, above. (2) Joseph W. Alsop, "Why We Lost China," *The Saturday Evening Post*, January 21, 1950, p. 111. The text suggests that Alsop received his data from Soong.

¹⁰ (1) On 29 September, Soong asked Hurley if Stilwell had arranged for the President to send the note: "The G-mo thinks I had it done and then tore his face off with it." *The Stilwell Papers*, p. 338. (2) Hurley Interviews. General Hurley in 1949-50 believed Stilwell had been responsible for the radio, thereby defeating Hurley's diplomatic efforts.

¹¹ (1) Hurley Interviews. (2) *The Stilwell Papers*, p. 338. (3) When Hurley discussed the episode of the note with Mr. Roosevelt in February 1945, the President confirmed Hurley's suspicions. Roosevelt, perhaps forgetting that his message had been discussed by the Combined Chiefs of Staff in his presence at OCTAGON on 16 September 1944, disclaimed authorship of the note, and said he had been taken by surprise when the press called it an ultimatum. He left Hurley with the impression that he had simply initialed the note when it was presented to him amid a group of other official papers. Hurley Interviews.

defense of Kweilin. Stilwell at once sent appropriate orders to Timberman in east China:¹²

Have prevailed on G-mo to change plans at Kweilin and order 31st Army to fight outside of town. Pai is coming down tomorrow to put new plan into effect and promises to make artillery commanders listen to American liaison officers. Be ready to get artillery liaison officers back on the job if they have been withdrawn, and tell them to throw their weight about. Good luck.¹³

The information was repeated to Marshall with the added word:

. . . Also the CG of the 93d Army was executed today, which should encourage the rest of them. The Gmo is beginning to listen apparently, but he is moving slowly on the main questions of command and the use of the Reds.¹⁴

Stilwell also ordered that G-4, Z-Force Operations Staff, fly about 200 tons of ordnance to Kweilin and Liuchow.¹⁵

Not until 21 September did Stilwell learn that the Generalissimo was genuinely angry, which struck Stilwell as being very, very funny. He marked the occasion with a wry bit of doggerel, added a Biblical quotation, and mailed both to Mrs. Stilwell.¹⁶

Being in close touch with the Generalissimo, Hurley knew of his anger, and knew too that because of it the negotiations were now deadlocked. He met with Stilwell on 21 September, which was when Stilwell learned of the Generalissimo's wrath, and during the next two days he and Stilwell began drafting an initial progress report to the President. They also considered various ways to get the negotiations moving forward again.¹⁷ To Marshall, Stilwell on 22 September expressed the opinion that the Generalissimo was simply delaying in the belief that the U.S. advance in the Pacific would spare him further effort, and permit him "to avoid taking the bitter pill of recognizing the Communists and putting a foreigner in command of the Army." Hurley and he were standing firm, Stilwell reported, and when the shock of the President's radio wore off results might be accomplished, though a relaxing of American pressure would confirm the Generalissimo's belief that his policy of delay would ultimately succeed.¹⁸

¹² Stilwell Diary, 20 Sep 44.

¹³ Rad CFB 22920, Stilwell to Timberman, 20 Sep 44. Item 2854, Bk 8, JWS Personal File.

¹⁴ Rad CFB 22921, Stilwell to Marshall, 20 Sep 44. Item 12, OKLAHOMA File, JWS Personal File.

¹⁵ (1) Z-FOS Journal, KCRC. (2) Ltr, Col Carl R. Dutton, Rr Ech, Z-FOS, to Timberman, 25 Sep 44. AG (Z-FOS) 319.1, KCRC.

¹⁶ (1) *The Stilwell Papers*, p. 334. (2) Stilwell Diary, 21 Sep 44. (3) Many examples of children's verse, nonsense verse, short sketches, essays, stories, poems, and articles by General Stilwell can be found in the Stilwell family papers. He wrote a great deal, but for the entertainment of himself, his family, and a few intimates.

¹⁷ (1) Stilwell Diary, 21 Sep 44. (2) Stilwell gave Hurley his suggestions for a new agenda on the 23d, writing as he did in his diary: "Decided to try and break the deadlock." *The Stilwell Papers*, p. 335.

¹⁸ Rad CFB 22995, Stilwell to Marshall, 22 Sep 44. Item 14, OKLAHOMA File, JWS Personal File.

What Stilwell hoped to do in China if the Generalissimo could even yet be persuaded to place him in command was indicated by a planning directive from Stilwell to his staff on 22 September. An operation against the Canton-Hong Kong area, with the Hanoi-Haiphong area as an alternate target, was to be planned. The staff were to assume resources from within China Theater, such as thirty Chinese divisions and the existing U.S. Army Air Forces and SOS in CBI, and from without China Theater, such as a reinforced U.S. corps of 70,000 men. Possibly Stilwell had been informed of Marshall's agreeing on 16 September to consider sending a corps to CBI. Stilwell told his staff that he planned to move the Chinese Army in India with its five crack divisions and Wei Li-huang's Y-Force divisions to the Kweiyang area. The Canton-Hong Kong area would be the next target. That vital point taken, and its major port and rail facilities open, Stilwell would drive north up the Canton-Hankow Railway, take Hankow, then pivot east and move down the Yangtze valley on Shanghai. Manchuria was the ultimate goal.

Behind this directive lay months of effort by CBI theater planners, beginning April 1944. Col. William M. Creasy and General Sultan of the New Delhi headquarters had taken the initiative in launching staff studies of future CBI operations in China so that there might be a guide for theater deployment and projects. The planning focused on two objectives—establishing a secure, efficient base at Kunming and opening a port in the Canton-Hong Kong area. In June Stilwell's approval of the final draft was given to Colonel Creasy. Meanwhile, in China, Col. Thomas F. Taylor was studying the problem of effecting a lodgment on the southeast China coast. His paper complete, in mid-July Taylor brought a copy to the New Delhi staff, and returned to China with their draft of plans for future operations in China. Taylor developed these studies during August and September. His work called attention to the need for a central reserve at Kunming, to the desirability of establishing areas of Sino-American responsibility across the avenues of approach to Kunming, and to the vital importance of Kweiyang. Stilwell had these studies before him in September and they were discussed at length among his senior staff officers. As noted above, Stilwell accepted the work of the CBI planners, but implementation waited on the Generalissimo's decision on Stilwell. The work of the CBI planners laid the foundation of later China Theater planning.¹⁹

Hurley's report as it was finally written and dispatched on 23 September took a more optimistic line than the situation as known to Hurley and Stilwell actually warranted. It made only brief reference to the events of 19 September, and said nothing of the manner in which the President's radio had been delivered to the Generalissimo. There was a hint that the Generalissimo

¹⁹ (1) Outline of Proposed Future Operations in China, prepared by Hq USAF CBI, 22 Sep 44. Folder 10, Hq AAF IBS, USAF CBI, KCRC. (2) Ltrs, Col. Thomas F. Taylor (Ret.) to Maj. Gen. Albert C. Smith, Chief of Military History, 1, 9 Jun 54. OCMH. (3) Interv with Maj. Gen. William M. Creasy, Chief Chemical Officer, 9 Jun 54.

contemplated a very strong reaction to the President's message. The key passages of Hurley's report were:

As early as the 8th of September the Generalissimo said to me that he was willing, for the purpose of the unification of China, that the Communist troops should be incorporated into the National Army but they should serve as components of the Chinese Army and not as a separate or independent force and, finally, that they must submit to the command of the Generalissimo. The Generalissimo has been working on this subject diligently since our arrival here. Last week he caused to be published the terms submitted by the so-called Communists, and he delivered an address on the subject to the People's Political Council. All of which leads toward harmony with the so-called Communist troops. I am insisting that the conference be shortened and that action be taken without delay. I am familiar with the State Department message to the Generalissimo on the Communist question.²⁰ I have informed the Generalissimo that the so-called Communist troops in China are not considered real Communists by Molotov; Russia's attitude toward China is friendly and that Russia is not attempting to use the Communist troops to prevent military unification of China. Russia desires closer and more harmonious relations with China. I am familiar with your message which General Stilwell delivered to the Generalissimo on September 19th. I have been advising the Generalissimo not to make a response to your note which might cause a deadlock. What is needed to save the situation in China is harmonious action, not a deadlock. The Generalissimo realizes this.

The nature of General Stilwell's mission, the obstruction he has met due to jealousy and concern for face of the Chinese Chief of Staff and others, the inherent dislike for any foreign control on the part of the Chinese and in particular of the Generalissimo, the necessity for safe-guarding American interests have put General Stilwell frequently in a position where he has had to differ with the Generalissimo and stand alone in telling the truth. This has in the past led to friction, due to the fact that the Generalissimo holds very decided views, in most cases not subject to argument, and that Stilwell has to get on with his mission somehow or other. I believe that in spite of the differences in their viewpoints, the situation will now iron itself out. The extent to which General Stilwell has agreed to a reasonable allotment of authority and the fact that his chief concern is to avoid having responsibility without adequate authority and the fact that the Generalissimo has said he will give Stilwell field command of the Ground and Air Forces and with it his complete confidence should indicate to you that while the situation is difficult a harmonious solution is possible. General Stilwell has read and approved this report.²¹

At Stilwell's urging, Hurley had deleted two paragraphs from his report. One of them related Stilwell's suspicion that the Generalissimo's offer of command might be no more than a device to shift "the responsibility for collapse." Hurley himself believed the situation could be saved and that American officers should assume responsibility where offered, always providing responsibility was matched with adequate authority. Hurley had also proposed saying that "as is usual where two strong personalities are so intimately involved in the question of distribution of authority, the Generalissimo and Stilwell appear to be personally and fundamentally incompatible. They appear to be mutually suspicious of

²⁰ See *U.S. Relations with China*, Annex 46.

²¹ Rad CFB 22988, Hurley to President, 23 Sep 44. Incl to Memo, Leahy for Marshall, 25 Sep 44. China File (Hurley), Item 61, OPD Exec 10.

each other." And then his draft had resumed: "The extent to which Stilwell has agreed" ²²

In briefing Hurley's progress report, the Operations Division missed every warning hint and presented the whole course of events to Handy and Marshall in bright, affirmative tones. ²³

But optimism was unwarranted, for Stilwell and Hurley were fully aware that the negotiations were now at a standstill.

Deadlock

After a routine conference that same 23 September, Gen. Ho Ying-chin, Chief of Staff of the Chinese Army, took Stilwell aside for a private talk. Apparently General Ho knew that something big was under discussion, but had not been taken into the Generalissimo's confidence. ²⁴ Stilwell gave Ho a general outline of the discussions and revealed that the negotiations were stalled. Ho's reaction was that American control of lend-lease was the central issue, that the Generalissimo resented the fact that the British Commonwealth and Soviet Union could distribute lend-lease, after receiving it, without American supervision. Stilwell agreed with Ho that such was the obstacle that had stalled negotiations, which suggests he did not believe any act of his was the major factor. ²⁵

Quickly expanding Ho's suggestion, Stilwell prepared an agenda for a renewal of talks and gave it to Hurley that same day of 23 September:

Something must be done to break up this stalemate, and it is up to us to do it. CKS is sulking, and the WD [War Department] expects us to handle it.

It is obvious that CKS is listening to our recommendations. He changed his plan at Kweilin, he put Pai Chung-hsi back in, he executed the commander of the 93d Army, and he is going to move *six divisions* down from the northwest [where they had been watching the Communists]. Apparently he is ready to pass command, and will use the REDS, if they will acknowledge the authority of the Central Government. What he is gagging at is L-L, and it is a serious matter of face with him that Stalin and the Br. can handle the stuff and he can't. The pros and cons are well known; the ques. remains. I propose that we go to the GMO and take up the following items for his consideration.

1. That I be sent to Yen-an to make the following propositions to the Reds:
 - a. The Reds to acknowledge the supreme authority of the GMO, and to accept command through me.
 - b. The Red Forces to be employed north of the Yellow River, out of contact with the Central Government Troops.
 - c. Equipment and ammunition to be furnished five divisions with supporting artillery.
 - d. Keep these Red Divisions at full strength at all times.
 - e. Both the KMT [Kuomintang] and the Reds to drop discussion of political matters until the Japanese are beaten.

²² Bk 1, Hurley Papers.

²³ Brief, Marshall to Handy, 25 Sep 44. China File (Hurley), Item 61, OPD Exec 10.

²⁴ Stilwell Diary, 23 Sep 44.

²⁵ *The Stilwell Papers*, p. 335.

2. That lend-lease materials (military) be turned over to the GMO on delivery in China for distribution, with the understanding that:
 - a. The "X" and "Y" Forces have first priority.
 - b. That the remainder of the first 30 divisions, the Reds, and the Kweiyang Force (to be formed [from the units in east China]) to have equal priority.
 - c. That no other units be equipped until after these units are fully outfitted. This includes maintenance.
3. That the command question be settled by the publication of orders as suggested by General Hurley.²⁶

So far as is known, this is the first detailed proposal to supply arms to the Chinese Communists made by General Stilwell to the Chinese and U.S. Governments. He proposed to arm sixty Nationalist and five Communist divisions, with first priority to the Nationalists.

Highly pleased with the new agenda, Hurley accepted it with characteristic gusto and the remark: "This will knock the persimmons off the trees!"²⁷ He took the agenda to the Generalissimo's residence on 24 September. There he found that the Generalissimo had reached his decision; Hurley later wrote on Stilwell's agenda: "Too late!"

The Generalissimo had decided he would not accept Stilwell. Diplomatically refraining from objections to anything the President had said or done, the Generalissimo placed his stand on the ground that because Stilwell had given him the President's message, that, in the Generalissimo's opinion, made him Stilwell's subordinate. Were Stilwell appointed, the Chinese Army might mutiny.²⁸ Then the Generalissimo gave Hurley an *aide-mémoire*, explaining his refusal to appoint Stilwell, which he desired Hurley to forward to the President. Reading the *aide-mémoire*, Hurley was startled to see it framed in language which in his opinion was insulting to the President. Considering that he had been sent to China to harmonize Sino-American relations, and believing he held in his hand a paper that would snap them Hurley told the Generalissimo the *aide-mémoire* would have to be redrafted, that not until the paper could be read by the President without offense would he forward it.²⁹

That afternoon and evening the Chinese worked on their state paper, moderating and polishing it until finally Soong gave it to Hurley in a form that Hurley considered could be sent to the President. With the *aide-mémoire* Hurley sent his regrets that he had been unable to bring about harmony between Stilwell and the Generalissimo, but believed that the two men were incompatible. "The decision not to appoint General Stilwell," Hurley remarked, "was not made by the Generalissimo until after General Stilwell, a subordinate, handed the Generalissimo your message of September 18."³⁰

²⁶ Memo, Stilwell for Hurley, 23 Sep 44. Item 31, Bk 1, Hurley Papers.

²⁷ Stilwell Diary, 23 Sep 44.

²⁸ *The Stilwell Papers*, p. 336.

²⁹ Hurley Interviews.

³⁰ Rad CFB 23212, Hurley to President, 25 Sep 44. Item 60, OPD Exec 10.

In his *aide-mémoire* the Generalissimo repeated his agreement of 8 and 12 September on the choice of an American officer as commander-in-chief of the "Chinese-American" forces fighting against Japan in China, agreed to place all Chinese field armies and air forces under his command, and concurrently appoint him chief of staff of China Theater. He would welcome Americans taking over the Chinese SOS. He would make "such important changes" among Chinese personnel as would be necessary for the "harmonious" operations of the new American field commander. But Stilwell had to go.

Stilwell must go, the Generalissimo said, because:

. . . it was made manifest to me that General Stilwell had no intention of cooperating with me, but believed that he was in fact being appointed to command me. If you will place yourself in my position, I believe you will understand how in the future I can never direct General Stilwell, or in all seriousness depend on General Stilwell to conform to my direction. If ignoring reason and experience, I were to appoint General Stilwell as Field Commander, I would knowingly court inevitable disaster.

3. In view of the many fine and soldierly qualities which General Stilwell has shown in the past, it is with deep regret that I come to this decision. But my recent experiences with him merely reinforce the experiences of the past two and one-half years, which have firmly convinced me that General Stilwell is unfitted for the vast, complex and delicate duties which the new command will entail. Almost from the moment of his arrival in China, he showed his disregard for that mutual confidence and respect which are essential to the successful collaboration of allied forces. I have repeatedly caused word of this fault in General Stilwell to be conveyed to the President. Last October, I intended to ask for his recall, but when General Stilwell solemnly promised that in the future he would unreservedly obey my orders and would give me no further cause for disappointment, I withdrew my request. Unhappily, General Stilwell's solemn promise has never been implemented. Far from leading to an intensified effort against the common enemy, the appointment of General Stilwell as Field Commander would immediately cause grave dissensions in the new command, and do irreparable injury to the vital Chinese-American military cooperation.³¹

And the Generalissimo closed by pledging his support to any qualified American officer who might be sent to China as field commander.

The Generalissimo's comments about Stilwell suggest his understanding of what the role of an American field commander in China would be. The field commander would receive the Generalissimo's orders, and the Generalissimo would depend on him "to conform to my [the Generalissimo's] direction." In suggesting that the Generalissimo appoint an American to command the Chinese Army, the President had not proposed that the officer chosen be an instrument for relaying the Generalissimo's directions, but had used such phrases as "full responsibility and authority" (6 July), "absolute command without any hindrance . . . delegating at once to one individual the powers to take immediate military direction. . . ." (15 July), "directly under you [the Generalissimo] he commands the armed forces in China" (23 August), and

³¹ Memo, Comdr J. V. Smith, White House Aide, for Col Frank McCarthy, 27 Sep 44, with Incl, Rad CFB 23212, Hurley to President, with *Aide-Mémoire*, Generalissimo for Hurley, 25 Sep 44. Item 16, Item 60, OPD Exec 10.

finally on 18 September, "in unrestricted command."³² Manifestly, there was as yet no agreement regarding either the powers and duties of the proposed American field commander or his identity.

The Generalissimo's *aide-mémoire* went unanswered for nearly two weeks. Several replies were prepared by General Marshall for the President's signature, but were laid aside, some after informal talks at the White House. Certain passages that Marshall repeated suggest his concept of the impact of operations in China on the war in Europe. Marshall contemplated asking the President to point out to the Chinese that the American effort over the Hump was badly hampering the war in other theaters because so many transports were involved in bringing supplies to Chennault for an effort that the Joint Chiefs had advised the President on 4 July 1944 was a futile one. For example, the draft of 28 September which Marshall sent to the other members of the JCS said:

. . . General MacArthur's urgent requirements for air transport have not been met. General Wilson in Italy has not had the transport planes he needs. The situation in Holland now hangs in the balance, the outcome dependent largely upon adequate support by air for the forces flown in to secure the Rhine crossing. . . . The United States effort exerted in your theater if placed in other areas would undoubtedly have expedited and shortened operations and resulted in saving many American lives. . . .

After the war, General Marshall considered that the heavy commitment of transport aircraft to the Hump had prevented exploitation of the break-through on the Italian front in the summer of 1944, and had prevented air supply of Lt. Gen. George S. Patton's swift armored advance across France to the German frontier in late summer of 1944.³³

The proposed draft also offered an explanation by Marshall of the manner in which the President's message had been delivered by Stilwell:

. . . The delivery of my message by Stilwell personally was a routine procedure which had been in effect for more than a year due to difficulties encountered in the past in securing prompt deliveries and in at least one instance of some evidence that the phrasing of my messages to you had been tampered with. You have my apology for the procedure in the present instance and I much regret that the transmitting agencies in the War Department did not think to give instructions for the message to be presented by General Hurley. Further, I have given instructions which will avoid any offense of this kind in the future.³⁴

Stilwell himself reacted angrily to the Generalissimo's *aide-mémoire*. His immediate response to Marshall was that the cause of the impasse might possibly be a Japanese broadcast which claimed that Stilwell was plotting a *coup d'état* that would make him czar of China. "In view of the character of CKS, such stuff, silly as it is, is dangerous." Stilwell repeated his previous contention that the Generalissimo was simply waiting out the war, and was putting its entire burden on the United States. The Generalissimo had "no

³² See pp. 383-84, 386, 416-17, 445-46, above.

³³ Interv with Marshall, Jul 49.

³⁴ Memo, Marshall for JCS, 28 Sep 44. Item 8, WDCSA 091 China.

intention of instituting any real democratic reforms or of forming a united front with the Communists.”³⁵

Stilwell charged that the *aide-mémoire* was a mass of false statements. Said Stilwell, the Generalissimo had given to Hurley but one concrete example of Stilwell’s refusal to co-operate. This was the attack on Bhamo the Generalissimo had desired. Stilwell stated that the Americans had actually paid to fly replacements to Yunnan, had been rushing munitions by air to units not included in CBI Theater plans. “As to conduct, you may be sure I have made no breaks in Chinese etiquette. His statement that I believe I was appointed to command him requires no comment.”³⁶ Marshall relayed the message to the White House.

On 29 September, Stilwell reported to Marshall that he had discussed the issue with Gens. Ho Ying-chin and Lin Wei and reported them as unable to guess what the vague disasters were that the Generalissimo had prophesied might follow Stilwell’s assumption of field command. The Chinese told Stilwell that the Generalissimo had discussed the issue in a meeting of the National Military Council and no objections had been raised. After that meeting, the Generalissimo had confided only in T. V. Soong, and it was then, said Stilwell, that the Generalissimo had reversed himself.³⁷

Wondering what the Generalissimo might fear from his assumption of command, Stilwell told Marshall that since

. . . the Gissimo might have the notion that I am trying to arm the Communists against him, I informed Ho and Lin that this matter of Communist participation might well be deferred for the time being, if such a solution would let us proceed to face the crisis with the other means available. In other words, work on the X and Y Forces, and salvage and reorganize the remnants south of the Yangtze. They said that this should surely make it possible to get going. I do not know how such a proposal fits in, but it was the only point I could imagine that would explain the Gissimo’s stand. It is significant that there was no opposition to me in the Military Council, and that the GMO reversed himself only after Soong moved in and the others were left out. The delay in replying to the GMO’s last message has had a marked effect on T. V. Soong who is in a highly nervous and disturbed condition. The only other point that might bear on the situation is that the GMO may believe that I asked the President to send the message in order to humiliate him.³⁸

As he had so often done in the past, during this period of waiting for the

³⁵ (1) Rad CFB 23254, Stilwell to Marshall, 26 Sep 44. Item 16, OKLAHOMA File, JWS Personal File. (2) Hata claimed to be unaware of the extent of the differences between Stilwell and the Generalissimo. The Japanese were aware that “a minor dispute for the right of command” was in progress between the two Allied leaders; the broadcast was intended to drive a wedge between the United States and China. Given the general standard of living in China in 1944, the only radios would be in possession of members of the Chinese elite, so the broadcast was aimed at Nationalist officialdom. It may be that Hata understates the information at his disposal, for disputes over the right to command are hardly apt to be minor.

³⁶ (1) Quotation from radio, CM-IN 24721, Stilwell to Marshall, 26 Sep 44. (2) Memo, Handy for Leahy, 28 Sep 44. Item 20, Item 60, OPD Exec 10.

³⁷ Rad CFB 23556, Stilwell to Marshall, 1 Oct 44. Item 18, OKLAHOMA File, JWS Personal File.

³⁸ CM-IN 27152, Stilwell to Marshall, 29 Sep 44. For the full text of Stilwell’s proposal, see page 337 of *The Stilwell Papers*.

President's reply Soong himself turned to Harry Hopkins and asked him to intervene.³⁹

End of the Deadlock

September ended with the actors in the drama in suspense. Stilwell heard nothing from Marshall, and Soong had no word from Washington.⁴⁰ But Soong did not have long to wait. Word from Washington came on 1 October, and Soong immediately passed it on to Hurley:

October 1, 1944

Dear General Hurley:

The Generalissimo will see you at 5:00 p.m. tomorrow. I shall come to fetch you.

For your immediate information, the Generalissimo today received a significant telegram from Dr. Kung. Dr. Kung stated that Harry Hopkins had told him at a dinner party that the President had received the Generalissimo's Aide-Memoire and my accompanying letter; that the President was glad of the Generalissimo's acceptance of an American Commander-in-Chief; and that since it concerned the sovereign right of China, the President intended to comply with the Generalissimo's request for the recall of General Stilwell and his replacement by another American officer. At the same time, Mr. Hopkins also told Dr. Kung that the President had not yet seen General Marshall.

According to Dr. Kung, the intention is for the President to discuss the problem of General Stilwell's successor with General Marshall, and as soon as that has been solved, to reply to the Generalissimo's message.

Sincerely yours,

(Signed) T. V. SOONG
(Typed) T. V. SOONG⁴¹

Next day, the Generalissimo told a meeting of the Central Executive Committee of the Kuomintang that he had definitely declined to appoint Stilwell as field commander of the Chinese forces but that he would appoint an American to that post.⁴² The Generalissimo could hardly reverse himself after such a statement without irrevocable loss of face. In effect, he cast the die after Kung's cable from Washington.

Learning of these events, Stilwell accepted the apparently inevitable and on 2 October began to write farewell letters to officers of his command and to Chinese personages.⁴³

³⁹ Undated Cbl, Soong to Hopkins. Bk IX, Hopkins Papers. This is the cable quoted on pages 804-05, Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins*. The author of *Roosevelt and Hopkins*, Robert E. Sherwood, may have mistaken the period of the cable, for he places it in the context of spring 1944. It contains details of the September 1944 negotiations which place it in that month. Soong would not have sent the message before 19 September, and events after 30 September 1944 left him no need to send it.

⁴⁰ A Chronology of the Recall, SUP 5.

⁴¹ Memo for record, Gen Hull, 4 Nov 44, initialed G.C.M. General Hull noted: "The attached is a copy of a letter delivered to General Hurley and is self-explanatory." Item 59, OPD Exec 10.

⁴² Rad CFB 23864, Hurley to Roosevelt, 6 Oct 44. Item 41-a, Bk 1, Hurley Papers.

⁴³ (1) *The Stilwell Papers*, p. 340. (2) Carbon copies of Stilwell's letters as finally sent are in OKLAHOMA File, JWS Personal File.

What would be the reply from Washington when it did come? Some indications of the attitude of Stilwell's superiors, rather different from those volunteered by Kung, came from General Merrill, just back from the OCTAGON Conference and Washington. Stilwell called him to Chungking, and Merrill arrived on 3 October. Next day the two officers discussed the current situation. Many years later, Merrill recalled Stilwell's telling him that he had (originally) summoned Merrill to China to act as Stilwell's chief of staff if the latter became field commander of the Chinese forces. Stilwell told Merrill of receiving the President's 18 September message, remarking that he had questioned the wisdom of his delivering it as it really should have gone through Hurley, but that he had been given an order and had carried it out. Stilwell then gave Merrill a number of "eyes alone" messages on the command crisis, saying as he did so that Merrill was the only one besides Stilwell who had seen most of them, and that they were not to be discussed with anyone.⁴⁴

Then Merrill told Stilwell what he had learned in Washington, and shortly after submitted his observations in memorandum form:

I was surprised to find a general willingness to tighten up and put some definite pressure on the Chinese. [Marshall] is having much less trouble in getting agreement from the White House on pressure than in the past. As regards planning for this Theater, I had a long session with Generals Handy, Hull, and Roberts. Following this, as agreed, General Roberts went into specific details. Points of immediate interest to us are:

- a. Nimitz' repeated statements that we require bases on the China Coast are purely as a cover for our real operations.
- b. We have no interest in the Canton-Hong Kong area.
- c. We would be interested in any operations conducted from the interior of China towards the coast with Amoy being the southernmost limit and Tsingtao the northern limit of the coastal strip in which we might possibly be interested in.
- d. All plans for operations against the Japanese assume that China does nothing but contain some Japanese.
- e. We do not desire to get mixed up on the Continent with large U.S. forces.
- f. We will probably not assist China more than already promised. (30 divisions plus 10% for 2d 30 divisions) thru India. War Department recognizes we may eventually have to equip entire Chinese Army but intends to do this only when it can be done through a port on east coast. . . .

General Handy admitted Stilwell mission was primarily political and that not much in the way of real action by the Chinese was hoped for.⁴⁵

The mood of the War Department, if Merrill assessed it correctly, was one of detachment toward the military problems of China Theater. There was no longer a military reason for a major U.S. effort in China Theater. If the War Department felt that way, and since at Tehran Marshal Stalin had pledged that the Soviet Union would enter the war against Japan when Germany was

⁴⁴ (1) Stilwell's diary sets the date of Merrill's arrival as 3 October 1944. (2) Ltr, Merrill to Ward, 26 May 52. OCMH.

⁴⁵ Memo, Merrill for Stilwell, 5 Oct 44, sub: Matters Discussed in Washington. SNF 115.

defeated, then the Generalissimo's bargaining power vis-à-vis the United States was rapidly diminishing. The China problem was becoming one of diplomacy and personalities, while the stiffening of German resistance ended the possibility of sending a corps to CBI.

The Secretary of War on 3 October recorded his impression that the scales were inclining against Stilwell. In his diary he noted his belief that now as so often in times past the President was preparing to side against Stilwell. And, that same day, Marshall told Stimson that if the United States "had to remove Stilwell he would not allow another American general to be placed in the position of Chief of Staff and Commander of the Chinese armies, for it was so evident that no American would be loyally supported."⁴⁶

Stilwell's political adviser, who was still in the United States and was unaware that Stilwell's recall appeared probable, believed that the War Department and the Joint Chiefs were losing interest in China, and submitted to Stilwell a plan to be sent to the JCS in hope of recapturing their attention. Its diplomatic implications were great. The plan proposed that the United States in company with the Chinese Communists seize the Shanghai area, after which large quantities of captured German arms would be given to the Chinese Communists. The whole operation was to be kept secret from the Generalissimo and his government until it was executed, and the Chinese Communists were to be treated as a sovereign power to the complete exclusion of the Central Government. Stilwell made an identifying note on the cover of the plan and dropped it in his file.⁴⁷ From Merrill, Stilwell knew that his adviser had incurred the displeasure of the War Department for what the Department thought a breach of discretion in February 1944.⁴⁸

When the President's reply to the Generalissimo's *aide-mémoire* arrived, it indicated that the President was willing to compromise. As Stilwell recommended on 1 October, this Presidential message was sent to Hurley for delivery.⁴⁹ Hurley gave it to the Generalissimo on 6 October. Its terms suggest that the President as well as the Generalissimo understood the uses of circumlocution. Though there had been no great change in the military situation in China since 19 September when the President had insisted that the Generalissimo place Stilwell in command at once, the President now remarked that the ground situation in China had so deteriorated since the summer that he did not want the United States to assume responsibility. Possibly the President agreed with Marshall that no American should command in China because none would be "loyally supported" there:

⁴⁶ Stimson and Bundy, *On Active Service*, p. 538. (2) Ltr, Dill to McNarney, 5 Oct 44. Folder 66, OPD Exec 10. (3) CM-OUT 42323, 6 Oct 44. Case 516, OPD 381 Security.

⁴⁷ Ltr, Davies to Stilwell, 2 Oct 44. SNF 115. Stilwell labeled the scheme "Plan DAVIES." No references to the proposal could be found in Stilwell's papers.

⁴⁸ See Memo cited n. 45, above.

⁴⁹ CM-IN 665, Stilwell to Marshall, 1 Oct 44.

Your message of September 25th has been carefully considered. I must state my surprise and regret at the reversal of your agreement of August 12th to accept Stilwell for the command of all forces in China. The ground situation in China has so deteriorated since my original proposal that I now am inclined to feel that the United States Government should not assume the responsibility involved in placing an American officer in command of your ground forces throughout China.

However, the maintenance of the Hump tonnage is of such tremendous importance to the stability of your Government that the continuance of a reasonably secure situation regarding operations over the Hump demands that Stilwell be placed in direct command under you of the Chinese forces in Burma and of all Chinese ground forces in Yunnan Province, it being understood that adequate support in replacements and supplies be furnished these armies by you. Otherwise I am convinced that the Hump tonnage will be interrupted by Japanese action.

I accept your proposal that he be relieved as your Chief of Staff and I intend to relieve him of further responsibility in connection with Lend-Lease matters.

I am willing in the present situation to continue General Chennault in command of the 14th Air Force and for General Hurley to continue as my personal representative with you regarding military affairs in China.

Tonnage over the Hump will be under the direction of General Sultan in Burma. There are further details regarding American administrative responsibilities not pertaining to Chinese personnel which will affect the arrangement of affairs in China but instructions regarding these matters will be issued as soon as the various details can be carefully considered. This would include matters relating to the training by American officers of Chinese units other than the forces of Yunnan Province and the Chinese forces in Burma. The training of these latter should of course be under General Stilwell. At an early date, I will designate an officer to assume supply responsibilities for the U.S. forces in China and who can serve as an advisor to you in similar matters for Chinese forces.

I hope that you will inform me by telegraph that the foregoing proposals are acceptable because I feel that should we remove Stilwell from the Burma campaign the results would be far more serious than you apparently realize.⁵⁰

Reporting to the President his delivery of the message, Hurley informed Mr. Roosevelt of the Kung-Hopkins exchange, on the strength of which the Generalissimo had publicly committed himself to Stilwell's removal. Hopkins hastened to deny any such statement as that credited to him by Soong: "I told him . . . that I had no idea how the President would reply to the Generalissimo in regard to the latter's request for Stilwell's withdrawal."⁵¹ The President's explanation, as given to Hurley in February 1945 and recalled by Hurley in 1949, differed. The President stated he had told Hopkins that he would appoint another American officer, presumably referring to a statement in the Generalissimo's *aide-mémoire* that any of three Americans whom he listed would be acceptable. Hopkins had relayed the statement to Kung, who drew the conclusions Soong had reported to Hurley.⁵²

⁵⁰ (1) Memo, Leahy for Hull, 5 Oct 44. Item 28, Item 60, OPD Exec 10. (2) Rad WH 77, Roosevelt to Hurley for Generalissimo, 5 Oct 44. Item 38, Bk 1, Hurley Papers. This message was sent through Navy communications.

⁵¹ (1) Rad CFB 23864, Hurley to Roosevelt, 6 Oct 44. (2) Rad WH 79, Hopkins to Hurley, 7 Oct 44. Item 41-b, Bk 1, Hurley Papers.

⁵² Interv with Hurley, 26 Jan 49.

The Generalissimo Places the Blame

After the arrival of the President's new proposals, there was another lull, though a brief one, while the Chinese weighed their answer. It was a weekend, and the Generalissimo called Hurley to Huang Shan, his residence. That the Generalissimo would insist on Stilwell's recall was evident at once; had not the President stated through Hopkins that the Generalissimo had only to be firm and the Americans would yield to China's sovereign right? But such a step had to be justified, and the Generalissimo and Soong poured out their complaints against Stilwell. Hurley listened, and answered where a defense of Stilwell seemed necessary. He defended Stilwell as best he could, and finally reduced the Chinese case to what seemed its hard core. But in his discussions Hurley was handicapped by the hasty and inadequate briefing he had received before his departure from Washington. Charge after charge was leveled against Stilwell, and Hurley had no information to the contrary. Moreover, no liaison existed between the War Department and Hurley, so that Hurley still knew nothing of the antecedents of the President's 18 September radio. His reactions were inevitably colored by these circumstances. The discussions at Huang Shan ended with the Chinese seemingly resolved on what they presented to Hurley as an irrefutable case and Hurley returned to his quarters.⁵³

The formal Chinese reply to the President came in two parts. First was a simple and dignified note from the Generalissimo, and then T. V. Soong presented Hurley with an *aide-mémoire* "covering his [Chiang's] weekend conversations with you."⁵⁴ The Generalissimo's note to the President assured Roosevelt that the two men were in accord on all points, denied that there had been reversal of policy on his part, but regretted that he could not confide the execution of such important matters to so unqualified an officer as Stilwell. He asked that Stilwell be immediately replaced.⁵⁵

But the Generalissimo was not content to leave the matter at that. The *aide-mémoire* denounced Allied strategy in Southeast Asia and toward China as responsible for the loss of east China. Primary responsibility for the debacle was placed on Stilwell, in that this Allied strategy was, according to Chiang, his creation, and the *aide-mémoire* hinted that Stilwell had been deceiving the President as to the situation in China. Stilwell, whose appointment the President had been urging since the previous July, seemed obviously incompetent to the Generalissimo, a fact he now undertook to point out to Roosevelt:

To Major General Patrick J. Hurley.

In my telegram replying to the President which I have just handed to you, you will note that in order to avoid what may be considered controversial matter, I have purposely limited it to a simple statement of lack of confidence in General Stilwell and a request for his recall.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ Memo, Soong for Hurley, 9 Oct 44. Item 43, Bk 1, Hurley Papers.

⁵⁵ Rad CFB 24103, Hurley to President, 11 Oct 44. Item 33, Item 60, OPD Exec 10.

So long as I am Head of State and Supreme Commander in China, it seems to me that there can be no question as to my right to request the recall of an officer in whom I can no longer repose confidence.

There are, however, certain essential points which I wish to make informally, with a view to obtaining full and clear personal understanding between the President and myself. I am anxious to secure such an understanding since the President's courageous and farsighted leadership in the war against Axis aggression has won my unbounded admiration, and since he has my lasting gratitude for his generous assistance to China in her struggle to win independence and her rightful place in the family of nations. The President has been a constant inspiration to me and my people, so that any misunderstanding between us distressed me most deeply.

Both the President and the War Department are dependent on General Stilwell for information concerning the military situation in China. Thus the President may not be aware that I not only have no confidence in General Stilwell, but also lack confidence in his military judgment. I believe the record sustains my opinion, and I shall summarize it briefly.

General Stilwell and I have never agreed about the Burma campaign. I have most naturally been anxious for a campaign in Burma which would reopen land communications with China. At the same time, in view of the enemy's superior communications in that area, and the difficult terrain, I have always insisted that the only strategically sound campaign in Burma was one which included amphibious operations in south Burma to insure rapid collapse of the enemy's resistance. From the first, I have repeatedly warned General Stilwell that a limited offensive in north Burma would be most costly than could be justified by the results and might even prove exceedingly dangerous. I have also given my opinion to the President when we met in Cairo.

At the Cairo Conference, commitments were finally made by the representatives of the United States and Great Britain which appeared to insure the kind of Burma campaign which I could approve. Unhappily, those commitments were abandoned shortly after I left Cairo. General Stilwell then came to me and announced that he proposed to proceed with a limited offensive in north Burma. I again warned him of the consequences, stating specifically that I feared the project would be difficult and costly, and would engage all of China's limited resources at a time when this would be dangerous. He treated my warning lightly, and intimated that if I maintained my attitude, China would be suspected of wishing to withhold any real contribution to the Allied cause. At length I consented to his employing the Ramgarh troops which were entirely American trained and equipped and with the clear understanding that these forces were all that would be forthcoming.

It was not long before my warning was substantiated. The moment obstacles were encountered in Burma, General Stilwell began to use every sort of pressure to induce me to commit additional forces. I shall not enter into details. It is enough to say that by the beginning of May, the Burma campaign had drained off most of the properly trained and equipped reserves in China. At the same time, it had greatly reduced the incoming supply tonnage so that during critical ensuing months it was impossible to strengthen the military position in any area within China. It was not until June that the Hump tonnage, exclusive of the B-29 project, again reached the January level.

As I had feared, the Japanese took advantage of the opportunity thus offered to launch an offensive within China attacking first in Honan and then in Hunan. Owing to the Burma campaign, no adequately trained and equipped reinforcements were available for these war areas. Owing to the effect of the Burma campaign on the Hump tonnage, supplies were not forthcoming for the Chinese armies stationed in Honan and Hunan. The forces brought to bear by the Japanese in their offensive in east China were six times as great as those confronting General Stilwell in north Burma, and the consequences of defeat were certain to outweigh in China all results of victory in the north Burma campaign. Yet General Stilwell

exhibited complete indifference to the outcome in east China; so much so that in the critical days of the east China operations, he consistently refused to release Lend-Lease munitions already available in Yunnan for use in the East China fighting. Prior to June 1944 with the exception of the Yunnan Expeditionary Forces, the entire Chinese Army did not receive a single rifle or piece of artillery from American Lend-Lease. It was not until the first week of June 1944, that General Stilwell at last visited Chungking to discuss the east China situation with me. When the enemy's offensive was already on the way to its objectives, General Stilwell finally consented to give a small quantity of equipment to the Chinese armies in east China, and to facilitate more effective air support. In all, excepting the Yunnan Expeditionary Forces, the Chinese armies have received 60 mountain guns, 320 anti-tank rifles and 506 bazookas.

In short, we have taken Myitkyina but we have lost almost all of east China, and in this General Stilwell cannot be absolved of grave responsibility. Even now he appears to be unaware of the implications of this fact and the grave damage to prestige and morale of the Chinese Army. It is possible that this fact, fundamentally important as it is, had not been pointed out to the President. Whatever my opinion of General Stilwell as a man may be, I might bring myself to appoint him to command in China if I thought well of him as a military leader. However, with all the facts before me I have come to the conclusion that he is not competent to envisage or to deal with a problem of such range and complexity as now confronts us.

From what I have said above it is also specifically evident that the various areas of war in China cannot be divided into independent sectors. Already what has happened in Yunnan and Burma has instantly and vitally affected all of China. To limit General Stilwell's authority to Yunnan and Burma does not constitute a solution of the problem.

In his last telegram, the President asserts that the China situation has deteriorated so far that he is now inclined to feel the U.S. Government should not assume the responsibility involved in the appointment of an American commander of the Chinese forces. I do not altogether understand this statement, for two reasons. First, no matter what happens, no matter what command arrangements are adopted, I cannot personally escape ultimate responsibility for the future of the China Theater. Even the responsibility of General Stilwell's errors must be borne by me since I allowed myself to be overpersuaded against my judgment to countenance them. Second, I cannot feel that the deterioration is so serious as the President suggests. After long years of experience and first hand knowledge of Japanese methods and strength, despite the defeats of east China, I cannot foresee any disaster fundamentally incapacitating China.

The statement was also distressing to me in another sense. While I do not anticipate disaster, the situation in China is indeed critical. Aid is most needed in an hour of crisis. Yet the statement I have referred to appears to imply that aid will be withheld precisely because this is an hour of crisis.

I am disturbed by the fact that the President has expressed regrets at my "reversal of agreement" with respect to the appointment of General Stilwell in command of the Chinese Forces. My telegram to the President dated August 12th, showed great readiness to meet his wishes as far as humanly possible. Developments which I described in aide memoire of September 25th, have, I trust, made it clear why it has become impossible to appoint General Stilwell.

I am wholly confident that if the President replaces General Stilwell with a qualified American officer, we can work together to reverse the present trend and achieve a vital contribution to the final victory.

To this *aide-mémoire* Hurley added his own conclusion, which was that the Generalissimo was the Chinese leader best qualified to execute a policy of

Sino-American co-operation. To Hurley, Stilwell and the Generalissimo appeared fundamentally incompatible. Therefore, the issue was narrowed down to a choice between Stilwell and Chiang Kai-shek. "There is no other issue between you and Chiang Kai-shek. Chiang Kai-shek has agreed to every request, every suggestion made by you except the Stilwell appointment."⁵⁶

The Generalissimo's *aide-memoire* was an extraordinary document to dispatch to President Roosevelt, for as the President read it he may have wondered at whom the Generalissimo's shafts were aimed, Stilwell or himself? The events described by the Generalissimo must have been fresh in the President's memory, for Mr. Roosevelt had been a principal actor in them within the last eighteen months.

In response to heavy pressure from the Generalissimo and his associates, pressure reinforced by Harry Hopkins, the President in May 1943 had agreed to the Generalissimo's demand that Chennault receive the bulk of Hump tonnage. In the course of this the Generalissimo had promised Mr. Roosevelt on 29 April 1943 that "in the event the enemy attempts to interrupt the air offensive by a ground advance on the air bases, the advance can be halted by the existing Chinese forces."⁵⁷ So the President had agreed to the Generalissimo's demands, Chennault had received first priority, and now the Generalissimo was complaining that no arms had gone to his ground forces in east China.

Concerning the North Burma Campaign, the President had sent radio after radio to the Generalissimo urging him to take part. Action had finally come after the President told the Generalissimo on 4 April 1944, "It is inconceivable to me that your 'YOKE' Forces, with their American equipment, would be unable to advance against the Japanese *56th Division* in its present depleted strength. To me the time is ripe. . . ."⁵⁸ Now the Generalissimo was blaming the loss of east China on the North Burma Campaign. Did some concept of etiquette impel the Generalissimo formally to state that the North Burma Campaign was uniquely Stilwell's project, as though the latter's American superiors bore no responsibility for him? But even so the President might decide the attack was aimed at himself, for he could hardly have forgotten the series of radios he had sent the Generalissimo five months before.

With the President's military advisers appearing indifferent to what China might contribute to the war, the President could reasonably feel that the alliance with China was now primarily a sort of insurance policy to be drawn on if anything went wrong with the central Pacific offensive, which currently (mid-October) was within a few days of reaching the Philippine island of Leyte. The policy should be kept in force, but there was no need to pay an exorbitant premium.

⁵⁶ Rad CFB 24103, Hurley to President, 11 Oct 44. Item 61, OPD Exec 10.

⁵⁷ Incl to Ltr, Soong to Hopkins, 29 Apr 43. Bk. VII, Hopkins Papers.

⁵⁸ Rad WAR 17956, Roosevelt to Generalissimo, 3 Apr 44. Item 2164, Bk 6, JWS Personal File. Quoted p. 310, above.

There remained the diplomatic aspects. The United States was China's only champion among the Great Powers. That policy had been the President's own concept and he had been forceful in its execution. Now at a time when China's military importance was rapidly diminishing, the Generalissimo sent the President an *aide-mémoire* in which he sought to place the blame for China's misfortunes, in terms the President might well regard as directed at himself.

Waiting for the Decision

That the future of CBI depended on exchanges of radios between the President and the Generalissimo gave a curious rhythmic quality to events in Chungking. A message would come from Washington, and there would be a flurry of activity. The answer would be prepared, and then would come a period of suspenseful waiting, while Washington in turn wrote a reply. In the current period of suspense, Stilwell and Hurley each sent off radios, Stilwell to Marshall and Hurley to the President, offering their solutions.

In his radio to Marshall, Stilwell accepted a suggestion of General Merrill's, and revived an old (January 1943) proposal of his own, that a joint Sino-American committee of senior staff officers be set up in Chungking. "Such a plan," wrote Stilwell,

. . . would have effect of putting China on the same status as our other Allies and increasing the prestige of the Generalissimo. It would permit him to win his point with regard to me personally to the extent that I would not be anything but a field commander executing orders which would come from the Generalissimo. However as field commander I could ensure that orders were obeyed and that the plans and policies, which would be largely created by the Joint Sino-American Military Committee, were actually executed and that the maximum military effort was made.

Stilwell went on to say that in his opinion the situation was at a deadlock because the Generalissimo did not want to make any voluntary military effort, and was simply using Stilwell's removal as a step in his delaying tactics. Two and one half years of struggle had convinced Stilwell, he told Marshall, that the Generalissimo would not make an effort against the twenty-four Japanese divisions Stilwell thought to be in China unless he was pushed into it. There was a deadlock as a result of Kung's telegram, but if pressure was applied from Washington, and the Generalissimo given a face-saving escape, Stilwell thought the Generalissimo might even yet agree.⁵⁹

Hurley's final comments were sent several days after Stilwell's and suggest he was familiar with the contents of Stilwell's message to Marshall. By this time, Hurley was in complete disagreement with Stilwell on the proper approach to the problems of China. In language highly reminiscent of the President's views of 8 March 1943, Hurley told the President that Stilwell's fundamental mistake was the idea that he could subjugate a man who had led a nation in revolution and who for seven years had led an ill-fed, poorly equipped, practically unorganized army against an overwhelming foe. Not

⁵⁹ CM-IN 9592, Stilwell to Marshall, 10 Oct 44.

attempting to place any responsibility for the state of the Chinese Army, Hurley went on to say that if the President in the present controversy sustained Stilwell he would lose the Generalissimo and possibly China too. He did not agree with the President's reason why the United States should not assume responsibility, for he believed that the very danger of a Chinese collapse was the reason America should assume responsibility for the guidance of China's military affairs. Hurley was convinced that China could be kept in the war, that the Chinese Army could be reorganized, and that this could be done through the Generalissimo. It could not, he told the President, be done through Stilwell.

Hurley saw nothing to be gained by a prolonged debate as to whether the Generalissimo or Stilwell was responsible for the state of affairs in China. He was also opposed to Stilwell's suggestion for a Sino-American policy committee, thinking it would complicate a situation already complex enough.

Hurley concluded by urging that Stilwell be relieved and that another American officer be appointed to command the Chinese Army. This man should be willing to accept the responsibility the Generalissimo wished to place on an American, that of command of the Chinese forces. Hurley said that he respected and admired Stilwell but that he was simply not the man for the job.⁶⁰

Though expecting the final word from Washington would be an order to return, Stilwell during the interval carried the burdens of command in full measure, including two problems that involved General Chennault. On 13 August, one of Chennault's aircraft reconnoitered the Manila docks, presumably to prepare for an attack on them. The move angered Stilwell and embarrassed him in his relations with his neighboring theater commander, General MacArthur. Stilwell wondered how Chennault could justify operations in MacArthur's theater when he complained that he did not have enough supplies for effective operations in China. From MacArthur, Chennault's move drew a frigid warning direct to the airman that under no circumstances was he to bomb the Manila docks. MacArthur told Chennault that he had no authority to make the attack for he had not obtained from MacArthur permission to operate in MacArthur's theater. Were Chennault to bomb the docks, it might well provoke a premature uprising in the Philippines and seriously embarrass MacArthur's projected operations.⁶¹

Stilwell sent a strong message to Chennault about this affair and received in reply what he considered to be a false official statement from Chennault. The matter was at once turned over to the theater inspector general, and on 13 October an investigation was opened at Kunming. Three days later the inspector general reported to Stilwell that there was no proof of the charge and the matter was dropped.⁶²

⁶⁰ (1) *Stilwell's Mission to China*, Ch. VIII. (2) Rad NAVY 131200, Hurley to Roosevelt, 13 Oct 44. Item 51, Bk 1, Hurley Papers.

⁶¹ CM-IN 11955, MacArthur to Chennault, 13 Aug 44.

⁶² Stilwell Diary, 1, 13, 16 Oct 44.

The inspector general's inquiry was conducted concurrently with a bitter dispute between Stilwell and Chennault as to whether the latter had made unauthorized use of the stockpile of gas accumulated for support of U.S. operations in the Pacific by China-based aircraft. In May 1944 the Joint Chiefs ordered Stilwell to begin accumulating gasoline for support of Pacific operations, target date November 1944. Little could be done in the summer of 1944 because of the overriding necessity of supporting Chennault's efforts in east China. Then, in August the JCS weighed the effect of the loss of the east China airfields on the support that might be given U.S. operations in the western Pacific and decided to hold Chennault's Hump tonnage allocation at the 10,000-ton level in order that CBI might begin building up the stockpile ordered in May. If emergencies arose Stilwell could permit diversions from the stockpile.

On 27 September, after his trip to Kweilin and east China, Stilwell authorized Chennault to borrow 1,000 tons of gasoline from the stockpile. At the end of the month, when the time came to take inventory of the stockpile and prepare October Hump allocations, CBI Theater headquarters discovered that the Fourteenth Air Force had overdrawn its account by 2,400 tons. Accordingly, theater headquarters decided to even the books by cutting Chennault's October allocation to 7,600 tons. Chennault at once protested, and the matter was brought to Stilwell's attention. Chennault argued that Stratemeyer had authority to divert 3,500 tons and that he had simply drawn on that in order to stay in the fight.⁶³

Stilwell's reply was an administrative admonition. He told Chennault that the drain on the theater stockpile had hindered CBI in carrying out commitments for the support of MacArthur's and Nimitz' Pacific operations. Chennault was taken aback by this sharp response for he felt the matter had been discussed with Stilwell in an atmosphere of friendliness, and so on 19 October he asked further details that he might reply to Stilwell's charges.

The issue was rapidly being submerged in the flow of greater events; Stilwell in effect finessed it by replying that his radio had been an admonition, and so not a subject for discussion.⁶⁴

B-29 missions in support of Pacific operations, one of the types of support for which gasoline had been stockpiled, were flown on 14 and 16 October from China. Since so much importance was attached to these operations, which were

⁶³ (1) CM-OUT 31202, JCS to Stilwell, 2 May 44. (2) CM-OUT 87086, Marshall to Stilwell, 26 Aug 44. (3) CM-IN 7032, Chennault to Arnold, 7 Oct 44. (4) Rad CRA 15931, Evans to Stilwell, 6 Oct 44; Rad CAK 9482, Chennault to Stilwell, 14 Oct 44. Items 2918, 2938, Bk 8, JWS Personal File.

⁶⁴ (1) *The Manual for Courts-Martial, U.S. Army, 1928* (Washington, 1943), which was in effect when Stilwell sent his admonition, defines "administrative admonition" as a nonpunitive measure, more analogous to instruction than to punishment, which a commanding officer or officer in charge is authorized and expected to use to further the efficiency of his command or unit. (2) Rad CFB 24389, Stilwell to Chennault, 17 Oct 44; Rad CAK 9733, Chennault to Stilwell, 19 Oct 44; Rad CFB 24556, Stilwell to Chennault, 20 Oct 44. Items 2935, 2950, 2953, Bk 8, JWS Personal File.

launched a few days before American forces landed on Leyte Island in the Philippines, Stilwell flew to Cheng-tu to be on hand for the first attack. Attacking ground installations of the Japanese air force on Formosa, 120 B-29's dropped 650 tons of bombs on the island. Examining photographic assessments of the attack, Stilwell was not impressed by the results attained.⁶⁵

In the midst of these problems at the highest level of strategy, Stilwell took a quick trip to Myitkyina where he talked until late in the night with the survivors of GALAHAD, or Merrill's Marauders as they were now known to every reader of the press. The grievances accumulated during the North Burma Campaign, whose most dramatic expression came during the siege of Myitkyina, needed a hearing, and so Stilwell was advised by Lt. Col. Fred Eldridge, of his public relations staff, to visit the unit. On 6 October, Stilwell spoke with the survivors of GALAHAD, now organized as the 475th Infantry Regiment. First he met with the regiment as a whole, then with officer and enlisted man delegates from each battalion.⁶⁶

On 14 October, Stilwell flew to east China. Since the Generalissimo had accepted his 18 September plan, preparations had been made, and Gens. Chang Fa-kwei and Pai Chung-hsi were getting ready to pass to the offensive. D Day was set for 20 October, and the Chinese were optimistic.

The result of this effort belongs to a somewhat later period. The Chinese finally decided on a limited-objective attack with one army to counter the Japanese drive north from Canton. With strong air and artillery support, the 64th Army drove toward Meng-shan on 21 October. The Chinese took their initial objective, Meng-hu, but a Japanese counterattack that night threw them back out of the town. Shortly after, General Chang told the American liaison officer assisting him, Col. Howard C. Bowman, that "the morale of the Chinese soldier was broken and he no longer had the will to fight." This estimate offered slight hope of holding Kweilin and Liuchow.⁶⁷

Though at the time he was mildly optimistic about the 64th Army attack, for himself, Stilwell had no great hopes. John Davies, newsmen Brooks Atkinson and Theodore H. White, and General Hearn, all were told that recall was imminent.⁶⁸ In far-off Yen-an, capital of Red China, John S. Service revealed his detachment from events by drafting a long memorandum to Stilwell urging "greater realism" in the United States' dealings with the Generalissimo. Service recommended that the United States enter into diplomatic discussions with the Yen-an regime, and that the United States should make clear that it was considering withdrawing its support from the Generalissimo and its recognition from the Nationalists. The language of the memorandum strongly suggests

⁶⁵ (1) CM-OUT 39817. Arnold to Stilwell, 1 Oct 44. (2) Stilwell Diary, 14 Oct 44.

⁶⁶ (1) Stilwell Diary, 6 Oct 44. (2) *The Stilwell Papers*, p. 341. (3) An impression of the meeting is given by Cpl. Ferdinand Staunch, in *Ex-CBI Roundup*, Vol. 6, No. 6 (November, 1952), p. 13.

⁶⁷ (1) Stilwell Diary, 14 Oct 44. (2) Campaign of Southeastern China, p. 5.

⁶⁸ Stilwell Diary, 11-18 Oct 44.

Service was unaware that he was addressing it to a man whose farewell letters had been written two weeks before Service mailed it.⁶⁹

The President Ends CBI Theater

In Washington, the discussion about the next step was narrowing down. On receipt of Hurley's 13 October message, the President briefly considered appointing an American officer.⁷⁰ The exact nature of the President's answer was discussed between the White House and the War Department, and several drafts were prepared and rejected by either one or the other. Giving increased powers to Chennault was contemplated for a time.⁷¹ The Generalissimo was asked to name three Americans who would be acceptable to him.⁷² In reply, through Hurley, he listed Alexander M. Patch, Albert C. Wedemeyer, and Walter Krueger.⁷³

In the nature of things, the reply would be a complex one, for the Generalissimo was still asking for an American general to assume the title of commander of the Chinese Army and to wield powers which, in the light of the Generalissimo's 25 September *aide-mémoire*, may have seemed to the President and General Marshall to offer as much chance for later controversy as those which had seemed so clearly defined and so carefully negotiated when Stilwell assumed them in January 1942. There was the further question of what to do about the China, Burma and India Theater, whether it should be split, or continued as one. There was also the question of the President's personal reaction to the charges made by the Generalissimo in his 9 October *aide-mémoire*.

The President's decision, in his reply of 18 October 1944, was that Stilwell would at once be recalled. For himself and the Prime Minister, he accepted responsibility for the North Burma Campaign, and told the Generalissimo that no American would command the Chinese Army in China. The Generalissimo was also asked to continue the North Burma Campaign he had denounced so strongly.

Your message of 9 October 1944 was transmitted to me through General Hurley. I am issuing instructions to recall General Stilwell from the theater immediately.

General Stilwell was not responsible for the decisions with respect to attacking in North instead of South Burma. This decision was made by the Combined British and American Staff and was fully approved by the Prime Minister and myself. Our conclusions, which were inescapable, were reached only after serious consideration of all pertinent facts. Your decision to employ Yunnan forces on the Salween was sound in my opinion. The maintenance and the increased facilities for a supply route into China demanded the occupation of Myitkyina and I am now informed that the vital gas supply and low level flying route are assured by the opening of the pipeline at Myitkyina on September 29.

As stated in my October 6 message, I do not feel that an American should in the present

⁶⁹ (1) Rpt 40, Service to Stilwell, 10 Oct 44 (mailed the 16th—probably the day the courier aircraft departed). Item 48, Bk 1, Hurley Papers. (2) *The Stilwell Papers*, p. 340.

⁷⁰ Memo, McNarney for Marshall, 14 Oct 44, sub: Relief of Gen Stilwell. Item 36, Item 60, OPD Exec 10.

⁷¹ (1) Stimson and Bundy, *On Active Service*, p. 539. (2) Item 60, OPD Exec 10.

⁷² Leahy, *I Was There*, p. 272.

⁷³ Rad, NAV 151825, NCR 4780, Hurley to President, 15 Oct 44. Item 60, OPD Exec 10.

situation assume responsibility in a command position for the operations of Chinese forces in China. However, I will furnish a qualified officer to serve as your Chief of Staff. General Hurley informed me that you prefer either Generals Patch, Wedemeyer, or Krueger. General Patch is commanding an army now attacking the Germans in the vicinity of Belfort, France, and cannot be spared. General Krueger is commanding an army now launched in a most difficult offensive operation. General Wedemeyer can be made available after confirmation from you that he will become your Chief of Staff. I would also appoint him Commander of all U.S. Forces in the China Theater.

The recall of General Stilwell and appointment of General Wedemeyer will necessitate changes of which I will outline the most important. What has heretofore been the U.S. China-Burma-India Theater will be separated into two theaters so far as American interests are concerned, of which China will be one and the India-Burma Theater under General Sultan will constitute the other. The 14th Air Force will remain in the China Theater under General Chennault who in turn will be under Wedemeyer as Commander U.S. Forces in the China Theater. I assume that you desire that the Ramgarh training and the supply and training the X Forces should be continued, otherwise the fighting power of these units will inevitably and quickly dwindle away. I hope that the necessary replacements will be furnished to enable the X Force to continue on its present mission, and that you will delegate control of Chinese forces in India-Burma to General Sultan. Please let me hear from you on these points.

The offensive operations of the Y Forces will continue to be most important and I should like your assurance that they will advance in conjunction with the offensive operations in Burma of Admiral Mountbatten. Coordination between operations of the China-based Yunnan forces and Chinese forces based in Burma could be effected by General Wedemeyer as your Chief of Staff in communication with Sultan and Mountbatten.

I think all the above is the best solution and that it will expedite the solution of our immediate joint problem. Let me hear from you as soon as possible.⁷⁴

With receipt of the President's message in Chungking, the Generalissimo's victory was an accomplished fact, though not of the dimensions at which he and his advisers had aimed. Stilwell was now on orders to return to the United States, but there was no American to take the responsibility for whatever might happen in China. In retrospect, the Generalissimo's triumph acquires an aspect it probably did not wear at the time. It was the last diplomatic victory he was to win for many years. Moreover, the President's answers to the Generalissimo, progressively colder and less accommodating, suggest a corresponding alteration of attitude on Mr. Roosevelt's part toward the Generalissimo and China. In May 1943, at the Washington Conference, Roosevelt had been solicitous in his concern not only for China but for the personal position and prestige of the Generalissimo. Not three months after the Generalissimo had forced Stilwell's recall, Roosevelt met with the Prime Minister and Marshal Stalin on Russian soil at Yalta, February 1945. The attitude the President there adopted toward the territory and interests of China suggests that the Generalissimo's triumph of October 1944 was one of the steps that led to the Manchurian partition of February 1945.

A personal radio from Marshall warned Stilwell that recall was coming, and

⁷⁴ Memo, McCarthy for Handy, 18 Oct 44, with Incl, Memo, President for Generalissimo. Item 39, Item 60, OPD Exec 10.

Stilwell quickly made what few preparations for departure seemed necessary.⁷⁵ He had rather expected to be recalled, and the mere fact did not overly disturb him. As he prepared to leave the theater where he had spent two and one half years, the question that troubled him was whether he would be made a scapegoat for the fracas that followed when he delivered the President's 18 September message to the Generalissimo. Stilwell did not want the American public to think that nothing more was involved than a personality clash between himself and the Generalissimo, and hoped that the War Department would permit him to issue a statement explaining the issues as he saw them.

As Stilwell went about his last-minute preparations at Chungking, he found time to sketch the record of his mission and his recall as he saw it then:

After CEC [Central Executive Committee of the Kuomintang] disclosures and knowledge of relief, informed W [Theodore H. White?], A [Brooks Atkinson?], and I [Harold Isaacs?] 1) Confirmed relief. 2) Reasons given by Gmo. Incompetent, non co-op, lack of respect, and disobedience of orders, unwarranted diversion of munitions and men to Burma. Responsibility for disaster in South China. Explained orders to attack Bhamo. Explained "trade of S. China for N. Burma." 3) Issue of CKS vs. JWS. Real issue China make effort or not. 4) Offer of Burma and Yunnan command.

CEC. Refusal of US demands. JWS must go. (Hurley: CKS said I was trying to subjugate him.)

Given a mission and no means. Hamstrung by "no bargaining." Three years of struggle. Secret reports by Chinese, British, and special emissaries—Currie, Willkie, Wallace, Nelson, Hurley. Command functions reduced by ATC, XX BC, 14th AF, Miles. Bucked by the British. Bucked by the Chinese.

In spite of it all, just ready to blossom, and then made whipping dog for CKS. It was September 19 radio that got CKS. He blamed it on me—FDR was his great friend. FDR did not stand up to it. I was relieved on the arbitrary stand and false statements of Chiang Kai-shek. Q. Will a statement be made to explain the relief? Will I be allowed to make a statement?

The issue was not CKS vs. JWS. Hurley realized too late what he had done. Took CKS at face value. Believed his promises. Said to me he had bitched it up. When radios came in via Navy, and when Hurley did not show them to me, I knew I was the goat.

Asked for policy at Cairo. All I was told was: "We want to help China."⁷⁶

Stilwell left India for the United States on 27 October 1944. The hope that he would be able to explain his conduct of their affairs in China to his countrymen was never realized. On his return, he was told by the War Department that he could not discuss Chinese matters with the press, and his death in 1946 prevented his completing the personal account he had begun several times.⁷⁷ Never carried beyond an initial survey of Chinese culture and history, the surviving fragments offer no guide to what he planned to say.⁷⁸

The comment of the United States Government on Stilwell's work in China, Burma, and India was spoken by Secretary of War Stimson on 10 Feb-

⁷⁵ CM-OUT 48285, Marshall to Stilwell, 18 Oct 44.

⁷⁶ Data Notebook.

⁷⁷ Stilwell Diary 3, 4 Nov 44.

⁷⁸ The Stilwell documents in the Hoover Library contain several tentative beginnings of such a work.

ruary 1945, just over three years after Stimson had invited him to his home for a conference on China. The occasion was a ceremony to decorate Stilwell with another Legion of Merit and with the Oak Leaf Cluster to the Distinguished Service Medal. Stimson, pinning the awards on Stilwell, later wrote in his diary:

I was particularly happy to lay this encomium on Stilwell's hard and terrific work in Burma and in China and so I read the two citations myself and made a few comments to Stilwell which I think he appreciated. I said I thought he had had the toughest job of any of our generals and that I had never conveyed one of these medals with such pleasure as I had in doing this.⁷⁹

Conclusion

When Stilwell left the CBI Theater, the situation in China appeared dark. As far as the American contribution to China Theater was concerned, the most hopeful factor was that the projects begun in the equally dark days of 1942 were about to yield results on a scale far beyond 1942 and 1943. The fast-approaching completion of the projects begun by Stilwell or under his command would give his successors resources far beyond any that Stilwell ever had.

The projects that were Stilwell's own were those coming from his War Department orders to "improve the combat efficiency of the Chinese Army." In attempting to carry out that mission, he had created in the Chinese Army in India a force of five divisions that compared very favorably with any in the Japanese Army. What seemed to him a lack of interest on the part of Chinese authorities had limited the results he had achieved within China proper, but even there something had been done. Service schools and training centers had been set up, and the Y and Z Forces had been exposed to U.S. training.

The North Burma Campaign had not been fought at the time or in the manner Stilwell had proposed to his superiors, but he had successfully executed the directives of the Joint and Combined Chiefs of Staff. Under Stilwell, the Chinese Army in India had conducted the first sustained Chinese offensive against a Great Power, taken the key centers of north Burma, and planted the Chinese and American flags within forty miles of the Chinese border. The Chinese divisions now firmly gripped a part of the prewar Burmese road net, which linked with the old Burma Road. Inevitably, the Japanese would be driven from the last portion they held, and the existing road from Myitkyina to Wanting in China could readily be brought to the desired standard. The Japanese blockade of China was doomed.

The great line-of-communications projects in CBI were not Stilwell's in conception or in primary concern, for he was a troop trainer and a tactician, not an engineer; but the degree to which they were completed, or brought close to completion, very nearly equals the difference between his successor's problems and his own. By October 1944, the bottleneck of the Assam line of

⁷⁹ Stimson and Bundy, *On Active Service*, p. 541.

communications, which had hindered all operations in CBI, was only a bad memory. In May 1943, the month of TRIDENT, when Roosevelt had approved the Chennault Plan, the Assam line of communications had brought 5,117 long tons of U.S. supplies, exclusive of gas and oil, to Assam. From this trickle Stilwell had been expected to support the Fourteenth Air Force and the Generalissimo's 300-odd divisions, build the Ledo Road, prepare for the North Burma Campaign, and support the Americans in the Assam base area. In October 1944, 124,499 tons came forward over the Assam line of communications. The improvement was a remarkable feat of engineering and organization, and great credit is due the railwaymen, the engineers, and Generals Wheeler, Covell, and Somervell.

The airline had significance in that the tonnage it brought to China was the sum of the resources the U.S. theater commander could throw into battle there. In all of 1942 the air force and the ATC flew 3,706 long tons to China. In 1943, 61,151 tons were flown to China. And when Stilwell went home in October 1944, in that one month 35,131 tons were flown to China by the ATC, by the CNAC which by this time was under government contract, and by other contract carriers. (*See Chart 5.*)

The Ledo Road was nearly complete on 24 October 1944. The two great terrain problems, the Patkai Hills and the marshy lowlands, had been conquered. Trucks could now drive in eighteen hours from the Ledo base area to Warazup, which in turn was only seventy miles from Myitkyina. The road survey was complete to the neighborhood of Kamaing. Before the monsoon lifted, a great collection of road-building machinery had been assembled in the high ground of the upper reaches of the Hukawng and Mogaung valleys, and was put to work as soon as the ground was dry enough. The progress in completing the Ledo Road was making possible a significant change in the method of supplying the forces in north Burma, for in October 1944 more tonnage was delivered by truck than by air, and the difference was to increase sharply in the months ahead.⁸⁰ (*See Chart 7.*)

The pipeline had far outstripped the Ledo Road. On 2 October one of the two pipelines was in operation from the Digboi refineries via Ledo to Myitkyina. Henceforth Myitkyina would become a great supply center fed by road, by air, and by pipeline.

Therefore, with the Assam line of communications bringing up supplies in a great stream, with the Hump airline at an all-time high in efficiency, with a pipeline delivering fuel to Myitkyina, and the Ledo Road soon to reach Myitkyina, the stage was set for the last act in China's wartime drama, in which the blockade would be broken. Thanks to Stilwell, his successors in 1945 would have the means to carry on the work he had almost single-handedly begun in 1942 in compliance with Marshall's order: "Support China!"

⁸⁰ Rpt, Gen Pick to Gen Wheeler, 9 Aug 45, charts, pp. 97-98. OCMH.

Bibliographical Note

The sources for this volume are in three categories: official records; collections of private papers; and published works.

Official Records: Identification and Location

Official records are the major source of information for this volume.*

(1) Papers and minutes of the Combined Chiefs of Staff and the Joint Chiefs of Staff and their planners can be located by the number, date, and title assigned by the CCS and JCS Secretariats. These papers are in the custody of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

(2) The Army's set of JCS and CCS papers was kept by the Strategy and Policy Group, Operations Division, WDGS, under the heading of ABC files. ABC files are organized by subject and date of the first paper in the file and are now located in the Departmental Records Branch, The Adjutant General's Office.

(3) The central file of the Operations Division, WDGS, is identified by the symbol OPD, preceded by the case number within that file and followed first by a decimal number referring to the specific subject file, and second by a theater area. OPD papers are in the custody of Departmental Records Branch, The Adjutant General's Office. The Executive Group file of OPD is an informal collection of papers which has been divided into ten major categories and assigned an arbitrary serial number for each item (book, folder, envelope) in each category. The abbreviation OPD Exec identifies these papers in footnotes.

(4) An Army office of record is the Departmental Records Branch, The Adjutant General's Office. The Departmental Records Branch gave each major block of records from a War Department agency an accession number by which it can be located. Accession numbers cited in this volume, with the year of retirement and numerical order of accession within that year, follow:

<i>Accession Numbers</i>	<i>Agencies that deposited files</i>
A45-466	War Department, Chief of Staff, Army
A46-217	SEAC War Diary
A46-257	Headquarters, Army Service Forces (Somervell File)
A46-299	International Division, Army Service Forces (Lend-Lease to China)
A47-30	War Plans Division and Operations Division
A47-81	Headquarters, Army Service Forces (Somervell China File)
A48-102	Stilwell Personal Radio Files
A48-224	American-British Conversations—Papers from Plans and Operations

*The date on all documents is determined by the time zone at the point of origin; the exception is classified messages, which are dated upon their receipt in Washington.

Of particular interest to students of the CBI Theater are General Stilwell's personal message books (A48-102, Record Group 800), which have been cited arbitrarily in footnotes as JWS Personal File. There are nine of these books, including the OKLAHOMA File, which relates to General Stilwell's recall. A book of messages sent and received by General Stilwell at Forward Echelon, Northern Combat Area Command, is cited as 6A and is located separately at the Kansas City Records Center, The Adjutant General's Office, Kansas City, Missouri.

Records of Headquarters, U.S. Army Forces, China, Burma and India, and those of its subordinate commands are now filed in the Kansas City Records Center. Records describing the combat in north Burma, along the Salween Front, and in east China come from the files of Headquarters, Northern Combat Area Command, Headquarters, Y-Force Operations Staff, and Headquarters, Z-Force Operations Staff, all subordinate commands of CBI Theater.

CBI Theater lend-lease reports are in Col. William S. Gaud's reports to Headquarters, Army Service Forces.

The SEAC War Diary is a chronological compilation of pertinent documents of Southeast Asia Command (A46-217).

(5) U.S. Army radiograms in this volume can be found either in the Staff Communications Office, Office of the Chief of Staff, Department of the Army, or in files of headquarters, USAF, CBI, and its subordinate commands. Location of the latter radios is given in the footnotes. Messages sent and received through Staff Communications are identified according to their local reference numbers and date, the CM-IN or CM-OUT numbers. Messages sent and received through CBI Theater agencies are identified by the call letters of their various headquarters; for example, CAK, CRA, CFB, CHC, and SH.

(6) A variety of miscellaneous records collected overseas by CBI Theater historians or obtained by correspondence with participants in an event are in the possession of the Office of the Chief of Military History. Among these miscellaneous records are a collection of reports and notes of the DIXIE Mission, the U.S. observer group to Communist China.

(7) An extensive account of the Japanese side of the story is found in Japanese Studies in World War II, a series prepared by former Japanese officers in Tokyo, begun under the auspices of the G-2 Historical Section, U.S. Far East Command, and translated by Allied Translation and Interrogation Section, Headquarters, Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers. These studies are cited by the number assigned to each by the Far East Command. Most of the basic directives and orders to Japanese Army commanders of continental commands as issued by *Imperial General Headquarters* are in volumes entitled *Imperial General Headquarters Army Directives or Orders*. These volumes were compiled by the military historians of the Military Intelligence Section, General Headquarters, Far East Command. Copies of Japanese records are in the possession of the Office of the Chief of Military History.

Immediately after the war's end, Southeast Asia Command interrogated a number of senior Japanese officers who had served in Burma or in south-western Yunnan. The results were published in a number of mimeographed bulletins, under the imprimatur of Southeast Asia Translation and Interrogation Center (SEATIC). They are in the Military Intelligence Division Library. The interrogators directed questioning to the 1943–45 fighting in Burma. The Japanese spoke freely and showed no particular disposition to flatter the victors.

Thanks to Maj. Gen. Charles A. Willoughby, Assistant Chief of Staff, G-2, very useful information was obtained from Lt. Gen. Kitsuju Ayabe, Assistant Chief of Staff, *Southern Army*; Lt. Gen. Tadashi Hanaya, Commanding General, *55th Division*, later Chief of Staff, *18th Area Army*; Col. Takushiro Hattori, *Operations Section, Imperial General Staff*; Lt. Col. Taro Hayashi, staff officer, *56th Division*; Lt. Gen. Masaki Honda, Commanding General, *33d Army*; Maj. Gen. Tadashi Katakura, Chief of Operations, *Burma Area Army*; Lt. Gen. Momoyo Kunomura, Chief of Staff, *15th Army*, Commanding General, *Guard Division*; Col. Husayasu Maruyama, Commanding Officer, *114th Infantry Regiment, 18th Division*; Maj. Gen. Yasuyuki Miyoshi, Chief of Staff, *5th Air Division*; Lt. Gen. Eitaro Naka, Chief of Staff, *Burma Area Army*; Lt. Col. Masaji Ozeki, staff officer, *General Headquarters* (Tokyo); Lt. Gen. Shoichi Sato, Chief of Staff, *5th Air Division*; Maj. Iwao Takahashi, staff officer, *15th Army*; Lt. Col. Masahiko Takeshita, staff officer, *15th Army*; Lt. Gen. Yutaka Takeuchi, Commanding General, *55th Division*; Lt. Gen. Shinichi Tanaka, Commanding General, *18th Division*; Lt. Col. Taro Watanabe, *Operations Section, Southern Army*; Col. Motohisa Yoshida, staff officer, *15th Army*.

The papers cited as Japanese Comments were prepared by the Japanese Research Division, Military History Section, Special Staff, of Headquarters, Far East Command, in reply to requests in 1951 and 1955 by the Office, Chief of Military History, for comments on draft narratives of the second and third CBI volumes. Included in this manuscript are statements by General Tanaka, Cols. Takushiro Hattori and Ichiji Sugita, and Lt. Cols. Shiro Hara and Iwaichi Fujiwara of the *15th Army* staff. The manuscript cited as Japanese Officers' Comments was also prepared by the Japanese Research Division of Headquarters, Far East Command, in reply to a request of 9 April 1952 from the Office, Chief of Military History, for comments on a draft of this volume. Included in these comments are statements by Marshal Shunroku Hata, Supreme Commander, *China Expeditionary Army*; Generals Yasuji Okamura, Commanding General, *North China Area Army*, later Supreme Commander, *China Expeditionary Army*, Renya Mutaguchi, *15th Army* Commander, Shinichi Tanaka, Commander, *18th Division*, Masakazu Kawabe, Commander, *Burma Area Army*, Jo Iimura, Chief of the General Staff, *Southern Army*; Colonels Kiyoo Nagai, Staff Officer, *56th Division*, Masanobu Tsuji, Staff Officer, *33d Army*, Iwaichi Fujiwara, Staff Officer, *15th Army*, Ichiji Sugita, Staff Officer, *Imperial General Headquarters*, Takeharu Shimanuki, Senior Staff Officer,

11th Army, Kumao Imoto, Staff Officer, *11th Army*, Hiroshi Hashimoto, Staff Officer, *15th Army*, and Maj. Kanetoshi Mashida, Staff Officer, *11th Army*. These manuscripts are in the files of the Office, Chief of Military History.

(8) Manuscript histories, prepared during or after the war, were consulted in the preparation of this volume. The first attempt to prepare a CBI Theater history was initiated by General Stilwell, then theater commander, when in the summer of 1944 he created a Historical Section, Theater Headquarters, under Col. Mason Wright. The section's mission was to prepare a comprehensive history of the theater for General Stilwell. After General Stilwell's recall, the manuscript prepared under Colonel Wright's supervision was reworked and edited by General Stilwell at his home in Carmel, California. Much of the political comment in the manuscript is a close paraphrase of the reports of John P. Davies, Jr., Stilwell's political adviser. The manuscript was then submitted to the War Department as General Stilwell's Report. The original copy is in the custody of the Departmental Records Branch, The Adjutant General's Office. A carbon copy is in the Hoover Library, Palo Alto, California.

While the Historical Section, CBI Theater Headquarters, was preparing a history of the theater, the Historical Section, Headquarters, Services of Supply, China, Burma and India, under Lt. Col. Harry L. Mayfield, was preparing a history of that organization. The manuscripts prepared by the SOS and Theater Historical Sections have certain physical similarities. Both have a basic narrative, surveying the years 1942-44, with a host of appendixes, many of them reports by subordinate units. The two manuscripts are a rich source of material, and the footnotes in this volume reveal how deeply the authors are indebted to Colonel Wright, to his successor Lt. Col. John L. Mott, and to Colonel Mayfield. The SOS history is in the custody of the Office, Chief of Military History.

The American point of view of the fighting in north Burma is covered in a manuscript by Capt. Edward Fisher, History of NCAC. The British side is in Operational Record of Eleventh Army Group and ALFSEA, November 1943-August 1945. These manuscripts are in the possession of the Office, Chief of Military History.

Miscellaneous manuscripts are 1st Lt. James H. Stone's U.S. Army Medical Service in Combat in India and Burma, 1942-1945; History of the Ramgarh Training Center, 30 June 42-15 May 45; History of the First Provisional Tank Group; and U.S. Army Transportation in China, Burma, India During World War II, by Joseph Bykofsky, Historical Branch, Office, Chief of Transportation. These histories are filed in the Office, Chief of Military History.

Giving the Army Air Force side of the CBI Theater are Despatch on Air Operations in Eastern Air Command (SEA) Covering the Period 15 December 1943 to 1 June 1945, a manuscript prepared for Lt. Gen. George E. Stratemyer; History of the Fourteenth Air Force; and Growth, Development, and Operating Procedures of Air Supply and Evacuation System, NCAC Front, Burma

Campaign, 1943–45, prepared by the Military Observer Group, New Delhi, India. With the exception of the History of the Fourteenth Air Force, which is now in the U.S. Air Force Historical Division, Air University Library, Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama, the above manuscript histories are in the custody of the Office, Chief of Military History. The History of the India-China Division, Air Transport Command, 1944, is in the Historical Division, Military Air Transport Service, Andrews Field, Maryland.

(9) Because Southeast Asia Command was an integrated Anglo-American organization, it seemed advisable to obtain a British point of view on those sections of the manuscript dealing with the operations of British units and with discussions of strategy between British and American officers. Brigadier M. R. Roberts of the Cabinet Office Historical Section, who commanded the 114th Indian Infantry Brigade in the 1944 Arakan fighting, very kindly commented at length on the manuscript. His observations and criticisms are filed in the Office, Chief of Military History. A draft narrative lent by Lt. Col. J. E. B. Barton of the same office permitted a sharper and clearer description of Chindit operations in 1944, within the restrictions imposed by the scope of this volume. In July 1953 Sunderland was able to visit the British Isles following temporary duty with the Historical Section, U.S. Army in Europe, and spent many hours with Brigadier Roberts discussing the campaign in Burma.

Collections of Private Papers

A source of valuable information is the private papers of participants in the China, Burma and India Theater. These include (1) Collections of personal papers; (2) Diaries; (3) Letters and inclosures.

Personal Papers: Of primary importance are the records of the late Gen. Joseph W. Stilwell, which consist of: his personal journal, cited as the Stilwell Diary; essays and analyses kept in two copy books, cited either as Stilwell Black and White (B&W) Book or Stilwell Black Book; a file of undated papers, cited as Stilwell Undated Papers (SUP); and his collection of theater records and official personal papers, cited as Stilwell Documents, Stilwell Numbered Files (SNF), or Stilwell Miscellaneous Papers. The Stilwell collection is in the Hoover Library, Palo Alto, California.

From the days of his boyhood, General Stilwell kept a diary. As the man grew in maturity and responsibility, his diary kept pace with him. By January 1942 his diary was a tool of command. It acted as a little personal file to which he could turn to refresh his memory. In the diary he summarized important radios, telephone calls, conferences, after action reports, and other papers important to a commander in the field or in the headquarters. In physical form, the wartime diaries are small ring-bound notebooks that the general could slip into his pocket. His family knew he kept a diary, but knew nothing of its contents until after his death, when the little notebooks were found among his personal effects. They were not intended for publication.

In addition to the diaries, General Stilwell kept two copybooks, one with a black cover about eight by ten inches in size, one black and white, such as school children use. In his copybooks, Stilwell wrote his reflections on the day's events, dating almost all of them. However, because he was prone to worry over his problems, the entries tend to blur the clear, terse statements in the diaries. Because the copybooks are more literary in style than the diaries, Mr. Theodore H. White relied heavily on them in editing *The Stilwell Papers*. Of similar nature is the collection of sketches and essays on pieces of paper which the authors, following Mr. White's usage, have called the undated papers.

The Stilwell Numbered Files and their contents fall into an entirely different category. These are official papers, as distinguished from the purely personal items in the diaries and copybooks. Some of them are official Chinese documents, some are British, some are Stilwell's papers as Chief of Staff, China Theater, most are American. These official papers were sealed by General Stilwell before his death. Mrs. Stilwell in May 1950 permitted the footlockers in which they had been sealed to be opened and the contents inspected by Riley Sunderland. These five linear feet of documents are now in the Hoover Library. For an understanding of the events in China Theater in the years 1942-44 their importance can hardly be overestimated.

Also of great importance are the private papers of the late Harry L. Hopkins, which were temporarily in the custody of Mr. Robert E. Sherwood. The Hopkins papers have now been retired to the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York. As a personal friend of Dr. T. V. Soong, the Chinese Foreign Minister, and, in effect, the lend-lease administrator, Mr. Hopkins was actively concerned with Chinese affairs in 1941-44. There are three major classes of papers regarding China, Burma, and India in Book VII of the Hopkins Papers: letters from Soong to Hopkins, official correspondence on lend-lease and Sino-American relations, and letters from Joseph W. Alsop and Maj. Gen. Claire L. Chennault. In addition, Hopkins usually received carbon copies of Chennault's letters to the President. A complete catalogue of all Hopkins' papers was generously given to the Office, Chief of Military History, by Mr. Sherwood. The authors also used Mr. Sherwood's manuscript of *Roosevelt and Hopkins: An Intimate History*, as well as notes from his personal files.

Material on the background of the Hurley-Nelson mission and Stilwell's recall is in Maj. Gen. Patrick J. Hurley's papers. Here, also, are the White House messages as sent and received by General Hurley while acting as the President's personal representative in Chungking. Notes and extracts from the Hurley Papers are in the custody of the Office, Chief of Military History.

Material on the background and activities of GALAHAD is in the papers of Col. Charles N. Hunter. Among the papers of Col. Carlos G. Spaht is a Chinese unit history giving the Chinese 8th Army's part in the Salween

offensive. Scrapbooks of Col. Robert F. Seedlock contain engineering data on rebuilding the Burma Road inside China.

Diaries: As G-2, NCAC, Col. Joseph W. Stilwell, Jr., kept a diary of his activities in the north Burma fighting. A diary of Col. Walter S. Wood gives an account of Chinese action along the Burma Road on the Yunnan front. Lt. Col. (then 1st Lt.) Dwight E. Brewer, while adjutant general of Z-FOS, recorded events as he saw them at Kweilin during the east China fighting. Extensive notes or transcripts from these diaries are in the custody of the Office, Chief of Military History.

Letters: On file with the Mail and Records Section, Office, Chief of Military History, are a number of letters from other official historians of the war in Asia and from participants in its campaigns. These letters, often including wartime documents as inclosures, and a file of comments and criticisms on draft manuscripts of this volume which were submitted to informed persons, are a source of valuable information. Of particular interest is the file marked HIS 330.14 CBI 1947, 1948, 1949, 1950, 1951, and 1952 which will be eventually retired to the Departmental Records Branch, The Adjutant General's Office.

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Glossary

A-1	Personnel section of air staff
A-2	Intelligence section
A-3	Operations and training section
A-4	Matériel and supply section
AAF	Army Air Forces
ACofS	Assistant Chief of Staff
Adv	Advance
AF	Air force
AG	Adjutant General
AGFRTS	Air Ground Force Resources Technical Staff (Provisonal)
AMMDEL	American Military Mission, Delhi. Code name for American Headquarters at New Delhi, India
ASC	Air Service Command
ASF	Army Service Forces
ATC	Air Transport Command
Bomb Gp	Bombardment Group
Br	Branch
CAI	Chinese Army in India
CBI	China, Burma, and India
CCS	Combined Chiefs of Staff
CDS	China Defense Supplies, Inc.
CEF	Chinese Expeditionary Force, a part of Y-Force
CG	Commanding General
Chindits	Troops of the British Long-Range Penetration Groups
CinC	Commander in Chief
CM-IN	Classified Message sent into Pentagon
CM-OUT	Classified Message sent out of Pentagon
CN	Chinese National Currency
CNAC	China National Aviation Corporation
CO	Commanding Officer
CofS	Chief of Staff
Comd	Command
Comdr	Commander
Conv	Conversation
COS	British Chiefs of Staff
CPS	Combined Staff Planners
CT	China Theater
CTO	China Theater of Operations
DCofS	Deputy Chief of Staff
Dir	Directive
Div	Division

EAC	Eastern Air Command
ELOC	Eastern line of communications
Elms	Elements
Engr	Engineer
Exec	Executive
FO	Field order
Fwd Ech	Forward Echelon
G-1	Personnel section of divisional or higher staff
G-2	Intelligence section
G-3	Operations section
G-4	Supply section
Gar	Garrison
GHQ	General headquarters
GMO CKS	Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek
GO	General order
GOC	General Officer Commanding
Gp	Group
Hist	Historical
Hq	Headquarters
Hump	The India-China air ferry route
I & R Platoon	Reconnaissance Platoon
IBT	India-Burma Theater
IG	Inspector general
IGH	Japanese <i>Imperial General Headquarters</i>
IIB	Independent Infantry Brigade
Ind	Indian, indorsement
Inf	Infantry
Int	Intelligence
Int Sum	Intelligence summary
Interrog	Interrogation
Interv	Interview
ITC	Infantry Training Center
ICW	India-China Wing
IMB	Independent Mixed Brigade
JCS	Joint Chiefs of Staff
JICA	Joint Intelligence Collecting Agency
JPS	Joint Staff Planners
JSM	Joint Staff Mission (British)
JSSC	Joint Strategic Survey Committee
JWS	Joseph W. Stilwell
KCRC	Kansas City Records Center, Kansas City, Mo.
Ln O	Liaison officer
LOC	Line of communications
LRPG	Long-Range Penetration Group

MID	Military Intelligence Division
Mil	Military
Min	Minutes
(-)	Less detachments
MRS	Military Railway Service
Msg Bk	Message Book
MTF	Myitkyina Task Force
Mtg	Meeting
NCAC	Northern Combat Area Command
NMC	National Military Council
OCMH	Office, Chief of Military History
OCofT	Office, Chief of Transportation
Off	Officer
OPD	Operations Division, War Department General Staff
Opn Instr	Operation Instruction
Opns	Operations
OSS	Office of Strategic Services
POL	Petrol (gasoline), oil, and lubricants
Prov	Provisional
QM	Quartermaster
RAF	Royal Air Force
Rr Ech	Rear Echelon
Rs	Rupees
RTC	Ramgarh Training Center
S-1	Personnel section of regimental or lower staff
S-2	Intelligence section
S-3	Operations section
S-4	Supply section
S&P Gp	Strategy & Planning Group
SAC	Supreme Allied Commander
SACSEA	Supreme Allied Commander, Southeast Asia
SEAC	Southeast Asia Command
SEATIC Bull	Southeast Asia Translation and Interrogation Center bulletin
Sec	Section
Secy	Secretary
Sitrep	Situation report
SNF	Stilwell Numbered File
SOS	Services of Supply
Sq	Squadron
Stf	Staff
SUP	Stilwell Undated Paper
TC	Transportation Corps
Telg	Telegram
TIG	Traveling instructional group

Tng	Training
T/O	Tables of Organization
Trs	Troops
USAF	United States Army Forces or United States Air Force
USAF CBI	United States Army Forces, China, Burma and India
USAF Hist Div	United States Air Force Historical Division, Air University Library, Maxwell Air Force Base, Ala.
USFCT	United States Forces, China Theater
USF IBT	United States Forces, India-Burma Theater
USSBS	United States Strategic Bombing Survey
VLR	Very long range bombers
WASC	Chinese War Area Service Corps
WDCSA	War Department Chief of Staff, Army
WDGS	War Department General Staff
Wkly	Weekly

Code Names

ABERDEEN	Chindit stronghold near Manhton, Burma
ALBACORE	Operation plan of Chinese Army in India to retake north Burma
ALBACORE ONE	Plan for defense of the Ledo Base
ALBACORE TWO	Plan providing for occupation of Shingbwiayang on D plus 15 and for sending patrols to the lines of the Tarung and Tanai streams
ALBACORE THREE	Plan in four phases: Phase 3A—seizure of Jambu Bum; 3B—seizure of the Lonkin-Kamaing line; 3C—seizure of Mogaung and Myitkyina; 3D—seizure of Katha and Bhamo
ANAKIM	Plan to retake Burma and open the line of communications to China through the port of Rangoon
ANVIL	Amphibious assault on southern France
AQUILA	Code name for Task Force, Tenth Air Force, and Headquarters, Tenth Air Force, New Delhi
ARCADIA	Washington Conferences, December 1941–January 1942
AXIOM	Mission sent to Washington and London in February 1944 by SEAC to urge CULVERIN
BLACKPOOL	Chindit block on railway near Namkwin, Burma
BROADWAY	Airstrip about fifty miles northeast of Indaw, Burma, used by Chindits
BUCCANEER	Plan for amphibious operation in the Andaman Islands
BULLDOZER	Small-scale amphibious operation briefly pushed by Admiral Mountbatten after cancellation of PIGSTICK
CAPITAL	Offensive to recapture north Burma, 1944
CHAMPION	SEAC's plan for Burma operations as of December 1943
CULVERIN	Plan for an attack against Netherlands Indies
DIXIE	U.S. Army observer group sent to Communist China
DRACULA	Plan for airborne and amphibious assault on port of Rangoon, 1944
END RUN	Task force of GALAHAD survivors used in drive for Myitkyina
GALAHAD	Code name for American long-range penetration groups
GALVANIC	Occupation of key points in the Gilbert Islands
GASPER	Striking force for defense of Tinsukia–Nazira line of communications, April 1944
GRIPFAST	Plan for an attack on north and central Burma, a modification of TARZAN
ICHIGO	Over-all Japanese operation for east China, 1944
KIKU	Japanese 18th Division's code name
KOGO	Japanese plan to clear the Chinese off the railway lines north of the Yangtze River

LEDO STRIPTEASE	Plan for 22d Division to move into Shingbwiyang area when the Nambyu-Tawang river lines were secured. One of its regiments would protect the 38th Division's right flank, the other would fly to Fort Hertz
MATTERHORN	Plan to place B-29's in CBI
MERCHANT OF VENICE	Code signal indicating capture of Myitkyina
OCTAGON	Quebec Conference, September 1944
OKLAHOMA File	Stilwell's personal file of messages about his recall
OVERLORD	Plan for the invasion of northwest Europe, spring 1944
PEANUT	Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek
PIGSTICK	Assault on Mayu peninsula aimed at Akyab
QUADRANT	Quebec Conference, August 1943
QUARTERBACK	General Stilwell
RAINBOW	Y-FOS plan for Salween offensive
ROCKBOTTOM	CBI Theater plan for Hump deliveries, fall 1943
SEXTANT	Cairo Conference, November-December, 1943
SHO	Japanese plans for decisive operation, western Pacific, summer, fall, 1944
TIGAR 1 C, TIG-1C	Ledo-Myitkyina-Kunming Road project
TIGAR 26 A, TIG-26A	Project to move supplies for the Fourteenth Air Force over the line of communications Kunming-Chanyi-Kweiyang-Liuchow-Kweilin to be distributed among the east China airfields
TOGO	Japanese plan in three phases: capture of Heng-yang; capture of Kweilin and Liuchow; capture of Nanning, opening of Canton-Hankow railroad and overrunning of Fourteenth Air Force's fields at Suichuan and Nanhsiung
TORA	Japanese map maneuvers designed to test intentions and capabilities of enemies in the Pacific and China area, winter, 1943
TOREADOR	Airborne landing by two divisions in central Burma
TRIDENT	Washington Conference, May 1943
TWILIGHT	Plan to bomb Japan through Chinese bases
U Operation	Japanese attack on Imphal
UTOPIA	Seizure of Andaman Islands
WHITE CITY	Chindit stronghold near Mawlu, Burma
X-RAY Force	Chinese Army in India
Y-Force	American sponsored Chinese divisions in Yunnan
Y-FOS	Y-Force Operations Staff (American)
ZEBRA Force	U.S.-sponsored Chinese divisions in east China
Z-FOS	Z-Force Operations Staff (American)

Basic Military Map Symbols*

Symbols within a rectangle indicate a military unit, within a triangle an observation post, and within a circle a supply point.

Military Units—Identification

Antiaircraft Artillery	
Armored Command	
Army Air Forces	
Artillery, except Antiaircraft and Coast Artillery	
Cavalry, Horse	
Cavalry, Mechanized	
Chemical Warfare Service	
Coast Artillery	
Engineers	
Infantry	
Medical Corps	
Ordnance Department	
Quartermaster Corps	
Signal Corps	
Tank Destroyer	
Transportation Corps	
Veterinary Corps	

Airborne units are designated by combining a gull wing symbol with the arm or service symbol:

Airborne Artillery	
Airborne Infantry	

*For complete listing of symbols see FM 21-30, from which these are taken.

Size Symbols

The following symbols placed either in boundary lines or above the rectangle, triangle, or circle inclosing the identifying arm or service symbol indicate the size of military organization:

Squad	•
Section	••
Platoon	•••
Company, troop, battery, Air Force flight	
Battalion, cavalry squadron, or Air Force squadron	
Regiment or group; combat team (with abbreviation CT following identifying numeral)	
Brigade, Combat Command of Armored Division, or Air Force Wing	X
Division or Command of an Air Force	XX
Corps or Air Force	XXX
Army	XXXX
Group of Armies	XXXXX

EXAMPLES

The letter or number to the left of the symbol indicates the unit designation; that to the right, the designation of the parent unit to which it belongs. Letters or numbers above or below boundary lines designate the units separated by the lines:

Company A, 137th Infantry	A  137
8th Field Artillery Battalion	 8
Combat Command A, 1st Armored Division	A  1
Observation Post, 23d Infantry	 23
Command Post, 5th Infantry Division	 5
Boundary between 137th and 138th Infantry	 137 138

Weapons

Machine gun	
Gun	
Gun battery	
Howitzer or Mortar	
Tank	
Self-propelled gun	

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The Army and Economic Mobilization
The Army and Industrial Manpower

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The Organization of Ground Combat Troops
The Procurement and Training of Ground Combat Troops

The Army Service Forces

The Organization and Role of the Army Service Forces

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