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How Nationalist China Attempted to Modernize its Military Food System During and After World War II

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During and After World War II

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「軍無糧食則亡」 *The army will perish without food.* Sun Tzu¹
「準備三月，打仗一天」 *Prepare three months, fight one day.* Chinese proverb.²
「子貢問政。子曰：足食，足兵，民信之矣。」 *Zigong asked about government.*
*The Master said, You need enough food, enough weaponry, and the trust of the common people.*³ Confucius.

Introduction

In 1949, the United States Government published the *China White Paper* as justification for withholding military aid to the Chinese Nationalist Government (KMT) during the Chinese Civil War, which many blamed as the cause of the KMT's loss to the Chinese Communist Party (CCP).⁴ In the *China White Paper*, the claim was made that "in no small measure, the predicament in which the National Government finds itself today is due to its failure to provide China with enough to eat."⁵ Six years prior to the American government making this conclusion in 1943, the KMT sent one of its leading public health official's, Tsai Chiao, to visit America and describe some of China's nutritional challenges to American scholarly audiences at the request of the Norman Wait Harris Memorial Foundation of the University of Chicago.⁶ Chiao was Western educated at the University of California, Indiana University and the University of Chicago and was a physiologist at the National Central University in Nanjing.⁷ He told his

¹ Sun Tzu's *Art of War* Chapter 7.

² Li Qiming. *Zhongguo Houqin Tizhi*. Zhongyang Wenwu Gongyingshe: Taipei. 1982. Page 303.

³ Confucius *Analects*. Chapter 12, verse 7 as translated in *The Analects of Confucius*. Transl. Burton Watson. Columbia University: New York. 2007. Page. 81.

⁴ Chang, David Cheng. *The Hijacked War: The Story of the Chinese POWs in the Korean War*. Stanford University Press: Stanford. 2020. Page 79.

⁵ "Text of Secretary Acheson's Letter Transmitting White Paper on China to President Truman." *The New York Times*. August 6, 1949. Page 4.

⁶ The foundation was a trust fund given to the University of Chicago in 1923, for the promotion of knowledge of an interest in international affairs. As such, it held annual Harris Institutes, composed of a private round table and a series of public lectures on international affairs. The annual institutes lasted until 1956.

<https://www.lib.uchicago.edu/e/scrc/findingaids/view.php?eadid=ICU.SPCL.HARRISNW>.

⁷ Harley Farnsworth MacNair. "Synthesis Out of Analysis." *Voices from Unoccupied China*. Ed. By Harley Farnsworth MacNair. University of Chicago Press: Chicago. 1944. Page x.

American audience that as a result of several Chinese nutritional studies, “for the most part, Chinese diets are adequate in calories, but deficient in animal protein, vitamins, and certain salts.”⁸ He stated that several years prior, the Nutritional Committee of the Chinese Medical Association had recommended an increase in animal protein for Chinese diets, “but it has not been possible to follow this recommendation.”⁹ Chiao then told the Americans that Chinese soldiers “received animal food usually once, or at most twice, a month.”¹⁰ The idea that meat was an imperative ingredient to a daily diet played directly to American audience’s own understanding of food. Perhaps coincidentally, over the next two years, the American military spent considerable resources attempting to rectify this lack of meat in Chinese soldiers’ daily diet. In researching this attempt, it appears that while certain aspects of China’s military food system changed, these were far from universal, were reliant on a local populace, and were unsustainable beyond America’s direct intervention.

By the end of World War II, the Americans had felt that their nutritional experiment with the Chinese soldiers had had some limited success. American Colonel Charles F. Kearney, who was a liaison officer to the Chinese Army logistics unit, believed that “the Chinese were shown that armies on the march could be given an adequate, balanced diet,” which was based on “what the Americans thought to be effective procedures.”¹¹ Kearney, however, concluded in his report that he did not believe permanent or lasting changes had occurred in the Chinese

⁸ Tsai Chiao. “Problems of Nutrition in Present Day China.” *Voices from Unoccupied China*. Ed. By Harley Farnsworth MacNair. University of Chicago Press: Chicago. 1944. Page 16.

⁹ *Ibid.* Page 17. I was not able to find the report Chiao cited other than what was presented at the conference.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ Quoted in Romanus, Charles F. and Riley Sunderland. *China, Burma, India Theater: Time Runs Out in CBI*. Center of Military History. United States Army: Washington, D.C. 1999. Page 243.

military before the end of World War II.¹² Indeed, the research into American and Chinese archives suggests that there was a gap between what American military leaders tried to change and what actually occurred on the ground.

The tension between what American leaders attempted and the actual reality in China also reflects the debate surrounding America's aid to the KMT government and its leader Chiang Kai-shek. Many American observers who lived in China during the 1930s and 40s and were associated with the U.S. State Department, War Department and newspapers believed that the KMT government was hopelessly corrupt, incompetent, and not worthy of America's aid.¹³ While recognizing faults in the KMT government, Generals Joseph Stilwell and Albert Wedemeyer, America's senior representatives to China during World War II, believed that fundamental changes to China's armies could happen and that this would allow China to successfully compete with Japan's military.¹⁴

More recent scholarship of the KMT has changed many of these negative views. Instead of incompetency, the recent scholarship has shown the KMT was limited more by circumstances.¹⁵ As Hans Van de Ven concluded about the KMT from studying its method of warfare, "rather than seeing these...as evidence of irredeemable backwardness and incompetence, I suggest that the approach was in reality firmly grounded in local realities and

¹² *Ibid.* Page 246.

¹³ See for example, Tuchman, Barbara. *Stilwell and the American Experience in China 1911-45*. The Macmillian Company: New York. 1970. And Theodore White, *Thunder Out of China*. 1946.

¹⁴ In reference to General Stilwell's opinion, see Berrigan, Darrell. "Uncle Joe Pays Off". *The Saturday Evening Post*. June 17, 1944. Page 101. In reference to General Wedemeyer's opinion, see Taylor, Jay. *The Generalissimo: Chiang Kai-shek and the Struggle for Modern China*. Harvard University Press: Cambridge. 2011. Page 296-97.

¹⁵ See Hans Van de Ven. *War and Nationalism in China: 1925-1945*. RoutledgeCurzon: New York. 2003. Jay Taylor's *The Generalissimo: Chiang Kai-shek and the Struggle for Modern China*. Harvard University Press: Cambridge. 2011. Also see Hsi-sheng Ch'i *The Much Troubled Alliance: US-China Military Cooperation During the Pacific War, 1941-1945*. 2016. As well as Mitter, Rana. *Forgotten Ally: China's World War II, 1937-1945*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt: New York. 2013.

indigenous practices.”¹⁶ Another scholar, who studied Chiang Kai-shek’s diaries, made the comment that “[Chiang Kai-shek] was caught between a rock and a hard place. On one side were his nominal domestic partners who might turn against him if he pushed the reforms too far and harmed their interests. On the other side was the important American ally who seemed totally unempathetic to his domestic difficulties but kept pressing him to implement the reform aggressively.”¹⁷

One such reform was the nutrition of China’s soldiers. Perhaps unrecognized by American observers of the time, by 1945 China had adopted and nurtured a system of feeding its soldiers that was centered around its agrarian economy and mainly supplied rice and wheat. The soldiers then had to purchase additional food on the local economy from their individual military salary.¹⁸ This system had been used during the years of war against the Japanese and continued to function despite corruption, flooding, famine, and hyper-inflation.¹⁹ American observers, however, felt China’s nutrition was inadequate and needed an overhaul to reflect American ideas about food. By taking as a case study the methods used to feed China’s soldiers

¹⁶ Hans Van de Ven. “The Sino-Japanese War in History.” *The Battle for China: Essays on the Military History of the Sino-Japanese War of 1937-1945*. Eds. Mark Peattie, Edward J. Drea, and Hans Van de Ven. Stanford University Press: Stanford. 2011.

¹⁷ Hsi-sheng Ch’i *The Much Troubled Alliance: US-China Military Cooperation During the Pacific War, 1941-1945*. 2016. Page 739.

¹⁸ See for example, Nanjing Archives. Series 5, Part 2, Military Affairs 1. “Letter between Chiang Kai-shek and Yu Feipeng on the 1939 operation plan.” July 1, 1939. Page 666. Nanjing Archives. Series 5, Part 2, Finance and Economy 6. April 1941. “Outline of the Three year wartime plan for the defense industry.” Page 124, 128. Academia Historica Archives (hereafter designated as AHA). “The Chairman of the Military Commission Jiang Zhongzheng sent a telegram to the commanders of the various theaters.” November 2, 1944. Volume name: “Military food quota and appropriation” Collection: National Government. Collection number: 001-087210-00001-008.

¹⁹ For an in depth look at the effects of famine during the Anti-Japanese War, see Micah S. Muscolino. *The Ecology of War in China: Henan Province, the Yellow River, and Beyond, 1938-1950*. Cambridge University Press: New York. 2015. For an in-depth analysis of China’s hyper-inflation situation, see Hans Van de Ven. *War and Nationalism in China: 1925-1945*. RoutledgeCurzon: New York. 2003. Page 259-261.

before, during, and after World War II, this paper also highlights some critical limitations of America's foreign policy to enforce internal changes in a developing country.

In 1945, a military food system was developed between the Americans and the Chinese. This system utilized China's own internal resources to procure and distribute rice, meat, and vegetables directly to its soldiers. The official history of the United States Army details extensively these changes and suggests that they would have become universal and perhaps permanent if not for the sudden end of World War II.²⁰ Unfortunately, this official history does not bring in Chinese sources nor does it show China's efforts to feed its soldiers throughout the war. It also does not detail China's attempts to universalize this military logistical food distribution system past the end of World War II because once the war concluded, America's mission changed and was no longer interested in jointly developing military logistical systems with China.

Other than the official history published by the United States Army, there are few Western scholars who study China's military logistical systems during 1945. In China and Taiwan, when scholarly works refer to military food adjustments made during 1945, they primarily cite this official history from the United States Army.²¹ The U.S. Army's official history of World War II in China was well written and documented, but leaves room for further scholarship based on other sources such as the Nanjing Archives, which is the depository for China's official government documents from 1912-1949, the Academia Historica Archives in

²⁰ See Romanus, Charles F. and Riley Sunderland. *China, Burma, India Theater: Time Runs Out in CBI*. Center of Military History. United States Army: Washington, D.C. 1999.

²¹ See for example, Su Shengxiong. "Reforms and dilemmas: The Revolution of the National Army's Logistic Supply System (1944-1946)." *Institute of Modern History of the Academia Sinica*. Issue 107. March 2018. Pages 95-147. Also see, Liu Shufang "On the National Government's Army Food Policy during the Anti-Japanese War." *Military History Research*. Volume 33. Issue 138. No. 4. July 2019.

Taiwan, which house Chiang Kai-shek's and other senior KMT officials documents and mandates, as well as memoirs and journals. These additional sources suggest that American pressured permanent changes to its military food system was never realistic because the infrastructure required simply wasn't there.

This paper focuses on the events of 1945 when the United States military was more than willing to provide technological and industrial resources to help the KMT change its logistical food supply system. Consequently, Chiang Kai-shek and the KMT military were willing to tell America they were altering China's supply system to meet the requirements of the American allies. By bringing in Chinese primary sources and comparing them with American sources, it can now be seen more clearly what changes were made, why they were made, and when they worked and failed.

In this paper, I will first discuss the context for American nutritional pressure. I then discuss the context of China's military food logistics followed by an in-depth analysis of the 1945 changes and the succeeding efforts in the Chinese Civil War to feed the KMT soldiers without American aid. Ultimately, the sources suggest American changes affected only a small subsection of the Chinese Army for a short period of time, but for the bulk of the soldiers, the food system remained effectively the same. It was unrealistic for America to assume that an agrarian society devastated by years of warfare could swiftly adopt an American based food system without significant American investment of resources. In fact, the system pushed by Americans proved to be unsustainable beyond American direct involvement.

American Military Food Development

To more fully understand America's pressure on China to adopt a different military food system, one must understand the development of America's food industry and its logistics of getting its food to the front lines in warfare. Shortly after the end of World War II and the Korean War, U.S. Army historians examined the development of the standard ration for a soldier, which was defined as one meal for one soldier. These historians found that since the beginning of America, the U.S. ration was adapted and changed as the nature of fighting evolved.²²

World War I brought drastic changes to the ration and the means of delivering it to the soldier. This war, unlike other wars in which America was involved, was much bigger. The war placed an emphasis on "mass movement and mass supply to far-off centers."²³ The solution to this problem required greater industrialization and the "combined efforts of science, the food industry, and the food supply services of the military establishment."²⁴ World War I required preserving large quantities of food for lengthy periods of time while being transported over large distances to the soldiers at the front line. Industrial plants in Chicago packaged the rations in iron and tin cannisters that were large, expensive, and prone to spoilage and contamination, especially in the trenches. The deficiencies in feeding the American soldier during World War I spurred even more industrial ingenuity to overcome the problem of spoilage in transporting

²² Raphael P. Thian, *Legislative History of the General Staff of the Army of the United States (Its Organization, Duties, Pay, & Allowances), from 1775 to 1901* (Washington: G.P.O., 1901) Page 241. See also Koehler, Franz A. *QMC Historical Studies Series II, No. 6*, Historical Branch Office of the Quartermaster General, Washington D.C., 1958, Page 7 and (Insert info on the other QMC Historical Studies) and <https://washingtonpapers.org/resources/articles/supply-problems-plagued-the-continental-army-from-the-start/>

²³ Koehler, Frnz. *QMC Historical Studies*. Page 12.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

food over long distances.²⁵ The resulting ration would be used by Americans in all theaters of World War II.

It was also during this time that the idea of the calorie as a calculable criterion came into being. By the 1930s, American scientists professed that the number and type of calories required by humans each day “differed according to age, sex and levels of exertion, but the scientists were uncertain as to exactly how many calories were needed for different activities.”²⁶ A decade later in May 1941, the American Food and Nutrition Board published a table of daily nutrients that were needed for a person to maintain good health.²⁷ This table allowed the military to judge the diets of its soldiers and determine if they were receiving enough food to perform adequately. It is now commonly understood that an average military soldier needs approximately 4,000 calories a day to perform all the physical requirements of the job.²⁸ However, in the 1940s, the idea of the calorie was not well defined, though it was understood and believed that a proper diet consisted of meat, vegetables, milk, and fruit since they were “all essential foods which protected the body from disease.”²⁹ Experiments and conclusions made about calories led to changes in the American diet and the development of a large industrial base that could produce food in mass quantities and then distribute it over long distances.

²⁵ *Ibid.* Page 13-14.

²⁶ Collingham, Lizzie. *The Taste of War: World War II and the Battle for Food*. Penguin Press: New York. 2012. Page 268.

²⁷ Collingham, Lizzie. *The Taste of War: World War II and the Battle for Food*. Penguin Press: New York. 2012. Page 420.

²⁸ Goldberg, G.R. “Intake and Energy Requirements”. 2003. *Encyclopedia of Food Sciences and Nutrition*. Academic Press. Page 2096.

²⁹ Collingham, Lizzie. *The Taste of War: World War II and the Battle for Food*. Penguin Press: New York. 2012. Page 269.

China's Military Food Logistics

When conflict finally broke out with Japan, China was not militarily prepared to defend itself and the KMT government had to flee westward from Nanjing, deep into the heart of China to Sichuan province, which was many hundreds of miles away from the conflict and the provinces in which the KMT held most control. In 1937, Japan swiftly gained control over many provinces and sponsored their own Chinese government in Nanjing that directly competed against the KMT for legitimacy. Due to the dynamics of this power struggle, Ch'i Hsi-sheng, a prominent Taiwanese historian, noted that "it was difficult to identify a single province where the Central Government could honestly claim to enjoy a degree of control comparable to what it had enjoyed [in the Eastern provinces] before 1937."³⁰

After the KMT government fled to Sichuan Province, Chiang Kai-shek laid out his military plan to fight the Japanese. He instituted a "scorched-earth policy to fall back into the interior" of China to conduct a war of attrition because China's armed forces and weapons were "weak as compared with Japan."³¹ To best accomplish this vision of fighting the Japanese, Chiang Kai-shek arranged the military forces of both the Central Government and the provinces in a war zone perimeter around Sichuan that would hopefully protect his government from defeat by Japanese troops.³² Broadly speaking, these war zones would act as a buffer-zone and help the

³⁰ Ch'i Hsi-sheng. *The Much Troubled Alliance: US-China Military Cooperation During the Pacific War, 1941-1945*. World Scientific: London. Page xv.

³¹ Hsu Long-hsuen and Chang Ming-kai. Compilers. *History of the Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945)*. Wen Ha-hsiung. Translator. Chung Wu Publishing Co. Taipei, Taiwan. 1985. Page v.

³² The number of war zones varied throughout the war. In the beginning, China was divided into five war zones. By 1945, the number was 10. For most of the war, the number of war zones were nine. See Hoover Institution Library & Archives (hereafter referenced as Hoover Archives). Stillwell Papers. Map Case Folder 43. File 214. Also see Hsu

Chinese government to endure longer while it sought advanced weapon systems from more advanced industrial countries that could compete with the firepower of Japan. Chiang Kai-shek had for years wanted better military equipment, but China did not have the industrial capacity to produce heavy military equipment and weapons and had to rely on outside aid.³³

It was clear many years before fighting began in 1937 that China's war with Japan would be difficult. A large reason for this difficulty was that Japan was heavily industrialized with advanced weaponry and China was not. In anticipation of the war with Japan, Chiang Kai-shek attempted to increase his country's industrial output. According to the *History of the Sino-Japanese War*, published by the Chinese government in Taiwan, China's industry was able to produce all forms of small arms, but not much else.³⁴ The KMT consequently sought foreign assistance and initially looked to Germany for aid in the 1930s. Germany supplied the KMT military with advanced weaponry and modern training techniques, most of which went to the KMT's most loyal troops rather than other regional and provincial forces.³⁵ However, with the outbreak of war with Japan, the German advisors were recalled. China then signed a treaty with the Soviet Union immediately after hostilities began with Japan that provided China with "millions of dollars' worth of warplanes, bombers, tanks, antiaircraft weapons, ammunition, and trucks."³⁶ This treaty served an important stop gap between German and US aid. By the

Long-hsuen and Chang Ming-kai. Compilers. *History of the Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945)*. Wen Ha-hsiung. Translator. Chung Wu Publishing Co. Taipei, Taiwan. 1985. Page. 187, 438-446.

³³ Hsu Long-hsuen and Chang Ming-kai. Compilers. *History of the Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945)*. Wen Ha-hsiung. Translator. Chung Wu Publishing Co. Taipei, Taiwan. 1985. Page 171-175.

³⁴ Hsu Long-hsuen and Chang Ming-kai. Compilers. *History of the Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945)*. Page 169.

³⁵ Ch'i Hsi-sheng. *The Much Troubled Alliance*. Page xvii.

³⁶ Pomfret, John. *The Beautiful Country and the Middle Kingdom: America and China, 1776 to the Present*. New York: Henry Holt and Company. 2016. Page 251.

time of Pearl Harbor, China was holding out in expectation and anticipation of America supplying its troops with advanced weaponry and modern training.³⁷

While waiting for outside assistance, China still had to meet the logistical requirements of its troops. During the Anti-Japanese war, China's military food procurement and distribution systems remained largely unchanged from those used in the prior Warlord and Qing era. It was expected that local county governments would provide all the necessary food provisions as armies passed through those regions.³⁸ In 1939, Yu Feipeng, the director of the logistics department of the KMT armies, wrote to Chiang Kai-shek about the upcoming military campaign. In this letter, Yu said that "for the grain supply, in addition to carrying two days' worth of rations, the unit will still distribute rice to the troops after purchasing it in local areas."³⁹ In other words, the expectation was for soldiers to rely on local agrarian communities for their sustenance and not on a centralized industrial structure, like the United States.

The KMT, however, still allocated significant resources into the military food industry. In fact, of the seven industries associated with National Defense, the food industry was fourth in estimated value of its production, behind the mining, cloth, and chemical industries.⁴⁰ The food industry associated with China's national defense was listed in 1941 as solely flour and oil products because the KMT government only issued rice or wheat to a soldier with the rest of a

³⁷ Ch'i Hsi-sheng. *The Much Troubled Alliance*. Page 727.

³⁸ McCord, Edward A. *The Power of the Gun: The Emergence of Modern Chinese Warlordism*. University of California Press: Los Angeles. 1993. Page 286 and see note 59 from Chapter 8.

³⁹ Nanjing Archives. Series 5, Part 2, Military Affairs 1. "Letter between Chiang Kai-shek and Yu Feipeng on the 1939 operation plan." July 1, 1939. Page 666.

⁴⁰ Nanjing Archives. Series 5, Part 2, Finance and Economy 6. April 1941. "Outline of the Three year wartime plan for the defense industry." Page 128. The output levels from the food industry was estimated to be valued at almost 1 billion yuan over three years.

soldier's diet provided from supplementary income or foraging.⁴¹ Significantly, there was no meat industry or plants listed anywhere in that 1941 document detailing every industry and product associated with China's National Defense.⁴² Similar absences were noted in other documents researched in the Nanjing Archives.

To ease the logistical challenge of providing enough grain to the soldier during the war, China designated 2.5 cups of raw rice or wheat for each soldier per day.⁴³ The determining factor for whether a soldier received rice or wheat was the location of the soldier. The KMT stationed troops near areas with surpluses of food and grain.⁴⁴ Northern provinces primarily provided wheat and southern provinces provided rice. "Sichuan supplied both" wheat and rice to its military forces.⁴⁵

The government also mandated that for the transportation of military grain, soldiers would not move the food if the distance was more than 20 miles.⁴⁶ Instead, civilians would move the grain the needed distance. In 1939, the government allocated money to construct granaries within each war zone that could house half-a-years' worth of grain for military personnel. Within a year, construction of most granaries was complete.⁴⁷ At the end of the war,

⁴¹ *Ibid.* Page 124.

⁴² *Ibid.* Pages 120-128.

⁴³ The 2.5 cups was calculated by taking the amount of total grain allotted for the year for an area with a known number of soldiers. The numbers come from the 1944 annual military ration quota in the following document. AHA. "The Chairman of the Military Commission Jiang Zhongzheng sent a telegram to the commanders of the various theaters." November 2, 1944. Volume name: "Military food quota and appropriation" Collection: National Government. Collection number: 001-087210-00001-008.

⁴⁴ Hans Van de Ven. *War and Nationalism in China: 1925-1945*. RoutledgeCurzon: New York. 2003. Page 264.

⁴⁵ Mitter, Rana. *Forgotten Ally: China's World War II, 1937-1945*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt: Boston. 2013. Page 265.

⁴⁶ AHA. "Jiang Zhongzheng, He Yingqin and others plan to implement the measures for military-civilian cooperation in the transportation of munitions to all provinces." August 24, 1941. Collection. President Jiang Zhongzheng's Cultural Relics. Collection number. 002-070200-00011-033.

⁴⁷ Hans Van de Ven. *War and Nationalism in China: 1925-1945*. RoutledgeCurzon: New York. 2003. Page 265.

the logistical department for the KMT military was accountable for 290 granaries spread throughout the country.⁴⁸ These granaries were located near agricultural centers and key transportation nodes such as roads, railways, and waterways.⁴⁹ Placing granaries in these locations made it easier for the local troops to procure and distribute the needed grain to the soldiers. Other than grain, the KMT military expected the Chinese soldier to forage for wild onions, garlic, mushrooms, and leeks to eat with their rice or purchase extra food from their monthly allowance.⁵⁰

The problem with supplementing a soldier's diet with a set amount of money to purchase additional food was the rising inflation rate that decreased the purchasing power of the Chinese soldier. According to reports, by 1941, the purchasing power of a soldier had decreased 80 percent. By 1942, the price of grain had increased by over 3,000 percent.⁵¹ In fact, by June 1944, "the monthly cost of living for ordinary soldiers in Chengdu, one of Sichuan's major cities, was over eleven times their pay."⁵²

⁴⁸ AHA. "Arrangement table of military depots under the General Headquarters of Rear Service." Volume. "Supply materials during the term of the Minister of Military and Political Affairs (3)". August 1945. Collection. Vice President Chen Cheng's Cultural Relics. Collection Number. 008-010706-00035-001.

⁴⁹ AHA. "The garrison table and garrison setting plan of the ninth theater of military depots." Volume. "Information on the tenure of the commander-in-chief of the ninth theater (2)." September 16, 1938. Collection. Vice President Chen Cheng's Cultural Relics. Collection Number. 008-010701-00048-005. See map on page 9.

⁵⁰ Wu Hsiang-hsaing. *The Second Sino-Japanese War: 1931-1945*. Tsung Ho Book Co.: Taipei. 1973. 吳相湘。第二次中日戰爭史下冊。綜合月刊社：台北。1973. Note 380 on pages 1110-1112 that quotes Yang Shutian reminiscing about the situation as a soldier in the Chinese Army during World War II. Yang was stationed for three years at the Xiling Gorge of the Yangtze River. He talks about Chinese soldiers given a ration of rice each day, which was then cooked with foraged wild onions, garlic, mushrooms, leeks, etc. To supplement the daily rice ration, the soldiers were paid a set rate of money so they could purchase from the local economy. The amount of money given was based on rank with the lowest enlistee receiving 50 yuan per month and a sergeant paid 100 yuan. According to Yang's reminiscence, it cost 350 yuan per month for non-staple food in 1945. Consequently, "soldiers often have no food...and officers with family members cannot survive."

⁵¹ Hans Van de Ven. *War and Nationalism in China: 1925-1945*. RoutledgeCurzon: New York. 2003. Page 270.

⁵² Mitter, Rana. *Forgotten Ally*. Page 275.

Besides decreasing purchasing power, inflation also enticed corruption among military leaders trying to provide for their families. General Chen Cheng, who was appointed commander of the Wuhan garrison in 1940, witnessed the abuse of military commanders controlling the supply and grain for their troops during the times of massive inflation. He mentioned several military commanders who stole rations from soldiers, stockpiled the extra food, and then sold them to civilians rather than provide them to the troops.⁵³ The military leaders had every incentive to do this as they were struggling to provide for their own families from their salaries. Besides outright stealing of military rations from the soldiers, it was also commonplace for military commanders to misrepresent the number of soldiers on their books because the annual rice allotment was based on the number of soldiers within a unit. If the reported numbers were higher than the actual number of soldiers, then that meant more food per actual soldier and more opportunity for the commander to sell from the food stockpiles to the civilian populace. Therefore, in the 1944 military food quota, the KMT government requested repeatedly for confirmation of the number of soldiers in an area.⁵⁴

China also looked to other avenues to curtail inflation's effects on soldiers. Significantly, in 1941, the government convened a financial conference in Chongqing where it was decided to alter the tax collection method so that an individual would pay taxes in produce, such as rice and other crops, rather than strictly cash.⁵⁵ Collecting taxes in kind rather than money had

⁵³ Chen Cheng. *Chen Cheng's Memoirs of the Anti-Japanese War*. Eastern Publishing House: Beijing, 2009. 陈诚。陳誠回憶錄--抗日战争。东方出版社：北京。2009。Page 214.

⁵⁴ AHA. "The Chairman of the Military Commission Jiang Zhongzheng sent a telegram to the commanders of the various theaters". November 2, 1944. Volume name: "Military food quota and appropriation" Collection: National Government. Collection number: 001-087210-00001-008. This happens in most of the documents I reviewed relating to food and ration distribution. The need to check and recheck numbers suggests the central government understood that the numbers reported by lower echelons may not have been trustworthy.

⁵⁵ Mitter, Rana. *Forgotten Ally*. Page 264.

multiple ramifications for the KMT government. The most positive result of this policy was that it allowed the government to avoid and somewhat curtail problems associated with inflation “because the army no longer had to purchase so much food on the open market.”⁵⁶ However, there were also negative consequences to this policy, such as the “burden of feeding the armies fell directly on the peasants.”⁵⁷ This would not be an issue in a time of plenty, but in a period of famine, the consequences could be deadly because a farmer’s food went first to the government. For example, in times of famine, local politics sometimes exacerbated the severity of the crisis. In the summer of 1942, Hubei and Shaanxi provincial authorities refused to transport excess grain to Henan to alleviate the pressures of both famine and the military grain tax because they did not want to sell grain to a sister province for “increasingly worthless government currency.”⁵⁸

In 1944, the KMT government determined that the Ministry of Food and Ministry of Finance would oversee procuring rice for the soldiers. The specific combat unit would be responsible for collecting the food from granaries directly. However, if the unit had transportation difficulties, the unit could issue cash to the soldiers or to the local government, who would then be responsible for supplying food to the soldiers. The unit had to be within a day’s worth of travel round trip to be eligible to travel to a granary.⁵⁹

⁵⁶ Mitter, Rana. *Forgotten Ally*. Page 266.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ *Ibid.* Page 267. Mitter relies on a primary source in making this conclusion I’ve quoted. See Zhang Zonglu, “1942 nian Henan dahuang de huiyi” [“Memories of the Great 1942 Henan Famine”], in Song Zhixin, 1942: Henan, 144-145.

⁵⁹ Nanjing Archives. Series 5, Part 2, Military Affairs 1. September 1944. “The supply system table of military depots under the rear service department.” Page 475.

Distributing grain to soldiers, however, was a challenge because the KMT government had a shortage of 100-liter rice bags, which were used for rice storage and transportation. This also limited the amount of rice available for sale in the general economy. It was anticipated that the military would need approximately 10 million bags of rice and flour each year.⁶⁰ According to a report to the Central Government from the Daxin Flour Company in Shaanxi Province, the company needed 30,000 strips of silk cloth each month to make enough flour bags for the amount of flour produced, with no less than 18 days a month dedicated to producing flour for the military.⁶¹ At the time, the KMT determined that “the bags of grain for the army and military are crucial and so are the factories.”⁶² During the war, only 70 factories in unoccupied China produced flour with the largest factory able to produce 5,000 bags of flour per day. Prior to the war, there were well over 100 flour factories with the largest able to produce more than 14,000 bags per day.⁶³ While the number of flour factories remained somewhat large in number their capability to produce flour decreased significantly because of the war. Unfortunately, the grain and flour factories needed specific machines to “manufacture new grain bags,” which were in short supply throughout the country and made it difficult for the factory to operate at the level required.⁶⁴ The grain bags were made out of silk cloth and factories needed

⁶⁰ Nanjing Archives. Series 5, Part 2, Finance and Economy 9. November 11, 1940. “Opinions of the Fourth Joint HQ on Raising Military Food for the Anti-Japanese War.” Page 321.

⁶¹ Nanjing Archives. Series 5, Part 2, Finance and Economy 7. August 1939. “Statement of the Shaanxi Office of the Industrial and Mining Adjustment Office of Daxin Flour Company.” Page 386.

⁶² AHA. “The Chairman of the Military Commission Jiang Zhongzheng sent a telegram to the commanders of the various theaters.” November 2, 1944. Volume name: “Military food quota and appropriation” Collection: National Government. Collection number: 001-087210-00001-008. Page 2.

⁶³ Nanjing Archives. Series 5, Part 2, Finance and Economy 6. May 1943. “The Statistics Department of the Ministry of Economic Affairs on the Statistical Report of the Wartime Rear Industries.” Pages 334.

⁶⁴ AHA. “The Chairman of the Military Commission Jiang Zhongzheng sent a telegram to the commanders of the various theaters.” November 2, 1944. Volume name: “Military food quota and appropriation” Collection: National Government. Collection number: 001-087210-00001-008. Page 4.

substantial quantities of coal, oil, and silk, all of which were also in short supply, to manufacture them.⁶⁵ Consequently, in 1944, the KMT government mandated that provinces “should as far as possible use old bags to deliver the rations to the soldier and the machines.”⁶⁶

Reusing old bags was just one of many methods used to ensure soldiers received the allotted amount of grain. In fact, when there were fluctuations of troop levels in areas due to the shifts on the battlefield, the logistics units had to be even more creative. In one instance, the influx of soldiers into Guizhou from the 24th Army Group, who were originally stationed in Hubei and Hunan, required the Ministry of Military and Public Affairs to purchase additional grain from Guizhou’s local markets. Yet, Guizhou’s supply of grain was already exhausted, so the Ministry had to allocate vehicles out of its own fleet to send grain from Guizhou’s immediate provincial neighbor, Sichuan.⁶⁷ For the Chinese Expeditionary Forces fighting in Burma, the original plan was to transport grain to them from Xikang Province, but due to the difficulty of transportation because of unimproved roads and shortages of fuel, the KMT government decided it was more cost effective to pay Burma to distribute Burma’s own grain to the Chinese forces.⁶⁸

When the 1944 military food quota was published, the Department of Food became aware that Guangxi’s provincial government had difficulty raising military food from local

⁶⁵ Nanjing Archives. Series 5, Part 2, Finance and Economy 7. “Statement of the Shaanxi Office of the Industrial and Mining Adjustment Office of Daxin Flour Company.” August 1939-July 1941. Page 386.

⁶⁶ AHA. “The Chairman of the Military Commission Jiang Zhongzheng sent a telegram to the commanders of the various theaters.” November 2, 1944. Volume name: “Military food quota and appropriation” Collection: National Government. Collection number: 001-087210-00001-008. Page 4.

⁶⁷ AHA. “Chen Liangcheng Chen Chengyu's 33rd National Army Food Allocation Table.” February 8, 1945. Collection. Vice President Chen Cheng’s Cultural Relics. Collection Number. 008-010706-00034-014. Pages 2-3.

⁶⁸ AHA. “Chen Liangcheng Chen Chengyu's 33rd National Army Food Allocation Table.” February 8, 1945. Collection. Vice President Chen Cheng’s Cultural Relics. Collection Number. 008-010706-00034-014. Page 2.

farmers, in part because the provincial government had to flee to the countryside. The Department of Food consequently borrowed grain from counties in the East and North of Guangxi in anticipation of the requirements for the following year's rations. They also planned to pay for the transportation of military food along the Guangxi-Guizhou border and prepared 50 trucks to transport grain from other areas of Guizhou to the frontline troops in the area.⁶⁹

Poor harvest yields were also a challenge. In June 1945, China's Minister of Food, Xu Kan, wrote to the Civil Service Office to inspect the claims about the bad harvests in Guizhou and the desire of Liping County to be exempt from gathering military grain because of the bad harvest. The claim was that the poor yield was making everyone's life in Liping County seem "like living in a prison."⁷⁰ In Qinghai Province, the 1945 harvest was not enough for the number of soldiers stationed there. They were short by 2,000,000 liters of grain. Xu Kan requested that Gansu Province be prepared to make up the difference.⁷¹ Western Hunan also faced grain constraints during these latter years of war. In early 1945, it was reported that Western Hunan had an increase of troops stationed there, but the granaries in Hunan did not have enough grain left over. Unfortunately, transportation challenges made it impossible to move grain from other provinces to Hunan because the waterways were in a drought, and the aftereffects of war had destroyed crops that would have been part of the military grain tax. The KMT government's

⁶⁹ AHA. "Yu Feipeng telegraphed the situation of Jiang Zhongzheng, chairman of the military committee, raising grain for Guizhou and Guangxi." December 24, 1944. Collection. National Government. Volume "Military Food Quota and Appropriation (2)." Collection Number. 001-087210-00002-004.

⁷⁰ AHA. "The Minister of Food, Xu Kanhan, asked the Civil Service Office of the National Government." June 27, 1945. Volume "Military Ration Procurement (2)". Collection. National Government. Collection Number. 001-087110-00002-005.

⁷¹ AHA. "The Minister of Food Xu Kan sent a telegram to the Chairman of the Military Commission Jiang Zhongzheng." February 11, 1945. Volume "Military food quota and appropriation (2)." Collection. National Government. Collection Number. 001-087210-00002-007.

solution to the problem was to purchase an additional 90,000 bags of grain, or enough grain to feed an additional 41,000 soldiers for a year, at a cost of upwards of 276,000,000 yuan, a value that was decreasing in purchasing power daily.⁷²

China Adopts a New Military Food System

In 1944, Japan's final offensive in China, the Ichigo campaign, almost destroyed the KMT forces, and resulted in a massive shift in geographic control of China in Japan's favor. This campaign lasted until December 1944. In the end, Japan ended the Ichigo campaign, mainly because of difficulties in supplying its troops so far forward from its main supply hubs.⁷³ However, the crisis was so great that in December of 1944 that the U.S. military encouraged President Chiang Kai-shek to retreat from Chongqing further into the Chinese hinterland, but Chiang refused. He wanted to remain in Chongqing.⁷⁴ Consequently, the American and Chinese military commands placed even greater emphasis on training and arming Chinese troops with more modern American weapons.

At the same time, American military leaders pressured the KMT to not just provide grain to its soldiers, but all other necessary food as well, specifically meat. To Americans, modifying China's military food system meant that China was adopting a more scientific understanding of

⁷² AHA. "The Ministry of Grain submitted to the Executive Yuan to increase the military rations for the garrison." January 26, 1945. Volume "Military food expenditure (1)". Collection. Executive Yuan. Collection Number. 014-040502-0001. Pages 6-7.

⁷³ See Chen Cheng. *Chen Cheng's Memoirs of the Anti-Japanese War*. Eastern Publishing House: Beijing. 2009. 陈诚。陳誠回憶錄--抗日战争。东方出版社：北京。2009。Page 382. Also see Combined Arms Research Library. Fort Leavenworth. *Lessons from the CBI Theater: 2d Command Class*. June 21, 1946. Appendix C. "Lessons from Ground Forces and Overland Supply Operations." Presented by Colonel F. Hill. Paragraph 31. Page 24.

⁷⁴ Taylor, Jay. *The Generalissim: Chiang Kai-shek and the Struggle for Modern China*. Harvard University Press: Cambridge. 2011. Page 297.

and appreciation for the calorie.⁷⁵ This also marked the beginning of America's use of food and the calorie to push its foreign policy beliefs and exert pressure on foreign governments.⁷⁶

Before detailing how the military food system changed for the Chinese in 1945, one must understand how America was involved in China during the war. From the beginning of World War II, America's interest in China was to keep it fighting Japanese forces so that Japan could not pull its best troops away into the Pacific Theater or join forces with Germany in the European theater. America wanted to mainly focus on fighting Germany and only shift its military focus to Japan once Germany was defeated.⁷⁷ Consequently, until the war in Europe subsided, American aid to China was purposefully minimal.⁷⁸ At the outset, the War Department in Washington D.C. felt that the largest obstacle to fighting Japan from China was getting supplies into China because of its "almost complete isolation."⁷⁹ War Department

⁷⁵ See Cullather, Nick. "The Foreign Policy of the Calorie." *The American Historical Review*. April 2007. Vol 112, No. 2. Pages 337-364. Also see Collingham, Lizzie. *The Taste of War: World War II and the Battle for Food*. Penguin Press: New York. 2012.

⁷⁶ Some succeeding examples are listed in Collingham's book *The Taste of War* pages 483, 485. In 1946, it was reported that non-communist French politicians asked for "a wheat loan so that no cut in the bread ration would have to be made before the elections to the provisional National Assembly in June." In what was seen as a political gesture Stalin offered France 500,000 tons of grain. The following year, the United States channeled food to Europe through grants rather than the United Nations, which was seen as a "reluctance to continue funding the feeding of eastern European populations under Soviet influence." Later, when countries in Latin America, Asia, and Africa experienced an agricultural surplus thanks to improved technologies, "protectionist policies within Europe and the United States created trade barriers which prevented [them] from exporting enough of their agricultural produce to boost their economies" even though shipping excess food was one of the methods that America and Europe had built up their economic power after World War II. The calorie had secured its place as a powerful weapon to ensure the West's economic and political hegemony in the world.

⁷⁷ Hoover Archives. Stilwell Papers. Box 16. Folder 14. "Memorandum for Lieutenant General Hugh Drum." January 5, 1942. "In the long run, China is the logical theatre from which to finally push on the attack on the Japanese islands. But the use of China is a question of long range planning right now." The Americans felt that the largest obstacle to fighting Japan from China was getting supplies into China and consequently, America wanted to ensure that a secure supply route was in place before committing to an offensive strategy there. See Hoover Archives. Stilwell Papers. Box 16. Folder 14. "Joint Planning Committee Report to Chiefs of Staff: Immediate Assistance to China." January 10, 1942.

⁷⁸ Ritter, Rana. *Forgotten Ally*. Page 13. Mitter makes the point that "the Europe First strategy meant that China was to be maintained in the war at a minimum cost."

⁷⁹ Hoover Archives. Stilwell Papers. Box 16. Folder 14. "Joint Planning Committee Report to Chiefs of Staff: Immediate Assistance to China." January 10, 1942.

planners consequently felt the best way to help China was to open up a land supply passage into the country from the Indian Ocean and Burma, present day Myanmar.

General Stilwell, who was America's military representative to China, Burma, and India for most of World War II, helped develop and followed this strategy. He advocated that "Burma must be our first objective."⁸⁰ As American military leaders in China had no combat troops to lead, General Stilwell's purpose was to advise and aid the Chinese military as best he could while fulfilling the War Department mission to open a supply route to China. Such a passage could furnish China with food and supplies that would allow China's military to march to the Pacific Ocean and drive Japanese forces out of the country. In support of this mission, China sent several armies to Burma, called the Chinese Expeditionary Force, which would be the main offensive weapon against Japan.

Stilwell believed Chinese forces, properly supplied with "good food, warm clothing, rapid hospitalization, and modern arms"⁸¹ was equal to any other modern military force. He set about to ensure that Chinese soldiers in Burma were "properly trained, equipped, supplied, led, and fed."⁸² However, Stilwell believed that China's system of ration provisioning was insufficient and caused more harm than good. In November 1943, he sent an official memo to Chiang Kai-shek telling him that the supply arm of the Chinese military needed to provide "meat and oil, by local purchase, and by shipment. There are plenty of sheep, goats, and cattle, in Yunnan. There is plenty of salt. The oil will probably have to be shipped in."⁸³ The reason for

⁸⁰ Hoover Archives. Stilwell Papers. Box 20. Folder 8. Handwritten note titled "To Clear China of Japanese Forces." July 2, 1942.

⁸¹ Berrigan, Darrell. "Uncle Joe Pays Off". *The Saturday Evening Post*. June 17, 1944. Page 101.

⁸² Combined Arms Research Library. Fort Leavenworth. *Lessons from the CBI Theater: 2d Command Class*. June 21, 1946. Page 23.

⁸³ Hoover Archives. Stilwell Papers. Box 24 Folder 17. Nov 5, 1943.

this demand of Stilwell's was his perception "the majority of the [Chinese soldiers] are physically incapable of sustaining prolonged hardship. Malnutrition is common, due to poor diet. Meat and fats are entirely lacking, and salt and fresh vegetables are insufficient."⁸⁴ The Chinese military and government ignored Stilwell's demand because he ignored local Chinese realities and naively assumed Chinese military logistical systems could and would change if mandated. When the Chinese did not comply, Stilwell ensured the British in India provided all the food Americans felt were needed for the Chinese Expeditionary Forces. The ration there included 6 ounces of flour, 3 ounces of peanuts, 3 ounces of beans, 20 ounces of rice, 8 ounces of vegetables, 8 ounces of fresh meat, $\frac{2}{3}$ ounces of salt, $\frac{1}{4}$ ounce of sugar, $\frac{1}{3}$ ounce of tea, 2 vitamin pills, and 1 egg per day.⁸⁵

This conflict over rations highlights just one aspect of Stilwell's thorny relationship with the KMT government that only festered and eventually boiled over for many other reasons that are detailed elsewhere.⁸⁶ In fact, within a short period of time, Chiang Kai-shek asked President Roosevelt to recall Stilwell to the United States and be replaced by someone else. Taiwanese scholar Hsi-sheng Ch'i explained, "in the eyes of many Chinese, the Americans around Stilwell were the most arrogant and least understanding foreigners they had ever dealt with."⁸⁷ General He Yingqin, who had served as China's Minister of War and Chief of Staff to Chiang Kai-shek, said of Stilwell in his memoirs that "his personality is stubborn, rigid, and self-serving, and his

⁸⁴ Hoover Archives. Stilwell Papers. Box 24 Folder 17. Nov 5, 1943.

⁸⁵ Hoover Archives. Wedemeyer Papers. Box 84, Folder 7. January 11, 1945.

⁸⁶ See for example, Barbara Tuchmann's *Stilwell and the American Experience in China*, and Hsi-sheng Ch'i's *The Much Troubled Alliance*.

⁸⁷ Hsi-sheng Ch'i. *The Much Troubled Alliance*. Page 723.

prejudices are too deep.”⁸⁸ President Roosevelt finally acquiesced to Chiang Kai-shek’s recall request in the fall of 1944. On October 31, Stilwell was replaced by General Wedemeyer.⁸⁹

Like Stilwell, General Wedemeyer also wanted to drive the Japanese to the Pacific Ocean. However, Wedemeyer’s attitude and approach was much different. Part of the reason for the different approach was Wedemeyer did not have to worry about what was transpiring in Burma or India as his mission was solely based in China. Wedemeyer was therefore able to focus his attention solely on how best to improve Chinese forces with Chinese resources.⁹⁰ Wedemeyer also was more respectful of the KMT leadership and China’s role in the war with Japan. He believed in the KMT military’s potential because unlike France who “had surrendered in six weeks...China was still resisting after more than seven years and nearly three million total casualties.”⁹¹

However, Wedemeyer also entered China at a time when Japan was completing its final offensive against the Chinese military, who were retreating swiftly at the onslaught. The situation was dire for Chiang Kai-shek and the KMT military, but Wedemeyer did not find the KMT military capable of combating the threat.⁹² General Wedemeyer further blamed Stilwell and those who worked with him, for the situation. In a letter to a friend the month after he

⁸⁸ He Yingqun, Rijnun Qinhuo Banian Kangzhan Shi. Guofangbu Shizheng Bianyi Juyin: Taipei. 1985. 何應欽。日軍侵華八年抗戰史。國防部史政編譯局印：台北。1985。Pages 381-386.

⁸⁹ Multiple sources detail the acid relationship between Stilwell and Chiang Kai-shek. For Stilwell’s perspective, see Barbara Tuchman, *Stilwell and the American Experience in China: 1911-45*. The Macmillan Company: New York. 1970. For Chiang Kai-shek’s perspective see Hsi-sheng Ch’i *The Much Troubled Alliance* or Jay Taylor, *The Generalissimo*.

⁹⁰ Romanus, Charles F. and Riley Sunderland. *Time Runs Out in CBI*. Center of Military History United States Army: Washington D.C., 1999. Page 15.

⁹¹ Taylor, Jay. *The Generalissimo*. Page 296-97.

⁹² Romanus, Charles F. and Riley Sunderland. *Time Runs Out in CBI*. Center of Military History United States Army: Washington D.C., 1999. Page 52.

arrived, he said, “When I arrived [in China], I found the American effort was absolutely disorganized and ineffective.”⁹³ General Wedemeyer brought in his own staff and went about seeing what he could do to improve the situation. Soon, Wedemeyer and Chiang Kai-shek developed a respectful relationship and many of Wedemeyer’s suggested policies and ideas were accepted and adopted.

Wedemeyer’s first major revision was to create a Joint Staff between the American and Chinese military leaders. This proposal was suggested by Stilwell before he was recalled, but his relationship with Chiang Kai-shek by that point was too acrimonious for any progress to be made.⁹⁴ After the suggestion by Wedemeyer was adopted, Chiang Kai-shek appointed General He Yingqin to command the forces who would be primarily responsible for the summer 1945 military campaign. In General He’s memoirs, he summarized General Wedemeyer’s contribution to the Chinese Army and pointed to the joint staff operations and the work of the Chinese logistical unit that ensured supplies and equipment made it to the Chinese soldier as examples of Wedemeyer’s success. Once the joint meetings began, the two military staffs “exchanged opinions and worked together to solve difficulties in a spirit of friendliness and mutual respect.” The result of these meetings was “quite effective.”⁹⁵ Prior to this, the two militaries had no regular forum for discussion of mutual goals or a place to resolve conflicts between them.

⁹³ Hoover Archives. Wedemeyer Papers. Box 82, Folder 9. Correspondence with COL Lincoln. 26 NOV 1944.

⁹⁴ Hoover Archives. Wedemeyer Papers. Box 83 Folder 39 OCT 10, 1944.

⁹⁵ He Yingqun, *Rijun Qinhua Banian Kangzhan Shi*. Guofangbu Shizheng Bianyi Juyin: Taipei. 1985. 何應欽。日軍侵華八年抗戰史。國防部史政編譯局印：台北。1985. Page 381.

Not all Chinese Army units were represented in this joint effort. In fact, of the 38 group armies in the Chinese Army, totaling over 5 million soldiers, only seven group armies were directly under the Central KMT Army authority, comprising approximately 500,000 soldiers.⁹⁶ The others were under the direct control of provincial authorities and garrisons and not under the same chain of command.⁹⁷ The seven group armies under the Central KMT Army were then reorganized into a counter-attack force of two armies for offense (Alpha Forces) and two armies for defense with only the two offensive armies receiving American weapons and equipment.⁹⁸

The reorganization of China's Army was titled the Alpha Plan and was officially implemented on February 2, 1945.⁹⁹ Prior to the development of the Alpha Plan, however, Wedemeyer began putting pressure on the Chinese to reform the ration that was given to

⁹⁶ The exact number of soldiers under the direct central KMT Army authority is difficult to identify. However, when the Alpha Forces chart from *Time Runs Out* on page 237 is combined with the troop strength levels reported by the Central KMT Army within the Nanjing Archives "KMT Army Force Statistics and Battle Sequence Attached to the Resident List." January 1, 1945. Pages 771-781, the number of soldiers is listed at 417,690. However, this does not include the New 6th Army numbers as those numbers are not separated from the personnel numbers of the New 1st Army. An educated guess would place the total number of forces under the central KMT authority at somewhere around 450,000-500,000 soldiers.

⁹⁷ Nanjing Archives. "KMT Army Force Statistics and Battle Sequence Attached to the Resident List" (January 1, 1945), "Compilation of Archives and Materials of the History of the Republic of China", 5th Series, 2nd Edition Military One (Nanjing: Phoenix Publishing House, 1998), Pages 769-784.

⁹⁸ See Hsu Long-hsuen and Chang Ming-kai. Compilers. *History of the Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945)*. Wen Hsiung. Translator. Chung Wu Publishing Co. Taipei, Taiwan. 1985. Page 448. Also see AHA. "Revolutionary Documents-Anti-Japanese War Strategy: Whole Army." Number 002-020300-00007-117. Page 3. General He Yingqin and Major General McClure held a conference to identify which units would receive American technology and be included in the 39-division "Alpha Force." The resulting recommendation to Chiang Kai-shek that was implemented was really "General He Yingqin's strongly expressed desires" on who should be the "offensive" forces and receive the most aid. General Wedemeyer did not like the idea of the 2nd Corps / Army being considered offensive because "it is not particularly good," but the Chinese rejected this concern. They also rejected Wedemeyer's concern that the Yunnan forces under Lu Han were considered defensive even though they had already received a lot of American equipment and assistance. However, General He Yingqin did not "believe that these divisions will fight offensively." General Wedemeyer consequently recommended that Chiang Kai-shek adopt the plan and modify it as necessary afterwards.

⁹⁹ Chen Cheng. *Chen Cheng's Memoirs of the Anti-Japanese War*. Eastern Publishing House: Beijing. 2009. 陈诚。陳誠回憶錄--抗日战争。东方出版社：北京。2009。Page 387.

Chinese soldiers. Upon arriving in China, Wedemeyer quickly became “convinced that the simple failure to feed the Chinese soldier underlay most of China's military problems and that the Chinese armies needed food even more than they needed guns.”¹⁰⁰ His office received reports that many Chinese soldiers were too weak to march and that they were dying along the roads because of poor nutrition.¹⁰¹

Less than two weeks after arriving in China, General Wedemeyer began sending official memorandums to Chiang Kai-shek detailing problems with getting enough food to the Chinese soldiers. The memo sent on November 12, 1944 requested that the “Central Government provide funds to Division and Army Commanders to buy rice locally if they cannot furnish it directly to their forces.”¹⁰² Wedemeyer then suggested that the American military liaison officers could front the money in emergency situations so that “local rice purchases could be made immediately.”¹⁰³ The KMT government would, of course, reimburse this money directly to Wedemeyer’s office.¹⁰⁴ Beginning on December 6, 1944 and through the end of January 1945, in less than two months, General Wedemeyer’s office sent no less than 13 official memorandums detailing suggested improvements to the Chinese ration.¹⁰⁵ On December 15, 1944, General Wedemeyer even went so far as to point out that the Chinese Expeditionary Forces in Burma, who would soon be returning, would “continue to receive the same rations, pay and supplies to which they have been accustomed.”¹⁰⁶ Implied in this memorandum was

¹⁰⁰ Romanus, Charles F. et al. *Time Runs Out in CBI*. Page 65.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰² Hoover Archives. Wedemeyer Papers. Box 84, Folder 5. 12 November 1944.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁵ Hoover Archives. Wedemeyer Papers. Box 84, Folders 5-7.

¹⁰⁶ Hoover Archives. Wedemeyer Papers. Box 84, Folder 5. 15 December 1944.

that the disparity between the rations of the units in China compared with those in Burma would negatively impact the morale of the Chinese soldiers who had never been to Burma. At first, when the Chinese Expeditionary Forces returned to China, the Allies planned to have their rations shipped in from India rather than rely on China's resources. However, General Wedemeyer put a stop to that out of concern for morale. He recommended to Chiang Kai-shek that the six months of rations being furnished by the British for these returning troops be instead "stored within China in appropriate time and places for emergency use."¹⁰⁷ The memorandums also expressed the idea that desertions would decrease significantly if there was a better ration for Chinese soldiers.¹⁰⁸

In Memorandum 298 on December 19, 1944, General Wedemeyer recommended implementing a separate council between the Food Ration Office of the Chinese Services of Supply and American Officers to review the current Chinese ration and develop improvements to the overall system of procurement, storage, and distribution of rations. The Americans would merely act in an "advisory capacity, coordinating and directing the efforts."¹⁰⁹ On January 11, General Wedemeyer recommended the Alpha Forces receive a food ration of comparable quality as the Chinese troops in Burma.¹¹⁰ On January 24, 1945, General Wedemeyer sent a memorandum to Chiang Kai-shek detailing the main points of a conference held with representatives from the Ministry of Food, Department of General Affairs, and American Officers. The conference identified that the Ministry of Food was incapable of

¹⁰⁷ Hoover Archives. Wedemeyer Papers. Box 85, Folder 4. July 27, 1945.

¹⁰⁸ Romanus Charles F. et al. *Time Runs Out in CBI*. Page 164.

¹⁰⁹ Hoover Archives. Wedemeyer Papers. Box 84, Folder 6. 19 December 1944.

¹¹⁰ Hoover Archives. Wedemeyer Papers. Box 84, Folder 7. 11 January 1945.

providing meat to the Chinese soldier because it was outside their responsibility. The conference also found that the China Food Corporation was developing an emergency ration for use by the Chinese soldier but that “shortages of machinery...limit the output.” The U.S. War Department was requested to send experts to China to assist in the production of the emergency ration.¹¹¹ The next day, General Wedemeyer’s office submitted reports to Chiang Kai-shek from the subject matter experts in the U.S. Army on the food situation in China along with a promise that U.S. “food trucks will be made available to the Food Ministry to facilitate and expedite the collection, storage and distribution of food to the Chinese Soldier.”¹¹² By February 1, 1945, the new ration was adopted in a joint Sino-American conference that mandated a Chinese soldier receive 27 ounces of rice, 2 ounces of beans, 1 ounce of peanuts, 11 ounces of vegetables, $\frac{1}{3}$ ounce of salt, and 1 ounce of meat per day “when local procurement [was] feasible.”¹¹³ Significantly, the rice was more and the meat less in quantity than what the Chinese Expeditionary Forces received in Burma from British storehouses, which suggests that China’s own internal capabilities to provide such a ration may have been consulted.

In March of 1945, the General Wedemeyer’s office gave an update to Chiang Kai-shek on the new ration for the Chinese soldiers. This memo detailed that the Chinese Ministry of War, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Food, and a new Joint Council for Food were all directly involved in the procurement process of this new ration. It also contained a recommendation

¹¹¹ Hoover Archives. Wedemeyer Papers. Box 84, Folder 7. 24 January 1945.

¹¹² Hoover Archives. Wedemeyer Papers. Box 84, Folder 7. 25 January 1945.

¹¹³ Hoover Archives. Wedemeyer Papers. Box 84, Folder 7. 31 January 1945. Also see Romanus, Charles F. et al. *Time Runs Out in CBI*. Page 243.

that the Ministry of Forestry and Agriculture, War Transportation Board, and Committee of Control of Liquid Fuels become involved.¹¹⁴

From February to July 1945, more than seven memorandums were submitted to Chiang Kai-shek from General Wedemeyer suggesting improvements and pleading for actual implementation of the ration that was agreed upon.¹¹⁵ As late as June 1945, General Wedemeyer used such language as “we must as early as possible adopt [a] uniform ration for all members of the Chinese Military Forces including officers and enlisted men” that would include “a certain number of pounds of meat.”¹¹⁶ The next month, Major General McClure, who was Wedemeyer’s Chief of Staff, wrote to him that Chiang Kai-shek “has settled the ration problem and I believe he can solve most of our other problems.”¹¹⁷

On July 29, 1945, China’s Central Daily News published almost a full-page length article written by General Wedemeyer. In the article, he touted many recent improvements to China’s military because of America’s direct intervention, to include food, pay, and clothing.¹¹⁸ Near the end of the article, he made the claim that because of Chiang Kai-shek’s personal intervention, Chinese soldiers now received a much larger salary and all the food and clothing they needed. “Normally, a Chinese soldier earns US \$1.50 per month, and they have to pay their food expenses from this. Now they get \$30 per month, and food and clothing are provided

¹¹⁴ Hoover Archives. Wedemeyer Papers. Box 85, Folder 2. March 6, 1945.

¹¹⁵ Hoover Archives. Wedemeyer Papers. Box 85, Folders 1-4.

¹¹⁶ Hoover Archives. Wedemeyer Papers. Box 85, Folder 4. 18 June 1945.

¹¹⁷ Hoover Archives. Wedemeyer Papers. Box 82, Folder 18. Letter to Lieutenant General A.C. Wedemeyer from Major General R. B. McClure. 4 July 1945. Page 3.

¹¹⁸ In December 1944, General Wedemeyer recommended to Chiang Kai-shek that the Chinese soldier’s pay should be increased by one U.S. dollar per month to help in purchasing food on the economy. Zongtong jiang gong dashi changbian chugao. 5th Volume, Part 2. Editor Qin XiaoYi. Taiwan. 1978. Pages 655-656.

by the government.”¹¹⁹ Private Lee Pin Pao, a Chinese soldier, read that article and wrote immediately to General Wedemeyer to question the veracity of his claims.

This came as a great surprise to me because Chinese soldiers could never get such a good salary, even a Commanding General has rarely received that amount. A second class private received only 300 [yuan] per month, we now receive 900 [yuan] and it is really not enough to buy a box of cigarettes of high quality, a pair of shoes or a shirt. Chinese soldiers are left unnoticed by our Government and people. How can we be contented and cooperate with your soldiers in the future counter offensive? It is requested that the Chinese Government be consulted with regard to our present conditions to augment our salary more than 1,000 percent (the prices of common necessities have been risen more than 10,000 percent). This would help our living condition.¹²⁰

Wedemeyer forwarded this letter to Chiang Kai-shek as written and translated. It may be debatable, however, how genuine this letter was as Chinese privates, many of whom were forcibly enlisted, were often from the village poor, and most likely illiterate.¹²¹ Also, there was plenty of anti-KMT forces that had an interest in thwarting any sign of positive KMT-American relations that plausibly could have written this note.¹²² However, if Wedemeyer’s claim that a Chinese soldier’s pay improved was false despite mandates by the KMT government and pressure from America, then it is also questionable what improvements occurred in a Chinese soldier’s daily diet that Wedemeyer also claimed was improved. To further throw doubt on the suggestion that the “ration problem” had been resolved, the official numbers from the United

¹¹⁹ Wedemeyer, Albert C. “China Cannot Be Ignored”. Central Daily News. July 29, 1945. Page 3. 「不可忽視中國」中英日報。

¹²⁰ Hoover Archives. Wedemeyer Papers. Box 85, Folder 4. 5 August 1945.

¹²¹ Hans Van de Ven. *War and Nationalism in China*. Pages 253-258 and Hsi-Sheng Chi. *Nationalist China at War*. Page 32.

¹²² The CCP was especially interested in ensuring that the KMT and America did not have close ties. See Hsi-Sheng Chi. *Nationalist China at War*. Pages 126-128.

States Army are instructive. During the height of the summer 1945 campaign, the Americans reported that the joint food logistical system was able to provide food for only 185,000 soldiers, which was still a fraction of the total number of soldiers.¹²³ As discussed earlier, there were approximately 500,000 soldiers under the central KMT authority, which was approximately a tenth of the total Chinese forces. Consequently, it is debatable how much the Chinese soldier's daily diet changed during this time.

Wedemeyer, for himself, continued to believe that he had been successful at helping the Chinese adopt an improved ration and distribution system for the Chinese soldier. In his memoirs, written almost a decade after the fact, he wrote that "the ration plan ... had a salutary effect throughout [China]."¹²⁴ Wedemeyer, however, had at least two incentives for claiming success with the ration. First, it would serve to highlight his success in his role as the senior American military leader charged with assisting China's military situation. Secondly, it would also serve to show that America could work with the KMT's unique political reality without CCP involvement, something that Stilwell and his staff often questioned.¹²⁵ The conflict over which American general was more correct about China continues to this day.¹²⁶

Some Chinese military leaders, however, appeared to have believed the Chinese soldier's diet had improved. Just as General Wedemeyer had incentives to believe the diet had changed as prescribed, Chinese military leaders also had incentives to portray that the diet had improved. Critically, it would show that the Chinese were good allies and capable of receiving

¹²³ Romanus, Charles F. et al. *Time Runs Out in CBI*. Page 246.

¹²⁴ Wedemeyer, Albert C. *Wedemeyer Reports!* Henry Holt and Company: New York. 1958. Page 336.

¹²⁵ See Barbara Tuchman. *Stilwell and the American Experience in China*.

¹²⁶ See Cornebise, Alfred E. *Soldier Extraordinaire: The Life and Career of Brig. Gen. Frank "Pinkie" Dorn (1901-81)*. Combat Studies Institute Press: Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. 2019. Page 169n92. General Wedemeyer tried to demote Brig. Gen. Dorn in China, who had served as Stilwell's right-hand man.

American instruction and aid. On April 25, 1945, General Chen Cheng, who was the Minister of Military and Public Affairs, gave a speech where he claimed the military food logistics had improved but admitted that until transportation challenges were fully resolved, any improvements to feeding the soldiers were only temporary solutions.¹²⁷ General Zhang Fakui, who was the commander of one of the defensive armies in the Alpha Plan, noted in his memoirs that the new ration and system of procurement, storage, and distribution “undoubtedly reduces corruption and fraud” in part because the soldiers were supplied “more quickly than before.”¹²⁸ However, the negatives to this plan included transportation delays such as food trucks not arriving to the unit on time, leaving the soldiers with what they had with them. Sometimes, it took two days longer than expected for fresh vegetables to arrive, which made the quality of the vegetables questionable.¹²⁹ This also points to the complexity of feeding the Chinese soldiers.

The end of World War II on August 15, 1945 changed America’s military relationship with China. All American military training of Chinese forces were canceled.¹³⁰ The American supply teams went home over the next several months after first transferring all U.S. facilities and property over to the Chinese.¹³¹ General Wedemeyer was ordered from the War Department not to support any efforts by the Chinese KMT during an internal civil war conflict, which was expected to occur at any time as the Communists and the KMT were each vying for

¹²⁷ Wu Hsiang-hsaing. *The Second Sino-Japanese War: 1931-1945*. Page 1105.

¹²⁸ Zhang Fakui. *Chiang Jieshi and Me: Memoirs of General Zhang Fakui*. Hong Kong Culture and Arts Press. 2008. Page 388.

¹²⁹ Zhang Fakui. *Chiang Jieshi and Me: Memoirs of General Zhang Fakui*. Hong Kong Culture and Arts Press. 2008. Page 388.

¹³⁰ Romanus, Charles F. et al. *Time Runs Out in CBI*. Page 395.

¹³¹ Reese, John Russell. “Supply Man: The Army Life of Lieutenant General Henry S. Aurand, 1915-1952.” Kansas State University. Unpublished PhD dissertation. 1984. Page 156.

political control of China. The Chinese Civil War commenced almost immediately and ended in 1949.

General Wedemeyer, however, was not interested in America leaving the KMT government completely empty-handed. He was concerned about the new Chinese ration and system of procurement and distribution. He wanted the system to remain even if the Americans were no longer involved. In Memorandum Number 869-7 dated February 12, 1946, Wedemeyer counseled Chiang Kai-shek to continue issuing the recently developed ration to his troops as well as preserve the system that procured and distributed that ration. Specifically, Wedemeyer advised that the KMT forces ensure a “capable, trained and experienced supply organization” that would be responsible for furnishing food to the soldiers. However, he did not give any indication for how to determine what a capable organization looked like. Wedemeyer also suggested that a separate food purchasing commission continue to purchase the food separate from the tactical organization.¹³² Implied in this system was that a separate organization would prevent the military command from stealing food and money from its soldiers.

In preparing for the upcoming Chinese Civil War, the KMT split the country into two spheres of logistical support. North of the Yangtze River was split into five different war supply zones while areas south of the Yangtze River were returned to civilian control.¹³³ The sixth war supply zone covered all of Northeast China and Manchuria. That area was placed under the command of General He Shili, who was appointed in 1944 to be Deputy Chief of Staff of Joint

¹³² Hoover Archives. Wedemeyer Papers. Box 86, Folder 1. 12 February 1946.

¹³³ Nanjing Archives. Series 5, Part 3, Military Affairs 1. August, 1947. “HQ and duties of the Joint Service HQ.” Pages 145 and inset map between page 144 and 145.

Logistics to assist Weidemeyer.¹³⁴ General He had the opportunity to be a graduate of the U.S. Army's Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth where he was a classmate of General Wedemeyer.¹³⁵ As part of General He's duties in Manchuria, he was responsible for the coordination and distribution of all the supplies flowing in from the South to the various military units in Manchuria, comprising approximately a million troops. The supplies were shipped from Shanghai to the port in Qinhuangdao, a distance of over 1,000 miles, before being placed on trucks or trains to the cities of Shenyang or Changchun, a distance of well over 180 miles.¹³⁶ The importance of Manchuria for the KMT was immense as according to unofficial statistics, "the military expenditure on transportation to the Northeast alone account[ed] for about 40 percent of the national military expenditure."¹³⁷ In fact, Chiang Kai-shek felt that controlling Manchuria from a strategic and military standpoint was key to cementing the KMT's control over China after the devastation of war.¹³⁸

It is difficult, however, to really know how well China's new military ration and its procurement and distribution system was implemented by the Chinese forces after the Americans left at the end of World War II. The archives consulted contain the policies that were passed, but there was limited discussion on what the situation was on the ground other than one passing reference made on September 9, 1947. The government reported that the logistics department "strives to provide physical supplies to avoid inconveniencing troops or breeding

¹³⁴ Zheng Hongtai and Huang Shaolun. *Hong Kong General – He Shili*. Hong Kong Joint Publishing Co. 2008. Preface.

¹³⁵ Zheng Hongtai and Huang Shaolun. *Hong Kong General – He Shili*. Hong Kong Joint Publishing Co. 2008. Page 166.

¹³⁶ Zheng Hongtai et al. *Hong Kong General*. Page 189.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*

¹³⁸ Taylor, Jay. *The Generalissimo*. Pages 326-327.

malpractice.”¹³⁹ In the economic section of the Nanjing Archives, the military food industry was discussed, but only in relation to the salt, sugar, and flour industries.¹⁴⁰ In 1947, the Ministry of Food’s progress table for the handling of military rations discussed the 1946 data and stated the plan in 1946 was for the Chinese armies to need “6,344,390 bags of rice, 6,553,600 bags of wheat, and 633,600 bags of sorghum.” No meat or other food was listed.¹⁴¹ In discussing grain, the Ministry of Grain made the statement in 1947 that “there was no shortage of military rations all over the country.”¹⁴² However, in the military section of the Nanjing Archives, it appears the Chinese took Wedemeyer’s counsel in the passage establishing the KMT Army’s Procurement Agency.¹⁴³ The military food Procurement Agency would work with local governments to purchase non-staple foods, specifically meat, at a local price, which then were transported by individual units from the warehouse to the soldiers.¹⁴⁴

To better know how well the ration and food procurement system was adopted by the Chinese forces, other sources such as memoirs must be consulted. According to the memoirs of

¹³⁹ Nanjing Archives. Series 5, Part 3, Military Affairs 1. August, 1947. “Military Report by Ministry of National Defense at the Fourth Plenary Session of the Sixth Central Committee of the Kuomintang.” Page 587. The purpose of the changes were specified in the same document as ensuring a “modern military system in order to lay the foundation of the national army for a century and ensure the security of national defense.”

¹⁴⁰ Nanjing Archives. Series 5, Part 3, Finance and Economy 5. Pages 486-503.

¹⁴¹ Nanjing Archives. Series 5, Part 3, Finance and Economy 1. “Ministry of Food’s progress table on the handling of military rations in 1946.” 1947. Page 741.

¹⁴² Nanjing Archives. Series 5, Part 3, Finance and Economy 1. “The Ministry of Grain’s report on the supply of military rations in the first half of 1947.” 1947. Page 745.

¹⁴³ Nanjing Archives. Series 5, Part 3, Military Affairs 1. June 1, 1946. “Organization of the Procurement Agency.” Pages 423-425. In this document, it specifies that a procurement agency is established that is completely separate from the military Chain of Command. Also included are the following: Article 8. Local governments at all levels shall comply with the orders of the Executive Yuan for non-staple food, fodder, and horse shoes...and shall effectively bear the responsibility of purchasing parity and assisting in transportation. Article 9. If the non-staple food, fodder, and horse shoes ... cannot be purchased on the spot or the quantity is insufficient, report to higher-level for purchase, transportation, replenishment. Article 10. When necessary, vegetables, fuel, fodder, and meat may be discounted and handed over to each unit to purchase.

¹⁴⁴ Nanjing Archives. Series 5, Part 3, Military Affairs 1. August 29, 1946. “Principle of procurement of food for military.” Pages 425-427.

Wang Dingjun, who was stationed in the logistics unit of the Qinhuangdao army in Manchuria, when the city of Changchun fell to the Communists, “there was still a large amount of food in the national army, indicating that the national government at that time was supporting [the war in Manchuria].”¹⁴⁵ The KMT army went so far as to airdrop food into the cities and “dispatched personnel to set up depots in many small strongholds to store food and ammunition” in the areas controlled by the national army. Unfortunately, due to the pace of the war, “these small strongholds fell one by one, [and] the whereabouts of the warehouse staff sent by the military station were unknown.”¹⁴⁶ Other sources claim that there was adequate food for the KMT soldiers in Manchuria, but that the overextended supply lines and poor transportation, not the supplies themselves, contributed to the loss of Manchuria.¹⁴⁷

One of the first cities to fall in Manchuria was Changchun. The city was surrounded by the Communist Army and besieged to such an extent that no food was allowed in by ground and the people were starved into surrendering.¹⁴⁸ When the refugees made their way to the port defensive area of Qinhuangdao, the KMT army issued rice and vegetables to them.¹⁴⁹ The rice used by the military in Manchuria was transported by boat from Shanghai to Manchuria and distributed to the units from there.¹⁵⁰ As far as meat goes, the method of procurement during the Chinese Civil War appears to have descended into more coercive practices. According to Wang Dingjun, rather than having a separate agency purchase food from the local

¹⁴⁵ As quoted in Zheng Hongtai and Huang Shaolun. *Hong Kong General – He Shili*. Hong Kong Joint Publishing Co. 2008. Page 189.

¹⁴⁶ Wang DingJun. Guan Shan DuoLu: Huiyilu sibuqu zhisan. Beijing. 2013. Page 151.

¹⁴⁷ Tanner, Harold M. *Where Chiang Kai-shek Lost China: The Liao-shen Campaign, 1948*. Indiana University Press: Indianapolis. 2015. Pages 277-78 and 336n20.

¹⁴⁸ Wang DingJun. Guan Shan DuoLu: Huiyilu sibuqu zhisan. Beijing. 2013. Page 206.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid*. Page 208.

¹⁵⁰ Hoover Archives. Wedemeyer Papers. Box 86, Folder 1. “Movement of the New 6th Army.” 9 January 1946.

populace to then distribute to the soldiers, it was the units themselves who interacted directly with the locals for food. “The cooking team would go from house to house to catch chickens,” offending the local populace in the process of acquiring needed meat.¹⁵¹ This method was different than the plan envisioned by the KMT military in the Nanjing Archives after the end of World War II as it was not a separate procurement agency purchasing food from the populace but the local unit itself taking needed food from the locals.¹⁵² However, the demands of the conflict changed the reality for food procurement on the ground, especially since there had not been enough time between the end of World War II and the onslaught of the Chinese Civil War for the KMT to solidify a sustainable system in Manchuria. According to Wang Dingjun’s account, the CCP army did not have such bad relations with the local populace and were able to feed their prisoners of war two meals a day with meat included.¹⁵³ Other scholars have provided in depth analysis as to how the CCP secured such loyalty amongst the rural classes, especially in Manchuria.¹⁵⁴ That analysis, however, was beyond the scope of this research. In the latter part of 1949, the KMT officially lost its war with the CCP and fled to Taiwan for safety.

Conclusion

To finish this story, it will be instructive to return to Tsai Chiao’s lecture at the University of Chicago in 1943 where he concluded that “if nutrition in China is to be improved, there must

¹⁵¹ Wang DingJun. Guan Shan DuoLu: Huiyilu sibuqu zhisan. Beijing. 2013. Page 235.

¹⁵² Nanjing Archives. Series 5, Part 3, Military Affairs 1. June 1, 1946. “Organization of the Procurement Agency.” Pages 423-425.

¹⁵³ Wang DingJun. Guan Shan DuoLu: Huiyilu sibuqu zhisan. Beijing. 2013. Page 222.

¹⁵⁴ See for example, Pepper, Suzanne. *Civil War in China: The Political Struggle, 1945-1949*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.: New York. 1999. Brian DeMare. *Land Wars: the Story of China’s Agrarian Revolution*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press. 2019. Odd Arne Westad. *Decisive Encounters: The Civil War, 1946-1950*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press. 2003.

simultaneously be improved the general economy, the output of agricultural products, and the health education of the people.”¹⁵⁵ These areas are fundamentally not the purview of any military. In Chiao’s opinion, however, unless those three other areas were improved, China’s “fundamental problems of nutrition will remain largely unsolved.”¹⁵⁶ This paper has suggested that Chiao’s conclusions in 1943 were largely correct as the American sponsored 1945 ration-distribution plan appeared to not last beyond American direct intervention.

The American military, with all its resources could not force permanent internal nutritional changes in China.¹⁵⁷ The Chinese agrarian economy was devastated by near continuous warfare with Japan for eight years and could not sustain such drastic changes without immense support in resources and technology. America’s solution to improving the Chinese soldier’s diet in 1945 was to centralize the food procurement and distribution methods and deliver to the soldier all the food he would need each day, especially meat. This happened primarily, and perhaps only, for those directly involved in that year’s military campaign in Southern China. America was willing to provide trucks and personnel to transport that food to

¹⁵⁵ Tsai Chiao. “Problems of Nutrition.” Page 21.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.* For a general study of rural China’s health challenges and developments under the KMT, see Ka-Che Yip, “Health and Nationalist Reconstruction: Rural Health in Nationalist China, 1928-1937.” *Modern Asian Studies*. May, 1992. Pages 395-415.

¹⁵⁷ Similar themes and arguments have been made about the Vietnam War as well. See for example, Caputo, Philip. *A Rumor of War*. Ballantine Books: New York. 1977; Karnow, Stanley. *Vietnam: A History*. Penguin Books: New York. 1985.; Lewy, Guenter. *America in Vietnam*. Oxford University Press: New York. 1980. Karnow quotes Henry Kissinger on page 9: “Vietnam is still with us. It has created doubts about American judgment, about American credibility, about American power – not only at home, but throughout the world. It has poisoned our domestic debate. So, we paid an exorbitant price for the decisions that were made in *good faith* and for *good purpose*.” Emphasis added. Also see Harry G. Summers, Jr. *On Strategy: A Critical Analysis of the Vietnam War*. Random House: New York. 1995. On the very first page of the introduction, Summers states “As far as logistics and tactics were concerned we succeeded in everything we set out to do...Yet, in the end, it was North Vietnam, not the United States, that emerged victorious.”

those soldiers and the local populace was willing to provide the food to that agency to support the fight with Japan.

After the end of World War II, America pulled its military back home, with some Americans feeling that their efforts at improving the Chinese ration had not produced any drastic permanent changes. The Chinese sources, however, are mixed in their assessment of these changes post-American direct guidance and aid. The Military section of the Nanjing Archives suggest meat was now included in a soldier's ration he received daily provided by a procurement organization separate from his military unit. The economic section of the Nanjing Archival sources suggests the only food the soldier received was rice, wheat, and sorghum. In consulting memoirs, at least one memoir available suggested that regardless of whether meat was included in the diet or not, the KMT military was not physically capable of providing meat to the soldiers during the subsequent Chinese Civil War. In those circumstances, the military units and soldiers themselves were left alone to procure their meat and other non-rice food on the economy, this time most likely through force.

Consequently, we are left with questions about the universality of the changes to the Chinese ration. We may never know exactly how widespread this new ration system was without access to other sources. However, after reviewing the available sources, I believe the truth about the new Chinese ration most likely lies near the side of some limited attempts at adopting the calorie as a measure of health, but failing in implementation because of the realities of China's internal economy devastated by war. An agrarian economy devastated by years of warfare cannot be expected to implement in a short period of time a highly

industrialized food system on its own, even with external pressure and significant foreign monetary investment.

Speculating about the KMT's eventual universal adoption of an American-centric food supply system if not for the devastations of the Anti-Japanese War and the demands of the Chinese Civil War parallels Lloyd Eastman's argument from the 1970s. In discussing the KMT's attempts to modernize its political and economic systems prior to the Anti-Japanese War, he said "if the regime had been given more than a decade before it was drawn into the vortex of war, it *might* have resolved these problems."¹⁵⁸ Eastman, however, quickly followed this statement with the qualification that this expectation was unrealistic because the KMT's political forces "were too weak to impose efficiency and accountability upon" the governmental bureaucracy.¹⁵⁹ Unlike Eastman's conclusion, this paper suggests that the greatest factor preventing widespread change to the military food industry was not so much political as much as practical reasons. A Western-centric ration, if it was implemented, was only implemented for a short period of time and affected only a small minority of Chinese soldiers. Although it appears that some efforts were underway to universalize those changes, the succeeding civil war laid bare the KMT's inability to implement permanent systemic changes throughout all of China. It also laid bare the American military's inability to force permanent nutritional changes in a developing country that could last beyond direct American intervention.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁸ Eastman, Lloyd. *The Abortive Revolution: China Under Nationalist Rule, 1927-1937*. Harvard University Press: Cambridge. 1974. Page xiii.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁰ Future historians may make similar arguments about the war in Afghanistan after the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Milley told Congress on Sep. 28, 2021 that "lessons need to be learned, including whether the U.S. military made the Afghans overly dependent on American technology in a mistaken effort to make the Afghan army look like the American army." See <https://www.usnews.com/news/politics/articles/2021-09-28/pentagon-leaders-to-face-congress-on-afghan-pullout-decision>. Accessed May 11, 2022.