

Finding a Local Partner in Post-war Maritime East Asia

What is the issue of the Pacific? It is an issue related to sea power. The competition for maritime power shifted from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic, and now from the Atlantic to the Pacific. ... The issue of the Pacific henceforth is about the survival of our Chinese nation and the destiny of China. Therefore, the crux of the Pacific lies in China. The competition for sea power in the Pacific is for the right to access China. Whoever can control this door can have the whole hall.

Father of the Republic of China Sun Yat-sen¹

A MARITIME OVERLORD FROM ACROSS THE PACIFIC

Early in the twentieth century as the strength of Japan's naval forces grew, the United States came to see the Pacific as a geostrategic space connected to national security. Inspired by Alfred Thayer Mahan, Theodore Roosevelt believed thalassocracy to be equivalent to world dominion.² He argued that the United States should therefore have a great navy to secure its place in the world. In other words, the US Navy could serve as an implement of carrying out America's national policies.³ Such American

¹ Chi-yun Chang, ed., 'Zhanhou Taipingyang wenti xu' [The preface to the issue of the Postwar Pacific], September 1919, *Guofuquanshu* [The Anthology of the Father of the Nation] (Taipei: Institute for Defense and Security Research, 1966), 748.

² Kenneth Wimmel, *Theodore Roosevelt and the Great White Fleet: American Sea Power Comes of Age* (London: Brassey's, 1998), 58. Lawrence Lenz, *Power and Policy: America's First Steps to Superpower, 1889–1922* (New York: Algora, 2008), 91.

³ Howard K. Beale, *Theodore Roosevelt and the Rise of America to World Power* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins Press, 1956), 39.

naval supremacy should not be limited to the Atlantic but should also be proportionately deployed in the Pacific. To Theodore Roosevelt's mind, the United States was not only an Atlantic power but also a Pacific power, and he thus wished to 'see the United States the dominant power on the Pacific Ocean'.⁴ In 1906, the United States began considering a plan of war against Meiji Japan, its enemy in the Pacific. This plan, known as Plan Orange, was formally crafted by Rear Admiral Raymond P. Rodgers in 1911.⁵ Plan Orange assumed that the Philippines and Guam would fall into the hands of Japan and that the United States would retreat to its west coast, where it would mobilise and counterattack across the western Pacific. However, as a result of America's traditional continental isolationism, US politicians did not adopt an offensive maritime strategy in the 1920s and 1930s – it made War Plan Orange become unpractical.⁶

In April 1938, Franklin Roosevelt, an interventionist, in his well-known Fireside Chat, conflated the sense of insecurity at home and insecurity abroad in order to associate the world system with national security. This thinking was embodied in his subsequent foreign policy, which was interventionist on the grounds of self-defence and which had profound ramifications for America's foreign policy blueprint in the years that followed.⁷ Roosevelt spared no effort to build an offensive navy and promoted a programme to build a two-ocean navy in the Pacific and the Atlantic.⁸ As a result of American interventionism, the role of the maritime space gradually came to be linked with international and national security and strategic purpose, none of which can be ignored when we explore maritime history.

The mighty navy of Imperial Japan was the United States' biggest obstacle to achieving a power balance in the Pacific, but the two sides

⁴ Anna K. Nelson, 'Theodore Roosevelt, the Navy, and the War with Spain', in Edward John Marolda, ed., *Theodore Roosevelt, the U.S. Navy and the Spanish-American War* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001), 4. Howard K. Beale, *Theodore Roosevelt and the Rise of America to World Power*, 38.

⁵ Edward S. Miller, *War Plan Orange: The U.S. Strategy to Defeat Japan, 1897–1945* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1991), 24–5.

⁶ George W. Baer, 'Parameters of Power: The US Navy in the Twentieth Century', in Nicholas Andrew Martin Rodger, ed., *Naval Power in the Twentieth Century* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1995), 3. Frank C. Langdon and Douglas A. Ross, 'Superpower Conflict', in Frank C. Langdon and Douglas A. Ross, eds., *Superpower Maritime Strategy in the Pacific* (London: Routledge, 1990), 4.

⁷ Andrew Preston, 'Monsters Everywhere: A Genealogy of National Security', *Diplomatic History* 38:3 (June 2014), 477–500.

⁸ James E. Auer and Robyn Lim, 'The Maritime Basis of American Security in East Asia', *Naval War College Review* 54:1 (Winter 2001), 44.

did not find themselves completely at war until 1941. Although the flames of war between China and Japan had been spreading across mainland China since 1937, the United States did not largely send its armed forces to Asia. The United States did not think that Japan could become a hegemon and other powers, such as China, France, the Soviet Union, and United Kingdom, could curb Japan's ambition.⁹ The United States continued with its wait-and-see stance until Roosevelt declared war on Japan following the surprise attack on Pearl Harbor by Yamamoto Isoroku, Commander-in-Chief of the Combined Fleet of Japan, on 7 December 1941. Japan's strike on Pearl Harbor kicked off the Pacific War, which connected the Second Sino-Japanese War and World War II. Initially, Imperial Japan inflicted heavy losses upon the United States and its ally Britain, who lost Guam, Wake Island, Hong Kong, and Malaya in tandem, and the Allies' maritime corridors in the Indian Ocean were interdicted by Nagumo Chūichi by early April 1942.¹⁰ These defeats, rather than frustrating the United States, instead accelerated the development of its naval industries. After 1943, the US Navy made a decisive breakthrough, particularly in its ship-building and aircraft carrier techniques, which allowed the United States to break the deadlock and turn the tables in the Pacific Theatre.¹¹ By mid-1944, the US Navy, the world's largest, consisting of 1,080 warships and 60,191 other craft, was powered by 80,000,000 horsepower.¹² America's wartime naval advancement not only sunk Imperial Japan's *Hinomaru* into the Pacific, its unprecedented victories on the seas also laid the groundwork for its post-war maritime predominance. The US Navy believed that it had the 'traditional responsibility to defend the United States' interests in the Pacific' and to 'uphold United States' commitments to prevent future aggression and to preserve the peace'.¹³ The shaping of power in the post-war Pacific

⁹ John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, 258–9.

¹⁰ Milan Vego, 'HM 22: Major Fleet-versus-Fleet Operations in the Pacific War, 1941–1945', *Historical Monographs* 22 (Newport, RI: US Naval War College, 2016), 81–2. Sunil S. Amrith, *Crossing the Bay of Bengal: The Furies of Nature and the Fortunes of Migrants* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013), 197.

¹¹ David C. Evans and Mark R. Peattie, *Kaigun*, 506–13.

¹² Annual Report Fiscal Year 1944, 10 February 1945, box 6108, Com 7th Flt 1945, 1942–1946. RG 313, NARA.

¹³ 'Memorandum by the Special Assistant to the Secretary of the Navy', 31 January 1945, SWNCC 16, NARA.

Basin should be, the United States insisted, ‘undertaken by the United States’, and the Commander-in-Chief, US Pacific Fleet, and Pacific Ocean Areas ‘had and will continue to have paramount interest in the locality’.¹⁴ America’s complete control over the Pacific not only enabled the United States to project its military to every corner of the Pacific, it also allowed the United States to implant its hub-and-spokes system of alliances in areas of geostrategic importance.¹⁵

The post-war years of the twentieth century were not just, as magazine tycoon Henry Robinson Luce argued, the American century but also the juncture in time when the United States was able to proclaim that it had become a maritime power.¹⁶ However, this raises a question that leads to endless argument: was the United States ready to act as overlord?¹⁷ Notwithstanding the broad spectrum of analysis, one can conclude that the tumult in post-war East Asia was connected to the questions of how to conciliate the parties in the impending Chinese Civil War, how to deal with Imperial Japan and its colonies, and how to compete for interests in north China against the Soviet Union, all of which meant that the Truman administration had its hands full. Although the United States was acquiring command of the seas in the western Pacific, we should keep in mind that the ocean in East Asia is not an isolated geographical space but a space adjacent to the jumble of the East Asian continent and its islands. The United States needed to strike a balance between continental East Asia and maritime East Asia in order to properly act as a rising maritime overlord.

¹⁴ ‘Joint War Plans Committee: A Strategic Plan for the Defeat of Japan J.W.P.C. 15’, 5 May 1943, box 317, Central Decimal File (CDF) 1942–45, RG 218, NARA. ‘Proposed Operations by 14th Army Air Force over Northern Part of South China Sea’, 29 May 1944, box 292, CDF 1942–45, RG 218, NARA.

¹⁵ Andrew Preston, ‘America’s Pacific Power in a Global Age’, in Nicholas Andrew Martin Rodger and Christian Buchet, eds., *The Sea in History: The Modern World* (Suffolk: Boydell & Brewer, 2017), 616–27.

¹⁶ Frank C. Langdon and Douglas A. Ross, ‘Superpower Conflict’, 4.

¹⁷ Marc Gallicchio, *The Cold War Begins in Asia: American East Asian Policy and the Fall of the Japanese Empire* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988). Marc Gallicchio, *The Scramble for Asia: US Military Power in the aftermath of the Pacific War* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2008), xi. Richard Frank, *Downfall: The End of the Imperial Japanese Empire* (New York: Random House, 1999), 343–8. Tsuyoshi Hasegawa, *Racing the Enemy: Stalin, Truman, and the Surrender of Japan* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005). Sayuri Guthrie-Shimizu, ‘Japan, the United States, and the Cold War, 1945–1960’, in Melvyn P. Leffler and Odd Arne Westad, eds., *The Cambridge History of Cold War Volume I* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 246.

THE IMMEDIATE POST-WAR DEFENSIVE STRUCTURE

After World War II, the traces of Nazi U-boats disappeared from the Atlantic and Imperial Japan's *Nisshōki* drowned in the Pacific. After such bloody battles as the Battle of the Coral Sea and the Battle of the Midway, the historic saga of the US Navy and its remarkable victories at sea convinced some American admirals to believe that the US Navy had played an unparalleled role in smashing the tenacious Imperial Japan. Admiral Chester Nimitz, who had demonstrated outstanding leadership in the defeat of the Japanese navy at sea, admitted that the Japanese navy was superior to the US Navy during the initial stages of the war, but without 'naval power' he predicted that 'our air and ground forces might have held the West Coast but would have stopped right here, no matter what their numerical expansion'.¹⁸ According to a report from 1949 titled 'Naval Forces for Fiscal Year 1951 Program', the power of the US Navy was 'equal in importance to the atomic bomb'.¹⁹ In the words of Robert William Love Jr, naval leaders were obsessed 'with the notion that "the Pacific war [was] a naval war"'.²⁰ Admiration for the achievement in the Pacific was not restricted to the Department of the Navy. US Ambassador to China Patrick Hurley said: 'The war against Japan had been won not by the atomic bomb, not by Russia's entry into the war, but rather by the magnificent job done by the US Navy in the Pacific.'²¹ The US Navy was a mobile force capable of being brought to bear against the enemy shortly after D-Day, the forces of which could maintain US command of vital sea areas. This could be decisive in a future war.²²

The US Navy's victories at sea served to consolidate US supremacy in the Pacific. The dissolution of the Japanese Empire in 1945 had resulted in a power vacuum in maritime East Asia which the United States took

¹⁸ 'Statement by Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, U.S.N. before the Military Affairs Committee of the United States Senate on a Single Department of National Defense', 17 November 1945, box 23, CDF 1942-45, RG 218, NARA.

¹⁹ 'Naval Forces for Fiscal Year 1951 Program', 29 July 1949, box 152, CDF 1948-50, RG 218, NARA.

²⁰ Robert William Love Jr., 'Fighting a Global War, 1941-1945', in Kenneth J. Hagan, ed., *In Peace and War: Interpretations of American Naval History, 1775-1978* (London: Greenwood Press, 1978), 271.

²¹ 'Memorandum for Captain Metzler', no date, box 38, Naval Historical Center Records of US Naval Group China and VADM. Milton E. Miles 1942-1957 'Naval Group China Papers', RG 38, NARA.

²² 'Naval Forces for Fiscal Year 1951 Program', 29 July 1949, box 152, CDF 1948-50, RG 218, NARA. Stephen Howarth, *To Shining Sea: A History of the United States Navy, 1775-1998* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1999), 475.

advantage of to assume the naval superiority of its former adversary and build a new order.²³ The US experience of World War II showed it that the maritime space could serve not only as a way to interdict Japan's supply lines in maritime East Asia, it could also be a platform for America to meet its security needs by maintaining its supremacy in the western Pacific rim. In the opinion of James Forrestal, who became Secretary of the Navy following the death of Frank Knox in 1944, the US Navy should be 'an instrument of national policy, an instrument usable and to be used for the purpose of peace rather than war'.²⁴ This was not mere sloganeering but a new responsibility that the US Navy was intended to shoulder in the post-war period. The function of the post-war US Navy would not be limited to maritime transportation and command of the sea, but was of significance to America's strategic deployment in the early Cold War.²⁵ Command of the seas would allow the United States to maintain perpetual stability amongst nations under the framework of the United Nations. The US Navy thus believed that a balanced naval force of all categories should be maintained for its unswerving maritime policy of 'maintenance of maritime communication' stemming from World War II.²⁶ Forrestal expected the US Navy to create a new era of global stability at sea and replace the Royal Navy as a maritime superpower: 'a Pax Americana, descendant of the Pax Britannica of 1815 to 1914'.²⁷ Accordingly, the US Navy identified itself as being not limited to military projects but, rather, as cardinal to America's security and national development.²⁸ As an offshore balancer in the Atlantic and Pacific, the US Navy would maintain a global presence in crucial maritime corridors. Forrestal thus deployed US naval forces to operate around the world and visit numerous countries. The presence of the US Navy would serve as a political deterrent against the latent enemy because the US Navy would be standing ready to manage any emergent crisis.²⁹ In Michael A. Palmer's words, the aims of the globally deployed

²³ Robert William Love Jr., 'Fighting a Global War, 1941–1945', 287.

²⁴ Michael Palmer, *Origins of the Maritime Strategy: The Development of American Naval Strategy, 1945–1955* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1990), 12.

²⁵ Jakub J. Grygiel, 'The Dilemmas of US Maritime Supremacy in the Early Cold War', *The Journal of Strategic Studies* 28:2 (April, 2005), 195.

²⁶ 'Memorandum by the Chief of Staff to the Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces to the Joint Chiefs of Staff', 16 December 1947, box 151, CDF 1948–1950, RG 218, NARA.

²⁷ Stephen Howarth, *To Shining Sea, 1775–1998*, 476.

²⁸ George W. Baer, 'Parameters of Power', 2.

²⁹ Michael A. Palmer, 'The Influence of Naval Strategy on National Security Planning, 1945–1955', in 'A Time of Change: National Strategy in the Early Postwar Era (Colloquium on Contemporary History, No. 1, 7 June 1989, published online: 16 December 2020)', link: [bit.ly/3UU5JH5](https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009418737.002). Access: 19 November 2021.

Navy were to 'show the flag, to support American friends, and to deter aggression on the part of potential enemies'.³⁰

The outcome of World War II testified to the Navy's predominance on the seas, but wartime naval deployment was costly and unsuitable, and decision-makers in Washington racked their brains to strike a balance between security and domestic economy in a peacetime context. In order to maintain sea routes and international security, the US Navy began reshuffling its wartime deployment in the period immediately after the war. During the last phase of World War II, there were three US fleets operating in the western Pacific rim: the Third Fleet was conducting naval operations against Japan in the Central Pacific, the Fifth Fleet had responsibility for the area near Japan, and the Seventh Fleet was in charge of the Southwest Pacific area.³¹ In the years after Japan's surrender, both the Third Fleet and the Fifth Fleet were deployed to cover US Navy occupation forces entering Japanese and Korean waters and ports. By way of this redeployment, the Third Fleet mainly secured the US naval establishment in the Kantō region of Japan (the eastern-central region of Honshu Island) and the Fifth Fleet was in charge of the Kansai region of Japan (the southern-central region of Honshu Island).³² In September 1945, to avoid overly large naval forces securing waters near Japan and Korea, the United States deactivated the Third Fleet and reassigned its responsibilities to the Fifth Fleet.³³

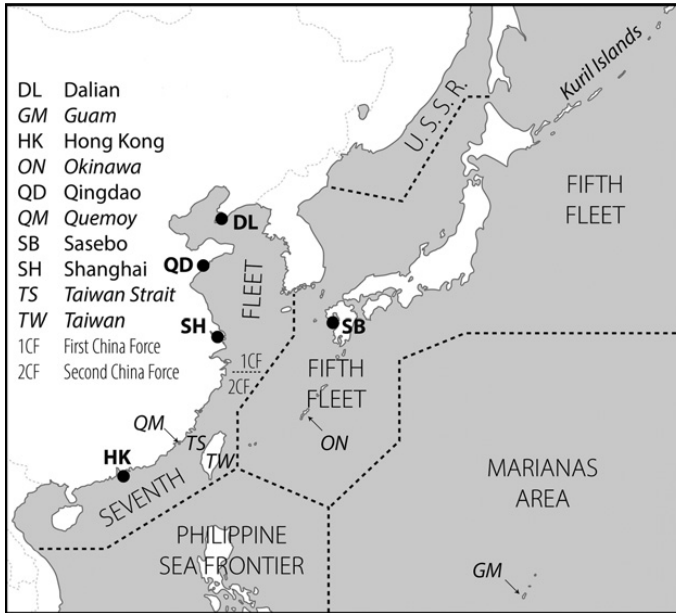
The Seventh Fleet gradually became the only tool whose purpose was to project America's influence in East Asia in the immediate post-war period. Its area of responsibility was redrawn to accommodate ships reassigned from the Pacific Fleet. The Seventh Fleet's responsibility area extended from the Southwest Pacific region to the Pacific rim and covered South China and East China Seas and included control of the Yellow Sea and Gulf of Pohai beyond a line that started at Hainan Island and extended to the western Korean coast for the occupation of strategic areas in China,

³⁰ Michael A. Palmer, 'The Influence of Naval Strategy on National Security Planning, 1945–1955'.

³¹ Anne Sharp Wells, *The A to Z of World War II: The War against Japan* (Maryland: Scarecrow Press, 2009), 91. Eiji Takemae (author), Robert Ricketts (translator), and Sebastian Swann (translator), *The Allied Occupation of Japan* (New York City: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2003), 589. Alan Axelrod, *Encyclopedia of World War II* (New York City: Facts on File, 2007), 854.

³² 'Operation Plan ComSEVENTHFleet No. 14-45', box 5525, Red Finding and Folder Commander Seventh Fleet, RG 313, NARA.

³³ 'General Headquarters Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers and United States Army Forces, Pacific Summary of Operations for the Month of October 1945', October 1945, box 5653, Top Secret Oper. Plans Orders & War Diaries, 1944–45, RG 313, NARA.



MAP 1.1 Zones of responsibility for naval operations (1945).³⁴

Japan, and Korea (Map 1.1).³⁵ At the end of September 1945, the Seventh Fleet's area of responsibility was extended even further, to the Korean coast, and included Japanese waters that had been under the control of the Fifth Fleet. The Seventh Fleet was assigned the responsibility of operating in this area alongside the Fifth Fleet until the latter's dissolution in 1947,³⁶ and the power of the Seventh Fleet was enhanced to reach Nimitz's expectation that the function of the post-war Navy was to extend US influence to every corner of the globe in support of US foreign policy and for the sake of national security and international peace.³⁷

³⁴ This map is redrawn from: 'Operation Plan ComSEVENTHFleet No. 14-45', box 5525, Red Finding and Folder Commander Seventh Fleet, RG 313, NARA.

³⁵ 'Narrative of US Seventh Fleet', 1 September 1945 to 1 October 1946, box 277, WWII Command File Fleets Numbered Seventh Fleet History – Memorandum, RG 38, NARA. Jeffrey Barlow, *From Hot War to Cold: The U.S. Navy and National Security Affairs, 1945–1955* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2009), 128.

³⁶ 'Operation Plan ComSEVENTHFleet No. 14-45', box 5525, Red Finding and Folder Commander Seventh Fleet, RG 313, NARA.

³⁷ 'Statement by Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, U.S.N. before the Military Affairs Committee of the United States Senate on a Single Department of National Defense', 17 November 1945, box 23, CDF 1942–45, RG 218, NARA.

While adapting its wartime deployment, the United States also occupied the geostrategic ports of its previous enemy in the western Pacific rim. Following the US occupation of Japan on 28 August 1945, the US-led Allied powers established their General Headquarters (GHQ) in Tokyo. All matters regarding the occupation were under the control of the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (SCAP), with the Eighth US Army serving as the executive agency for occupation, demobilisation, political democratisation, and economic recovery in post-war Japan.³⁸ At the same time, the United States began surveying a number of geostrategic ports, including Yokosuka, Nagaura Harbour, Fuka, Ura, and Miyako Bay, to obtain information about their geographical features, facilities, accommodation of vessels, hydrographic features, warehouses, and dock capacities.³⁹ These surveys showed the importance and strategic value of these Japanese harbours to US maritime security and order in East Asia. In January 1946, after surveying these ports, the United States established Naval Activities, Japan (COMNAVJAP) and appointed Vice Admiral R. M. Griffin as commander and as representative of the Commander of the US Pacific Fleet in the office of the SCAP. The COMNAVJAP consisted of two Fleet Activities, in Yokosuka and Sasebo, and five liaison offices, in Kure, Kobe, Nagasaki, Fukuoka, and Kagoshima, with responsibility for all three naval missions: (1) occupying the sea; (2) selecting Japanese naval shore establishments; and (3) controlling and demobilising Japanese naval vessels.⁴⁰ The US Navy chose Yokosuka and Sasebo due to their historical prominence and the nature of their ports. Yokosuka, the first port in Japan that the fleet of 'Black Ships' led by Matthew Perry had sailed into in 1853, had been a primary naval base since the late nineteenth century, following the Meiji Restoration, thanks to how well it functioned and its geographical position near the political centre (forty miles south-west of Tokyo).

³⁸ Eiji Takemae, *GHQ no Hitobito: Keireki to Seisaku* [The GHQ's People: The Process and Policies] (Tokyo: Akashishyoten, 2002).

³⁹ 'Operation Plan CTG 31.9 No. 1-45', 27 August 1945, box 03, Commander, Submarine Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet (COMSUBFORPAC) Top Secret General Administrative Files, 1942-1946, RG 313, NARA.

⁴⁰ Douglas MacArthur, *Reports of General MacArthur* (Washington, DC: Center of Military, 1966), 278. 'Operation Plan CTF 96 No. 3-46', 8 July 1946, box 60, GHQ, Far East Command Military History Section, RG 554, NARA. 'Joint Chiefs of Staff Unified Command Structure', 7 October 1946, box 99, CDF 1946-47, RG 218, NARA. 'Operation Plan ComSEVENTHFleet No. 14-45', 25 December 1945, box 5525, Red Finding and Folder Commander Seventh Fleet, RG 313, NARA.

Accordingly, Yokosuka was equipped with complete naval facilities, including six large dry docks and extensive ship-repair facilities, numerous warehouses, and administrative buildings.⁴¹ Sasebo was comparable to Yokosuka: a naval base had been established there in the late nineteenth century not only because it offered deep water but also because of its geographical location. It had helped Japan to defend its west coast and served as a base from which Japan could extend its force to China and Korea.

The Philippine Islands, like the Japanese archipelago, were a target of the US trident during the post-war period. The Philippines consists of 7,107 islands and permits geostrategic access to the maritime corridor in the South China, Philippine, and Sulu Seas. America's involvement in the Philippines can be traced to the nineteenth century. One could say that the Philippines became a colony of the United States following the 1898 Spanish–American War, and the US Navy was including the Philippines in its naval strategic thinking when it proposed in 1899 that the base of the Pacific Fleet be located at Manila. However, the Army objected to the Navy's proposal for two reasons. Firstly, Japan was gradually taking command of the entire western Pacific following its naval expansion and its victory in the First Sino–Japanese War, and the Philippines' proximity to the Japanese Empire rendered it vulnerable to attack by Japan. Secondly, because the Philippines were very distant from the west coast of the United States, the Army suggested that the Pacific Fleet be stationed in the Hawaiian Islands instead, this being an ideal location for defending America's interests and security across the Pacific from the west coast to the Philippines. The US Navy withdrew its proposal in 1909 and the United States began developing its base at Pearl Harbor thereafter.⁴² The Commonwealth of the Philippines was established in 1935, in accordance with the Tydings–McDuffie Act, but the Filipinos could not end their naval dependence on the United States because, as Manuel Quezon, President of the Commonwealth of the Philippines, frankly admitted in November 1935, the Philippines did not have the industrial capacity or the wealth to support its own naval forces.⁴³ The Tydings–McDuffie Act had authorised the US President to negotiate with Manila over the US Navy's

⁴¹ Edward John Marolda, *Ready Seapower: A History of the U.S. Seventh Fleet* (Washington, DC: Department of the Navy, 2013), 46.

⁴² Gordon L. Rottman, *World War II Pacific Island Guide: A Geo-Military Study* (California, CA: Greenwood, 2001), 33.

⁴³ Louis Morton, *The War in the Pacific: Fall of the Philippines* (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, United States Army, 1993), 13.

prerogatives in the Philippines.⁴⁴ Consequently, the United States was still managing maritime security near the Philippine Islands after Philippine's independence.

Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941 led the United States to undertake the Pacific War, and in 1941 it began managing the maritime space around the Philippines for the campaign against Japan by establishing the Philippines Sea Frontier as part of the 16th Naval District, which was under the authority of the United States Asiatic Fleet. However, the mission and organisational structure of the Philippines Sea Frontier were not suitable for wartime requirements. MacArthur's well-known statement – 'I said to the people of the Philippines whence I came, I shall return. Tonight, I repeat those words: I shall return!' – indicated, ironically, that the United States had lost complete control of the Philippines, both on land and at sea.⁴⁵ As such, the Philippines Sea Frontier was virtually non-existent by 1942. Imperial Japan's rising sun flag, however, did not flutter over the Southwest Pacific for long. In 1943, the United States began to strategically deploy its naval forces there in an attempt to cut Japan's supply lines at sea. Following the bloodshed on the battlefield of the western Pacific, on 20 October 1944, MacArthur kept his promise and returned to Leyte, defeating Japan's naval and ground forces in the Battle of Leyte Gulf and the Battle of Leyte at the end of 1944. After the United States regained the Philippines in 1945, the Philippines' role in securing the US Navy's sea routes to the Southwest Pacific and Southeast Asia did not change. Thus, not only did the United States begin mine-sweeping operations to secure Philippine waters for shipping, it also signed an agreement with Philippine President Sergio Osmeña on US naval bases in the Philippines on 14 May 1945.⁴⁶ This agreement enabled the Philippines to engage in full and close military cooperation with the United States while also allowing it to retain its naval bases as long as it supported US national security policies.⁴⁷ According to this agreement,

⁴⁴ Arnold H. Leibowitz, *Defining Status: A Comprehensive Analysis of United States Territorial Relations* (London: Nijhoff, 1989), 56.

⁴⁵ Edward Imparato, *General MacArthur Speeches and Reports, 1908–1964* (Tennessee: Turner, 2000), 130.

⁴⁶ 'Command, Staff Organization and Administration', no date, box 6107, Com 7th Flt 1945, 1942–1946, RG 313, NARA. 'Top Secret Record of Proceedings of Board Convened at Manila, P.I.', 18 September 1945, box 11, PHILSEAFRON inquiry into Post-war Development to LogSGrp Basic Operation Plan No. 8/P/3–45, 1944–1946, RG 313, NARA.

⁴⁷ 'Joint Chiefs of Staff United States Requirements for Military Bases and Rights in Philippines Islands', 8 March 1946, box 046, Geographic File (GF) 1946–1947, RG 218, NARA. 'Joint Staff Planners United States Requirements for Military Bases and

the United States maintained six naval bases – in Tutu-Tawitawi, Leyte-Samar, Subic Bay, Sangley Point, Princessa, and Aparri.⁴⁸ In this way, the United States could keep its full command of maritime affairs and operating offshore surface patrol within Manila's territorial waters.⁴⁹

Although the United States had exclusive control over significant ports and had established its supremacy in the western Pacific through its effective control over post-war East Asia, its existing guidelines were equivocal when it came to its future defence strategy in maritime East Asia.⁵⁰ Prior to the end of World War II, the US Navy and Army, as cabinet-level departments, had their own post-war blueprints, but otherwise their intentions were vague and they did not develop clear or specific plans. Forrestal insisted that the US Navy should 'keep the fleet of powerful warships assembled to fight the Axis and use it to deter future aggressor[s]' and that it 'must not again quit with the job half done' in the post-war period.⁵¹ Similarly, an outline for the post-war Army approved by General George Marshall on 15 April 1944 suggested that one of the US Army's post-war obligations was to secure America's 'vital sea and air routes'.⁵² However, during the Truman administration, the US Army and Navy were unable to agree where the heartland was that the United States had to safeguard nor how the two services should coordinate with each other to achieve these goals. Without any clear or unified instructions as part of an overall plan for the western Pacific rim, the admirals who were there on the spot could paint whatever picture they wanted on the blank canvas of maritime East Asia.

The US Navy appeared to adapt its wartime structure but it raised two questions: Firstly, who was to act as its local partner in the management of regional security and, secondly, where would the Seventh Fleet have a geostrategic home port from which it could maintain US maritime

Rights in the Philippines Islands', 23 February 1946, box 046, GF 1946–1947, RG 218, NARA.

⁴⁸ 'Board to inquire into and submit a specific plan for Post-war development and curtailment of Naval facilities at bases within the Philippines', 4 September 1945, box 11, PHILSEAFRON inquiry into Post-war Development to LogSGrp Basic Operation Plan No. 8/P/3–45, 1944–46, RG 313, NARA.

⁴⁹ 'Memorandum for Joint Staff Planners', 28 February 1946, box 046, GF 1946–1947, RG 218, NARA. 'Joint Chiefs of Staff United States Military Assistance to the Philippines in the post-surrender period', 6 October 1945, box 046, GF 1946–1947, RG 218, NARA.

⁵⁰ Roger Dingman, 'Strategic Planning and the Policy Process: American Plans for War in East Asia, 1945–1950', *Naval War College Review* 32:7 (1979), 9.

⁵¹ Michael S. Sherry, *Preparing for the Next War: American Plan for Postwar Defense, 1941–1945* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1977), 32–3.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 39.

power and exert its influence in the western Pacific? In terms of modern naval development, Japan was undoubtedly the best location, because Meiji Japan had taken advantage of the geographically suitable harbours in Yokosuka and Sasebo to construct naval bases as springboards for imperial expansion in the western Pacific. Imperial Japan had vanished in August 1945, but its naval strength, facilities, and well-trained seamen still surpassed those of its Chinese counterpart. If the United States was seeking a friendly navy with which it could mutually defend its security in maritime East Asia, a reformed Japanese navy would be the cream of the crop. However, the guideline in America's post-war East Asian policy was to *punish* Japan. The Imperial Japanese Navy, which had run wild in the western Pacific during wartime, had been dissolved subsequent to the Potsdam Declaration: its seamen had been demobilised and all its ships disarmed. Its Ministry of the Navy had also been reshuffled and reformed as the Second Bureau of Demobilization in December 1945. Japan's post-war constitution indicated that 'the Japanese people forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat or use of force as a means of settling international disputes', and it was not until 1954 that it had its own naval forces: the *Kaijō Jieitai* (Japan Maritime Self-Defence Force).⁵³ Following the bloody battles in Okinawa, the United States had occupied it and established its B-25 base there, but it still looked for a geostrategic location under the control of an independent yet pro-American country which had preliminary naval facilities that could share in the burden of maintaining the sea lanes of communication in maritime East Asia. Japan was thus a possible partner, but who else was at the top of America's list?

CHIANG KAI-SHEK AND THE US NAVY

America's wartime ally Chiang Kai-shek and his Chinese Nationalist government were also at the top of the list for a partner in the maintenance of America's thalassocracy in maritime East Asia. Chiang Kai-shek had raised the banner of Sun Yat-sen and unified the whole of China in 1928. Although regional conflicts between warlords had never ceased, Chiang

⁵³ In terms of Japan Maritime Self-Defence Force, Alessio Patalano offers the historical evolution and ties between JMSDF, Pacific security, and contemporary. See: Alessio Patalano, *Post-war Japan as a Sea Power: Imperial Legacy, Wartime Experience and the Making of a Navy* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015), 95–117. Alessio Patalano, 'Japan's Contemporary Naval Power and Regional Maritime Cooperation', in Andrew Forbes, ed., *Australia and Its Maritime Interests: At Home and in the Region* (Fyshwick, ACT: Union Offset Printers, 2008), 131–40.

was the only internationally recognised Chinese leader. During the war against Japan, Chiang's reputation reached its peak: most of the Chinese people believed that he was the chosen one who would lead China to defeat Japan and rebuild itself on the debris of war.

During the war, an amicable relationship had begun to develop between the US Navy and Chiang. His government collaborated closely with the US Navy, and the United States lent him battleships to use against Japan on the basis of the Lend-Lease Program and also helped the Kuomintang (the KMT, or Chinese Nationalist Party) train its naval officers to operate these ships.⁵⁴ While these Chinese naval officers were few in number, this cooperation yielded a group of naval leaders who were familiar with the US Navy's equipment and tactics and laid the groundwork for association between the KMT and the US Navy following the war. Furthermore, joint operations during wartime had strengthened the links between the US Navy and Chiang's Chinese Nationalist Party. In 1942, Chiang and Roosevelt approved the establishment of the Sino-American Special Technical Cooperative Organization for clandestine operations behind Japanese lines, weather forecasting, and intelligence gathering in mainland China.⁵⁵ Vice Admiral Milton Edward Miles was sent to China to manage this organisation. He collaborated with a Chinese colleague, Dai Li, the most mysterious agent in China, referred to as a spymaster by historian Frederic Wakeman.⁵⁶ Miles and Dai worked together closely, gathering and deciphering intelligence and conducting sabotage in Japanese-occupied areas, which made a positive contribution to the defeat of Japan.

China's geostrategic location and the Americans' wartime experience of working with the Chinese Nationalists led key decision-makers to expect a great boom in post-war China. For instance, Roosevelt

⁵⁴ Li Chang, '1940 niandai Ying Mei haijun yuan Hua zhi zaitan' [Rethinking American-British Naval Assistance to China in the 1940s], in Kam Keung Lee, Yee Cheung Lau, and King Sang Mak, eds., *Jindai Zhongguo haifang: Junshi yu jingji* [Modern China's Maritime Defense: Military and Economics] (Hong Kong: Hong Kong Modern China History Society, 1999), 289–314.

⁵⁵ Linda Kush, *The Rice Paddy Navy: U.S. Sailors Undercover in China* (London: Osprey Publishing, 2012), 24–5. Taiwanese historian Chang Li compares different narratives of SCAO in China, Taiwan, and the United States; see: Li Chang, 'Guanyu Zhongmei tezhong jishu hezuosuo de lishiji yu lunshu' [Historical memory and narratives of SCAO], in Military Intelligence Bureau (Taiwan), ed., *Zhongmei hezuosuo zhi* [SCAO records] (Taipei: Military Intelligence Bureau, 2011), 205–26.

⁵⁶ Frederic Wakeman, *Spymaster: Dai Li and the Chinese Secret Service* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2003).

confidently predicted that the forthcoming dissolution of the Japanese and European empires would lead to China becoming America's powerful partner to bring stability in post-war East Asia.⁵⁷ Other American military leaders similarly gauged the future of East Asia. One day before Japan's surrender, Albert Coady Wedemeyer, Commanding General, United States Forces, China Theater of Operation, pointed out that the Nationalist government was 'the only officially and universally recognized constituted government in China' and that Chiang was 'conceded at present to be the strongest Chinese leader and the only one capable of possibly accomplishing a modicum of stability during this period of uncertainty'.⁵⁸ Wedemeyer was not alone in his opinion. The geographically advantageous space of China's long coastline had led the US Navy to establish China as its weight-bearing area for holding the reins of the sea in post-war East Asia. Admirals in decision-making positions as well as those on the spot, such as Secretary of the Navy James Forrestal, Chief of Naval Operations Ernest King, and successive Seventh Fleet Commanders Thomas Kinkaid and Daniel Barbey, all identified China as a pivot in post-war strategic deployment. It was because, as Jonathan Blackshear Chavanne argues, these admirals 'believed China lay at the heart of America's longstanding relationship with East Asia'.⁵⁹

The view of China as a geostrategic location was not limited to the Navy. According to John Foster Dulles, Truman's special advisor, 'United States policy in the East rested on the foundation of friendly relations with China',⁶⁰ and, hence, a 'friendly China could help everywhere in Asia and the Pacific'.⁶¹ The Chief of Staff to the Commander-in-Chief, Admiral William D. Leahy, listed the following means by which the United States should assist the Chinese Nationalist government:

1. Give full and open military assistance to the National Government of China.
2. By diplomatic methods, force or induce England and the Soviet [Union] to give full backing to the Nationalist Government.

⁵⁷ Dean Acheson, *Present at the Creation: My Years in the State Department* (New York: Norton, 1969), 8.

⁵⁸ 'CFBX 4580', 14 August 1945, box 03, Chairman's File Admiral Leahy (CFAL) 1942-48, RG 218, NARA.

⁵⁹ Jonathan Blackshear Chavanne, 'The Battle for China: The US Navy, Marine Corps and the Cold War in Asia, 1944-1949' (Texas: PhD dissertation of Texas A&M University, 2016), 3-4.

⁶⁰ John Foster Dulles, *War or Peace* (London: Harrap, 1950), 224.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 225.

3. Provide Chiang-Kai-shek with arms, transportation, and every necessary assistance, except American troops. This last method might make it possible for Chiang to get full control in some months or years.⁶²

In order to deploy its naval forces in China, prior to Japan's surrender the United States had begun to reconnoitre the South China Sea and the waters around Taiwan.⁶³ These reconnaissance operations did not end with Japan's withdrawal from the Western and Southwestern Pacific areas after 1945 but paved the way for the United States to arrange its post-war naval deployment. America's policy and practice towards post-war China revealed that, in contrast with *punishing* Japan, the United States was assuming a policy of *assisting* China. This would allow the United States to not only prevent a revival of Japanese militarism but also build a pro-American Chinese navy which could serve as a guardian and help maintain Washington's maritime security in East Asia. This decision inaugurated the construction of the United States' new maritime order in East Asia in the years that followed.

In addition to the US Navy being interested in China, Chiang Kai-shek's need for US naval assistance provided the United States with an opportunity to get involved in the maritime affairs of East Asia. While many Chinese had rejoiced wildly in the midst of the victory over Japan, there were now some critical questions confronting the ruling KMT. The first such question was how to repatriate back to Japan the 1.18 million Japanese soldiers and 1 million Japanese civilians living in China.⁶⁴ The second question was how the KMT should transport its troops to north China. In the wake of the withdrawal of Imperial Japan, the upcoming fratricidal conflict between Chiang Kai-shek and Mao Zedong was already casting long shadows. While neither side launched all-out war, the curtain was rising on the competition between them for control of areas in

⁶² Henry Hitch Adams, *Witness to Power: The Life of Fleet Admiral William D. Leahy* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1985), 310.

⁶³ 'Operation Plan CincpoaNo.11-45', 9 August 1945, box 02, Commander, Submarine Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet (COMSUBFORPAC) Top Secret General Administrative Files, 1942-1946, RG 313, NARA.

⁶⁴ 'Zaigai hōjin hikiage gaikyō' [The situation of repatriation of overseas Japanese], Chūō shūsen shori, National Institute for Defense Studies. As quoted in Tzu-chin Huang, 'Kangzhan jieshu qianhou Chiang Kai-shek de dui ri taidu: Yidebaoyuan zhenxiang de tantao' [Chiang Kai-shek in East Asia: The Origins of the Policy of Magnanimity towards Japan after World War II], *Zhongyang yanjiuyuan jindaishi yanjiusuo jikan* [Bulletin of the Institute of Modern History, Academia Sinica] 45 (2004), 156.

north China previously dominated by Japan, where Japan and Manchukuo had left heavy industry behind. However, mainland China's domestic transport system had been ravaged during the war. The means of land carriage, such as roads and railways, could not effectively transport Nationalist troops to north China, so the waterways were the only viable alternative for this purpose.⁶⁵ Given the insufficient ship numbers, however, it was a challenge for the Chinese Nationalist government to manage sea transportation. On 10 September 1945, Soong Tse-ven, President of the Executive Yuan (the equivalent of prime minister), met Under Secretary of State Dean Acheson in Washington. Soong delivered Chiang's plea for US assistance in transporting troops to north China in the face of threats by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP).⁶⁶ Militarily, it was imperative to help Chiang take over the areas previously dominated by Japan, particularly in north China, where the CCP was eyeing its prey like a tiger. It was thus essential that the United States help deliver the Nationalist troops to these areas 'as rapidly as practicable'.⁶⁷ Wedemeyer indicated that this move could kill two birds with one stone, because not only would it 'assist the Chinese Central Government in the surrender and repatriation of the Japanese in China', it would allow the United States to concomitantly 'preclude successful operations by Communist forces'.⁶⁸ Truman instructed the Seventh Fleet to help Chiang Kai-shek repatriate the Japanese and transport KMT armed forces to north China, but with deliberations that the United States should not get embroiled in the Chiang-Mao struggle.⁶⁹ Washington's position was crystal clear – it was willing to assist China but had to avoid being dragged into the internal fighting in China.

The US Navy made a bid to take advantage of this occasion to increase its influence in China. The stature the US Navy had gained through its hard-won victories against Japan in the Pacific, together with its interest in mastering Chinese affairs, propelled the admirals to persuade decision-makers in Washington to approve the Navy's proposal that all naval

⁶⁵ 'CFBX 4928', 17 August 1945, box 03, CFAL 1942–48, RG 218, NARA.

⁶⁶ 'Memorandum by the Acting Secretary of State to President Truman', 12 September 1945, FRUS, 1945, Volume VII, 1027.

⁶⁷ 'WARX 66085', 18 September 1945, box 03, CFAL 1942–48, RG 218, NARA.

⁶⁸ 'CFB 5179', 18 August 1945, box 03, CFAL 1942–48, RG 218, NARA.

⁶⁹ James F. Schnabel, *History of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Volume I: The Joint Chiefs of Staff and National Policy, 1945–1947* (Washington, DC: Office of Joint History, Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, 1996), 188. Robert W. Love Jr., *History of the US Navy, 1942–1991*, 300.

activities based onshore in the China Theatre be immediately placed under the command of the Seventh Fleet.⁷⁰ Accordingly, in September 1945, then Deputy Chief of Naval Operations Vice Admiral Charles Cooke Jr sought to put all naval activities in China under the control of the Commander of the Seventh Fleet as quickly as possible on the rationale that as 'the speed and radii of action of forces and the range of missiles increase, it will become increasingly important to establish future unified commands on a Task Force basis rather than a geographical basis'.⁷¹ Cooke thus insisted that the US Navy proceed on the assumption that 'support units based ashore are inherently and necessarily a part of the Fleet they support and should always be a part of the Fleet Command regardless of any geographical theatre or area boundaries'.⁷² Chester W. Nimitz, Commander-in-Chief of the US Pacific Fleet, agreed. 'Concerning the temporary naval establishments on China's coastline and also the Naval Group China', he said, 'I believe it will improve overall efficiency to place them under ComSeventhFleet (Commander of the Seventh Fleet) at the earliest practicable date'.⁷³ Nimitz persuaded the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) that the US Navy should play a significant role in helping Chiang Kai-shek rebuild a stable and unified China. Therefore, in October 1945, the JCS informed Admiral Nimitz and General Wedemeyer that 'all US naval activities in the China theater including US naval section are hereby placed under the command and operational control of the Commander in Chief, Pacific Fleet'.⁷⁴ This revised command relationship provided the US Navy with an opening to increase its leverage in post-war China.

Without the agreement of China's supreme leader, Chiang Kai-shek, the US Navy could not fulfil its goal of building a maritime order in post-war East Asia that exploited the advantages of China's long coastline. Without such an agreement, its operations could be accused of infringing

⁷⁰ 'Narrative of US Seventh Fleet', 1 September 1945 to 1 October 1946, box 277, WWII Command File Fleets Numbered Seventh Fleet History – Memorandum, RG 38, NARA.

⁷¹ 'Memorandum for Admiral King', 18 September 1945, box 38, Naval Historical Center Records of US Naval Group China and VADM. Milton E. Miles 1942–1957 'Naval Group China Papers', RG 38, NARA.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ 'Command and Operational Control of Naval Activities in China', 2 October 1945, box 38, Naval Historical Center Records of US Naval Group China and VADM. Milton E. Miles 1942–1957 'Naval Group China Papers', RG 38, NARA.

⁷⁴ 'Cable from Tai Li to Mao Ren-feng', 26 October 1945, 144-010105-0004-027, The Papers of Dai Li, AH.

on Chinese sovereignty. Chiang's goodwill in granting the US Navy privileges in all Chinese ports and waters rendered this issue moot, however. Following Japan's surrender, Chiang gave the US Navy his personal assent. 'The United States Fleet and United States are welcome at any port in China', he said, and 'U.S. Naval vessels are free to go anywhere in China'.⁷⁵ This privilege was restricted to the US; other nations were told to 'obtain permission to visit Chinese ports from the Chinese government following customary diplomatic procedure'.⁷⁶ Chiang Kai-shek's friendly attitude, together with his request for assistance from the US Navy, provided the US with the leverage it needed to demand the placement of its naval forces in China. On the basis of its prior surveys of Chinese harbours, the US occupied and controlled the maritime corridor off of mainland China, including the Yellow Sea and the Gulf of Pohai, in order to have the freedom to tactically navigate throughout the western Pacific.⁷⁷ In response to Chiang's request for assistance, Thomas C. Kinkaid's Seventh Fleet arrived in Shanghai, Qingdao, and Tangku in September with great pomp and ceremony, and 75,000 enlisted men were stationed in China along with 'numerous heavy warships, such as carriers, battle cruisers, heavy and light cruisers and many smaller craft'.⁷⁸ The presence of these powerful naval forces reflected fleet commander Admiral Kinkaid's determination for his ships to assume the responsibilities of the Asiatic Fleet, the dominant US naval power in East Asia prior to 1941.⁷⁹ The United States also landed 50,000 marines at several important ports and cities along the Chinese coast.⁸⁰

⁷⁵ 'The Ambassador in China (Hurley) to the Secretary of State', 1 September 1945, *FRUS*, 1945, Volume VII, 545. 'Rear Admiral C.W. Styer of the Office of Chief of Naval Operations, to the Director of the Office of Far Eastern Affairs (Butterworth)', 8 January 1948, *FRUS*, 1948, Volume VIII, 308–309.

⁷⁶ 'Schedule for Naval Affairs Committee Hearing Shanghai, China', 23 January 1946, box 6110, Declassification of WWII Records (DWR), RG 313, NARA.

⁷⁷ Jeffrey Barlow, *From Hot War to Cold*, 128. 'Schedule for Naval Affairs Committee Hearing Shanghai, China', 23 January 1946, box 6110, DWR, RG 313, NARA. 'Report of Operations, Administrations and Logistics of Seventh Fleet', 1 March to 1 October 1945, box 277, WWII Command File Fleets Numbered Seventh Fleet History – Memorandum, RG 38, NARA.

⁷⁸ Alfred Emile Cornebise, *The Shanghai Stars and Stripes*, 23.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 23.

⁸⁰ 'Rear Admiral C. W. Styer of the Office of Chief of Naval Operations, to the Director of the Office of Far Eastern Affairs (Butterworth)', 8 January 1948, *FURS*, 1948, Volume VIII, 308–309. Harry Truman, *Memoirs by Harry S. Truman. Volume 2, Years of Trial and Hope* (New York: Doubleday, 1956), 65. Jeffrey Barlow also draws the stories of US Marines landing at Chinese ports after World War II; see: Jeffrey Barlow, *From Hot War to Cold*, 132–6.

After mooring his flagship, the USS *Rocky Mount*, at Shanghai, Kinkaid flew to the Nationalist government's wartime capital, Chongqing, to meet with Chiang Kai-shek and discuss the rebuilding of post-war China.⁸¹ Although Kinkaid saw Chiang on only this one occasion, it left him with positive impressions. 'Well I have a higher estimate of Chiang and his character than most people have', said Kinkaid several years later when recalling the meeting. 'He's a man of courage, a man of intelligence'.⁸² As for Chiang, his impression was that America was sincere about providing assistance to China. After the meeting with Kinkaid, he wrote the following in his next-day diary: 'I assume that a weak country like China would be regarded by other countries as a piece of meat on the chopping board, each drooling with anticipation. However, only the US cherishes China with true sincerity'.⁸³ Not only Chiang but also the Chinese people welcomed these American marines and demonstrated their pro-American sentiments without reservation. They saw the Americans as being different to the atrocious Japanese and other imperialist Western powers, as bona fide allies who would help them rebuild their war-torn country. An American marine, Eugene Bondurant Sledge, vividly depicts the arrival of American troops in Beiping [Beijing]: 'Huge crowds of people packed both sides of our route all the way. They ebulliently held American flags, waved, smiled, and shouted, "Ding hao (very good)!" until it was deafening', and 'How far our parade went and how long it lasted I do not know, but throngs of people surged into the street to shake our hands'.⁸⁴ After it had occupied north China by landing marines, the Seventh Fleet began assisting with the transportation of Nationalist forces from the south to north China.⁸⁵ By mid-October 1945, a total of fifty ships from fleet transport squadrons 17 and 24 had carried 56,000 Nationalist soldiers to Qinghuadao.⁸⁶ Then, on 23 December, the United States assisted in transporting the troops of Du

⁸¹ Gerald E. Wheeler, *Kinkaid of the Seventh Fleet* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1996), 439.

⁸² Ibid., 441.

⁸³ Chiang Kai-shek, 25 September 1945, *Chiang Kai-shek Diaries* (CKSD).

⁸⁴ Eugene Bondurant Sledge, *China Marine: An Infantryman's Life after World War II* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 20–1.

⁸⁵ 'Rear Admiral C.W. Styer of the Office of Chief of Naval Operations, to the Director of the Office of Far Eastern Affairs (Butterworth)', 8 January 1948, *FURS, 1948, Volume VIII*, 308. Jeffrey Barlow also detailed the America's transportation of Chinese Nationalist troops; see: Jeffrey Barlow, *From Hot War to Cold*, 139–44.

⁸⁶ Edward John Marolda, 'The US Navy and the Chinese Civil War, 1945–1953', (PhD dissertation, George Washington University, 1990), 26.

Yuming, Commander-in-Chief of General Headquarters of Suppressing Communist Bandit in Northeastern China, from Haiphong to Huludao.⁸⁷ By October 1946, the US Navy had assisted in transporting a quarter of a million Nationalist troops to north China for the takeover of areas previously occupied by Japan.⁸⁸ Matters related to China were all the prerogative of the US Navy. As the Chinese Nationalist General Shih Chueh observed in November 1945, 'All landing personnel were managed by the US Navy and the Army had no right to touch this issue'.⁸⁹ The US Navy's exclusive management of transportation indicated that it had made a good start in establishing its sphere of influence in China.

The anchorage of the Seventh Fleet in China and the landing of marines were a sign of the decay of the British Royal Navy (RN) in the western Pacific. One month after Japan's surrender, Bruce Fraser commanded the British Pacific Fleet to sail into Shanghai alongside the Seventh Fleet. However, it was immediately clear to him that China's changed circumstances had diminished the British Navy's former glory. Fraser was enraged when his flagship was anchored far from the RN's regular dock. There was reason for this, however. Chiang was dissatisfied with the RN's regular anchorage in Shanghai because, to his mind, entering Chinese waters was now the exclusive prerogative of the United States, and 'the British Fleet and British Forces and other imperialist forces [were] not welcome in China'.⁹⁰ On 23 September 1945, Chiang Kai-shek bluntly expressed his dissatisfaction with the RN's behaviour, which he described as 'an intrusion on Chinese sovereignty'.⁹¹ Chiang's reaction revealed that the Britons lost their naval dominance in Chinese waters.⁹² Consequently, in the year that followed, the Attlee administration reduced the strength of its naval forces in the western Pacific and the United States assumed sole command of Chinese waters.⁹³ This represented a shift in the international political order in the waters adjacent to

⁸⁷ 'Nationalist forces were divided into four parts to take over North-eastern China. Air transportation was on a large scale. Liberty ships and landing craft will be transferred to us from the US', 24 December 1945, *Shun Pao* (SP).

⁸⁸ 'Cooke held a press conference to state the mission of US forces in China', 1 October 1946, SP.

⁸⁹ 'Cable from Shih Chueh to Chiang Kai-shek', 8 November 1945, 002-090400-00003-001, The Papers of President Chiang Kai-shek (TPPCKS), AH.

⁹⁰ 'The Ambassador in China (Hurley) to the Secretary of State', 1 September 1945, *FRUS*, 1945, Volume VII, 545.

⁹¹ Chiang Kai-shek, 24 September 1945, *CKSD*.

⁹² Gerald E. Wheeler, *Kinkaid of the Seventh Fleet*, 437.

⁹³ Corbin Williamson, *The U.S. Navy and Its Cold War Alliances, 1945-1953* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2020), 90.

China, with Britain's naval glory in East Asia waning and its anglophone partner, the United States, assuming dominance.

Chiang Kai-shek sought to build a new Nationalist navy not only to transport Nationalist troops but also to consolidate his regime's relationship with the US Navy and further boost the presence of US naval forces. It is interesting to consider the first establishment of a modern Chinese navy, which can be traced back to the 1870s. Although *shui shi* (naval forces) existed in the Ming and Qing dynasties, their principal mission was to guard the coast against pirates and smugglers. The first modern Chinese navy was established following a national humiliation in 1860, when, during the Second Opium War, the British and French armies occupied China's capital, Beijing, and burnt its lavish royal palace, Yuanming Yuan, to a cinder. This bitter experience drove the Manchurian court to consider how it could recapture the glory of its celestial dynasty. It realised that its military strength lagged far behind that of the Western powers and thus took its cue from *shiyi zhi zhangji yi zhiyi* (learning from barbarians [foreigners] to compete with barbarians). Accordingly, the Qing court purchased ironclads from Britain and Germany, Western-style vessels which came to make up the Beiyang Fleet, ranked the most powerful in Asia prior to the First Sino-Japanese War in 1894. However, despite the significance of cutting-edge vessels and weapons, this conflict demonstrated that the key to winning a war was modern tactics. Japan's sweep upon the seas not only smashed the Beiyang Fleet, it also shattered China's ambition of building its own modern navy. Following the 1911 revolution, the Republic of China replaced the Qing dynasty as China's legitimate central government. The Republic of China Navy (ROCN) was established in 1912, but the constant hostilities amongst warlords meant that the ROCN existed in name only. Beginning in 1926, Chiang Kai-shek swept to power on the Northern Expedition, and within two years he had become supreme leader. Chiang looked to have a strong and modern Chinese navy. In August of 1928, when attending a launching ceremony in Shanghai, Chiang swore an unswerving oath:

We have to recover our national sovereignty and build a mighty navy and make our Republic of China the leading naval state. . . . From today onwards, I need to make our navy progress rapidly. The tonnage of our navy must, at a minimum, achieve 600,000.⁹⁴

As Chiang sought foreign aid to build a modern Nationalist navy following the Northern Expedition, his efforts were frustrated by financial difficulties

⁹⁴ 'The launching ceremony of *Chengning*', 17 August 1928, SP.

and a fractional struggle within the Nationalist navy.⁹⁵ Furthermore, during World War II, when Chiang was struggling to defend mainland China against merciless attacks by Japan, the building of a modern and competent navy became a secondary concern. Hence, in the immediate post-war period, China lacked qualified vessels and well-trained personnel to carry out transportation missions. It would be a mistake, however, to conclude that the Nationalist government did not seek a modern navy. As Chen Shao-kuan, commander-in-chief of Chiang's navy, stated:

We are now one of the Big Four, so we should shoulder one-fourth of the responsibilities in international society. If we want to shoulder one-fourth of the responsibilities, we must have a navy which has one-fourth of the might of all global navies.⁹⁶

In early 1945, Chiang began to mull over a plan to ask the US Navy to build a new Nationalist navy and instructed Kung Hsiang-hsi, Vice Premier of the Executive Yuan and governor of the Central Bank of the Republic of China, to appropriate 50,000,000 Chinese yuan in preparation for the US Navy's landing.⁹⁷ Everything was on track and all Chiang required was America's official endorsement. One week after Japan's surrender, Chiang cabled Soong, the President of the Executive Yuan, who had been sent to Washington to obtain financial and military support from the Truman administration, that it was time to build the Chinese navy.⁹⁸ Soong's efforts met with success: his request for assistance from the US Navy was agreed to by both Truman and Forrestal.⁹⁹

It had already been likely that the US Navy would assist China in regaining its pre-war status quo by way of strengthening their naval connections.¹⁰⁰ In terms of its short-term goal, the US Navy sought to

⁹⁵ Li Chang, 'Zhongguo haijun de zhenghe yu waiyuan, 1928–1938' [The Chinese Navy's Integration and Foreign Aid, 1928–1938], in the editorial committee of proceedings of centennial symposium on Sun Yat-sen's founding of the Kuomintang for revolution, ed., *Guofu jianchang geming yibai zhounian xueshu taolunji* [Symposium of the 100th anniversary of Sun Yat-sen's revolution and establishment of the KMT] (Taipei: Modern China Press, 1995), 444–74.

⁹⁶ 'The establishment of a navy', 23 November 1943, Xiaoxing Gao, ed., *Chen Shao-kuan wenji* (Beijing: Haichao Publisher, 1994), 326.

⁹⁷ 'Cable from Kung Hsiang-hsi to Chiang Kai-shek', 29 January 1945, 002-090103-00005-211, TPPCKS, AH.

⁹⁸ 'Cable from Chiang Kai-shek to T.V. Soong', 22 August 1945, 002-020300-00032-103, TPPCKS, AH.

⁹⁹ 'The Chronological Events', 25 August 1945, 002-060100-00203-025; 'Cable from the Chinese Embassy in the US to T.V. Soong', 25 August 1945, 002-090103-00005-183, TPPCKS, AH.

¹⁰⁰ Jeffrey Barlow, *From Hot War to Cold*, 136.

resolve a manpower shortage in the transport of Nationalist troops to north China by training Chinese crew members to operate diesel-driven tank landing ships.¹⁰¹ As regard its long-term goal, the US Navy believed that a unified and stable China would enable the United States to maintain its freedom to navigate the western Pacific and that a pro-US Nationalist navy could share in the US Navy's responsibilities. In February 1946, Commander of the Seventh Fleet Charles Cooke Jr said to Chiang that he expected a new Nationalist navy could 'participate in a coordinating programme with the US once the international environment changed'.¹⁰² On 23 November 1945, in accordance with the suggestion of Admiral Nimitz, CNO Ernest King established the Naval Advisory Group Survey Board (NAGSB) under the direction of Daniel Barbey, Commander of the Seventh Fleet. The NAGSB was tasked not only with investigating the needs of the Chinese navy and fulfilling the requirements of a naval advisory group but also with surveying the Chinese coastline,¹⁰³ firstly through aerial photography, to be carried out by the Seventh Fleet Air Wing One, in order to survey the Chinese coast from the area north of the twenty-fifth parallel to the Manchurian coast and to the western coast of Korea,¹⁰⁴ and secondly through an inspection of Chinese naval establishments and activities along the coast of China, from Tianjin in the north to Canton in the south.¹⁰⁵ Areas previously occupied by Japan in south China and Taiwan were of particular geostrategic importance in the western Pacific, leading the United States to emphasise their strategic value in terms not only of commanding maritime East Asia but also of gaining access to Southeast Asia. Hence, the United States began surveying the harbours in Keelung, Kaohsiung, and Zuoying in Taiwan and Swatow in south China.¹⁰⁶ On the basis of several surveys, the United States established further naval port facilities, including a fleet post office,

¹⁰¹ Samuel J. Cox, 'U.S. Naval Strategy and Foreign Policy in China, 1945–1950', (Annapolis, MD: United States Naval Academy, 1980), 49.

¹⁰² Academia Historica, ed., *The Chiang Kai-shek Collection: The Chronological Events*, Volume 64, 3 February 1946, 552.

¹⁰³ 'Memorandum by the Assistant Chief of Naval Operation (Wooldridge) to the Deputy of the Office of Far Eastern Affairs (Penfield)', 20 January 1948, *FRUS*, 1948, Volume VIII, 239–40.

¹⁰⁴ 'Schedule for Naval Affairs Committee Hearing Shanghai, China', 23 January 1946, box 6110, DWR, RG 313, NARA.

¹⁰⁵ 'Discussion on the Naval Advisory Preliminary Survey Group', no date, box 6110, DWR, RG 313, NARA.

¹⁰⁶ 'Harbor Facilities, Kiirun, Formosa', 5 January 1946, box 6111, DWR, RG 313, NARA. 'Ports of Kiirun, Swatow and Takao information concerning', 4 January 1946, box 6109, DWR, RG 313, NARA.

a purchasing office, a port director, a communication centre, and a small naval section base in support of the acquisition of intelligence and its deployment of naval forces in maritime East Asia.¹⁰⁷

The US Navy also fulfilled Chiang Kai-shek's wish for a modern Chinese navy. Although obtaining cutting-edge vessels and weapons from allies can increase a navy's strength in the short term, it is not a long-term approach to building a modern navy, which requires sufficient numbers of seamen capable of operating ship machinery and commanding officers capable of employing modern tactics. Chiang understood that for the navy to be independent and self-sufficient in terms of ammunition and personnel, 'the naval forces would have to be trained, instilled with new concepts and spirit ... [and] expected not only to operate vessels, but also to have ship-building capability'.¹⁰⁸ By the end of 1945, in accordance with a proposal by Daniel Barbey, Commander of the Seventh Fleet, CNO Ernest King set up the Chinese Navy Training Center in Qingdao,¹⁰⁹ where the US Navy assumed responsibility for training the Chinese navy at its own cost. Additionally, the US Navy established the Chinese Amphibious Training Group in order to train Chinese personnel in the use of the diesel-driven amphibious ships and craft provided by the US Navy to transport of Nationalist troops for the takeover of north China (Table 1.1).¹¹⁰ By the end of 1946, in addition to ordnance supplies worth \$17.7 million given from the US Navy, in just one year, 'nearly two hundred Chinese officers and over 1,300 enlisted sailors', according to Jonathan Blackshear Chavanne's research, had become capable of operating amphibious landing craft.¹¹¹

Thus, for the Chinese Nationalist navy, Qingdao became a point of access to cutting-edge naval techniques from the United States. The Chinese government sent cadets from the Navy Academy to Qingdao to be trained in the operation of vessels transferred from the United States.

¹⁰⁷ 'Schedule for Naval Affairs Committee Hearing Shanghai, China', 23 January 1946, box 6110, DWR, RG 313, NARA.

¹⁰⁸ Academia Historica, ed., *The Chiang Kai-shek Collection: The Chronological Events, Volume 64*, 3 February 1946, 553.

¹⁰⁹ 'Rear Admiral C.W. Styer of the Office of Chief of Naval Operations, to the Director of the Office of Far Eastern Affairs (Butterworth)', 8 January 1948, *FURS*, 1948, *Volume VIII*, 308–9.

¹¹⁰ 'Commanding General, U.S. Forces, China Theater to Joint Chiefs of Staff, CFBX 22078', 3 February 1946, box 08, GF 1946–47, RG 218, NARA. 'Memorandum by the Assistant Chief of Naval Operation (Wooldridge) to the Deputy of the Office of Far Eastern Affairs (Penfield)', 20 January 1948, *FRUS*, 1948, *Volume VIII*, 239–240.

¹¹¹ Jonathan Blackshear Chavanne, 'The Battle for China', 164. Thomas G. Paterson, *Meeting the Communist Threat: Truman to Reagan* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 59.

TABLE 1.1 *Ships delivered to the Nationalist Chinese government by 1946*

Type	Number	Type	Number
Landing Ship Tank (LST)	9	Landing Craft Infantry (LCI)	8
Landing Ship Medium (LSM)	8	Landing Craft Tank (LCT)	8
Landing Ship Dock (LSD)	1	Landing Craft Repair Ship (ARL)	2
Landing Craft, Mechanised (LCM)	25	Landing Craft, Vehicle and Personnel (LCVP)	25
Minesweeper (AM)	2	Harbour Patrol Ship (YM)	2

By June 1947, the Chinese government had received eighty-six vessels, with a further twelve to follow, for a total tonnage of 70,000.¹¹² Meanwhile, the total number of the ROCN also increased to 40,000.¹¹³ This assistance allowed the US Navy to deepen its connection with Chiang's Nationalist government. Not only did the US Navy strengthen its naval connection with China's Nationalist government this way, it also established personal ties with Chiang Kai-shek. In Chiang's diaries, he does not hide his admiration for the American admirals. He describes Daniel Barbey as 'a delightful and friendly admiral' and 'a wholehearted friend'¹¹⁴ and states that, 'unlike the US Army personnel, who were difficult and distrustful, Badger [Oscar C. Badger II, the Commander of Naval Forces, Western Pacific] is obviously sincere in assisting Nationalist China'.¹¹⁵ Chiang's personal relations with the American admirals and America's close cooperation with China led the Chinese people to believe that China had replaced Japan as a policing entity that shared responsibility for safeguarding world peace with the United States. As stated in an editorial titled 'China sea power' in the widely circulated Chinese newspaper *Shun Pao*, 'The US and China are the most important countries located in the East and the West of the Pacific; henceforth security in the Pacific will mainly rely on the close collaboration of these two big powers'.¹¹⁶ China rejoiced at the prospect of its promotion in the international arena and at its close ties with the United States. Its anticipation

¹¹² 'The Weight of Qingdao Base', 9 June 1947, SP.

¹¹³ Bruce A. Elleman, *A History of the Modern Chinese Navy, 1840–2020* (London: Routledge, 2021), 117.

¹¹⁴ Chiang Kai-shek, 22 & 29 November 1945, CKSD.

¹¹⁵ Chiang Kai-shek, 6 June 1948, CKSD.

¹¹⁶ 'China's sea power', 7 February 1946, *Zhongyang ribao* (ZYRB).

in this regard supported the development of the US Navy in maritime East Asia in the years that followed.

STRENGTHENING CONNECTIONS WITH NATIONALIST CHINA

The US Navy's friendly relationship with Chiang Kai-shek was not enough to create a pro-American Nationalist navy; it still needed to equip the ROCN with well-functioning vessels. The US Navy did not believe that Chiang Kai-shek would be able to consolidate his regime and rebuild a unified and stable China without US assistance and thus deemed that its cooperation with China should continue after World War II. When Secretary Forrestal proposed naval assistance to China, this provided fresh impetus for the United States' naval connections with China. By the end of 1945, the US Navy had drafted a proposal for such assistance that sought authority for Truman to provide China with surplus goods and materials, including naval vessels, and for the United States to provide the Chinese navy with training and technology.¹¹⁷ Although Chiang Kai-shek was attempting to build a modern Nationalist navy, his government did not aspire to be a maritime power and therefore did not need an ocean-going navy. Before the bill was sent to Congress for ratification, the United States asked Fleet Admiral Ma Chi-chung, commander of the Chinese navy, what the Chinese navy's requirements were. Ma replied:

Our country is establishing a navy to guard offshore waters and inland waterways in order to avoid incursions by pirates, to maintain the affairs of customs, and to train naval personnel for the future. . . . Because cruisers are too large and costly to maintain, we do not need them that much. . . . We hope the US can give us destroyer escorts, cruisers, landing crafts, and other vessels.¹¹⁸

The United States did not expect China to become an ocean-going maritime power, nor did it have the intention to shape ROCN as a comprehensive navy. Following the demobilisation of the Imperial Japanese Navy, there was no power, including the rising Soviet Union, that was capable of developing an ocean-going navy in maritime East Asia. In this context, the United States expected Nationalist China to assume joint responsibility with it for guarding China's coastline.

¹¹⁷ 'Report', 31 December 1945, 002-020400-00044-039, TPPCKS, AH.

¹¹⁸ 'Report', 3 January 1946, 002-020400-00044-039, TPPCKS, AH.

The US Navy proposal was approved by Truman and passed by Congress on 16 July 1946 as Public Law 512, seeking mainly to effect the administrative machinery for the transfer of certain naval vessels to the Chinese government 'on the basis of a gift'.¹¹⁹ Public Law 512 authorised the US Navy to train Chinese personnel in the operation of these vessels and carry out other naval tasks as the Secretary of the Navy deemed proper. These included establishing the US Naval Advisory Group to assist the Nationalist government in naval matters, furnishing technical advice, assisting in connection with the organisation, and maintaining a naval establishment.¹²⁰ All authorisations of the Department of the Navy were to be made with the concurrence of the Secretary of State on the basis of Executive Order 9843.¹²¹

Deteriorating relations between the KMT and the CCP brought new factors into play in the administration of Public Law 512. There were unresolved conflicts between the Chinese Nationalists and the Communists dating to the 1920s, and their military rivalry had persisted intermittently until the outbreak of the Second Sino-Japanese War following the 1937 Marco Polo Bridge Incident. Although Chiang Kai-shek and Mao Zedong had both been willing *pro tem* to put aside their old grievances and cooperate in resisting Japan when the CCP made its *gongfu guonan xuanyan* (statement for united efforts to save the nation), their clandestine struggles with each other did not abate during the war. Following Japan's surrender in 1945, their hidden enmity came to the fore, with Chiang and Mao beginning to jockey for position to fill the power vacuum left by Japan in mainland China. The United States was interested in building a friendly KMT-led Chinese government. It was because such a government could not only maintain control of mainland China without US military involvement but also allow the United States to coordinate the American offshore island chain in defence of its security in East Asia. Full-blown conflict between the KMT and the CCP was the last thing Truman wanted to see: a stable government in China was important for world stability.¹²² However, with war clouds looming over Chiang

¹¹⁹ 'Marshall Mission Files, Lot 54-D270: Telegram Colonel Marshall S. Carter to General Marshall', 5 December 1946, *FRUS*, 1946, Volume X, 806.

¹²⁰ 'The Secretary of the Navy (Forrestal) to the Secretary of State', 26 May 1947, *FRUS*, 1947, Volume VII, 966–8.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 966–8.

¹²² 'Notes on Meeting with the President and the Under Secretary of State at 11:30 A.M. Friday, Dec. 14, 1945', in Larry I. Bland and Sharon Ritenour Stevens, eds., *The Papers of George Catlett Marshall Volume 5* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981), 394.

and Mao, Truman did not take an equivocal attitude towards the Chinese Civil War and insisted that the United States should not get entrapped in a swamp of internecine strife in China. Then, on 27 November 1945, Truman named General George Marshall as special presidential envoy to China for the purpose of effecting a reconciliation.

In December of that year, Marshall travelled to Shanghai to mediate between Chiang in Nanjing and Zhou Enlai in Chongqing.¹²³ Marshall's efforts met with some initial success: he persuaded Chiang and Mao to reach a *pro tempore* consensus in the form of a ceasefire agreement in January 1946.¹²⁴ Marshall also established an executive headquarters for representatives of the KMT, the CCP, and the United States in Beijing for the purpose of mediating between the parties. Unfortunately, peace proved elusive. Military confrontation between the KMT and the CCP continued unabated in north China. To encourage reconciliation, Marshall proposed putting pressure on Chiang by imposing an embargo on the delivery of weapons from the United States to China. In June 1946, Marshall explicitly told Yu Da-wei, Minister of Transportation and Communications, that if civil war broke out, the United States would not support the KMT and that US military deployment in China would change considerably: the United States would withdraw not only its marines but also the Seventh Fleet, which was currently stationed in Chinese waters. More importantly, all US assistance to the Nationalist government, including Lend-Lease assistance and the extension of surplus properties, loans, and military requisitions, would most likely be cut off.¹²⁵ Under Secretary of State Dean Acheson similarly indicated that, in the event of stalemate in the KMT–CCP negotiations, the United States would maintain relations with the Nationalist government but its aid might be reduced through the withdrawal of military forces and the cessation of material support.¹²⁶ Despite the vehement opposition of naval leaders, including Forrestal, Leahy, and Cooke, Truman approved Marshall's proposal in July.¹²⁷ Four months later, Marshall officially suspended Public Law 512, and by the end of 1946,

¹²³ 'Meeting with Chiang Kai-Shek', 21 December 1945. 'Meeting with Chou En-Lai and T. V. Soong', 23–24 December 1945, in Larry I. Bland and Sharon Ritenour Stevens, eds., *The Papers of George Catlett Marshall Volume 5* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981), 400–1.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 400–1.

¹²⁵ 'Meeting with Yu Ta-Wei and John Leighton Stuart', 20 June 1946, in Larry I. Bland and Sharon Ritenour Stevens, eds., *The Papers of George Catlett Marshall Volume 5*, 600–1.

¹²⁶ Dean Acheson, *Present at the Creation*, 205.

¹²⁷ Robert W. Love Jr., *History of the US Navy, 1942–1991*, 304. John E. Jessup, *A Chronology of Conflict and Resolution, 1945–1985* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1989), 14.

the majority of the US ships, including all classes and the bulk of the combatant ships, had not yet been transferred.¹²⁸ The admirals were unable to accept Marshall's decision, which they viewed as tantamount to rupturing the valuable US naval link with China. They wholeheartedly supported a stable and unified China led by the Chinese Nationalists with large-scale American military assistance. It was because, according to Charles Cooke Jr, supporting the Nationalist government was 'the best means to prevent the extension of Soviet influence into Asia'.¹²⁹ Should the United States fail to assist Chiang Kai-shek's central government, as Admiral William Leahy warned in his diary, the United States 'would have no friends in either faction and no friends in China'.¹³⁰

While Marshall was eager to satisfactorily conclude his mission to China, the mutual distrust between the KMT and the CCP bogged down his efforts. By January 1947, Marshall's failure to get both sides around the negotiating table was taken as a sign that his mission to China had failed, thus raising the curtain on all-out Chinese civil war. It was obvious to the Truman administration that Marshall's embargo against Chiang could not bring both the KMT and the CCP to the negotiating table.¹³¹ Instead, the CCP was going to take advantage of this occasion to overwhelm the KMT in north China, which would speed up Soviet expansion in China. These concerns eventually led Truman to rescind his prohibition on 26 May 1947.¹³² For Marshall, it was expedient for the United States to cancel the embargo so as to deter the Soviet Union from expanding its influence into north China.

The cancellation of the embargo gave the US Navy the green light to implement Public Law 512. It planned to transfer a total of 271 ships and craft to the Chinese Nationalist government. Of these, 137 ships (Table

¹²⁸ 'Marshall Mission Files, Lot 54-D270: Telegram General Marshall to Colonel Marshall S. Carter', 8 December 1946, *FRUS, 1946, Volume X*, 807.

¹²⁹ Samuel Joseph Cox, 'U.S. Naval Strategy and Foreign Policy in China, 1945-1950', 52.

¹³⁰ Leahy Diary, 11 August 1946, Leahy Papers, Notes on China, Operational Archives, as quoted in Samuel Joseph Cox, 'U.S. Naval Strategy and Foreign Policy in China, 1945-1950', 61.

¹³¹ Robert W. Love Jr., *History of the US Navy, 1942-1991*, 305.

¹³² Department of State, United States, *The China White Paper* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1967), 356. Some scholarship has examined the stories of the US prohibition on transferring ammunition to China from both the American and Chinese sides; see: Chester Pach, *Arming the Free World: the Origins of the United States Military Assistance Program, 1945-1950* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1991). Donglai Ren, '1946-1947 nian Meiguo dui Hua jun ruo jinyun de jige wenti' [Several issues regarding the US prohibition on transferring ammunition to China], *Meiguo yanjiu* [American Studies] 5(2007), 85-102.

TABLE 1.2 *US ships transferred to China*¹³³

Type	Number	Type	Number
Destroyer Escort	6	Landing Craft Tank	8
Patrol Vessel Escort (180')	2	Motor Mine Sweeper	4
Mine Sweeper	12	Submarine Chaser (173')	6
Landing Ship Tank	10	Motor Gunboat	6
Landing Ship Medium	8	Submarine Chaser (110')	10
Landing Craft Infantry (Large)	8	Surveying Ship	1
Miscellaneous Auxiliary	1	Gasoline Tanker	2
Landing Craft, Mechanised	25	Auxiliary Floating Drydock Light	2
Landing Craft, Vehicle and Personnel	25	Repair Ship Landing Craft	1

1.2) would go to the Chinese navy and the rest would go to Chinese Maritime Customs.¹³⁴ In contrast with the vessels transferred to China in 1946, the US Navy added destroyer escorts and submarine chasers – both of which could be equipped with anti-submarine weapons – to the transfer list. Although this transfer was made on condition that the ammunition be used for training purposes only, it appeared that the purpose of the naval assistance was to train a Chinese navy that could share in the US Navy's burden of maintaining maritime corridors for the United States and its allies.¹³⁵

The US Navy also intended to establish a separate Naval Advisory Group in accordance with Public Law 512 in order to promote its influence in both China and the United States. Accordingly, it drafted a proposal for what would become the Sino-US Naval Agreement.¹³⁶ While Marshall did not unequivocally object to the proposed agreement, he did state that everything should be worked out with the

¹³³ A total of 137 ships would go to the Chinese government, and 95 of the above-listed vessels had already been transferred by June of 1947. 'The Secretary of the Navy (Forrestal) to the Secretary of State', 26 May 1947, *FRUS*, 1947, *Volume VII*, 966–968.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 966–968.

¹³⁵ 'The Chief of the Naval Advisory Group Survey Board (Murray) to the Ambassador in China (Stuart)', 19 June 1947, *FRUS*, 1947, *Volume VII*, 865.

¹³⁶ 'Memorandum by the Chief of the Division Chinese Affairs (Ringwalt) to the Direction of the Office of Far Eastern Affairs (Butterworth)', 22 January 1948, *FRUS*, 1948, *Volume VIII*, 240–1.

Department of War.¹³⁷ However, Secretary of War Robert Patterson opposed the Navy's proposal, insisting that the US Military Advisory Group should jointly consist of the Army and the Navy.¹³⁸ The strenuous opposition of the War Department led Forrestal to compromise in order to come to an agreement with China on the basis of Public Law 512. On 20 June 1947, Forrestal gave Marshall a revised proposal, according to which a joint advisory group would be established when legislation permitted and, in the meantime, naval personnel would be sent to China to continue training the Chinese navy and crews under Public Law 512. Marshall in his reply of 23 July concurred.¹³⁹

On the basis of Public Law 512, the United States and China reached a new milestone in terms of naval connections. On 8 December 1947, after several details of this agreement were clarified and confirmed and final agreement was obtained from the Department of the Navy, Minister of Foreign Affairs Wang Shih-chieh and Ambassador Stuart signed the Sino-US Navy Agreement in Nanjing.¹⁴⁰ Both sides eventually came to a formal agreement on the naval assistance that had begun without an official agreement in 1945. This agreement provided the US Navy with a legal basis for all the naval activities and training of the Chinese navy that had been taking place for years.¹⁴¹ Additionally, the US Navy was able to officially transfer 140 vessels with craft and floating drydocks, and it also provided 'technical information and advice with reimbursement' to improve the military strength of the Chinese Nationalist navy.¹⁴² With the US Navy's assistance, the Chinese Nationalist government could be equipped, as the iconic Chinese newspaper *Ta Kung Pao* reported, to 'guard

¹³⁷ 'Minutes of Conference Concerning China', 20 February 1947, *FRUS*, 1947, *Volume VII*, 947.

¹³⁸ 'The Secretary of War (Patterson) to the Secretary of the Navy (Forrestal)', 24 April 1947, *FRUS*, 1947, *Volume VII*, 961–2.

¹³⁹ 'Memorandum by the Chief of the Division Chinese Affairs (Ringwalt) to the Direction of the Office of Far Eastern Affairs (Butterworth)', 22 January 1948, *FRUS*, 1948, *Volume VIII*, 240–1.

¹⁴⁰ 'The Ambassador in China (Stuart) to the Secretary of State', 8 December 1947, *FRUS*, 1947, *Volume VII*, 988.

¹⁴¹ 'The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in China (Stuart)', 29 November 1948, *FRUS*, 1948, *Volume VII*, 615.

¹⁴² 'Agreement between the government of the United States of America and the government of the Republic of China concerning the transfer of naval vessels and equipment pursuant to United States Public Law 512 – 79th Congress of the United States of America', 15 August 1947, 014–020200–0169, AEY, AH.

its offshore waters and inland waterways in order to guarantee the security of navigation within territorial waters'.¹⁴³

The Sino-US Navy Agreement served as the basis for the United States' management of all military-related assistance in the China Aid Act of 1948. Despite the Truman administration's policy of avoiding direct military involvement in the Chinese Civil War, consecutive victories by Mao's sweeping troops led MacArthur to advocate that the Truman administration increase its material assistance to the Nationalist government.¹⁴⁴ Accordingly, Truman signed the China Aid Act of 1948 as part of the Foreign Assistance Act on 4 April 1948, allocating \$275 million in economic aid and \$125 million in military aid, and Truman granted Secretary of State George Marshall the right to make unrestricted use of the financial assistance to purchase military supplies.¹⁴⁵ In accordance with the China Aid Act of 1948, the United States established a Joint United States Military Advisory Group (JUSMAG) composed of the Naval Advisory Division, the Army Advisory Division, the Air Force Advisory Division, and the Combined Services Divisions to provide military assistance to the Chinese Nationalist government.¹⁴⁶ By way of the Naval Advisory Mission and Public Law 512, the US Navy helped the Nationalist navy 'reach operating standards it would not otherwise have achieved' by introducing 'modern naval thought into the various levels of the Navy with a resultant reorganization of Chinese Naval Headquarters'.¹⁴⁷ By the end of 1948, the ROCN had over 800 vessels with 40,859 enlisted men.¹⁴⁸ The US Navy also established a modern naval medical service and training centre where more than 300 Chinese officers and 3,000 Chinese seamen had been trained as of 3 March 1949, when JUSMAG suspended all operations in China due to the inevitable failure of the KMT in the civil war.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴³ 'The US naval vessels transferred to us, China and the US officially signed an agreement', 9 December 1947, *Ta Kung Pao*.

¹⁴⁴ Thomas H. Etzold, 'The Far East in American Strategy, 1948–1951', in Thomas H. Etzold, ed., *Aspect of Sino-American Relations Since 1784* (New York: New Viewpoints, 1978), 113. James F. Schnabel, *History of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Volume I*, 208.

¹⁴⁵ Gardner Patterson, *Surveys of U.S. International Finance, 1949* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1953), 45. Kenneth W. Condit, *History of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, The Joint Chiefs of Staff and National Policy Volume II, 1947–1949* (Washington, DC: Office of Joint History, Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, 1996), 240.

¹⁴⁶ 'The Secretary of State to the Secretary of Defense (Forrestal)', 4 August 1948, *FRUS*, 1948, Volume VIII, 269.

¹⁴⁷ Department of State, United States, *The China White Paper*, 341–342.

¹⁴⁸ Bruce A. Elleman, *A History of the Modern Chinese Navy, 1840–2020*, 120.

¹⁴⁹ Department of State, United States, *The China White Paper*, 341–2. Steven L. Rearden, *History of the Office of the Secretary of Defense, Volume 1: The Formative Years, 1947–1950* (Washington, DC: Historical Office of the Office of the Secretary of Defense, 1984), 220.