

PART II



Cold War



ASIA

U. S. S. R
(SIBERIA)

MONGOLIA

MANCHURIA

C

I

Z

Y

W
O
C
E
A
N

GREAT WALL

Peking

Tientsin
Taku

Chinchou

Hulutao

Changchun

Ssuningchieh

Mukden

Yingkou

Antung

NORTH KOREA

Pyongyang

SOUTH KOREA

Seoul

SHANTUNG PEN.

Tsingtao

Nanking

YANGTZE R.

TO HONGKONG & CANTON

TAIWAN

AMUR R.

Amursk

AMUR R.

SUNGARI R.

Harbin

Vladivostok

UMEN R.

LIAO R.

YALU R.

SEA OF JAPAN

YELLOW SEA

EAST CHINA SEA

OKINAWA I.



CHAPTER FOUR

CIA Manchuria

1946-1948



THE SITUATION BACK at Kunming was an odd combination of hectic confusion and deeply felt relief. The war was over. The Japanese had surrendered, and we would not be facing more combat. At least not immediately.

In the Special Operations compound in Kunming most of my buddies were preoccupied with finding priority passage to the States for discharge. I had other concerns. My application for a Regular Army commission was under consideration in Washington, and I hoped the matter would be quickly resolved. That summer the Purple Heart and the Bronze Star from my combat in France finally came down through channels. Superior officers assured me that these decorations would help my chances of winning a regular commission, as would the POW rescue mission to Hainan. But I'd heard there were a lot more wartime officers seeking such commissions than there were slots available.

Meanwhile, the task of winding down OSS operations in China, including turning over supplies and equipment to the Nationalist army, dragged along at a predictably slow pace. I was given a low rotation priority because I hadn't been very long in the China theater compared to many of the guys who'd been out there more than three years. But at least waking up each morning without a loaded weapon beside me, without the wariness of ambush or attack, was a simple pleasure bordering on luxury.

That luxury didn't last long. I'd just climbed into my bunk one humid September night when a mortar round slammed into the compound, and machine-gun tracers slashed past my window. I was on the floor, pulling on my boots with one hand and loading my carbine with the other when the

firing swelled to a real crescendo. The rear-echelon types in my billet were running around, waving flashlights, and yelling—making themselves damned good targets. You could tell the field soldiers among us; we kept low and quiet, and followed the course of the action by the pattern of fire.

A runner arrived with news. The local Nationalist governor, a warlord named General Lung Yun, had decided to rebel against Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek's Kuomintang (KMT) Nationalist government. Loyal Nationalist troops under General Tu Yu-ming surrounded our compound, supposedly to "guard" us. Lung's men were attacking them. As the senior combat arms officer with field experience, I was ordered to organize the defense of the compound. Throughout that night and the next day I put together ad hoc rifle squads and machine-gun teams, sometimes assigning a veteran corporal to command several nervous rear-echelon majors and captains who weren't quite sure how to cock their weapons.

While the firefight ebbed and flowed around the camp, a young technical sergeant from *Stars and Stripes*, named John Roderick, tried to sneak into town to file a story at the local telegraph office. It seemed he had elected to take his discharge in China, and already had a job offer from the Associated Press. Roderick appeared to favor Mao Tse-tung's Communists, and was eager to report on this obvious example of disunity in the KMT. He was indignant to the point of insubordination when I ordered him to stay in camp. Over the coming years, Roderick's reports from China consistently reflected his anti-Nationalist bias.

By the next afternoon, General Lung's men had had enough and the siege was lifted. While the headquarters types considered the "attack" an exciting punctuation to their China service, I found the incident more troubling. The Japanese collapse had unleashed China's centrifugal divisiveness, suppressed during the wartime alliance, among the Nationalist forces and between the Nationalists and their erstwhile Communist allies. As I finally boarded my flight over the Hump to Calcutta, it was clear to me that the war in China had not ended, but had simply entered a new, more dangerous phase.

☆

☆

My friend Lieutenant Howard Hunt (later a major player in the Watergate affair) and I ended up in so-called black-market lodgings in Calcutta, waiting for a troop ship home. The U.S. Navy transport *General M. B. Stewart* was virtually packed to the gunnels with troops and civilians returning from the Far East. And the accommodations were a far cry from the *Queen Elizabeth* or the transport out from California. Howie and I were assigned to a stifling four-tier officer's compartment on an airless lower deck that stank of bilges

and stale kitchen grease. We took advantage of the mild Indian Ocean weather to stake out a patch of deck just aft of the bridge that had daytime shade and plenty of breeze. Our army blanket on the deck became private territory, which we jealously guarded around the clock, never leaving it unattended.

Naturally, there was a certain amount of fraternization among the men and the nurses and the female civilians on board. One night my OSS colleague Bob North and a young lady were caught in flagrante delicto on the top deck by the burly master-at-arms. Their brazenness was probably related to the bottles of scotch that lay empty beside them. This probably also accounts for Bob's unusual response to the situation. By this time the girl had passed out. He dumped her clothing and most of his down an air vent, slung her over his shoulder, and carried her down the steep ladders to the women's quarters. But the entry to her cabin was blocked by a stern young OSS secretary from Kunming named Julia Child. In her characteristic, forthright voice, Miss Child announced, "I'll take her from here."¹

Although Howie and my open-air "cabin" were better than a shared bunk in the dungeon below decks, I was furious to discover that my Communist OSS colleague Captain George Wuchinich (who'd almost had his throat cut by his American-Yugoslav buddies on the passage out) was now residing in a well-ventilated private cabin. In China he had managed to wangle orders to the north, where he'd promptly broken those orders to cross lines to a Communist "liberated area" and had disappeared for several months. This period with Mao Tse-tung's troops was now officially considered captivity, which entitled him to prisoner-of-war status, including those comfortable accommodations.

Howie was a former journalist and a talented writer, who had relished his OSS experience in the "exotic" Orient. Like me, he was uncomfortable with the idea of returning to a tame civilian existence. We spent hours drinking tepid coffee from canteen cups and talking about the future as the ship rolled through the blue tropics toward Africa. Now that Nazi Germany and its Japanese ally had been crushed, the Soviet Union possessed the largest military force in the world. True, they didn't have the atomic bomb, nor was their navy or air force any match for those of the Western Allies. But the Red Army was firmly in control of much of the Eurasian land mass, with well-armed garrisons stretching from the Elbe River in Germany all the way to the 38th parallel in Korea.

The men around us talked longingly of normal peacetime lives, of college, families, of the dream homes they would build in the suburbs and the cars they would drive to them. But Hunt and I were convinced that the world we were entering would be anything but peaceful.

☆

☆

THE Pentagon was also concerned about future Soviet intentions. Apparently, the Army's postwar officer corps would be larger than expected. I had no trouble passing my interviews for a regular commission. On my recuperation leave in California, Mary and I had plenty of time to discuss our own future. She fully supported my plans for an Army career, despite the danger and separations inherent in the profession. But when my orders came to report to the Infantry Replacement Training Center in Camp McClellan, Alabama, we both felt let down. After London, Paris, and China, the rural South was a disappointment.

We drove to Alabama to get a look at our future home before heading up to New Jersey to visit Mary's family. Camp McClellan was a desolate stretch of piney hills in the red clay Appalachian piedmont, halfway between Birmingham and Atlanta. By the time we paid our first visit, almost all the off-base quarters were rented. We spent two fruitless days searching. Finally, we were shown a newly renovated "apartment" on a dusty road several miles north of Anniston in some chigger-infested woods. The whitewashed shed was obviously a converted chicken coop. But the farmer renting it was anything but a gullible yokel.

I checked the tarpaper roof and the reasonably new screen door. "What are you asking for it?"

The man looked at Mary's well-cut tweed skirt and my sportcoat. "What did you say your rank was?"

So much for patriotism. Down here, the rent on a chicken coop depended on your pay grade. "I didn't say," I answered. Mary got in the car and I followed. There had to be something better than this.

☆

☆

I WAS more or less resigned to a couple of years training draftee recruits in Alabama when my dad called. There'd been a telegram sent to me in California requesting an immediate interview in Washington to discuss a possible "overseas assignment."

I reported to the Strategic Services Unit (SSU) of the War Department in the old OSS headquarters at 25th and E streets. In September 1945, President Truman had disbanded the OSS and turned over its intelligence collection responsibilities to the State Department. But it soon became clear that State could not handle the far-flung intelligence collection and operations duties of the OSS. These had now devolved to the War Department's SSU, but this temporary organization, I learned, was about to become the Central Intelligence Group (CIG).

The tall colonel and stocky civilian who interviewed me were both Far East veterans of the OSS Secret Intelligence branch. They got right to the point.

"How much do you know about Manchuria?" the Colonel asked.

Not much, I had to admit.

For the next hour, they gave me an intense briefing, drawing on the latest secret intelligence reports. Under the terms of the Yalta Accords, the Soviet Union had agreed to enter the Pacific war against Japan and engage the much-touted Japanese Kwantung Army in occupied Manchuria. Prior to the dropping of the atom bombs, the potential of the Kwantung Army had been a knotty strategic problem for the United States. We had almost no independent military intelligence in Manchuria, and had to depend on our Soviet allies for information on Japanese troop strength in the region. The Soviets—who were not then at war with Japan—had an active intelligence network in Manchuria. Based on their reports, the Pentagon had estimated that Japanese forces from the puppet Manchukuo state (established by the Japanese in 1932) posed a major threat to our invasion of the Japanese Home Islands.²

So the Soviets were given the responsibility of neutralizing this powerful enemy formation by invading Manchuria overland from Mongolia and Siberia. In return, they'd receive the naval harbor of Port Arthur and joint custody of the major Manchurian railroads. (The fact that these Yalta concessions to the Soviets were made secretly, *without* the knowledge of the Chinese Nationalist government, was to prove a continued source of strained relations between America and Chiang Kai-shek in the immediate postwar years.³) But when the Soviet columns swept into Manchuria in August 1945, the Japanese immediately capitulated. As the Soviets knew, these Manchurian forces had been bled piecemeal for replacements during the three years of the Pacific war; the army was now made up of boys and old men. The Soviet Red Army under Marshal Rodion Malinovski quickly occupied all of Manchuria and the Korean peninsula north of the 38th parallel. There had been perhaps a week of fighting, and Soviet casualties were light. The Soviet price for entering the Pacific war had been low. But few at the time recognized their deception.

"Around here," the wry civilian said, "we started calling it the *Shantung Army*."

The Soviet occupation, of course—like that of Eastern Europe—was meant to be temporary. Officially, Manchuria comprised the three northeastern provinces of China. The legitimate government of China was headed by Chiang Kai-shek's Kuomintang, with its capital in Nanking, over a thousand miles south of the Manchurian border. The Allies had agreed that the Nationalists were to accept the surrender of Japanese forces and take possession of their arms and industrial assets throughout China, except for the

three northeast provinces: those of Manchuria, where the Soviets would take the enemy surrender and "safeguard" Japanese industry. But the uneasy truce between Mao Tse-tung's Chinese Communist Party and the Nationalists had not survived the Japanese surrender. Throughout the Communists' "liberated areas" Mao's growing armies took the Japanese surrender and seized enemy war matériel. In Manchuria, the Soviets were required by treaty to perform this function only as representatives of the Nanking government. However, American intelligence now feared the Soviets had stockpiled the Japanese munitions in Manchuria for delivery to their Communist Chinese allies.

By early in 1946, these fears had not been confirmed because the Soviets had simply not allowed Chinese government or American observers into Manchuria. The prescribed ninety-day Soviet occupation period had expired two months before, but the Russians had blackmailed Chiang into asking for an extension of it. If he didn't agree, the Russians threatened to simply pull out, creating a power vacuum that would suck in Mao's army.

"Under the Japanese," the Colonel noted, "there were no Communists in Manchuria. Chiang Kai-shek is gambling that he can occupy the area before Mao."

Clearly China was on the verge of a civil war, a cataclysmic struggle involving millions of troops. Estimates of the conflicting armies' sizes varied, but the Communists probably had a million armed regulars with 2 million militia "volunteers." Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalist armies numbered over 3 million, but his best trained and best equipped forces were several thousand miles away from Manchuria in western China, Burma, and even in training bases in India. The Communist forces were on the march from their bases in northern China to Manchuria. To counter this move, the American military was transporting tens of thousands of Nationalist troops north and east in a massive air and sea lift. Unfortunately, the Soviets—well ensconced in their newly mandated sovereign enclave at Dairen and Port Arthur at the tip of the Kwantung Peninsula—were steadfastly blocking the entry of Nationalist troops into Manchuria.

President Truman was so concerned about this explosive situation—which threatened to involve America and the Soviet Union in direct military conflict—that he'd dispatched General George C. Marshall, his wartime chief of staff, to China to act as his personal peace mediator. Marshall's mission was to somehow knock together a viable coalition government, with a division of civil and military power agreeable to both Chiang's KMT and Mao's Communists. His first order of business was to effect a cease-fire between the Nationalists and Communists, whose forces had already begun skirmishes in northern China. General Marshall was personally determined to accomplish this daunting task, I was told, but his chances of success were slim.⁴

"Mao and Generalissimo Chiang have been at each other's throats for over twenty years," the civilian officer said. "It's going to take more than George Marshall to keep them apart."

Marshall's limited stock of negotiating tools included the carrot of continued American economic and military support and the stick of suspending that aid. But this pressure only worked with the Nationalists; Mao had never depended on the Americans, but rather on the Soviets. On the other hand, America had carefully courted the Nationalist government during World War II, rebuilding the ragtag KMT army into a powerful force equipped with modern American weapons and trained in conventional tactics. We had hoped to use China's armed might in the final offensive against the Japanese. To this end, the Allies had led Chiang Kai-shek to believe he was an equal partner, including him in the major wartime conferences. The net result of this alliance was a Nationalist military machine utterly dependent on the United States. Chiang's army fired American-caliber ammunition from U.S. weapons, rode in American trucks, and flew in American aircraft. If we cut aid and logistical support, the KMT army would collapse.

But Mao's Communist forces relied almost exclusively on captured Japanese munitions for their hordes of light infantry organized on guerrilla-style formations. Their heavy weapons were Soviet, and their few armored units depended on Soviet equipment and advisers.

This was the grim situation in the early spring of 1946. Most of America had happily turned its back on the dark days of the war. But one of the epic military contests of the century was smoldering toward explosion in China. If there was going to be a Chinese civil war, the pivotal battles would no doubt be fought in Manchuria. And America, I was told, needed an effective intelligence presence on the scene. The two officers formally asked me to volunteer to join and eventually lead this intelligence mission.⁵ They wanted me to become Chief of Station in southern Manchuria. My cover would be commanding officer of the "U.S. Army Liaison Group" in Mukden, Manchuria, a liaison and observer team to the Nationalist forces, which the United States hoped were about to replace the Soviet Red Army on the ground.

Because of the confused situation, wives and dependents were not authorized to join us, and they couldn't tell me how long I'd be out there. I'd been married a little over a year, and Mary and I had spent maybe two months of that time together. Now the Army wanted me back on the other side of the planet again, more hazardous duty in a muddled and complex situation. But the alternative was training recruits in the Alabama foothills.

I looked around the neat, well-appointed office. Like most professional intelligence establishments, there was a conspicuous absence of paperwork and documents, but the filing cabinets were secured with thick combination-

lock drawers, each bearing a white cardboard "CLOSED" tag. I suddenly recalled the cluttered office of the OSS reception major in the Munitions Building in 1943; the organization had matured considerably in the thirty months since. For that matter, so had I. Then, I'd been a relatively naive, untested infantry lieutenant, the type of "eager" young officer that General Donovan sought to mold to his organization's wartime needs.

But a lot had happened to me in those two and a half years. I'd spent that time with the Special Operations branch, the ruffians of the outfit, the dagger branch of the cloak-and-dagger service. Now I was being asked to work in SI, Secret Intelligence, the murky world of espionage and counterespionage, where nothing was direct or straightforward, where layers of deception concealed reality, where a man survived not by physical courage but by cunning. I was twenty-five, a mere captain, but these two experienced officers now offered me responsibilities far beyond those I could find in a Regular Army unit. I'd be a fool to pass up this opportunity. But the decision was not mine alone to make.

"We'd like you to talk to your wife about this, Captain," the Colonel said. "Depending on the military situation out there, you could be separated quite a while."

When I broke the news to Mary that afternoon, she listened intently. "How dangerous will it be?" She assumed I'd already made up my mind. Other young wives across America were buying cribs and washing machines for their new suburban homes. She was sending her husband off to another distant conflict.

"I don't know," I answered, "probably not as bad as the war."

"Well," she said, "it certainly sounds more interesting than training recruits down in Alabama."

☆

☆

THE U.S. military facility in the southern Manchurian town of Chinchou was in a large brick house requisitioned from a Japanese official by the Chinese army. My group arrived at the tail end of the bitter Manchurian winter, when the first green shoots appeared in the mud and cackling geese and mallards swarmed across the Yellow Sea on their long migration back north to Siberia. I was immediately struck by the contrast between Manchuria and the lush rice paddies and jungles of Yunnan Province, thousands of miles to the southwest, where I'd trained Annamite guerrillas the year before.

Most of the Manchurian coast was flat grasslands, with a rocky spine of mountains rising from the sea near the Great Wall and another stretching down the Kwantung Peninsula. The town itself was a sprawling collection

of dusty, brick-walled compounds, some of recent Japanese construction, others centuries old with peaked roofs of russet, patched tiles. Tropical Yunnan Province had open village markets bounded by lichee hedges and bamboo, plodding water buffalo, and peasants with conical straw hats. But these Manchurian towns had a closed, cloistered atmosphere, protection against both the harsh winter and the procession of marauding armies that had swept across the natural invasion routes of the broad plains throughout the millennia. Clomping one-horse *drashki* carriages were the ubiquitous transport for goods and people. The Manchurians were taller and more raw-boned than the round-faced southerners I'd known in Kunming. When my group arrived in Chinchou, the milling crowds were still dressed for winter in thick, padded coats and trousers and fur hats with dangling earflaps. The town's narrow lanes were choked with coal smoke and the warm stench of stabled horses. Up here above the Great Wall (built so many centuries before to keep back the Manchu hordes), I felt much closer to the cold plateaus of the Mongol interior than to the emerald paddies of the south.

There was a reinforced U.S. Marine division garrisoned along the coast of China to the south of the Great Wall; the mood was one of optimistic permanence, as if America was solidly supporting its Chinese ally. Ostensibly, the American presence was merely a continuation of our wartime assistance program. But now our official responsibilities included repatriating thousands of Japanese and also logistical support for the Nationalist government's rehabilitation efforts. While I had nothing to do with either the repatriation or the logistical support efforts, occasional American presence in the area gave credibility to my cover as being a part of the Navy's External Survey Detachment 44, with headquarters in Shanghai. The civil war had already begun, and America was providing somewhat grudging military support to the Nationalists.

Through the Yalta concessions the Soviets had gained control of Manchuria's principal naval base at Port Arthur (annexed as sovereign Soviet territory) and the principal land transport, the South Manchurian and Chinese Eastern Railroads. They also occupied the nearby commercial port of Dairen. Legally, the Soviets should have allowed the Nationalists access to the "open" port facilities of Dairen in order for Chiang to move his armies into Manchuria. Moreover, the smaller port of Yingkou was clearly beyond the well-defined Port Arthur Naval Zone given the Russians at Yalta. But the Soviets stubbornly rejected the Nationalists' requests for access to their own territory during the crucial months following the Japanese collapse. By doing so, the Soviets effectively sealed off the Nationalists' practical routes of entry into Manchuria.

China's ancient emperors knew what they were doing when they built the Great Wall; the highlands north of Peking and the mountains of the Kwan-

tung Peninsula formed a natural bottleneck, funneling access to the plains of Manchuria to a narrow coastal choke point: the delta of the Liao River where the dusty town of Chinchou now stood. Chiang Kai-shek wanted desperately to move his best, American-trained "new armies" into Manchuria, but the way was blocked by the Soviets.

The Russians were too politically astute to refuse outright Nationalist rightful demands for access to Manchuria. Instead, the Soviets claimed that unsubdued Japanese forces, renegade Manchurian puppet troops, and otherwise unspecified "bandits" had disrupted rail and road communication.⁶ With Soviet assistance, the Chinese Communists occupied Yingkou, thereby denying the use of that most logical entry port into Manchuria to the Nationalists.⁷ The initial ninety-day Soviet occupation specified by the Yalta Accords and ratified in the Sino-Soviet Treaty of August 1945 was now in its third extension.

Cease-fire supervision teams organized by General Marshall's mission in Peking—the Executive Headquarters—which were destined for Manchuria, were now stalled in Tientsin and Chinchou awaiting Soviet permission to enter. These teams each had tripartite leadership, with an American, Nationalist, and Communist officer sharing command. In practice, this meant the Communist could side with the Russians and prevent the team's deployment in "dangerous" areas, specifically Manchuria north of the Sungari River, where the Soviets were equipping the Red armies of General Lin Piao.

Brigadier General Henry Byroade, Marshall's chief American deputy in the Executive Headquarters, came to Chinchou in early March 1946 to discuss the deployment of the cease-fire teams with our unit.

Never one to hold back, I spoke my mind. "Sir, the Japanese never tolerated any Communist forces in Manchuria. It isn't as if there already were KMT and Communist troops in cease-fire positions that needed supervision." He was frowning, but I pressed on. "Every day we hold the Nationalist forces back, more Red troops pour in from North China."

"Captain," he said coldly, emphasizing my junior rank, "I don't think we can prove that. The Communists deny that they are moving troops into Manchuria. We have not seen any evidence of this from our aerial reconnaissance of the area."

"Sir," I continued, "our agents who have recently come from Jehol Province report that the Communists are moving at night by the thousands into Manchuria. They hide out in villages during daylight. If we continue to immobilize the Nationalists, the Communists will be able to shift their entire force into Manchuria where they can make contact with the Soviets."

The General glared, then simply said, "Thanks for your opinion, Captain." His mind was already made up; more to the point, General Marshall,

Byroade's superior, was determined to exert his will on Chiang Kai-shek.

But my unit commander (and the officer I was scheduled to replace), an Army full colonel named Fitzhugh Chandler, echoed my assessment. Byroade didn't seem impressed by either of us. He returned to Peking later that day, convinced the Executive Headquarters could end the fighting.

Hugh Chandler was an old OSS hand whom I'd met in England, where he ran the clandestine OSS airdrop supply center at an RAF base in East Anglia. He hadn't been home since 1942, and was long overdue for rotation. While we were delayed in Chinchou, Chandler gave me a cram course in running an intelligence station. The prospect of taking the place of this experienced senior officer was both daunting and exciting.

The more I studied the situation, the more obvious it became that the Allies' decision at Yalta to invite Soviet participation in the Pacific war through their invasion of Manchuria was a blunder of epic proportions, which stemmed from faulty intelligence. Had we known the true state of the Kwantung Army, we could have dispatched American-trained Nationalist divisions to handle the occupation. Now we were stuck with a permanent Soviet presence in the region. Establishing a professional, clandestine intelligence station in Manchuria was therefore of vital national importance. In the future, I vowed, any strategic decisions about Manchuria made by America's leaders would at least be based on accurate information. While the Soviet stall tactics dragged on, our station's complement of specialist officers grew. Some were military intelligence officers; others had expertise in counterintelligence and security; some had been recruited to run agent networks. I felt reasonably confident I could manage their activities effectively.

In Hulatao, the port of Chinchou, as well as in ports along the Yellow Sea, large numbers of Nationalist troops en route to Manchuria were arriving daily aboard U.S. Navy transports. If the Soviets did not lift their occupation of Manchuria soon, there was bound to be an open military clash between the Nationalists and Russian forces. Already, small Nationalist units had moved up the railroad against Soviet objections, clearing token Communist resistance along the way. In the garrison outside of town, the KMT troops were being prepared for the coming struggle. Above their camp gate hung a huge banner with bold yellow characters: "China will survive or perish with the Northeast!"⁸

During one of these forays, the Mukden-Dairen rail line was cut and a Soviet military train was stalled north of the Russian enclave. An enterprising Soviet army artillery major decided to hike around the rail cut and was promptly captured by Nationalist troops, who delivered him to us. The Russian officer was a gregarious guy with a wrestler's build and a frost-nipped face. He had wide Slavic eyes of pale blue and he smiled frequently,

revealing a couple of stainless-steel teeth. He was obviously relieved to be in American custody, and spoke frankly over a bowl of hot, meaty soup.

Once he learned we were both combat veterans, he scornfully condemned the troops the Red Army had used for the initial invasion of Manchuria. "They were penal battalions," he said, shaking his head. "They suffered more losses brawling with each other when they looted the shops and hotels than they did fighting the Japanese."

Moreover, the Major added, the Soviet troops had been told by their political commissars that Manchuria was ripe for socialist liberation, the region having suffered for decades under the exploitive yoke of the fascist Japanese. But his men had been stunned to find modern cities such as Harbin and Mukden, replete with broad boulevards and public utilities, including sewage and water systems. The factory workers' apartment blocks, the well-appointed cinemas and sports complexes, surpassed anything he'd seen in the Soviet Union. Asked about the Japanese factories themselves, the Major went silent, again shaking his head. "Very modern," was all he said.

☆

☆

THE Soviet occupation troops finally were pressured into evacuating Manchuria in mid-March.⁹ But then there were immediate sharp clashes between the first Nationalist troops airlifted into Mukden and Soviet-supported Chinese Communist guerrilla units. For the next two weeks the fighting around the city was so intense that our team was advised to wait before proceeding north. The first week in April, Colonel Hugh Chandler and I led the advance party of the Army Liaison Group (ALG) into Mukden, arriving on two-man, single-engine L-5 spotter planes, the rugged little aircraft that would become our main means of transport around Manchuria. Flying up the alluvial valley of the Liao River, I watched the constricting mountains curve away both east and west and the broad expanse of low Manchurian hills and plains rise before me. Even though the Yellow Sea was only sixty miles behind us, I felt as if we were entering into the ancient heart of Asia.

The city of Mukden was anything but ancient. It sprawled across the flood plain of the Liao like a redbrick factory town transported from the Midwest. The first landmarks I sighted from the window of the L-5 were factory chimneys, grain elevators, and the angular steel geometry of blast furnaces and chemical plants. Unlike the old border towns to the south, Mukden was crisscrossed by wide boulevards and dotted by parks. The huge industrial complexes of Japanese conglomerates like Mitsubishi dominated the outskirts.

On this first aerial inspection, I saw considerable damage to the factories: blown-out windows, sections of roof missing, odd rectangular holes in walls. But strangely, there were no bomb craters in the factory yards. I knew that even American B-29s couldn't have bombed *that* accurately.

Once on the ground, we discovered the true cause of this damage. The first Nationalist military teams allowed in Manchuria by the Soviets had reported widespread looting of the industrial areas. Now we saw firsthand just how systematic the Soviet pillage had been. For three days we visited factories in and around Mukden. The pattern was the same wherever we went: From a distance the factories appeared nearly normal; on entering the compound, however, we discovered mere shells of buildings. Most walls and roofs were intact, but the factory interiors had been gutted.

When we drove into the vast Toyo Rubber Tire Company, for example, the factory yard seemed to have been swept clean for our inspection. But when Hugh Chandler and I entered the long building itself, we realized the absence of normal industrial grime was not the work of janitors. The place had been literally picked clean. The main factory hall, which once held hundreds of fiber-spinning and vulcanizing machines, was absolutely empty, although the concrete floor revealed the anchor bolts of the stolen machinery.

That afternoon, we found the interiors of the Mitsubishi Heavy Industry factories more chaotic. Here the looting had been quite selective. Only new lathes, drills, and milling machines had been taken, but the electric motors from older equipment were also stolen, as were all the overhead cranes. In some factory sheds we found machinery that bore orange chalk indications in Cyrillic, "Nyet," indicating older equipment to be left behind. Machines destined for pillage, we learned, had been inspected by Russian engineers, who chalked "Da" on each piece to be taken. The Red Army troops doing the work then simply blasted holes in the factory walls to drag the machines outside.

But our Chinese escort had more to show. "Come to see, please, the houses for workmen."

He led us outside the factory gates. The workers' housing blocks were severely damaged, with entire roofs removed along with windows, doors, and plumbing. The devastation was the same at each factory. This damage, KMT officials told us (corroborated by Japanese we interviewed), was caused by mobs of Chinese looters, whom the Soviets had encouraged to pillage, once the official Soviet looting of valuable equipment had been completed by the Red Army.¹⁰

THE Nationalist forces controlled the city, but the Communists had left behind saboteurs and propaganda teams. Mukden's rail station and government buildings were guarded by huge sandbagged pillboxes. Overall, the atmosphere was tense and unsettled.

But I didn't feel personally threatened. That changed one night in April as I was returning to my temporary quarters after conferring with American civilian officials in the Shenyang Railway Hotel, which stood on a wide traffic circle in the city's center. Because of power cuts, the street lighting was sporadic at best, and the voltage was so low that the few working lights gave a weak yellow glow. I drove my open jeep slowly around the wide circle, aware of the empty streets. It was well past curfew, but I felt secure because the police headquarters, a tall, imposing building, stood directly across the circle.

The crack of the sniper's rifle and the whiplash of the bullet past my face were almost simultaneous. The bullet slashed only inches from my forehead and shattered the asphalt just below the scooped entry sill on the passenger side. I'd been shot at enough in France to recognize a near miss. Grabbing the wheel with outstretched arms, I swung below the dashboard and floored the gas pedal. My first thought was that the sniper had fired from police headquarters. Then I saw he'd probably been in the bank building next door. I turned onto a wide boulevard and zigzagged, the tires squealing. If there was another shot, I didn't hear it.

Roaring along through the semi-blackout, I collected my thoughts. The sniper had undoubtedly used a telescopic sight; therefore, the attack was probably a planned assassination attempt, not a spontaneous action. This meant the Communists knew my real mission in Manchuria, probably through a local employee agent in my office. From now on, I could never feel completely secure in these supposedly government-controlled areas.

☆

☆

ONE of our first tasks in Mukden was to get the team settled in permanent quarters. There was a large prewar American compound in the diplomatic quarter not far from the American consulate. Originally intended as a residential and office district for American business and consular personnel, the compound had been only partially occupied by the Socony Vacuum Company before Pearl Harbor. An OSS prisoner-of-war rescue team used it in August 1945, but the Soviet army gave them only twenty-four hours to evacuate. Now I intended to return the favor. Even though the Soviet army had officially withdrawn, there were still Russian troops in the city, including a number of their GRU military intelligence types. They'd simply removed their hammer-and-sickle tunic buttons and replaced them with the wrench-and-hammer insignia of Soviet rail workers.

Despite the sniper incident, I now made a point of flying an American flag on my jeep, as an effort to show American support for the struggling local government officials. I rolled up to the compound gates, shouldered my way past the sentries whose tommy guns hardly resembled railroad tools, and demanded an audience with the Red Army colonel. He was disinclined to meet me, so I told his executive officer I was officially reclaiming the American compound and that they had twenty-four hours to vacate it.

The Russians immediately protested to the American consul general, a career Foreign Service officer named O. Edmund Clubb. Ed Clubb was a typical old-school State Department man—cautious, circumspect, and extremely wary of confrontations of any kind. He called me to his office that afternoon.

“Now, Jack,” he began, “you simply can’t do this. The Soviets claim you’re throwing them out on the street. They need time to pack their files and personal effects.”

I stared at him for a moment without answering. He knew perfectly well the Soviets had unceremoniously booted out our OSS team eight months before. He also knew these Red Army soldiers were serving as a Chinese Communist listening post in the heart of the city. “The compound’s ours,” I said. “We need quarters and office space as soon as possible. Unless we’re firm, the Russians will find one excuse after another not to leave.”

But Clubb was not convinced. “They’ve got women and children in there. It’s cruel to just evict them.”

“Mr. Clubb,” I said, carefully choosing my words, “I don’t have to remind you that everything we do here is watched closely by the Communists and the Nationalists. They try to read our actions like tea leaves. Booting the Russians out on their ass will demonstrate our support for the KMT. It’ll show the Communists we’ve got some backbone.”

He frowned. “I don’t think it’s wise to bully the Soviets . . . or to lean too far toward the Nationalists.”

“Well,” I said, swallowing my frustration, “the Chinese Reds have been making fools of our truce teams for months . . .”

“Do you really think that’s a fair assessment, Jack?”

I did not answer immediately. I was going to have to work with this man in the coming difficult months, and already I sensed an inherent anti-Nationalist, possibly pro-Communist attitude.

Clubb broke the silence. “Well, perhaps you could find them some trucks.” Like the good diplomat he was, he offered a compromise.

I was hesitant to accept it because I still wanted to exert my team’s authority as early as possible with the Soviets. But I realized my relationship with Clubb was probably more important than any impression I might make on the Russians or their Red Chinese allies. But trucks and fuel were scarce in Mukden, and the transport was vitally needed to beef up the government

defense of the city. I told Mr. Clubb that the Russians could scrounge their own transport, but that they could have an additional twenty-four hours to vacate American property.

The incident in itself was hardly important, but it exemplified the attitude of many American diplomats in China, Clubb included. Their careers had evolved during the years between the two wars when appeasement of totalitarian governments through supposedly effective restraining treaties and toothless international bodies like the League of Nations had been the hallmark of diplomacy. When this policy failed in both Asia and Europe, the career diplomats were forced to spend the war years in impotent frustration. The conduct of the war, of course, was controlled by military men, not the Foreign Service. Now that we had entered an ostensibly peaceful period, the diplomats were eager to settle Chinese problems through negotiation, not military operations. Career State Department officers equated war, or even the display of military power, with the failure of diplomacy.

This inclination was partly motivated, in my opinion, by a disdain for the military by men like Ed Clubb. He viewed us as brash and unsophisticated, lacking the language skills and deep knowledge of Asian culture that were the hallmarks of "Old China Hands" in the State Department.

He was probably right. But the situation in Manchuria involved fundamental military issues, not the nuances of treaty interpretation. The Nationalist government led by Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek was the sole legitimate government of China. Manchuria was an integral part of China. The Communist forces in Manchuria under General Lin Piao were in open rebellion, aided and abetted by the Soviet Union. You didn't have to be an Asian scholar to recognize this. Any soldier experienced enough to follow troop movements on a map and recognize geographical choke points and natural lines of defense, such as mountains or the Sungari River, could see the Communist strategy. They were perfectly willing to be legalistic—especially manipulating the cease-fire teams to their benefit—but were equally capable of striking hard military blows when it suited their purposes. This was a prime example of Mao's "Talk-Fight, Fight-Talk" strategy, which he boldly explained to General George Marshall in 1947, as an example of Communist resolve. In Mandarin, this phrase can be romanized as "*Da-Da, Tan-Tan.*" Mao openly used this approach in the long struggle with the Nationalists, which was one reason Chiang Kai-shek never had much faith in negotiations during the civil war. As with many of Mao's aphorisms, this expression lent itself to popular dissemination in an army of illiterate peasants.¹¹ But in all my service in Manchuria I was never able to convince State Department men that you couldn't successfully negotiate with the Communists. Such a philosophy was anathema to old-school diplomats.

There was more to their attitude, however, than an ingrained love of

negotiation. Most State Department professionals in China were thoroughly anti-Nationalist. They viewed Chiang Kai-shek's government as corrupt, inefficient, untrustworthy, and repressive. It cannot be denied that there was some substance to these charges. Chiang Kai-shek's Kuomintang was certainly not perfect. And relations between his government and the United States had often been rocky during the war. But in my opinion, State Department policy reflected a simplistically moralistic animosity toward the Nationalists.

Chiang's task had never been easy. When he inherited the Sun Yat-sen mantle in the late 1920s, Chiang was immediately challenged by the Communists on one side and a host of powerful, independent warlord generals on the other. A few years later he had to contend with a full-scale Japanese invasion. In effect, the Nationalists were attempting the task of what we now call "nation building," while simultaneously fighting a civil insurrection and foreign military aggression.

The Nationalists' strategy focused on winning the support of the educated urban classes during the first phase of their revolution. To establish a viable economic system to fill the void of the collapsed empire, Chiang had to confront the foreign powers who controlled the modern economy through their extraterritorial concessions along the coast. He allied himself with important Chinese bankers in Shanghai who conducted business in the Asian manner and who certainly weren't above making a profit from organized vice, including gambling, prostitution, money lending, and narcotics.

This pragmatic Nationalist approach to government ran counter to the attitude of moral superiority among the Western missionaries and educators who had labored in the heathen vineyards for a century. The fact that many of America's China experts in both the Foreign Service and the State Department bureaucracy sprang from missionary roots helped explain their paternalistic, anti-Nationalist attitude. Chiang's supporters were secular and educated. Although many were Christians, they did not kowtow to Western missionaries. Chiang himself was a titular Christian, but—to the chagrin of the missionaries—he advocated a return to traditional Confucian morals through his New Life Movement. Also, he never learned English and his wife, Soong Mei-ling, was the type of independent Chinese woman whom missionaries instinctively distrusted.

The Nationalists' emphasis on building a modern urban country bypassed the masses of rural peasants among whom the missionaries often worked. Thus, Chiang was seen as indifferent to the suffering of the common people.

During the war these American attitudes hardened. President Roosevelt viewed Chiang as a subordinate, not an equal partner in the Big Four alliance. The Nationalists' refusal to accept Communists into an anti-Japanese coalition government was thus viewed as insubordination. America's

chief military man in China, General Joseph Stilwell, never accepted Chiang's premise that admitting Communists to a coalition government and giving them Western military aid was tantamount to national suicide. Stilwell's key political advisers, including State Department officers John P. Davies and John Stewart Service, were vehemently anti-Nationalist.¹²

It was much easier, of course, for Americans to document the Nationalists' shortcomings than those of the Communists. Mao kept foreign observers at a distance, and only allowed visiting American delegations to his northern sanctuary on a few occasions. But the daily problems caused by venal and inefficient Nationalist civil and military officials grated on Americans eager to press on with the war against Japan. These diplomats seem to have forgotten our own country's checkered history of inefficiency and corruption during our protracted "nation building." Certainly, the Nationalists were no worse than the carpetbaggers and robber barons of the nineteenth century, and were far less corrupt than those responsible for recent scandals such as Teapot Dome. But the American political advisers chose to judge Chiang's government by unrealistic standards.

Parallel to this ingrained anti-Nationalist sentiment was the vague but pervasive belief that the Chinese Communist Party and People's Liberation Army led by Mao Tse-tung were somehow not "true Communists," that they were simply agrarian reformers who had been forced to the left of the political spectrum by the corrupt and repressive Nationalist regime. Above all, it was believed, Mao would never blindly do Moscow's bidding. Once there was a substantial American military and political presence in China during the war, Mao and his astute deputies such as Chou En-lai carefully cultivated this image. Their combined civil-military operations in areas "liberated" from the Japanese—in reality, regions of marginal tactical and strategic value which the Japanese High Command had bypassed—favorably impressed many Americans, including the military diplomat Major General Patrick Hurley, who served as ambassador in 1944 and 1945. From all appearances, the Communists had established egalitarian, grass-roots democracy in the areas they controlled. Considerable emphasis was placed on mass participation, on land redistribution, on village-level public works, and on agit-prop mass demonstrations to vigorously fight the Japanese.¹³

Their activities also made a strong impression on key career American diplomats. Urging the State Department to abandon the Nationalists and "declare ourselves for the Communists," John Davies wrote in a wartime dispatch that such a policy would mean "we shall have aligned ourselves behind the most coherent, progressive and powerful force in China."¹⁴

THE Soviets' crippling of Manchuria's hydroelectric plants had greatly reduced power available, causing the shutdown of Mukden's sewage treatment system. With refugees crowding the city, lack of sanitation quickly spread disease, including plague. During its industrial heyday, the population of Mukden had been 2 million. Now there were at least that many in the city, but there was no work for them and little food. And the overall economic situation was not promising. The Soviets had raided Manchuria's banks of gold bullion and 600 million Manchukuo yuan, the Japanese-backed currency. They then flooded the market with almost 10 billion worthless Occupation yuan, which they knew the Nationalist government could not redeem. The gutting of the local economy was near complete. Commenting on this situation, Ambassador Edwin Pauley noted, "If the Soviets plan to delay the economic recovery of the Orient a full generation, and to sow the seeds of violent social unrest, their plans have been successful." The combined Soviet and Communist Chinese pillage, he stated, "left a population hungry, cold, and full of unrest."¹⁵

The human face of Mukden was both exotic and pitiful. Stateless and displaced Europeans, including several hundred Germans and a thousand White Russians, formed the top stratum of the refugee community. Hapless Japanese peasants, many barefoot in the harsh Manchurian spring, were at the bottom of the heap. In between came Koreans, Mongolians, Japanese industrial workers, businessmen and engineers, and tens of thousands of Manchurians formerly employed in the factories. Luckily, Manchuria was a bountiful agricultural area and there were sufficient food stocks available to stave off widespread famine. But the United Nations relief workers had their hands full keeping food and medical supplies moving up the railroad, which was under attack by the Communists.

As I had learned in Kunming, however, the Chinese people were energetic and resourceful when it came to making a living under difficult conditions. The various Mukden black markets thrived in this near anarchy. Strolling the teeming side streets near the main railway station with Harold Leith, who'd been on the OSS prisoner rescue mission to Mukden, I found kids as young as ten and wizened old grandfathers squatting on the pavement selling a truly bewildering variety of items, many looted from the homes of wealthy Japanese. I bought two Japanese telephone sets in excellent condition for two U.S. dollars each. In Shanghai they would have fetched fifty.

One old woman offered an excellent selection of golf clubs (then, as now, the Japanese were enraptured by the game). On the next street over, Harold Leith bought a Leica camera for fifteen dollars. We stood in the crowded lane watching the lively commerce, a bedlam of Asian languages, Mongolian, Mandarin, Korean, and Japanese, sweeping over us. Little boys in peaked Japanese military caps jostled past with trays of sweetened rice cakes, which

they quickly traded for Russian or Shanghai cigarettes, the price being two cakes for a cigarette. Under the Japanese, Manchurians were forbidden to eat rice, and were forced to make do with sorghum and millet. These young entrepreneurs were the salesmen of a cottage industry that probably supported an entire extended family. In their own small way, they embodied the irrepressible Chinese affinity for commerce.

Local art dealers were more cunning. They'd gone north on horse caravans to Changchun, the capital of the Manchukuo puppet state, when the Japanese surrendered. Mobs had looted the palace of P'u-yi, the "last Emperor" of China, and art treasures dating back to ancient dynasties were available for a pittance. Now the Mukden dealers sold Ming vases and jade for U.S. greenbacks.

☆

☆

WE were soon contacted by members of Mukden's White Russian community. There were about a thousand of these anti-Soviet refugees in the city, some veterans of the White Army defeated by the Bolsheviks in the civil war, others their children who had been born as stateless exiles in Manchuria. They had been tolerated by the Japanese, and some had attained responsible positions in local industry. When the Soviet Army swept in, in August 1945, the White Russians had been engulfed by the totalitarian state they had fled more than twenty years before.

But the Soviet authorities had not simply rounded up the White Russians and shipped them to labor camps, as many refugees had feared. Instead, the White Russians were made to register their families with the Soviet authorities and then were issued Soviet passports, and encouraged to return to help rebuild the "Motherland."

One day that summer I was visited by a Russian doctor named "Ivanov" (a pseudonym; his family is still in the Soviet Union). When he entered my office in the old Socony Vacuum compound, he looked nervously around the room before taking his chair, apparently searching for microphones or hidden cameras. The doctor was middle-aged, thin with bristly white hair and a certain aristocratic hauteur. He didn't waste time.

"You are with the *Renseignements*," he stated directly, using the French term for intelligence service. "I will work with you, but you must help my family."

I shook my head. "We are an Army Liaison Group to the Kuomintang military," I said.

"As you wish," the doctor answered. "I have been asked to return to Soviet territory, to Amursk in Siberia. It's a military zone."

I listened intently, aware the man might well be a Soviet intelligence

officer, but also aware he had a rich potential as an agent. Such "walk-ins" were often valuable resources.

"My mother and my brothers survived the war," he continued, unperturbed by my silence. "The Soviet authorities have given me . . . letters from them. I have agreed to return."

"I see." He was being pressured by a family held hostage, a well-tested Soviet tactic.

"And also," the doctor said, sighing with resignation, "I'm tired of being stateless."

"How can we help you?" I hadn't committed myself, but I'd given him the opportunity to do so.

"My son Sergei is twenty-four years old. He has a wife and a child. If you take them safely from Manchuria, I will work for you."

The recruitment of an agent is more like a courtship than a business transaction. And this courtship had reached a delicate moment. If the doctor was a Soviet counterintelligence specialist, my proceeding too quickly would confirm Communist suspicions that my liaison group was really an intelligence team. Then my teammates and I would become the immediate targets of organized counterespionage operations. But if I "lived" my cover story too convincingly, the doctor might simply disappear.

"Would it be possible to meet your son?" The chances were the Soviets had not recruited an entire family here in Mukden and already trained them as convincing double agents.

The doctor rose and shook my hand warmly. "We will return this afternoon."

When Dr. Ivanov and his son came that afternoon, I introduced them to my three best professional case officers, Scott Miler, Rutherford "Pinky" Walsh, and Phil Potter. Pinky and Phil were ex-OSS (Pinky had been a Jed until he tried to outsmart the SOE psychologists in training). They had already established safe houses in Mukden and secure nearby villages where the Russian agents could be trained in tradecraft. Scott Miler's specialty was counterintelligence, so he would conduct the initial screening. By now, we had access to Japanese intelligence files and had the full cooperation of the Nationalist intelligence service. It was unlikely Soviet double agents would escape our scrutiny.

Dr. Ivanov was the first White Russian agent in what was to become a moderately successful network in Siberia and European Russia. The Soviets had pressured a number of refugees of his generation to return. Like him, they were weary of statelessness, resigned to their fate, but deeply concerned for the future of their children who had been born in exile. We were able to negotiate safe conduct for these children through the Nationalist lines and on to American-occupied Japan. Some settled in the United States,

others in Western Europe. Many eventually worked in private and governmental anti-Soviet organizations, such as Radio Liberty. Their parents kept the bargain. Within six months, American intelligence began receiving a sporadic flow of economic and political intelligence from parts of Siberia completely off-limits to foreigners.

One of the first tasks this group performed was informing the large uncommitted group of Russian exiles about true conditions inside the Soviet Union. Walsh and Potter had arranged simple word codes for the Russians before they returned. For example, "Uncle Vanya is feeling better" meant the conditions of daily life were acceptable. A phrase such as "Aunt Natasha is suffering from arthritis" meant severe repression and hardship. The correspondence from the returned exiles reported epidemics of arthritis and rheumatism among their elderly relatives.

☆

☆

ALTHOUGH our workload mounted steadily, there were some diversions. The marshes west of the city where the Liu and the Liao rivers formed an inland delta were thick with mallards, snipe, and Siberian geese. The new British consul general, Walter Graham, and I were both avid hunters. So we converted an Army ambulance, which I'd swapped for a jeep, into a mobile hunting lodge. Whenever we could, Walter and I would drive out the rutted, muddy farm lanes to the wetlands and shoot.

The only problem with this sport was that the area was often infiltrated at night by Communist troops. This was a classic guerrilla-versus-conventional-force situation. Government soldiers controlled the area during the day, but fell back to fortified camps at night. As long as we got into the marshes after dawn and out before sunset, we had excellent hunting.

But one chilly afternoon, our ambulance bogged down in a stream and we were stuck after dark. A local village headman took us in and insisted we bed down on his family's sleeping mats in his smoky little mud-brick house. Walter spoke good Chinese and asked the headman if Communist troops and armed propaganda teams ever occupied this village.

The old man's face was typically impassive. "Oh, yes," he answered, "many times. They were here two nights ago."

Walter and I exchanged uneasy glances. Government artillery flares cast a chalky glow in the distance, indicating just how far we were from Nationalist lines. If the Communists entered this village tonight, we would be captured. There was no way out. The headman had promised to bring oxen in the morning to tow our ambulance from the stream. But the morning was ten hours away. In the meantime, we waited.

Amazingly, we both fell asleep. But I woke up around three, the darkest

hour in that cold night. On the opposite sleeping platform, one of the headman's sons sat on his haunches, gazing at the two huge foreign devils on his bed. The boy's father had been obliged by traditional Confucian ethics to offer us hospitality, despite the certain knowledge that this gesture put his entire family at risk of execution, should the Communists discover us. The boy was old enough to recognize and to stoically accept this harsh dilemma. I gazed back at him in the chill, diffused moonlight. Although his face was almost empty, there was a mixture of compassion and fear in his dark young eyes. Time passed. We continued to silently watch each other. Finally, I slept.

The next morning when we got back to the city, we found both our staffs almost frantic with worry. On our future hunting trips we avoided that stream. I never saw the village headman or his son again.

☆

☆

BUT hunting was only a hobby. Accurate reporting on the progress of the civil war was my main concern. Normally this duty would fall to a military attaché from the embassy in Nanking, and, indeed, we did have just such an officer on TDY in Mukden, Major Robert B. Rigg. He was an armor officer, originally from the Black Horse Troop, an Illinois National Guard cavalry outfit that specialized in stunt riding: medieval jousting and cossack charges in the thirties. Rigg had sat out the war in Tehran far from the combat zones, overseeing lend-lease shipments to the Soviets. He was one of the most arrogant and obnoxious officers I'd encountered. Bob Rigg seemed obsessed with self-aggrandizement and was given to well-publicized feats of derring-do, after which he'd inevitably assemble the foreign press corps at the bar of the Shenyang Railway Hotel and regale them with dramatic tales of his narrow escapes "behind Commie lines." He reminded me of certain OSS *field* officers in Paris (actually staff rats assigned to the headquarters of regular outfits) who'd muddy their combat boots in the Bois de Boulogne, strap fighting knives to their web belts, then tell war stories about the Maquis at the bar of the Ritz Hotel. Over the years I've learned that every army has such phonies; it's just unfortunate when they land responsible assignments.

This would have been tolerable if Rigg's intelligence was accurate. But it wasn't. The Nationalists distrusted him because his secretary, Tanya Krupenin, was an attractive White Russian woman born in exile. Nationalist intelligence suspected her (unjustly) of being a Soviet agent. Interestingly enough, Amos D. Moscrip, the head of all covert CIA operations in China, was also associated with a White Russian woman—in this case, his girlfriend.¹⁶ Moscrip ran a large operation from a compound in the French

concession in Shanghai. He was a heavy drinker and cut a wide swath in Shanghai social circles. But his deputy, Bob Delany, made up for this. Bob had been the second-in-command of OSS in Kunming; he knew China well and was trusted by the Nationalists.

This trust spilled over to my office in Mukden. Harvey Yu, a Chinese-born American Marine officer, was my military intelligence specialist. The Nationalists' North East China Command gave him free access to their war room, where he obtained accurate daily situation reports. But I also had to rely on personal observation conducted by me or my staff. Often this took the form of flying over combat zones in our flimsy little L-5 aircraft. The plane had the virtue of flying low and slow, which made for good observation. Unfortunately, this made the L-5 an excellent target. I encountered this problem one afternoon flying over the trenches around Ssuningchieh, a vital crossroads town midway between Mukden and Changchun. The Soviets had delivered the town to the Communists that spring; now a strong Nationalist force, supported by armor and artillery, had the Red garrison under siege.

My best pilot, Sergeant Clayton Pond, handled the L-5 with considerable skill. He'd flown in the mountains of Burma during the war and knew how to avoid ack-ack. Pond kept down at treetop level as we overflew the Nationalist rear areas, which spread from the Mukden-Changchun highway through the newly green sorghum fields and orchards to the northeast. Ahead of these positions the Nationalist artillery batteries were dug in around shattered farm villages. I got a good look at the artillery, American-supplied 105mm howitzers and heavy mortars. These troops were part of the New First Army, which had been trained and equipped by the United States for the final offensive against Japan. The trenches and bunker systems began forward of the artillery, and snaked in a muddy scar across a range of low hills. The Communist forces were entrenched on the shell-pocked opposite slope.

I was astounded by the magnitude of the engagement. This was fighting on a densely packed front reminiscent of the trench warfare of the First World War. From what I saw, the Nationalists' earlier training was paying off. They had the Communists pinned down southwest of the town, and were in the process of turning the enemy flank, using light and medium artillery to great effect.

The L-5 was a handy little spotter plane, but it was cramped. My observer seat was wedged directly behind Sergeant Pond's. We hardly had headroom beneath the wing, the center of which was the main fuel tank. Just behind me was an even narrower compartment for radio equipment, but we had removed the set to lighten the load and increase our range. In a pinch, we could put a third person back there, hopefully someone who didn't suffer from claustrophobia.

We climbed up to a thousand feet to get a better look at the Red positions. Unlike the Nationalist side of the line, there was no evidence of truck parks, or vehicle tracks, or radio antennas and field telephone lines for that matter. These massed Communist forces were lightly armed compared to the KMT troops. The local Red commanders, Kao Kang, Ting Hua, and Chou Pao-chung, were veteran guerrilla leaders, in reality warlords from north China who had sided with the Communists after the Japanese invasion. They were fighting their first fixed engagement against disciplined, well-equipped Nationalist troops. And they seemed to be losing.

But they hadn't yet lost their will to fight. As we droned along above the trenches, a stream of orange tracers erupted from the enemy hills. Immediately, a second, then a third heavy machine gun opened fire on us. The tracers seemed slow and lazy in the warm afternoon, like aimless insects. Then the fire converged. Pond dragged back the throttle, chopping power, and slammed the control stick hard right. The little plane stood on its wing, stalled, and slipped into an abrupt dive. I was about to yell at Pond to take it easy when I heard a sound like a screwdriver puncturing a cardboard box. Craning my neck, I saw a line of bullet holes in the fabric-covered left wing. The holes stopped inches from the overhead gas tank. I was fascinated by the shreds of fabric flapping in the slipstream. They reminded me of wing feathers on a falling duck. But this wasn't mallard hunting. It was war.

Sergeant Pond centered the stick and kicked hard left rudder, preventing a spin. At about 200 feet he firewalled the throttle, and we regained a positive rate of climb just above the Nationalist lines. Pond had saved our lives. Had we stayed on that heading, we'd have flown into a converging stream of machine-gun fire.

He leaned out to check the left wing. "Hope they didn't hit a spar or something, sir."

"Me too," I shouted back.

☆

☆

In late April, Major Bob Rigg prevailed on me to borrow Sergeant Pond and his L-5 to go to Changchun. The Communists had besieged the Nationalist troops flown in after the Soviet evacuation. I told him flat out I didn't want to risk the aircraft or pilot up there. But Rigg said he had direct orders from Consul General Ed Clubb to get a "firsthand look" at the situation. Some American reporters had made their way to Changchun and Rigg apparently couldn't resist the opportunity to get some publicity. Sure as hell, he landed all right and they went into town without any problem, but the Reds then cut the road between the city and the airfield, stranding them.

I learned of this from the local Nationalist headquarters and went to see Clubb before filing my report to Shanghai. Clubb was with Sabin Chase, the consul general designate to Harbin, who was temporarily assigned to Mukden. Chase was an "Old China Hand" Foreign Service officer. He spoke Chinese well, but was ponderously slow and cautious to a fault. When I raised even the most mundane matter with him, Chase always considered every possible ramification before venturing an opinion. In this regard, he and Clubb were similar. So they were virtually stunned speechless when I broke the news about Rigg.

"Major Rigg and Sergeant Pond have been captured in Changchun," I announced. "I just got word from North East China Command."

Clubb and Chase stared at me gravely.

"Mr. Clubb," I continued, "I just wanted to confirm that Bob Rigg was acting on your orders before I report the incident to my headquarters."

Clubb pursed his lips. "Major Rigg . . . Rigg, well." He shook his head. "The name is familiar, certainly, but . . ." Now he turned to Sabin Chase. "Isn't Major Rigg assigned to *you*, Sabe?"

Chase smoothed his fine white hair. "Oh, no, no . . . I'm sure he's not." Clubb was passing the buck, but Chase was dodging it.¹⁷

This could go on all afternoon. But I didn't have time to waste with these jellyfish. I filed my report, noting Rigg claimed to have been acting on Clubb's orders. Later that day I received a real rocket from Shanghai. According to headquarters, I had been "totally irresponsible" in giving Rigg an aircraft and pilot. This was my first formal reprimand, and I was mad, both at Rigg for conning me and at myself for letting him. I was also worried about Pond; he was a fine young soldier who deserved better. As for Rigg, he might have actually backed into a dangerous situation for the first time in his life.

But they got back to the airstrip a few days later. They found their plane had been drained of gas, the radio stolen, and even their seat belts were missing. Luckily, there was still about nine gallons of fuel in each of two improvised wing tanks we'd installed on the struts. Pond scrounged some old Japanese "aviation" gas that was syrupy from months of evaporation. They used their regular fuel for takeoff, then switched to the gas Pond had found. The engine lost power so fast they couldn't maintain altitude. So they had a hundred-mile roller-coaster ride back to Mukden, with Pond switching tanks to gain altitude as needed. Rigg found the whole adventure quite thrilling.

Sergeant Pond took it all in stride. Once when flying back with him from Changchun we had a five-pound can of coffee stowed behind my seat. We came under ground fire, and bullets pierced the can, filling the cramped L-5 with the tantalizing aroma of freshly brewed coffee.

"Hey, Captain," Pond yelled over his shoulder, "pour me a cup."

☆

☆

THE fighting in Manchuria that spring and summer was savage. But the Nationalists proved they could defeat the Reds in set-piece engagements. If this pattern continued, I realized, the KMT might push the Communists all the way up to the Siberian border before winter. The Nationalists had fought to open the railroad to Jehol Province to the south, and were steadily moving supplies into Manchuria by both train and airlift. In the face of this pressure the Communists wisely disengaged and abandoned Ssuningchieh. However, the fact that 70,000 Communist troops had literally slipped out of the Nationalists' encirclement overnight did not augur well for the future conduct of the war. Whereas Chiang Kai-shek had ordered his generals to capture and occupy territory as if in a conventional campaign, Lin Piao's forces were fighting a classic guerrilla war. The Communists realized their immediate goal was not to capture real estate—especially cities with large, hungry populations—but to annihilate the Nationalist army.

After the Nationalists took Ssuningchieh, they continued north to engage the Communists at Changchun. There the fighting was bitter, and initially indecisive. But again they routed the Communists. The Reds switched tactics, the bulk of their troops retreating north of the Sungari River, while stay-behind guerrilla units harassed the Nationalists' extended lines of communication.

Now they opened an offensive on the political front. The cease-fire teams of General Marshall's Executive Headquarters flew in from Peking. Communist team members no longer dragged their feet, but spurred the truce teams to energetically inspect the newly captured Nationalist positions. This cease-fire activity naturally drew the attention of foreign correspondents. So the Nationalist North East China Command was obliged to cooperate. By midsummer the government forces were formally constrained from further advances, and had little choice but to dig in and fortify the positions they already held. North of the Sungari River in Communist territory, however, the cease-fire teams did not have things so easy. Once more the Communists reported widespread attacks by "bandits" and unsubdued Japanese forces. In late June a U.S. truce team finally managed to visit Communist-occupied Harbin, with the mission of inspecting Red forces there. After a gala banquet, the Communists refused the team's request to inspect the garrison. The Reds next announced there would be no truce teams from the Executive Headquarters permitted in their territory until an overall settlement in the civil war was reached.¹⁸

Incredibly, the American officers from the Executive Headquarters accepted this outrage without undue protest. Nationalist military leaders in Mukden were aghast. They had never had much confidence in Marshall's

cease-fire teams, and now their suspicions were confirmed. When George Marshall assembled his unit, he reportedly sought out mature staff officers, mainly colonels too old to have seen combat in the war. The Nationalists scornfully referred to their Peking headquarters as "The House of Ten Thousand Sleeping Colonels." Their languor was due in no small part, I'd heard, to the frequent banquets they attended, usually hosted by their erstwhile Communist teammates.

Marshall's officers had been completely outmaneuvered in Manchuria. They petitioned the Communists for permission to travel north of the Sungari, but Lin Piao's generals held them at bay. Meanwhile the Communist army regrouped and was reequipped by Soviet advisers who turned over the remaining stocks of captured Japanese weapons and equipment. In effect, the Communists had consolidated their position quite efficiently, shortening their lines of communication to supply bases in north China and Siberia. When the Red Army staged its next offensive, it would be well supplied with artillery and ammunition. While this consolidation was under way, Mao Tse-tung traveled to Moscow to consult with Stalin and Molotov about the next phase of operations in Manchuria.¹⁹

As if to highlight the Soviet involvement in Manchuria, the Communist leader most closely associated with the Russians, Li Li-san, was the political adviser to General Lin Piao. Li had spent the war in the Soviet Union, preparing for the Soviet role in the inevitable civil war. I hosted a dinner for the Executive Headquarters attended by the senior military officers of the U.S., Nationalist, and Communist delegations. The junior officers and some civilian advisers ended up sitting in an anteroom, well separated from the rest of us. After the dinner, one of my interpreters took me aside, his manner unusually solemn.

The thin man who called himself Li Min-jen, the interpreter told me, "was no other than Li Li-san."

Apparently, Li had come to personally take the measure of the "sleeping colonels."

He wasn't disappointed. In southern Manchuria the cease-fire team was quick to cite the Nationalists for "violations" when government forces moved out of their fixed positions to pursue Communist guerrilla units. Nationalist frustration with the Americans was growing daily. Naturally, relations became strained, although my personal contacts with North East China Command remained cordial.

(I kept their trust in part by treating them as true colleagues, not Asian subordinates. To emphasize this, I jumped with their Airborne regiment stationed at the main military air base and was the only American to do so. I also took part in a couple of drinking contests with NECC officers. One KMT officer was carried half-conscious from a party muttering, "Major

Singlaub . . . Major Singlaub," after I'd somehow managed to better him downing the fiery local Kaoliang sorghum liquor.)

In Nanking and Peking, General Marshall was himself showing frustrated impatience. He had come to China fully confident that he would succeed, just as he had with all of his major assignments in World War II. And Marshall was known to have little tolerance for those who stood between him and success. "I am going to accomplish my mission and you are going to help me," Marshall angrily told General Al Wedemeyer, who had warned Marshall that Communist intransigence might jeopardize his mission.²⁰

☆

☆

OVER the following months, the Communists deftly manipulated both the political and military situation. They controlled the Manchurian heartland above the Sungari River and kept guerrilla pressure on the Nationalist garrisons in the south. When Executive Headquarters interference became blatant, the Nationalists finally reacted by restricting their movements. This further angered General Marshall. In the spring of 1947, he withdrew the last of the U.S. cease-fire teams from Manchuria, citing Nationalist interference—not Communist intrigue—as the reason.²¹ (Marshall had become secretary of state in January 1947, and made no secret of his distaste for the Nationalist cause.)

The Communists reacted almost immediately with a massive offensive across the frozen Sungari River. One hundred thousand re-armed Red troops cut the road and rail link between Mukden and Changchun. Within weeks, the area was engulfed in massive, large-unit operations, with well-equipped Communist forces engaging the best Nationalist units. In the midst of this fighting, Major Bob Rigg managed to get himself captured again. This escapade caused an international incident that diverted attention from the fighting. Rigg and his assistant, Captain Rip Collins, were inspecting a Communist bridgehead south of the Sungari. When they reached the final Nationalist outpost, they were ordered not to proceed, but Rigg pushed on, as if he were back jousting in Chicago, not in the middle of a savage civil war. He and Collins were captured, taken to Harbin, and held for several weeks, where they were interrogated by none other than Li Li-san.²²

☆

☆

DURING Lin Piao's major conventional offensive from the redoubt north of the Sungari, his forces recaptured Ssupingchieh and the Nationalists were obliged to counterattack. This time the Communists did not withdraw. The fighting in the city was savage and prolonged, a street-to-street, sometimes

room-to-room struggle, reminiscent of Stalingrad. The Nationalist New First Army led the attack and finally overran the Communists, inflicting heavy losses.

I visited the city at the end of the battle. While it had become popular in some American circles to discredit the Nationalists' fighting spirit and resolve, I saw firsthand just how disciplined and effective their attack had been. The rifle companies that had borne the brunt of the counterattack had suffered losses as high as fifty percent. I shared a victory meal of pickled carp and rice in the rubble with the survivors of a machine-gun squad whose leader had been killed on the last day of street fighting. It was hard to eat with the stench of death and burnt-out buildings so heavy. These young troops had been trained and equipped by American advisers in India eighteen months before. Now they had faced and passed their first major combat test. They were tired and bloodied, but their morale was obviously high. When I showed them my field map, they were eager to regroup and press the attack north of the Sungari.

In the barbed-wire POW compounds, it was the Communist troops who were shocked and dejected. I realized that the Nationalists stood a good chance of victory, if Chiang's generals used these crack units correctly, and if his American ally continued supporting the Nationalist cause. Tragically, however, Chiang did not follow up on this victory, and American disillusionment with the Nationalists was spreading.

The situation in the south grew worse. Communist forces were alternating their pressure between conventional attacks and guerrilla forays. By June 1947, it was clear the Nationalists were on the defensive throughout southern Manchuria.²³

☆

☆

MARY had come out to join me earlier that year, and as the situation deteriorated I began to seriously question the wisdom of having her here. She was teaching English at the university, and determined not to let the military situation interfere with the semblance of family life we were able to maintain in our compound. We were friends with Scott Miler, whose wife, Nell, was my secretary. One Sunday we took a picnic lunch out to the beautiful pine groves of the Tung Ling Tombs, the ancient burial site of a Manchu emperor. The only reason the forest was intact was that cutting one of the sacred trees carried the death penalty during the Japanese occupation. We were joined by General Tao Huang, a senior officer in the 52nd Army, which was guarding the Mukden sector. The General had been educated in the States and had absorbed our natural optimism. As we sat in the mottled shade of the pine grove, drinking beer and chatting about the future, General

Tao told us how eager he was to complete these operations, so he could return south to visit his young wife and children.

A few days later, the General's command post was overrun and he was captured. The Communists condemned him to death. The sentence was carried out in a typically sadistic manner. He was dragged to a platform before the assembled Red troops and skinned alive.

☆

☆

GENERALISSIMO Chiang Kai-shek took the military situation seriously enough to fly into Mukden. He understood that the loss of Manchuria would be catastrophic. But Chiang was never one to delegate authority well, which was probably his greatest fault. In an operational theater, he normally made the right decisions and, in fact, rallied his troops well to break up the Communists' spring offensive. But he did not leave behind effective military leadership in Mukden. As elsewhere in China, the Nationalist command was fractured along political and military lines. The North East China Command conducted purely military operations. But the parallel President's Headquarters in Mukden held overall responsibility for Nationalist policy. The Communists avoided this bifurcated system by melding political and military authority in all their field commanders. Eventually, the Nationalists adopted this pattern. It wasn't until September 1947, however, that General Chen Cheng, who had Chiang's full confidence, took over the President's Headquarters. By that time, the Communists had regained the initiative.

☆

☆

ANTUNG was a strategic city on the Yalu River, the border between Manchuria and Soviet-occupied North Korea. The government had taken it in late 1946, despite a show of force by the Soviet army, massed across the Yalu bridge. My unit was now officially part of the newly formed Central Intelligence Group, which had taken over from the SSU. I had been promoted to major and my staff had grown considerably with the addition of several civilian intelligence officers. John Chrislaw was one of them, a resourceful, energetic young man who worked hard and kept a low profile, as befits the profession. I named him to open the small station in Antung.

The Koreans represented an unknown factor in the Manchurian equation. Their country had been colonized by the Japanese for decades, and many had suffered during the long Japanese occupation of Manchuria. Most of those we encountered distrusted the Soviets' motives in their country, but were nevertheless eager to return home. They represented a promising group of potential agents. A Korean named Kim Hong Il, who was a major general

in the Chinese Nationalist Army, gave us entrée into the Korean community in Manchuria.

With his help we contacted a number of bright, patriotic young Koreans willing to accept some hazardous assignments if it would benefit their country. My officer Scott Miler groomed them in tradecraft and brought them down to Antung to build their cover stories before insertion into Soviet-occupied Korea. He encouraged them to enter the military and civil government and to advance as quickly as possible. Their reporting channels would be through dead-letter drops to be established at a later time, once we had a better network support system inside Korea. In an emergency, they could move south across the 38th-parallel truce line into the American zone, where we would receive them at safe houses in Seoul.

The only problem with this system was that I hadn't been able to establish the safe houses. My initial request to Far East Command in Tokyo to do this was rebuffed. General Douglas MacArthur, the American viceroy in that part of Asia, despised the OSS and its various successor agencies, including the CIA. He had never allowed OSS operations in the Pacific theater during the war. This animosity stemmed from the jealousy he had long harbored for General Bill Donovan, who had come out of the First World War more highly decorated than MacArthur. Major General Charles Willoughby, MacArthur's intelligence chief, shared his master's distaste for our organization. And when "Sir Charles," as he was disparagingly known in the Agency, showed his contempt, you felt it.

So the only way I could set up safe houses in Seoul was by subterfuge. Drawing on lessons hard-earned with the Jedburghs, I dispatched a young officer named Tom McAnn to Seoul "on leave," with enough money to secure safe houses and a trustworthy agent staff to monitor them.

While these operations were under way, I often flew down to Antung in an L-5 to check their progress. It was always an interesting trip. The approach to the racecourse we used as an airstrip took us to the middle of the Yalu, near the steel-trestle bridge connecting China and Korea. On several occasions, as we were setting up for final approach, our little plane would be violently buffeted by Soviet P-39 fighters that buzzed us, sometimes only inches from our wingtips. The Russians didn't like our being there.

I once complained of this to a Soviet "railway" captain, noting that America had given the P-39s to the Soviets in the first place during the war.

The man was adamant. "*Nyet, nyet,*" he insisted, these planes were a product of "Soviet science." This same officer believed that the Studebaker nameplates on his unit's deuce-and-a-half trucks denoted a famous Soviet engineer of Baltic-German extraction. The prowess of Soviet science was almost an article of religious dogma among the Russians in Manchuria. One local NKVD booster named Chicherin would bore us for hours in hotel bars,

claiming the Russians had invented everything from penicillin to prophylactics, not to mention the radio and the steam engine. My officers joked that anyone using a Russian prophylactic would damn well end up needing penicillin.²⁴

☆

☆

DURING the fall of 1947, the combined military and political situations continued to deteriorate. The almost nonstop seesaw battles had bled both armies horribly. But whereas the Nationalists were throwing their best units piecemeal into Manchuria in a last-ditch effort to push back the Communists, the Reds often resorted to human-wave attacks with massed, lightly armed infantry. These attacks were usually in conjunction with well-coordinated assaults on government rail lines and isolated garrisons by crack Communist units. The net result was a steady hemorrhage of Nationalist resources.

With Marshall now secretary of state, his personal animosity toward Chiang Kai-shek and his frustration with the situation in China combined to sour the Truman administration on the Nationalist cause. I began to receive increasingly alarmed reports from North East China Command about a steady decrease in U.S. supplies and replacement equipment. As the record-cold winter of 1947-1948 slowly moved toward a bleak spring, I sensed a palpable decay of Nationalist morale. Twenty enemy divisions were operating between Changchun and the coast, striking government positions with impunity. Many of these Communist troops were supplied with brand-new Soviet equipment and munitions, including field artillery with calibers unique to the Soviet army. But when the Nationalist government complained of this blatant foreign aggression in the United Nations, its American ally was hesitant to back the claim.²⁵

In Mukden, the population was again swollen with refugees, and the food and fuel situations were perilous. Tragically, the splintered Nationalist political-military command could not agree on a practical rationing system. The Communists were quick to exploit this situation with propaganda teams who promised fair food distribution as soon as the city was "liberated."

☆

☆

ELSEWHERE in China, Mao's armies probed and feinted, keeping Chiang's high command off-guard. But it was obvious that Manchuria was the crucial theater of operations. Chiang visited Mukden on several occasions to rally his troops' flagging morale. But his charismatic leadership was no longer sufficient to carry the day. He assigned his best field commander, General Wei Li-huang, as overall commander of all Nationalist operations in Man-

churia. "One Hundred Victory" Wei, as the general was known from his brilliant record against the Japanese, was decisive. He arrested several corrupt division commanders, promoted brave and effective young colonels to command entire corps, and withdrew several badly exposed divisions to better defense positions. Wei then launched a series of sharp counterattacks that temporarily upset the Communist juggernaut.

But he quickly discovered how desperate the Nationalist supply situation was. Although the Nationalists had most of their air force in Manchuria, the American-supplied P-51 fighters were short of fuel, spare parts, and ordnance. Government artillery forces were in even worse straits. One rainy afternoon that spring, General Wei called me to his home to discuss this matter. His beautiful young wife, a graduate of the University of Hawaii, acted as interpreter, a situation I found strange until I learned the nature of our discussion.

"Major," he said, coming right to the point, as was his manner, "we know you have a direct line into the White House in Washington."

I swallowed hard. The Nationalists apparently knew my radio reports were sent directly to EDS-44 HQ in Shanghai and sometimes tagged directly for Washington, but always bypassing the embassy in Nanking. But I didn't want to acknowledge this, so I answered with a noncommittal, "Please continue, sir."

General Wei smiled briefly. "We do not trust your embassy," he said. "I have a very sensitive matter to raise directly with your president."

I'd been in Asia long enough not to show my hand in this kind of poker game. Wei wanted to use my communications to Washington to avoid his normal chain of command. "Please continue, sir."

"On the island of Okinawa," Wei said, tapping a map on his desk, "there is a very large American supply depot. It contains matériel from your many Pacific operations during the Japanese war." He put on a pair of frameless glasses and consulted a notebook. "There are wing tanks for our aircraft, shells for our light and medium artillery, ammunition for our small arms . . . batteries for our radios . . . repair parts for our vehicles." He raised his glasses and sighed. "I think you understand, Major."

"Yes, sir. I do."

Wei reminded me that the U.S. Congress had appropriated a grant of 125 million dollars for emergency military aid to the Nationalists. But Secretary of State George Marshall was blocking that aid. "If my troops do not receive ammunition soon," he stated flatly, "we will be defeated here in two months." He looked at his map once more. "If we are defeated here, all of China is lost."

General Wei rose from his desk and stood close beside me. His wife approached my other shoulder. When he spoke again, his voice was a strained whisper. "You have my permission to visit *any* of my units, day or

night, unannounced. Go where you will. You are a soldier, use your own eyes. All I ask, is you report what you see directly to President Truman."

For the next three days I did just as he requested, visiting the army units defending Mukden and the principal railheads and army supply depots. Every outfit I inspected was short on small arms and especially U.S.-caliber artillery ammunition. Their troops were half-starved. I returned to Mukden and sent my report, *Eyes Only Moscrip, For The President*. I requested no lateral dissemination of the message in China.

Within days, I received word that President Truman had been briefed, that he was "concerned" about the situation. But the urgently requested supplies never arrived.

☆

☆

In August 1948, the Communists began shelling Mukden nightly. Mary was six months pregnant and couldn't sleep through the barrages. I flew her out to Shanghai, where she boarded a Navy transport for California. This time when we said goodbye, Mary had more than a vague sense of the dangers I faced in the war zone. And she knew I intended to stay in Mukden as long as possible before evacuating. But I did not intend to be captured. The Reds knew my real job there. The brutal murder of General Tao was on both our minds.

"Well," she said, looking over the ship rail at the bustling Shanghai docks, "we could have been living in that chicken coop in Alabama."

☆

☆

By October the situation had become desperate. Now the Communist gunners who had dragged their artillery units forward each night to shell Mukden no longer bothered to retreat with daylight. The government air force and artillery did not have the munitions to challenge them. The siege ring tightened around the city. There was widespread panic and terrible scenes as civilian mobs swarmed the airfield seeking flights out of the isolated city. In the outer defenses far to the south, some government units simply succumbed to low morale and surrendered en masse to the enemy, hoping for clemency. Ever practical, the Communists turned these troops against their former comrades.

I evacuated my entire staff, and gave evacuation orders to the few American officers I had in other provincial cities. John Chrislaw escaped from the south, clinging to the underside of a flatcar. But his cook and houseboy weren't so lucky. When the People's Liberation Army took Antung, the Reds butchered the innocent servants.²⁶

In Mukden, the best Nationalist units held the perimeter. I'd often see

truck convoys from the crack units careening through the city, speeding from the southern front to the northern lines to prevent a Communist breakthrough. These soldiers had been abandoned by their superiors in Nanking and by their American supporters, but they still fought on bravely. We all realized, however, that the city was about to fall.

Angus Ward, the consul general who replaced Ed Clubb, was a different kind of Foreign Service officer altogether. He courageously volunteered to remain in Mukden after the inevitable Communist occupation. Ward had served in Tehran and spoke good Russian. His wife, a burly Finn named Irmgarde, was disdainful of all Communists, whatever their ethnic background. Ward shared her politics. One dreary morning, when the geese were again honking their way south to central China amid sporadic Communist barrages, I trekked across the empty boulevard to Ward's office. I had been burning Secret documents all morning in oil drums in the weed-strewn compound garden. I had evacuated my primary radio transceiver, retaining only my small emergency radio transmitter and one codebook. I needed to use the consulate radio to arrange my evacuation.

In Ward's stuffy little code room, I composed my final message from Mukden, which I addressed Eyes Only to Admiral Oscar Badger, the American naval commander in Tsingtao: "MUKDEN SITUATION PRECARIOUS. I CONSIDER IT IMPERATIVE I NOT BE CAPTURED. REQUEST IMMEDIATE RESPONSE MYTEL OF 9/10/48. SINGLAUB."

Three days before, I'd asked for two air evacuation flights. Yesterday's flight removed the last of my people and other priority passengers, many of whom worked for the American consul general. I remained the extra day to activate some stay-behind agents and to turn over to Angus Ward some assets he might find useful in the weeks ahead. On this particular day, I learned through consular communications that the U.S. Air Force plane scheduled to pick me up had refused to fly into the Mukden airport, because it was now under long-range Communist artillery fire.

Two hours later, Admiral Badger replied. The crew of a C-46 from the First Marine Air Wing had volunteered to land at Mukden that afternoon. It was my ticket out of the city. If I missed it, there would be no other.

I cleaned and loaded my .45 automatic and my carbine, checked the office once more for stray classified documents, then put the leash on my cocker spaniel, Blackie. He loved to ride in the jeep, but would often jump out, so the leash was a precaution, considering we would transit the pathetic starvation zones of the refugee camps on the way to the airport. Blackie was not pleased with the midday shelling. He cowered at my feet, and I had to push his head aside with my boots to shift gears.

There were no more refugees crowding the shell-pocked airport terminal, because the field was under combined infantry and artillery attack. I parked

my jeep near the Nationalists' command bunker and was met by an amazingly cheerful young lieutenant colonel friend who commanded a battalion of horse-drawn Japanese artillery. In the previous year, during less hectic times, he and I had ridden his fine horses just for the exercise and recreation. He was a graduate of an artillery officers course at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, and we frequently exercised the infantry versus artillery rivalry about which was the real combat arm. He was amused by the fact that the infantry man was withdrawing from the field of battle which was being defended by the field artillery. His troops had saved back a supply of 150mm ammunition so they wouldn't be overrun without a fight. I told him an American transport was about to land and asked him to instruct his soldiers not to shoot at it. I also suggested that some counter-battery fire against the Red artillery would be helpful while I was loading and taking off.

Before I left, the Colonel gave me a packet of important personal papers, including his farewell letter to his children, which he politely asked me to send to his family in the South. I gave him my jeep.

The C-46 dropped out of the sky with alarming speed. Because the north end of the runway was obscured by shellfire, the pilot had landed downwind. I grabbed Blackie and ran to the edge of the tarmac. The battered old transport roared toward me, spun on one engine in a cloud of yellow dust, and stopped. We were inside in seconds and the plane was rolling again straight down the runway. I didn't think we had enough room to take off, but at the last second the pilot hauled back and we cleared the old Japanese hangars by at least a foot.

As we clawed for altitude over the government-held sections of the city, a few halfhearted tracers looped toward us. We spiraled up tightly, trying to stay within Nationalist lines until we had enough altitude. Finally, we were above the effective range of small arms, and headed south. Behind us, the Mukden airfield was now half hidden by the dust and smoke of exploding artillery. But out ahead I saw a Soviet transport plane circling low on a reconnaissance flight for the Communists. The plane's Red Star insignia were vivid in the autumn twilight.

I leaned against the oily window, Blackie panting at my knee. It was finished. This war was lost.

"Over to you, Ivan," was all I said. Blackie didn't understand my words.

