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Review by Charles W. Hayford, Independent Scholar

The “Final Triumph of Chiang Kai-shek? The Rush to Revisionism

On a visit to Shanghai in the late 1970s, when it was still dangerous for a Chinese to be seen talking with a foreigner, I was approached for a “walking English lesson” by a young man who turned out to be a middle school political instructor. After we had strolled around the block a few times, he whispered to me his inmost secret: he had actually been rooting for the infamous Gang of Four! Why? They had been in cahoots with Chiang Kai-shek and would bring him back and raise mainland standards of living to Taiwan levels. My new friend’s unspoken premise was that Chiang was the only alternative to Mao and stood for the opposite of everything that Mao stood for.

This revisionist logic also marks Jay Taylor’s engrossing and informative chiaroscuro portrait of Chiang Kai-shek. Taylor muses in his Epilogue that if Chiang and his wife, Soong Mayling, could see today’s Shanghai and Beijing, they “might well believe that their long-planned ‘counterattack’ had succeeded and their successors had recovered the mainland.” Taylor jumps over Deng Xiaoping’s state capitalism and market Leninism to assert that “it is their [the Chiangs’] vision of modern China, not Mao’s, that guides the People’s Republic in the twenty-first century.” (592) ¹

How Chiang compares with Mao is significant, but historical judgment is not like a see-saw on the playground: when Mao goes down, Chiang does not necessarily go up. Taylor’s note of triumphalism was echoed in reviews for general readers of recent works on the Chiangs. Laura Tyson Li, author of a smart biography of Soong Mayling, reviewed *The Generalissimo* in the *Washington Post* under the headline “The Final Triumph of Chiang Kai-shek” and the *New York Review of Books* ran Jonathan Spence’s review of Hannah Pakula’s garrulous biography of Mayling under the title “The Triumph of Madame Chiang.”²

The difference between these reviews and those in academic journals reflects differences in audience but also in assumptions and starting points. Reviewers in academic journals

¹ A paperback edition was published in 2011. Page numbers in the main text of both editions are the same. The paperback adds a “Postscript” on the newly opened sections of Chiang’s Diaries which shifts the page numbers for the endnotes. The paperback edition fixes few of the slips and errors. “Irish” Chang is corrected to “Iris” Chang (638 n. 58) and see note #29, below. But, to select a few examples, Jung Chang is still “June” Chang (631 n 84 and 710 n. 156); William Kirby is “James” Kirby (657 n. 137); romanization glitches appear on almost every page of the notes; some citations are incomplete; and some references do not contain the material cited.

² Laura Tyson Li, *Madame Chiang Kai-shek: China’s Eternal First Lady* (N.Y.: Atlantic Monthly, 2006); Hannah Pakula, *The Last Empress: Madame Chiang Kai-shek and the Birth of Modern China* (N.Y.: Simon & Schuster, 2009); Laura Tyson Li, “The Final Triumph of Chiang Kai-shek,” *Washington Post* (Sunday, April 26, 2009); Jonathan Spence, “The Triumph of Madame Chiang,” *The New York Review* 57.3 (February 25, 2010), 4-6. Also, Samuel C. Chu, ed. *Madame Chiang Kai-shek and Her China* (Norwalk, CT: EastBridge, 2004), in which I have an essay.

commended Taylor but were less triumphal, even stingy, in their praise of the book. Keith Schoppa, for instance, said Taylor “paints in stark shades of black and white, with Chiang in white (except for his treatment of the Taiwanese in the 1940s and 1950s) and his opponents in black.” Roger Thompson spoke of a “partisan approach” and saw the work as “deeply influenced” by the Nationalist Party’s “narrative template for Chiang and his revolution.”³ Andrew Nathan endorsed Taylor’s “sympathetic” evaluation as “convincing in its own way.”⁴ The five scholars in Qiang Zhai’s Roundtable for *The Chinese Historical Review* welcomed the book but offered corrections, quibbles, and substantive disagreement. Taylor’s “Response” is extensive and informative, though at points evidently baffled at the nit picking of these learned professors.⁵

The Generalissimo sets out to rescue Chiang from a consensus, but Taylor is selective in establishing what the consensus was. When Chiang died in 1975, he says, Chiang was viewed as an exceptionally cruel and repressive figure who “possessed no authentic principles or ideals and had few if any achievements.” (1) Like many China specialists, Taylor says that he himself was influenced by Harold Isaacs’ *The Tragedy of the Chinese Revolution* (1938), Andre Malraux’s *Man’s Fate* (1933) (1). Perhaps “most influential of all” was Edgar Snow’s *Red Star Over China* (1937), an “uncritical biography of Mao.”⁶ (221) But Chiang also had been a hero for Henry Luce, the China Lobby, and much of the Washington political establishment. In the 1950s, one senator was called the “senator from Taiwan” (there was no “senator from Red China”). More important, as we will see, the China field had already begun to move beyond the 1940s deprecation of Chiang.

The word “and” in the subtitle of *The Generalissimo* suggests that “Chiang Kai-shek” and “The Struggle for Modern China” are two different topics -- biography and history. I will suggest that the book works well as biography but is less successful after the “and,” that is, as history.

³ Keith Schoppa, *Journal of Asian Studies* 69.1 (2010), 239-40; Edmund S. K. Fung, *American Historical Review* 115.2 (2010), 517-518; Roger Thompson, *Journal of Historical Biography* 6.1 (Autumn 2009), 98-105; Steve Tsang, *China Journal* 63 (January 2010), 153-157; Emily Hill, *The Review of Politics* 72.1 (2010), 180-183. Taylor posts quotes from the early reviews at <http://thegeneralissimo.net/reviews.htm>.

⁴ Andrew Nathan, “The Counterrevolutionaries,” *The New Republic Online Review* (March 31, 2011) <http://www.tnr.com/book/review/chiang-kai-shek-pakula-taylor>. Accessed June 10, 2011.

⁵ Zhai Qiang, “Introduction,” *The Chinese Historical Review* 17.1 (Spring 2010), 3-5; Morris L. Bian, “Building a New Nation State: An Examination of Chiang Kai-shek’s Critical Contribution to the Making of Modern China,” 6-15; Joseph Esherick, “The Many Faces of Chiang Kai-shek,” 16-23; Xiaoyuan Liu, “Chiang Kai-shek’s (Invisible) Marathon to the West,” 24-30; R. Keith Schoppa, “Diaries as a Historical Source: Goldmines and/or Slippery Slopes,” 31-36; Harold M. Tanner, “A Question of Influence: Jay Taylor’s *The Generalissimo* and American Images of Chiang Kai-shek,” 37-42; Jay Taylor, “Response,” 43-65.

⁶ Charles W. Hayford, “Snow, White & The Seven China Revolution Classics,” *Asia Media* (December 1 2006), <http://www.asiamedia.ucla.edu/article.asp?parentid=58826>. Accessed June 10, 2011.

Does Biography Make Bad History?

Academic historians find biography a little dodgy (few Ph.D. students write them). E.H. Carr's classic *What is History?* provocatively declares that biography represents the "Bad King John theory of history," for biography is based on the assumption that what matters is the "character and behavior of individuals," while "history" treats the individual as "part of a whole." Carr even suggests that "good biography makes bad history."⁷

Gordon Wood, a presiding figure in American colonial history, further points out that academic historians now write "almost exclusively for one another and focus on the issues and debates within the discipline." Since, "like papers in physics or chemistry, academic books focus on narrow subjects and build upon one another," most academic historians have tended to "throw up their hands at the possibility of synthesizing all these studies, of bringing them together in comprehensive narratives." Too often professors leave narrative history to the nonacademic historians who "unfortunately often write without much concern for or much knowledge of the extensive monographic literature that exists."⁸

If Taylor had grazed longer in graduate school pastures of monographs, he might never have finished his book, but I will argue that the academic literature is more helpful in framing a biography as "part of a whole" than *Red Star Over China* and its littermates.

The Struggle for Modern China: What's the Story?

How westerners characterized Chiang depended on the story they told and the China they saw. "Red General," as both Soviet advisers and fearful British called Chiang in the mid-1920s, implied Bolshevik revolution and anti-imperialism; "strong man" implied law and unity; "just another warlord" implied a perhaps comic, perhaps tragic, or perhaps hopeless China; *Time* magazine's "Man of the Year" and "Christian leader" implied middle class American Open Door values. An American who was Sun Yat-sen's god-son wrote in 1941 that to the Treaty Port crowd, Chiang was "just another Asiatic swashbuckler," while to the leftists he was "a sort of Franco, supinely cooperative with Anglo-American imperialism ...," but in fact "has at worst behaved like a Salazar, Atatürk, or Pilsudski."⁹

⁷ E.H. Carr, *What Is History?* (London: Penguin, 1961), 45-48.

⁸ "The Real Washington at Last," Gordon S. Wood, *The New York Review of Books* (December 9, 2010), 38-39.

⁹ Edgar Snow, "Weak China's Strong Man," *Current History* 39.4 (January 1934), 402-408; Edgar Snow, "China's Fighting Generalissimo," *Foreign Affairs* (1938), 612-625; Robert E. Herzstein, *Henry R. Luce, Time, and the American Crusade in Asia* (Cambridge; N.Y.: Cambridge University Press, 2005), e.g. pp. 27, 36-37, 93-96; Paul M. A. Linebarger, *The China of Chiang K'ai-Shek* (Boston: World Peace Foundation, 1941), 271-72.

Edgar Snow's *Red Star Over China* (1937) was not just an "uncritical biography of Mao" but a new way of framing China. Snow replaced the story of an Orientalist "unchanging China" with the story of a revolutionary, modernizing China. Taylor blames the spread of this revolution paradigm on Zhou Enlai's ontological seduction of the China Hands in wartime Chungking, but this progressive myth owes as much to Wilson as to Lenin. Americans were all too eager to be convinced that Revolution would do for China what 1789 did for France: give birth to a modern nation liberated from feudalism. The Generalissimo represented feudal China.¹⁰

After Mao's death in 1976, this progressive story lost power. Paul Cohen pointed out in 1988 that the perceived success of Deng Xiaoping's statist, authoritarian version of modernization had reframed China once more.¹¹ The nineteenth century Self Strengtheners, the late Qing reformers, the Empress Dowager (the most effective reformer until Deng), Yuan Shikai, and Chiang were no longer simply xenophobic reactionaries but statist creators of the elements which Mao would appropriate and Deng would build on. Mao had useful friends, such as Stalin, and even more useful enemies, such as Chiang and the Japanese invaders, a tag team who from 1927 to 1945 reduced the number of rivals for national power to two.

The meanings of Mao's 1949 revolution changed. Joseph Esherick's elegant 1995 historiographical article, "Ten Theses on the Chinese Revolution," argued that China's long revolution was not a single movement or created by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), but a cloud of global shocks, national accidents, local contests, and ad hoc reactions (and perhaps a butterfly's wing off the coast of Peru?). Esherick saw 1949 not as China's 1789, a liberating quantum leap from one historical epoch to another, but as a shift from one form of oppression to another. The ten theses are historical, not biographical; they do not include Mao's ideology or leadership, much less those of Chiang Kai-shek.¹²

Biography and Chiang's Inner Life: Neo-Confucianism, Christianity, and Nationalism

Early in his first chapter, "A Neo-Confucian Youth," Taylor declares that Chiang Kai-shek's identity and agenda were shaped by "two great forces." The first was Confucianism, the second was a nationalism stoked by the "extraordinary loss of sovereignty, territory, and

¹⁰ For this shift see my "The Storm over the Peasant: Orientalism, Rhetoric and Representation in Modern China," in Shelton Stromquist and Jeffrey Cox, ed., *Contesting the Master Narrative: Essays in Social History* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1998), 150-172 and "Mao's Journeys to the West: Meanings Made of Mao," in Timothy Cheek, ed., *A Critical Introduction to Mao* (N.Y.: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 313-331.

¹¹ Paul A. Cohen, "The Post-Mao Reforms in Historical Perspective," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 47.3 (1988), 518-540.

¹² Joseph Esherick, "Ten Theses on the Chinese Revolution," *Modern China* 21.1 (January 1995), 45-76, reprinted in Jeffrey N. Wasserstrom, ed., *Twentieth-Century China: New Approaches* (London; N.Y.: Routledge, 2003), 39-65.

self respect” that China had suffered during the century of the unequal treaties. (13-14)¹³ Chiang’s Christianity, surely another distinct force, is left for later, and another force which might be added is his emulous rivalry with Mao and the CCP.

Chiang’s Diaries are used to great effect, though I wish Taylor had expanded on their nature and their problems. Chiang clearly did not document his every act, as shown by Keith Schoppa’s extensive list of crucial events which are not mentioned. The preeminent scholar Yang Tianshi reasons that Chiang’s constant and nasty scolding of friends and allies shows that Chiang intended the Diaries to be kept private; on the other hand, Ray Huang suggests good reasons to think that Chiang had future readers in mind.¹⁴

The bile in the Diaries spared few except Mayling, Franklin Roosevelt, and Zhou Enlai. Zhou spoke the same Zhejiang patois as Chiang, served as Chiang’s political commissar at the Soviet financed Whampoa Academy in the 1920s, and had a shrewd grasp of (and even admiration for) Chiang’s character. Each accepted the other as sincere. (45) When Chiang was kidnapped at Xi’an in December 1936, Zhou went to Chiang, saluted his old commander (the first sign of obedience from the Red Army), and at Stalin’s behest agreed on concessions which appalled some but created a Second United Front against Japan. (134-36) In 1971, Zhou apparently informed Chiang of Kissinger’s secret visit, renewing the Generalissimo’s contempt for American sell out diplomacy. (3, 561, 569, 573)

More problematic is Chiang’s Neo-Confucianism. Taylor claims that Chiang would see the leaders of today’s China as “modern neo-Confucianists, dedicated – as he surely would have been if he had similarly enjoyed twenty-eight peaceful years on the mainland – to making China a harmonious, stable, and prosperous society, as well as a powerful and avowedly peaceful actor on the world stage.” (592) (Chiang’s mandatory harmony and political repression may well be a precedent for today’s China, but I’m not sure that this is what Taylor had in mind.) This ideology was, says Taylor, a “reaction to the catastrophe of the Mongol invasion of China in the thirteenth century,” but Chiang was a “left Confucian,” not a reactionary, and would have been “comfortable in the anti-imperialist Comintern, provided it kept out of telling him what to do in China.” (14, 158)

¹³ Dong Wang, *China's Unequal Treaties: Narrating National History* (Lanham, Md: Lexington Books, 2005) insightfully traces the development of this discourse.

¹⁴ Schoppa, “Diaries as a Historical Source”; Grace Huang, “Creating a Public Face for Posterity: The Making of Chiang Kai-shek’s Shilüe Manuscripts,” *Modern China* 36.6 (2010), 617-643; Qisheng Wang, “Chiang Kai-shek’s Reading: An Inquiry Based on Chiang’s Diary, 1920s-1940s,” *Journal of Modern Chinese History* 3.1 (2009), 11-25; Chen Yung-fa, “A Review of Yang Tianshi’s Seeking for Truthful Chiang Kai-shek: Interpreting the Diary of Chiang Kai-shek,” *Journal of Modern Chinese History* 3.1 (2009), 89-94; Ray Huang, “Chiang Kai-shek and His Diary as a Historical Source: Proposals for the Revision of Modern Chinese History,” *Chinese Studies in History* 27.1-2 (1996); Tianshi Yang, “Perspectives on Chiang Kaishek’s Early Thought from His Unpublished Diary,” in Mechthild Leutner, ed., *The Chinese Revolution in the 1920s: Between Triumph and Disaster* (London; N.Y.: RoutledgeCurzon, 2002), 77-97.

This does not tell us much. “Confucian” is so broad that it simply means “Chinese.” Chiang, like all literate youth of his generation (including Mao), read Confucian classics; his Confucianism displays the characteristics which the New Culture Movement attacked as “feudal,” but with a positive rather than a negative spin: paternalism, familism, harmony, and authoritarianism.

Again, some history would help. Chiang’s idolization of the paradigmatic Neo-Confucian modernizer, Zeng Guofan (1813-1872), is key. Zeng was the organizer of the mid nineteenth century Tongzhi Restoration which exterminated the Taiping Rebellion and saved the Manchu dynasty. Even the young Mao studied Zeng, who was a fellow Hunanese state builder. Chiang read and re-read Zeng’s diary, family letters, correspondence, and military writings, which were surely the model for his own diary – a moral and sometimes spiritual ledger, not a psychological or political record. For instance, March 23, 1925 he told his diary “I read Master Zeng’s diary. It impelled me to set life goals and I’m ready for heroism again.”¹⁵

Mary Wright’s classic 1957 monograph pronounced the Tongzhi Restoration “the last stand of Chinese conservatism,” contributing mightily to the misunderstanding which equated Confucian statism with reactionary conservatism.¹⁶ Wright was wrong to say that Confucianism would prevent China from modernizing, but she has brilliant things to say comparing Zeng and Chiang as “muscular Confucians.” Sun Yatsen identified with the Taiping rebels but Chiang identified with Zeng and the imperial government. Yet because they were preoccupied with “harmony,” that is, social control, Chiang and his followers did not follow Zeng’s program of reconstructing rural society through schools, roads, water works, and reduction of land tax, much less land reform.¹⁷

The Christianity which Chiang adopted and adapted reveals almost as much as his Neo-Confucianism. Taylor makes clear that Chiang was devout and sincere, but readers once more may need more historical help. Postwar academics tacitly presumed that Christianity was not authentically Chinese, often referring to Chinese Christians as “converts” in situations where westerners would be simply “Christians” or mentioning “rice Christians” where they did not mention “rice Confucians.” Chiang was among a number of Christian leaders in the century before 1949: the Taiping’s Hong Xiuquan, SunYat-sen, and the “Christian General,” Feng Yuxiang, not to mention Chiang’s in-laws, the Soong family.

¹⁵ Wang, “Chiang Kai-shek’s Reading,” 14.

¹⁶ Mary C. Wright, *The Last Stand of Chinese Conservatism: The T’ung-Chih Restoration, 1862-1874* (Stanford, Cal.: Stanford University Press, 1957).

¹⁷ Mary C. Wright, “From Revolution to Restoration: The Transformation of Kuomintang Ideology,” *The Far Eastern Quarterly* 14.4 (1955), 515, 522-24; Bradley Kent Geisert, *Radicalism and Its Demise: The Chinese Nationalist Party, Factionalism, and Local Elites in Jiangsu Province, 1924-1931* (Ann Arbor: Center for Chinese Studies University of Michigan, 2001).

Chiang's conversion was genuinely spiritual, not a grudging price for his 1927 marriage to Mayling or a bid to win American support (in 1927 American support was not politically helpful). His wife, as Karen Leong persuasively argues, was less devout than her Neo-Confucian husband. When asked to write an essay, "What My Religion Means to Me," she at first demurred, then asked a missionary friend to write it for her.¹⁸ In 1930, after several years of Bible study, Chiang came to his mother-in-law on her deathbed. To put her mind at ease, that is, out of Confucian filial piety argues the Korean scholar Bae Kyoungan, Chiang agreed to be baptized. The great turning point, however, was his kidnapping in Xi'an. Chiang wrote in his Diary for December 19, 1936: "Now that I am faced with death, life and death are a matter of nothing but five minutes. I am not ashamed of being baptized – for it is like the suffering on the Cross: who would take humiliation but myself?" After 1937 Chiang came to believe that the most important goal of his faith was national salvation.¹⁹

Nationalism was Chiang's strong suit, at least in the sense that he had patriotic and anti-imperialist sentiments. His near xenophobia was sometimes only natural. When British troops shot and killed fifty-two protestors in 1924, Chiang wrote in his Diary: "The stupid British regard Chinese lives as dirt.... How can we emancipate mankind if we cannot annihilate the English?" The United States and France "should also not be neglected." (49-50) Internationally, as an anti-imperialist, Chiang supported Indian Independence, a sore point with Churchill and other "stupid British," though he prudently counseled Gandhi to support the war against the Axis. (194-196)

Nationalism is also political and social – "nation building" or, in the term used around the world in those years, "reconstruction."²⁰ Taylor sees Chiang during the Nanjing Decade (1927-1937) as moving in a canny strategy to unite China, which is true, but also to reconstruct it, which is less clear. As Emily Hill notes in her review, *The Generalissimo* spends more time on international and military strategies than on the domestic reconstruction needed to pay for them.²¹

"Biography" once again needs more "history." As early as the 1960s the China field began to move beyond the earlier consensus to find that the Republican period (1911-1949) showed reasonable economic growth, substantial social development, and cultural energy, and that the Nanjing planning bureaucracy laid the foundation for 1950s growth in both

¹⁸ Karen J. Leong, *The China Mystique: Pearl S. Buck, Anna May Wong, Mayling Soong, and the Transformation of American Orientalism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 121.

¹⁹ Kyoungan Bae, "Chiang Kai-shek and Christianity: Religious Life Reflected from His Diary," *Journal of Modern Chinese History* 3.1 (2009), 1-10, quotes at 4, 5, 6; Daniel Bays, "The Soong Family and the Chinese Protestant Community," in Chu, ed., *Madame Chiang*, 22-32.

²⁰ For "reconstruction" as a global concept, see David Ekbladh, *The Great American Mission: Modernization and the Construction of an American World Order* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 4, 16-17.

²¹ Hill, 180; Taylor, "Response," *Chinese Historical Review*, 43-44.

the PRC and Taiwan. But these studies hardly mention Chiang.²² On another front, researchers challenged the wartime charges that Chiang was a puppet of the feudal comprador bourgeois bureaucratic capitalist class— whatever that is. Chiang squeezed them more than they exploited him.²³ Others charge that Chiang’s vision of rural development was top down, militarized, and hidebound.²⁴

Did Chiang create the stability needed for this growth? Here I am surprised that *The Generalissimo* snubs the views of Lloyd Eastman.²⁵ Taylor calls Eastman a “renowned, critical scholar of the Republican period” but his opinions are represented only by the inconsequential observation that by 1936 Chiang was an “inexpendable (*sic*) leader.” (122) (Why quote at all if you have to add “(*sic*)”?) Likewise, when there are so many fresh studies of party history and local revolutions it is disappointing to find *Red Star Over China* cited as an authority for the Long March or for Chiang’s competition with the CCP. (618 n. 67, 68)

Taylor downplays Chiang’s “Fascism,” which is not unreasonable, but does not account for the arguments which have been made. (101-104) The book does wrangle with Frederic Wakeman’s discussion of “Confucian fascism” and the goose-stepping Blue Shirt youth brigades who worshiped Chiang (Zeng Guofan would have been shocked). By standard definitions, Wakeman concedes, the question whether the Nationalist regime was “fascist” is “patently misguided,” but he wanted to invoke the “remarkable blend of Chinese and Western components” that made the Blue Shirts “something other than either traditional personalism or modern fascism.” The “most striking contrast with European fascism,” Wakeman concludes, was the Nationalists’ “inability or unwillingness to create a true mass movement which in turn reflected the regime’s persistent distrust of social mobilization and political participation.”²⁶

²² William Kirby, “Continuity and Change in Modern China: Economic Planning on the Mainland and on Taiwan, 1943-1958,” *The Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs* 24 (1990), 121-141, and “Engineering China: Birth of the Developmental State, 1928-1937,” in Wen-hsin Yeh, ed., *Becoming Chinese: Passages to Modernity and Beyond* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 137-60; Julia C. Strauss, *Strong Institutions in Weak Polities: State Building in Republican China, 1927-1940* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998); Frederic E. Wakeman, Richard L. Edmonds, eds., *Reappraising Republican China* (Oxford; N.Y.: Oxford University Press, 2000).

²³ Parks M. Coble, *The Shanghai Capitalists and the Nationalist Government, 1927-1937* (Cambridge, Mass.: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1980).

²⁴ Charles W. Hayford, *To the People: James Yen and Village China* (N.Y.: Columbia University Press, 1990), esp. pp. 147-52.

²⁵ There is no mention of Eastman’s two major books, *The Abortive Revolution: China under Nationalist Rule, 1927-1937* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1974) and *Seeds of Destruction: Nationalist China in War and Revolution, 1937-1949* (Stanford, Cal.: Stanford University Press, 1984).

²⁶ Esherick, “The Many Faces,” p. 22; Wakeman, “A Revisionist View of the Nanking Decade: Confucian Fascism,” in Edmonds and Wakeman, ed., *Reappraising Republican China*, 142, 174, 178.

The New Life Movement gets respectful treatment but Taylor misses the chance to explain its interest. Henrietta Harrison, for instance, connects the emphasis on cleanliness, discipline, and physical exercise to the concept of the citizen-soldier which reached back to the early twentieth century and looked forward to the campaigns of the 1950s, even the Red Guards.²⁷

These questions turn out to be central to China's diplomacy. Taylor does not need to agree with their particular arguments, but he needs to face the question posed by Wright, Eastman, Wakeman, and Harrison, among others: why, in spite of all their initial achievements, Chiang and his Nationalists could not (or at least did not) build a mass base, a strong party, and a stable regime? Japan's interference is only part of the answer. Paradoxically, China's weakness meant that the Japanese were stuck in China, for no Chinese government had the legitimacy to either make a deal for them to withdraw or the power to force them to. The United States could neither protect a weak China nor create a strong one. Only Chinese could.

Chiang faced a vicious circle: Solving problems creates legitimacy, that is, the ability to gain compliance without force or money rewards. Legitimacy makes it easier to solve problems and create more legitimacy, power, and success. But failure leads to weakness and more failure. (Critics did not understand that the assassinations and jailings grew from *lack* of authority, not fascist abuse of it.) This cycle was most evident in the military version of Chiang's conundrum: on the one hand, when he stood up to the Japanese, his troops were shredded – they didn't have modern firepower, air support, or logistics – yet on the other hand, when he prudently negotiated until his troops could be made ready, he was pilloried both by party rivals and by public opinion, not all of which was communist.

Either way, Chiang lost – until 1937.

Foreign Affairs: Triangulation and Squaring the Vicious Circle

The United Front and defiance of Japan in the summer of 1937 earned Chiang the strongest support for any ruler of China since the mid-Qing dynasty, if then. Heroic but futile military confrontation at Shanghai led to retreat, the Rape of Nanjing, United Front politics in Wuhan, and eventual withdrawal to Chongqing.²⁸ The Japanese, Chiang told his Diary, are "impatient and short tempered" and their military philosophy is to "emphasize a 'Blitzkrieg' type of offense with strong fire power and speed." Only after his best troops had been shattered, however, did Chiang "slow everything down, enduring, and fighting a long war of attrition." (161)

²⁷ Henrietta Harrison, *China* (N.Y.: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 202-203.

²⁸ Stephen R. MacKinnon, *Wuhan, 1938: War, Refugees, and the Making of Modern China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008).

Both Chiang and Mao looked abroad, though both distrusted the so called “returned students” who had studied abroad and spent too much time outside China. China was now part of the global battle against fascism, but the western democracies offered no more aid than they did to the Spanish Republic. As W.H. Auden wrote in his poem “Hong Kong,” written on his visit there in 1938, “Off-stage, a war, Thuds like the slamming of a distant door.”

For Stalin, China was not off-stage, and Taylor gives fresh details on his support for Chiang and Mao. Balancing his fear of provoking the Japanese against his desire for China to resist them, Stalin from 1937 to 1941 sent Chiang (in current US equivalent) at least three billion dollars worth of airplanes, advisers, and loans of cash, perhaps as much as twenty five billion, far more than he sent to Mao. Taylor rightly highlights Stalin’s crucial support for Mao, but perhaps goes too far in suggesting that without Stalin’s gold “the Long March might not have succeeded.” (149, 625 n.45, 618 n. 67) ²⁹

Pearl Harbor changed everything, or so it seemed. When he heard the news, the Generalissimo spent the rest of day singing Zhejiang opera at the top of his lungs. In fact, the strategic situation had not shifted. America still placed Europe first and did not see China as having the military or economic ability to become a global player. That would have to wait until 1972.

One of Taylor’s strongest revisionist arguments is that American pressure and military advice led Chiang to act against his own interests. The initial move was Stilwell’s 1942 unilateral rejection of Chiang’s strategy in Burma and his insistence on an offensive instead of a planned withdrawal. The inevitable rout was a public relations coup for Stilwell but it destroyed crack Nationalist troops loyal to Chiang which could have swayed later battles. Stilwell’s biographer, Barbara Tuchman, paints Chiang as obstinate in not wanting to launch a counter-offensive, but Hans van de Ven argues that Stilwell had no combat experience or command training, did not understand air power, and was wedded to pre-First World War infantry offensives. ³⁰ Taylor contends that Chiang’s strategy in Burma would have had a “fair chance of success” and, even if it had failed, an orderly retreat would have preserved Chinese troops. Likewise, the Doolittle Raid, about which Chiang was not consulted, was an empty American propaganda triumph paid for with tens of thousands of Chinese casualties. (208-09)

²⁹ See Taylor’s tortuous exchange with Esherick, “Response,” 59-65, leading to the paperback correcting one mistake: Stalin’s grant in 1940 constituted 8.3 per cent of the CCP’s deficit, not 84 percent. (171)

³⁰ Hans Van de Ven, “Stilwell in the Stocks: The Chinese Nationalists and the Allied Powers in the Second World War,” *Asian Affairs* 34.3 (November 2003), 243-259; “The War of Resistance Before Japan’s Southern Advance,” Hans J. Van de Ven, *War and Nationalism in China, 1925-1945* (London; N.Y.: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003). Chin-tung Liang, *General Stilwell in China, 1942-1944: The Full Story* (Jamaica, N.Y.: St. John’s University Press, 1972) is a prosecutor’s brief, not an exploration, blaming Communists in the State Department and White House.

The abiding challenge was to create party cohesion and local organization. After he heard, from Zhou Enlai, among others, of Mao's "On New Democracy" (1940), Chiang commissioned his own manifesto in 1943, *Zhongguo zhi mingyun* (China's Destiny) and ordered it to be used in mass campaigns.³¹ Taylor is right that this was no "*Mein Kampf* of China," but is evasive about its nature, as he was on the question of Fascism. He says the book merely "reflects Chiang's distinctly nationalist, highly anti-imperialist, and strictly authoritarian outlook," and on world affairs struck a "liberal, internationalist stance," an odd claim. (259-61)

"On New Democracy" is mail order ideology but shrewd propaganda presented in colloquial, often striking language, while Chiang's prose is hieratic and his program mixes abstract Confucian moralism, anti-imperialism, and Sun Yatsen's technocratic determinism. Mao, as a New Culture internationalist and a Marxist, blames feudalism for China's inability to stand up to imperialism, but urges his readers to digest both China's heritage and the culture of foreign countries.³² Adding to our list of ironies is that Chiang, the "left Confucianist," was actually less rooted in the classical heritage than Mao, who was set on destroying it.³³

Taylor's narrative of wartime diplomacy is especially rich, arguing that Chiang played his hand with crafty skill. But no amount of smoke and mirrors could make up for China's weakness, and Taylor, as a retired diplomat, might have explained more of Chiang's peculiar style. Chiang distrusted his Foreign Ministry, whose cadre of returned students had performed brilliantly in the diplomatic victories of the 1920s and 1930s for which Chiang received credit.³⁴ He preferred a succession of personal envoys who could be kept on a short leash. Among them was his brother-in-law, T.V. Soong, a brilliant economist. T.V. graduated from Harvard shortly after FDR and was periodically dispatched to Washington as a private conduit to him.³⁵

This brings us to China's most famous returned student, Soong Mayling. Theodore White wrote in 1940 that "by education and training she is equipped as no other woman in

³¹ (Chongqing: Zhengzhong, 1943). Here again my inner graduate student emerges: Taylor says the "only English edition" was that of "Phillippe" (*sic*) Jaffe (N.Y.: Roy, 1947), but there was also an "authorized translation" by Wang Chung-hui, with an Introduction by Lin Yutang (Macmillan 1947).

³² Earl Swisher, "Review," *The Far Eastern Quarterly* 10.1 (1950), 89-95, extends this comparison.

³³ Ross Terrill, *Mao: A Biography* (Palo Alto, Cal.: Stanford University Press, 1999), for instance, has more than two dozen references to Mao and poetry.

³⁴ Strauss, Ch 6, "The Ministry of Foreign Affairs," *Strong Institutions*; Stephen G. Craft, *V.K. Wellington Koo and the Emergence of Modern China* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2003); Sun Youli, *China and the Origins of the Pacific War, 1931-1941* (N.Y.: St. Martin's, 1993).

³⁵ Tai-Chun Kuo, "A Strong Diplomat in a Weak Polity: T. V. Soong and Wartime US-China Relations, 1940-1943," *Journal of Contemporary China* 18.59 (2009), 219-231.

modern politics to take her place in the affairs of state.”³⁶ Perhaps if she had been a man she would have been taken more seriously, but then she would have had no power at all, since hers derived solely from Chiang, who would not have gone for a same-sex marriage.

Mme. Chiang played much the same role for her husband that Zhou Enlai played for Mao – the cosmopolitan interpreter and enabler. Like Zhou, she understood the need to placate America and she smoothed relations with FDR, Stilwell, and later, George Marshall. Zhou never crossed Mao, but Mayling saw her husband as a reform project. She told Marshall that over the years she had tried to educate her husband on the subject of democracy but had made only a “two percent impression.” (371) During her media-savvy tour of the United States in 1942, she slept in the White House for weeks and addressed each House of Congress, but she got no concessions in policy. If Mao had come to Washington in 1945, as some later suggested would have improved relations,³⁷ it is hard to think that he or even Zhou could have succeeded where Mayling failed.

At the November 1943 Cairo Conference Mme. Chiang was her husband’s translator, surely a bad idea, and assumed the role of his authoritative spokesman. Taylor shows that the short life of some agreements at Cairo may have come from FDR’s studied ambiguity or the Chiangs’ wishful thinking, but others grew from Mayling’s mistranslation or misunderstanding of the American political system. (248, 254-255) The official photograph of the world leaders at the Cairo Conference reveals more than intended. The version in *The Generalissimo* (255) crops her out, but other versions show Mme. Chiang – the only woman – sitting farthest left, next to a scowling Churchill, while the Generalissimo looks blankly ahead. That is, a private citizen is seated as an equal to Roosevelt, Churchill, and Stalin. No surprise that the great victory promises at Cairo disappeared in Tehran, which Stalin did not allow Chiang to attend.

In the summer of 1944, Mayling joined T.V. in Chiang’s doghouse and spent the next thirteen months in the United States. The crisis of late 1944 and the recall of Stilwell unfolded in her absence, a turning point in ending whatever “special relationship” China had with the United States. Chiang’s deal with Stalin in 1945, this time on the personal counsel of his son, Chiang Ching-kuo, who had spent some ten years in Russia, displayed realpolitik and set up the post-war playing field. (310-311)

The Smackdown: Did Chiang Lose China?

³⁶ Quoted in Jespersen, “Madame Chiang Kaishek and the Face of Sino-American Relations,” in Chu, ed. *Madame Chiang Kai-shek and Her China*, 125.

³⁷ Barbara Tuchman, “If Mao Had Come to Washington,” *Foreign Affairs* (1972), 44-64.

In 1945 Chiang was in the driver's seat. The victorious war effort made him a hero; his armies outnumbered Mao's; he had the backing of the world's leaders, including Stalin, the master of playing both sides against the middle; he had the right to tax and conscript.³⁸

Chapters Eight and Nine, "The Chimera of Victory" and "The Great Failure," unfold the following debacle with telling effect. This is a rich tale of arrogance, mistrust, miscommunication, misunderstanding, backstabbing, and incompetence, all acknowledged and lamented by Chiang himself. Blame can be ladled out without fear of supplies running short, but in the end, Taylor leaves us with the impression that failures and shortcomings were so many and so bound together that the Nationalist regime could not save itself and was beyond outside salvation.

Rushing to take Manchuria immediately but then, when victory was within his grasp, agreeing to an American sponsored cease fire was disastrous. When things turned bad, the decision to pour more troops into the Northeast was "a huge, irrational – in fact, a mad – gamble." (378-379) Taylor quotes Chiang's petulant and later withdrawn outburst that "It was Marshall, this American, who lost us and lost China." (388, 400, 415) Taylor declares that the State Department White Paper's claim in 1949 that Chiang occupied Manchuria "contrary to the advice of the U.S." is "one of the most important unexamined and incorrect assumptions of the Chinese Civil War," though he says two pages later that it was Nationalist victories that misled Chiang into over-reaching. (390, 392)³⁹

The Civil War from 1946 to 1948 was among the largest military mobilizations of the twentieth century but it was as much political as military. Taylor downplays Chiang's neglect or destruction of his support outside the military. One example: When I interviewed him for my book, the liberal reformer James Yen told me that he went to seek Chiang's support for his successful programs in rural reconstruction. "Dr. Yen, you are a scholar and I am a soldier," Chiang replied, "we cannot see eye to eye." Destroying the Communist armies came first. Yen thought this exposed the Generalissimo as a military man whose thought came straight from the *Tale of the Three Kingdoms*; Mao Tse-tung at least had some scholarly depth, he added, carrying great amounts of Chinese history in readiness on his back, as if in a quiver.⁴⁰

Chiang's rule on Taiwan, which Taylor lucidly recounts in the later chapters of *The Generalissimo* and in his biography of Chiang Ching-kuo, shows that lessons can be learned, though it is still not clear to me that the lessons are Neo-Confucian.⁴¹

³⁸ Odd Arne Westad, *Decisive Encounters: The Chinese Civil War, 1946-1950* (Stanford, Cal.: Stanford University Press, 2003), 7-10.

³⁹ Taylor says "I documented and discussed this assumption in *The Generalissimo's Son*." (667 n. 69) There is no page reference and I do not see documentation or discussion in the relevant section.

⁴⁰ Hayford, *To the People*, 207. Yen then went around Chiang to lobby the U.S. Congress for the Joint Commission on Rural Reconstruction, later important in Taiwan's development.

⁴¹ Jay Taylor, *The Generalissimo's Son: Chiang Ching-kuo and the Revolutions in China and Taiwan* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2000).

The “struggle for modern China” was not to control an existing nation but to invent one. China in the 1940s was not a nation, but a traumatized, torn, and militarized landscape of desperation. Mao’s success was to build an organization which could learn from its own blunders and overcome them, then to exploit openings, mistakes, and outside help. But to imply, without recognizing the problem, that any Chinese leader –even a revived Confucius himself, much less a Neo-Confucian – could have unified and reconstructed a wealthy and strong China without unconscionable human cost is to avoid the tragic essence of the modern nation state.

Bottom Line: Thumbs Generally Upward

“Good King Chiang” has not dethroned “Bad King Chiang.” Jay Taylor has carried off a nearly impossible biographical task with intelligence and panache, yet for all its strengths and wonders, *The Generalissimo* does not use the resources of the China field to place Chiang in history nor does the biographical revisionism change my view of China’s history. A final judgment is yet to be written.

Charles W. Hayford is an Independent Scholar and Editor, *Journal of American-East Asian Relations*. He received his Ph.D. in History and East Asian Languages at Harvard University (1973) and has taught at Northwestern University, University of Illinois at Chicago, University of Iowa, Stanford University, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Harvard Summer School, New Asia College of The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Oberlin College, and Harvard College. While in Hong Kong, he was Representative of the Yale-China Association and Associate Director of the International Asian Studies Programme. His publications include *To the People: James Yen and Village China* (Columbia University Press, 1990); *China* (World Bibliography Series, ABC-Clio, 1997); *Draft Bibliography of American-East Asian Relations*, a special volume of *Journal of American-East Asian Relations* 8:1-4 (Spring-Winter 1999 [published 2002]); “The Open Door Raj and Post-Semi-Colonial Historiography: Chinese-American Cultural Relations, 1900-1945” in Warren Cohen, Ed., *Pacific Passages: Historiography of American-East Asian Relations* (Columbia University Press, 1995) He is working on a manuscript, tentatively titled *America’s Chinas: From The Opium Wars to the Olympics*, which deals with the books written for the home audience by Americans living in China.

Review by Steven I. Levine, University of Montana

Exiled on Taiwan, Chinese Nationalist leader Chiang Kai-shek (1887-1975) dreamed of returning to the land he had ruled before his arch-rival Mao Zedong and the Chinese Communists conquered mainland China in 1949. Yet Chiang's dreams, like those of most political exiles, were spun of gossamer. A political realist, his public fantasy of returning to China was intended to sustain the morale of his fellow exiles. Chiang well knew he lacked the means and the freedom of action to counterattack the mainland. He also understood that whatever future political changes took place there would likely come from within.

Jay Taylor's authoritative and indispensable biography of one of modern China's towering political figures is sympathetic in tone yet critical in judgment. He has managed to do what no one else has, namely, to restore Chiang Kai-shek to the position in history his accomplishments merit without, however, engaging in apotheosis. Taylor makes meticulous use of a broad array of written and oral sources in Chinese and Western languages, in particular the private diaries that the Chinese leader kept throughout his life. He dispels many of the persistent myths that have shrouded Chiang's career as political and military leader, including the false charges that he was a political reactionary, an instrument of landlords and capitalists, that he failed to fight the Japanese, and that he was later a puppet of American imperialism. These calumnies, which originated in Chinese Communist propaganda, unfortunately found their way into much Western academic as well as popular literature on China after World War II and became the conventional wisdom. Some among us will likely be reluctant to reassess what were long considered verities, yet we must in light of the evidence. As Taylor ably demonstrates, Chiang was in essence a revolutionary nationalist who sought to dominate, not serve, the landlords and corporate capitalists. He fought hard against the Japanese and asserted Chinese interests vis-à-vis the Americans as much as circumstances allowed.

It is true that in the twentieth century competition to unify China, restore China's sovereignty, and establish a modern developmental state, Chiang Kai-shek finished second, a respectable showing but not enough to win the gold. Yet it might well have been otherwise. By the eve of the Sino-Japanese War of 1937-1945, under extremely difficult domestic and international conditions, Chiang had gone far to achieve those goals. Although the vagaries of history only permit a counterfactual supposition, it seems very likely that absent Japan's imperial ambitions in China, Chiang might well have succeeded in marginalizing, if not totally eliminating, the Chinese Communists and other domestic enemies and setting China firmly on a moderate, internationally-oriented, state capitalist development trajectory. Instead, the primary contagion of Japanese aggression fatally weakened the Chinese body politic making it susceptible to the secondary infection of communism, an opportunistic disease that killed any hope of establishing a progressive, pluralist, and democratic polity. These ideals remain unfulfilled to this day except in that part of the Chinese cultural sphere that is contemporary Taiwan. In this sense, the greatest crime that Japanese imperialism committed against China was not the Nanjing Massacre or

even the Imperial Army's responsibility for the deaths of many millions of Chinese victims, but rather opening the floodgates to Chinese communism and the murderous dictatorship of Mao Zedong that claimed tens of millions of lives in the process of constructing what purported to be socialism.

Two elements enter into any assessment of Chiang Kai-shek's political and military leadership. The first is the character of the man himself, the nature of his leadership, and the quality of his judgments and decisions. The second is the times in which he lived, the challenges that he faced domestically and internationally, and the treatment that China under his leadership was accorded by other nations.

Chiang, who in Taylor's words, possessed a "domineering and cold personality," (p. 72) sought to emulate such late Qing Confucian military modernizers as Zeng Guofan. He considered "patriotism and national spirit...the keys to restoring China's dignity and its place in the world." (p. 22) Had he been Japanese, he would have been a worthy successor to the Meiji oligarchs. As it was, the legacy of his almost three years of study in Japan as an officer cadet was his admiration for the discipline and purposefulness of the Japanese that he sought to emulate. Throughout his life he possessed – or perhaps was possessed by – a sense of mission that was reinforced by the strong Christian faith he acquired in his mid-30s, a faith that emphasized duty, courage, and perseverance in the face of adversity. Chiang was a decisive leader adept at playing off his enemies but, as Taylor notes, he lacked the utter ruthlessness and boundless capacity for treachery and mendacity that distinguished a Stalin or a Mao. For example, right after the December 1936 Xian Incident, Chiang, contrary to the urgings of his advisers, declined to take the offensive against the still weakly embedded communist forces in northwest China that he might have destroyed once and for all. Instead, he honored the promise he had made to CCP leader Zhou Enlai to pursue an inclusive united front policy that Stalin had forced upon the reluctant Chinese communists. In this instance, Chiang proved to be his own nemesis.

Chiang was generally a shrewd observer of international affairs who more often than not correctly gauged major trends and adjusted his foreign policy to secure maximum advantage. He was not bound to any foreign power, but rather sought political and military advantage where he could find it. What he would not abide and fought strenuously to avoid was subordination to a foreign power, be it the USSR, Japan, or the United States, that would permanently impair Chinese sovereignty. Yet, China was far from being a great power during Chiang's tenure, and he was constantly forced to play the game of international politics with a very weak hand.

One of Taylor's longest and most valuable sections is his treatment of the Sino-American alliance during World War II. He inverts the master narrative that presents U.S. General Joseph W. ("Vinegar Joe") Stilwell as hero and Chiang Kai-shek as petty tyrant and military incompetent who refused to send his troops into battle. In fact, it was the Americans and, more particularly, the British that repeatedly reneged on promises of support to Chiang's forces. Chiang, who had tried to work with the cantankerous and insubordinate Stilwell, eventually succeeded in engineering his replacement. During the war, Chinese forces continued to tie down roughly a million Japanese troops in the China Theater. Yet, Chinese

representatives were excluded from Allied strategic planning and at Yalta Roosevelt, Churchill, and Stalin treated Chinese sovereignty with contempt.

During World War II, in order to elicit more U.S. financial and military assistance, Chiang repeatedly threatened the collapse of Chinese resistance, a tactic that often worked at the time, but lost its efficacy after his retreat to Taiwan. From then on, Chiang had to deal with a succession of American presidents and secretaries of state who paid lip service to the idea of a Free China on Taiwan, but who increasingly had little patience or respect for Chiang and his remnant regime. Toward the end, in 1971-1972, when Nixon and Kissinger made false assurances of continued support for the Republic of China while they acted like obsequious supplicants vis-à-vis Mao and Zhou, Chiang could do nothing but suffer this indignity. (He came to view Nixon as “disloyal, insincere, and scheming,” (p. 561), a judgment that is hard to dispute.) Toward Stalin, a much harder man, Chiang tried but failed to demonstrate that a China under his control would better serve the Soviet Union's national interests than a communist China under Mao. Stalin, a communist revolutionary, was not buying and threw his behind-the-scenes support to the CCP in Manchuria during the civil war.

War and politics is a game of chance as much as of skill. In this game Chiang, even though skillful, was unlucky. He managed to survive the challenge of his greatest foreign enemy, Japan, but his domestic foes, the Chinese communists, took advantage of the turmoil of war to grow from a marginal into a powerful force. To be sure, as Taylor acknowledges, Chiang made numerous strategic and tactical mistakes in both military and political spheres, particularly during the civil war of 1946-1949 when he appears to have lost his touch and with it the country that he had ruled since 1927. Yet, ultimately, it was not Chiang Kai-shek who lost China, but China that lost Chiang Kai-shek. The Maoist dictatorship that followed was a human tragedy on an almost unimaginable scale that dwarfed the very real but still limited repression of Chiang's China. That Taiwan, shortly after Chiang Kai-shek's death, was able to develop into a vibrant Chinese-style democracy while mainland China remains in the grip of a paranoid authoritarianism bears witness to the differing legacies that Chiang Kai-shek and Mao Zedong bequeathed the Chinese people.

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Author's Response by Jay Taylor, Research Associate, Fairbank Center for Chinese Studies, Harvard University

I thank Charles Hayford and Steven Levine for their thoughtful and informed reviews. Levine highlights what he sees as *The Generalissimo's* valuable contributions to the study of China's tumultuous half-century in the time of Chiang Kai-shek and Mao-Zedong. His comments stimulated a number of additional expositions on my part. Hayford kindly concludes that the book was a "nearly impossible biographical task," but was pursued with "intelligence and panache." He questions a good number of my interpretations, however, and raises so many tough questions that I have concocted a long response. I will reply first to his review.

Response to Charles Hayford

Hayford disagrees most especially with the book's revisionism regarding the role of Chiang Kai-shek in the history of modern China and the dynamics behind the 1949 victory in China of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). The differences between us are highlighted by the book's brief, final thought: the vision that drives China today is that of Chiang Kai-shek, not Mao Zedong. A related reflection occurs in the epilogue and is expressed by Chiang's ghost who thinks that without either Soviet or Japanese intervention (just one or the other), he would likely have beaten Mao, China's economic takeoff would have begun ten to twenty years earlier, and millions of lives--not just Chinese--would have been saved.

The Vision Factor

The main question boils down to what vision or model of development won the struggle for modern China as we see it today on both the mainland and Taiwan? In my view, it is clear it is not the ideals of Mao Zedong that have prevailed. It was the modern Confucians on both Taiwan and the mainland, who, I believe, were and in no way are indebted to Mao except as a negative example. The enlightened Confucianists on Taiwan in the era of the Chiangs and on the post-Mao mainland both sought and are still seeking the modern prosaic goals of sovereignty, unity, prosperity, an up-to-date culture, an avowedly peaceful world role, and harmony at home, which is to say stability. These goals were and today are to be achieved by rapid industrialization through an export-and foreign investment oriented economy, a productive agriculture based on the country's traditional system of family farming, rapid progress in universal education and science, and a modern military. Both the Chiang model and that of the post-Mao Dengists also emphasize maintenance of many of the traditional values and structures of society while also gradually opening up the country's culture to the ways of the world.

With variations of emphasis and effectiveness most of this model is a common formula in most of the developing world. But key to the accomplishment of modernity as seen by the rulers in the Chiang era in Taiwan, post-Mao mainland China, post-Ho Chi-minh Vietnam and the post-WW II dictatorships in South Korea, the Philippines, and elsewhere was the

interpretation of “harmony” or stability, as meaning primarily the suppression of political dissent. In the Sinic economies, the search for harmony through conformity is an ancient tradition and has a special nuance--the ancient, Confucian ideal of a firm but benevolent ruler.

Of course there were differences, but Chiang’s idea of modern China was neither a unique nor revolutionary conception-- it was not a profound departure from the norms of Chinese culture or the ideals of most of that country’s non-communist reformers of the past 100 years. It was not exclusively his model at all. I wrongly assumed that this was obvious in the book’s final, epigrammatic reflection. What is notable in Chiang’s case and that of post-Mao Deng Xiaoping is their implementation of the model. KMT propaganda eulogized Chiang’s leadership but there was never a grand model or an ideology called “Chiang Kai-shek’s Thoughts.” His development model reflected the *Zeitgeist* of nationalism, anti-imperialism, republicanism, economic development, a heavy state role in the economy, social welfare, women’s rights, and popular democracy that in Chiang’s young, formative years became dominant among youth and urban elites in many colonial and semi-colonial parts of the world including China. This occurred despite strongly countervailing world trends at the time-- monarchism, militarism, racism, and imperialism, as well the budding totalitarian ideologies of fascism and communism. With the exception of the 1948 mainland elections, Chiang-- at that point an authoritarian without the power of a true dictator and one whose country was in constant military conflict, postponed a free, electoral democracy. In exile on Taiwan his model assumed the stark features of a police state. But Chiang in Taiwan and the post-Mao Deng Xiaoping were different from most of the despotic rulers of the day. As a long-time Confucian--and an earnest not a cynical man--Chiang believed he was a benevolent as well as effective ruler as the ancient sage required. He was in fact largely an honest, uncorrupt man who thought he was serving the people although at times that required, he believed, cruel and violent measures. For his part, Deng finally rejected the totalitarianism he had long and enthusiastically served and came to believe his mission and that of “socialism” was to serve the common, everyday interests of the people rather than the aims of a grand, millenarian movement. Like Chiang, he no doubt thought he was a benevolent, wise ruler. Shortly after the brutal suppression of the Tiananmen demonstrations, while at that point set on a notably harder interpretation of “harmony,” Deng in fact resurrected Confucius and formally revived the Confucian model of good governance as the ethical framework of CCP rule..

The Sinic cultures of East Asia have produced a number of variations of the Modern Confucian model, including today what are liberal democratic ones, Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan and “modified or controlled” democracies in Hong Kong and Singapore. The models of Chiang Kai-shek in Taiwan, Deng after Tiananmen, and the Vietnamese rulers today are “hard” authoritarian regimes when it comes to dissent but ones that have impressively advanced the welfare of their respective citizens while gradually allowing more open and civil societies. “Soft authoritarian” regimes with a notable level of free speech and dissent include those of Chiang Ching-kuo in Taiwan in the Eighties and Deng before Tiananmen. In his last year (1988) ,Ching-kuo made the leap to full democracy (and quickly died) while the next year Deng shifted back to the more oppressive version of the post-Mao model.

The People’s Republic of China today maintains the same political structure and coercive and surveillance practices as under Mao, but it is far less draconian. Politically as well as

economically it is qualitatively a far, far different world than that under the Chairman. The Dengists have essentially dropped all the important identifying, intellectual or ideological principles of communism. The accumulation of wealth is encouraged; there is virtually no talk of exploitation of labor; capitalists may join the party, and religious believers are considered part of the “people.” If Mao’s ghost should also return and wander around China he almost certainly would call it a worse political and economic culture than say, present day Taiwan, because the leaders of the latter do not pretend to be Communists. Of course the current rulers in Beijing, like the early Dengists, all have their roots in the Communist Party of Mao Zedong. Thus, in order to avoid incriminating themselves, they, perforce, embrace both the ghost of Mao (with a hand over his mouth) and the tattered history of the CCP.

The prolonged KMT political “tutelage” was officially ended by the chaotic elections on the mainland in early 1948. But in Taiwan martial law soon provided the legal framework for a “temporary” police state, which went on for thirty-eight years. At the same time Mao took over the vast mainland. Chiang’s aim was not profoundly to transform human relations and the world as Mao aspired to do. Instead he hoped to assure stability and unchallenged political power in order to preserve his position and the goal of national unity, defeat any attack from the mainland, and build a modern and prosperous Chinese model on Taiwan. During the long martial law period, including the time under the elder Chiang, the promise and constitutional commitment to a rule of law and a free democracy remained ideals that always had much more promise in Taiwan’s relatively open and civil society--with for example several thousand non-governmental organizations--than in the extraordinarily closed society under Chairman Mao. My impression also is that in Taiwan after the mid-fifties and generally on the pre-1949 mainland as well Chiang’s regime was less harsh in suppression of dissent than is the current post-Mao Dengist-type regime in Beijing. This and other such comparison would be an interesting subject for a scholarly monograph.

Mao’s Role

Even with the above explanation of the vision thing, Hayford may not agree with my exposition. There may be a fundamental difference between us. In two key passages in his review he suggests a provocative thought on the issue of leadership and modernization in China:

“...to imply without recognizing the problem that any Chinese leader ...could have unified and reconstructed a wealthy and strong China without unconscionable human cost is to avoid the tragic essence of the modern nation state.” Elsewhere he suggests that “The ‘struggle for modern China’ was not to control an existing nation but to invent one. China in the 1940s was not a nation, but a traumatized, torn, and militarized landscape of desperation.”

Hayward is no apologist for Mao Zedong, but--if I read him correctly-- he seems to believe that China before Mao had fallen or been pushed over the cliff into the status of a failed state and had to go through a trauma similar to that of the Mao years in order to clean out all the cobwebs and cultural impediments to change so that modernization would be possible. From 1927 to 1947, China, under Chiang, did indeed suffer huge calamities, but as we will detail below China was in no way a failed state during this time. The Republic of China in Nanjing

and then Chongqing was a reasonably effective government under siege. Beginning in mid-1947 the economic, military, and morale situation began a rapid collapse. In less than two years it was effectively over. Mao could have put China back into working order in no time if he had chosen the hard, modern, socialist or the latter Dengist version of the Confucian model. Instead he began by treating the country to a series of profound and bloody shocks to ready it for the new, truly world-shattering society it was to become --like it or not.

Taiwan suffered the 2/28/1947 massacre and the white terror of the early 1950s, but I don't think these experiences in any way made the island's economic "miracle" possible. Quite the contrary. The same for the other Confucian economies referred to above. Their economic successes have in important ways also been due to Confucius---that is, they all inherited a culture that believes education and savings are the two legs of success, is highly entrepreneurial, and has a strong work ethic as well as a gambling streak. It is a way of life that has enjoyed centuries of experience in large scale organization and responsible administration as well as a civil service based (in theory at least) on learning. To become competitive with the Western world--and Japan--all these societies needed were first, a comparatively open and stable world economy and second, pragmatic leaders who could provide reasonably effective governance and order and predictability at home. These inherent cultural traits were also vividly seen on the mainland in the hard pressed but make-do administrations of Chiang Kai-shek in the Nanjing Decade and the war years, and then on Taiwan under both Chiangs, and finally on the mainland in the post-Mao Deng Xiaoping era. China did not need another blood bath.

Biographic History?

Hayford also raises an interesting metaphysical question --can biography be history.? He seemed to enjoy the narrative story of *The Generalissimo* but concludes that it works as biography but not as history. He appears to agree with E.H. Carr's dictum, which he cites, that "good biography makes bad history." This is another challenging but respectable thought. In my view, however, good biography is good literature bound by good history--that is, facts. Thus the craft relies first of all on the work of historians and other social scientists as well as diligent research on the part of the biographer. In the prologue to *The Generalissimo*, I make clear my heavy indebtedness to hundreds of perceptive and balanced studies by Western and other scholars of specific events and the international and domestic dynamics involved in Chiang's long career on the mainland and Taiwan. A good portion of the 2,300 endnotes in *The Generalissimo* reflect the use of scholarly monographs. Obviously I could have read and employed hundreds more of them, but, as Hayward suggests, in this case I probably would never have finished the book.

A biography of a historical figure must, in my opinion, not only make use of academic resources but must also itself provide important or at least interesting new perceptions of historical events and support them with significant unpublished material obtained through interviews, diaries, archival research, and such. True, biography's essential aim is to provide insight into the character, temperament, emotional life, thoughts and actions of an important or interesting individual, but also to try to capture the spirit of his or her times--that is, to provide valuable insight into events and characters in a highly readable fashion.

This means weaving a portrait of the myriad, enormously complex influences and experiences from childhood on that shape an individual's destiny, including personal relations and the dramatic attributes and events of the day. Working all this into a finished picture that moves as well as informs requires empathy and craftsmanship and at its best, art. Also of course creative energy. It requires in short a novelist's engagement with the vagaries of human nature and the contingencies of life but a historian's devotion to truth or when supposition is employed its clear identification. God invented guessing so science, history, and life could advance. Among the best histories, I think, are those that involve the same features of a good biography--they have to be inspired synthesis. The difference, I suppose, is that a very good history need not necessarily be a good story--it need not convey the sense of a dramatic narrative but a good biography must.

Scholarly Reviews

Hayward believes academic reviewers in general have tended to "commend" *The Generalissimo* but to be "stingy in their praise." Of the many academic reviews I have read, however, a substantial majority believe the Chiang book has made a significant--some made clear a major--contribution to history. To begin with, the other reviewer in this journal, the noted scholar, Steven I. Levine, concludes that the book "managed to do what no one else has, namely, to restore Chiang Kai-shek to the position in history his accomplishments merit without, however, engaging in apotheosis." Andrew J. Nathan also sees an important effect, declaring that *The Generalissimo* "was bound to reshape the historical debate over the failure of democracy and the rise of communism in twentieth-century China." (*Foreign Affairs*, Sep/Oct 2009. See also Nathan's equally positive review in *The New Republic's* on-line web)

Another leading historian, Jonathan Mirsky, writes that "Even in the rapidly widening field of modern Chinese history, it is unusual and gratifying to read a book that upsets not only the reader's previous views but even those of the author himself...Now a different Chiang stands before us....The book is a huge advance on our knowledge of what happened in China from the early twentieth century to the present day,..." Mirsky concludes that "There will be no oblivion [for Chiang]. Jay Taylor has seen to that... A substantial and comprehensive contribution to our knowledge of China." (*Literary Review*, May 1, 2009.) In a prepublication review, David Lampton cites *The Generalissimo* for "providing new insights into the savage international and civil wars in China that raged for almost thirty years as well as Chiang's quarter century on Taiwan." And Arthur Waldron describes it as "a magnificent achievement, very good reading, and a sign, if I am not mistaken, of deep changes in interpretative currents." (*China Brief*, October 2009.) Among the distinguished academic reviewers some wrote positive reviews but did not comment directly on the book's impact on history but did do so indirectly.. Among these were William Kirby, Jonathan Spence, and Robert Sutter.

Three of the five reviews by scholars in *The Chinese Historical Review* (Spring 2010), to which Dr. Hayward refers, are in accord with the book's overall treatment of Chiang and his place in history. Harold M. Tanner, for example concludes that, "Taylor's view of Chiang, his character and his role in modern China are fully justified and will contribute, in the long run, to changing

Chiang's image in the eyes of Americans," presumably including some historians.¹ In his review, Morris Bian, who was also highly positive in his overall judgment, complained of the work's relative lack of attention to Chiang's impressive efforts before and during the war to build up ordinance and other defense-oriented industries, to strengthen state institutions, and to plan for post-war reconstruction. Bian's thesis, of course, strongly supports *The Generalissimo's* overall assessment of Chiang's performance up to 1946. Liu Xiaoyuan focuses on the relative lack of attention in the book to the frontier, minority regions of China and what he calls China's "ethnopolitics" but he concludes that *The Generalissimo's* "new account of the entire lifespan of the Nationalist leader is... a rare and doubly valuable contribution to the burgeoning re-writing of the 20th-century Chinese history." Joseph W. Esherick strongly challenges the book's conclusions about Soviet aid to the CCP and the fall of Manchuria and what he calls its "apologetic tone" on Chiang's reputed fascism and other faults. But on its contribution to history he praises the biography's use of the Chiang diaries and "other documentary sources"; its "essential correction" of the "conventional narrative" on major aspects of the War of Resistance; and its "persuasive[ly]... criticisms" of General Stilwell. Professor Schoppa writes a strongly critical review.

Objectivity

Hayford notes with apparent approval Schoppa's accusation that the book paints Chiang "in stark shades of ...white" and opponents in black" and also cites Roger Thompson's perception (in another journal) of a "partisan approach" "deeply influenced" by the Nationalist Party's "narrative template for Chiang and his revolution." These criticisms challenge the basic objectivity of the book and in a response article in *The Chinese Historical Review* I listed in four paragraphs some 40 examples of Chiang's horrendous to serious offenses that I wrote about in the book.² Following are just a few of these treatments: an account of his blowing up the dikes on the Yellow River to stop the Japanese, leading to the death of 800,000 or more Chinese; a sweeping statement that the civil war years 1946-1949 constituted a "disaster" in terms of Chiang's military and administrative leadership; citation of incriminating passages in the diary on the February 1947 bloody massacre in Taiwan; and text that highlights his wanton sacrifice of hundreds of thousands of troops in Manchuria and later in North China because he needed time to prepare Taiwan for his retreat from the mainland. In the Epilogue, I conclude that some of Chiang's extreme actions amounted to "staggering moral blindness or turpitude" and constituted "offenses against humanity." I believe most readers, like many scholars, will decide that my treatment of Chiang's achievements and offenses is fair and balanced.

American Views Of Chiang

¹ Tanner, however, did disagree with the supposition that Chiang's vision is what drives Modern China today.

² *The Chinese Historical Review* Vol. 17, Number 1, Spring 2010, p.51.

Hayford does not agree with my statement that at the time of Chiang's death in 1975 he was viewed in the United States as an "exceptionally cruel and repressive figure who possessed no authentic principles or ideals and had few if any achievements." In the sentence next to the one cited above I indicated which observers I was talking about-- I wrote that "Like many China specialists" I had been influenced by Harold Issacs and the other well-known critical writers on the subject. In other words in 1975 "many China specialists" diplomats, journalists, and academics, held quite negative views of Chiang." I was careful in saying, "many." Probably it was "most." I certainly include myself. This was despite new monographs challenging the previous historical treatment of aspects of issues and events in Chiang's career. Of course there were prominent conservatives who had always extolled him.

The Role Of Zhou Enlai

I don't believe I suggested that the Communist revolution succeeded in China because of Zhou Enlai's political "seduction" of American officials. If General Joseph W. Stilwell had not been around and General Albert C. Wedemeyer had been Chiang's chief of staff for the China Theater, U.S.-China relations during the war, I imagine, would have been relatively smooth even if the persuasive Zhou was still working his magic. I think it was the combination of way-overboard critics in Stilwell's headquarters and the American Embassy, Chiang's abysmal sense of public relations--most especially with American reporters, and a lot of bumptious KMT officials, as well as the smooth work of Zhou and his staff that turned the Western press into unforgiving enemies of Chiang.

But probably in the end all that would not have made much difference in the conduct of the war in China nor the outcome of the civil war. If Wedemeyer had been in Chongqing all along instead of Stilwell, I doubt that the U.S., beginning in 1945, would have been any more willing to apply really serious pressure on Stalin not to intervene in the Chinese civil war or if it did to follow-up in a meaningful way. Without the influence of Zhou and Stilwell the U.S. would probably have stuck with Chiang longer than it did and it very likely would not have cut off material military aid to Chiang so soon. But it seems a good guess that the United States would in any event not have sent troops to help Chiang assert his government's authority in Manchuria and, after that key region was lost, to hold the line at the Great Wall or later at the Yangtze. We don't know of course, but probably President Truman would still have pursued the only conceivable way that in theory might have solved America's great dilemma in China-- Washington wished above all to avoid involvement in a bloody, endless, Chinese civil war but it also sought to avoid the transition of the huge nation of China into another communist state and Soviet ally. It is my view that Mao's success was essentially a military victory aided by critical Soviet aid and secondarily by the morale and economic collapse of Chiang's regime-- the latter due in good part to his pouring virtually all his resources and effort into the military campaign.

Chiang's Record In The Nanking Decade

Here I would like to return to Hayford's view that Chiang's leadership on the mainland was a failure on most counts. At the beginning of his leadership against heavy odds Chiang completed the Northern Expedition and formally united the country under one flag. While

continually fighting rebellions by war-lords and the Soviet-supported Communists, suffering Japan's capture of Manchuria as well as its bloody attack on Shanghai (1932), and suffering the ills of the Great Depression, he achieved impressive economic and other success in building up the country and preparing it for war. Hayford himself reports that "the field" of China scholars had "by the early 1960s" recognized "reasonable economic growth, substantial social development, and cultural energy, and...the [work of the Nanjing planning bureaucracy [that] laid the foundation for 1950s growth in both the PRC and Taiwan." But, in a short phrase, he dismisses any role Chiang may have had in these impressive achievements in most grueling circumstances. The relevant Western studies, he says, "hardly mention Chiang."

It was Chiang, however, who set the goals of modernization, who appointed the qualified technocrats to implement the model, and judging by his diaries closely followed their progress. This is what Morris L. Bian has to say on the subject in his definitive book on the subject speaking of both the Nanking Decade and the war years (1937-1945): "Chiang Kai-shek was the driving force in the Nationalist institutional rationalization."³

Hayford suggests that by 1937 Chiang could not defeat Japan's continued incursions into China and faced heavy domestic disapproval of his policy of appeasement while trying to build up a military force to face Japan in the coming war. Chiang, he concludes, was at this stage, "lost."

But as Lloyd E. Eastman made clear (as noted in my book and in Hayford's review), by the fall of 1936, Chiang, who had previously been pictured as an uneducated militarist scheming for personal power, ...was being praised as "a far-seeing leader who, so long as the nation had been torn by internal struggles, had wisely avoided a confrontation with the Japanese." He had become "a popular and seemingly inexplicable (sic) leader."⁴

As *The Generalissimo* explained, in the fall of 1936 Mao Zedong sent an open letter to the KMT praising Chiang and his handling of the Japanese threat. Secret and serious KMT/CCP negotiations on a united front were under way. A Comintern representative, that is, Stalin's representative, attended these talks. The liberal Chinese press was either quiet or had joined in the new optimism. Student outrage had quickly subsided. The usually unsympathetic *Dagongbao* declared, "The people's confidence seems as though it were revived from the dead."⁵ Chiang did not lack authority at that point. *The Generalissimo* adds details to the upbeat picture at that time despite the ongoing CCP and Communist threats as well as the drag of the Great Depression on China's economy:

There were many other bright spots. "The rate of illiteracy among government troops had diminished from 70 percent to 30 percent. Law codes had been rewritten and applied nationally. The recent extension of central financial authority over the defeated southern

³ Bian, p. 166.

⁴ *The Generalissimo*, p. 122. Hayford quibbles with my use of "sic." I did

⁵ *The Generalissimo*, pp. 121-122.

provinces had helped to complete the triumph of the national currency, the fabi. Under T. V. Soong, Nanking reduced taxes and levies on farmers by 50 million Chinese fabi a year, and the fall harvest produced the best grain crop in twenty years. China had somehow sloughed through the early years of the world depression. Now more Chinese villagers had more money to spend, and light manufacturing and industrial production steadily rose. Even at this unfavorable time, Chinese industriousness and entrepreneurial spirit, including in state-owned enterprises, were just beginning to show what they could do. There were many failings and deep poverty prevailed, but still the distinguished China scholar Franz Michael could sum up the first decade of the National government under Chiang Kai-shek as “a time of great progress in many fields—in economic development, in social and educational transformation, in political unification, and in the elevation of China’s standing in international relations.”⁶

Chiang was not “lost.”

Chiang’s Record During The War Years

The options after the 1937 war began were not for Chiang to either defeat the Japanese or make peace with them, as Hayford suggests. The option he adopted after fighting up the Yangtze to Wuhan was to refuse any serious concession to the Japanese, and to continue a war of attrition. For four years he held onto three quarters of China’s territory and one third of its people with military assistance only from the Soviet Union, no economic aid, limited international trade, and the loss of the vast majority of China’s industrial production including its sources of foreign and domestic revenue. The regime in Chongqing was also burdened with millions of refugees. Considering these extreme conditions, the American economist, Arthur N. Young was impressed with the relatively low rate of inflation and the extent to which the Chinese people in the free areas retained confidence in the currency.⁷ One reason was that very few Chinese kept savings in coins or paper bills. Even Stilwell was highly impressed with the healthy, well fed, and friendly appearance of the common Chinese folk he saw in his travels.⁸ During this time, no Chinese general, regional warlord, or sizable military unit defected.

The relative stability in Free China reflected the subsistence nature of the rural economy and (until 1942) good luck with the weather, but also the loyalty, administrative and organizational skills of the Chinese people and their strong sense of patriotism and loyalty during these times. This included the thousands of engineers, accountants, and other technocrats and bureaucrats that administered this vast, besieged, region. There was of course plenty of bureaucratic ills and malfeasance and in his diaries Chiang harped on the shortcomings especially the inability of the KMT to enforce discipline in government organizations. Following his recommendation a Central Planning Board and a Party and

⁶*The Generalissimo*, p. 121.

⁷ *The Generalissimo*, p. 223

⁸ *The Generalissimo* pp. 223-224.

Government Evaluation Commission under the Defense Council were established in 1940.⁹ Again as Morris Bian reveals, the Kuomintang Government in exile was able to rebuild the state ordinance industry and supply the weapons and ammunition that the Chinese army used in a number of important categories. Until late 1944 almost all American ordinance deliveries to China went to the forces in training for the Burma campaigns.

Bian also reports that by 1944 heavy industrial production in the Republic of China controlled areas was more than half state controlled and impressively productive. During the war years, generation of electric power in the Free China area, for example, increased from 1,533 thousand kilowatt-hours in 1937 to 70,136 thousand kilowatt-hours in 1945.¹⁰ It is interesting to compare this record with the 37 percent increase in electric power production that the Coalition Provisional Authority was able to achieve in Iraq from 2003 to 2011--also an eight year span of constant conflict.¹¹ During these years Chiang also achieved the promised return of all the "lost territories" except Outer Mongolia and Hong Kong/Macau; the ending of the outrageous extraterritoriality rights of Western citizens in China and the foreign concession areas in Chinese cities; Western acknowledgement of China's sovereignty over Tibet; and China's acceptance as one of the four permanent members of the UN Security Council and thus theoretically as one of the arbiters of world affairs.¹² But after the Americans arrived as allies and presumed saviors, things gradually began to come apart, including self-restraint on corruption.

Chiang's Record On Taiwan

It is Chiang's record on Taiwan that primarily reflects the model of economic development that he pursued as far back as the Nanking Decade with considerable success and with celebrated results on the island. In judging Chiang, Hayford hardly mentions his record on the island--half of his long career and in terms of economic development and land reform one that is almost universally admired.¹³ It is that record-- achieved with "harmonious" (i.e., brutally

⁹ Bian, pp. 159-161, 166.

¹⁰ Bian, p. 61.

¹¹ Iraqi Electricity Minister Karim Wahid said in Babil Province on February 18 that the country's power output has reached 6,760 megawatts, some 2,500 megawatts more than the amount being generated in 2003 before the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq. Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty website, "Iraq's Electricity Production Surpasses Prewar Level," 19 February 2009. http://www.rferl.org/content/Iraqs_Electricity_Production_Surpasses_Prewar_Level/1495927.html (accessed 20 December 2011).

¹² The Yalta agreement, of course, without Chiang's knowledge returned the old Tsarist "rights" in Manchuria. The Generalissimo, pp. 300-302.

¹³ Andrew Nathan in his review on *The New Republic* Web site previously cited wrote: "Taylor's long section on Chiang's years in Taiwan is one of the most masterful parts of his book, opening up a subject that no one else had seriously investigated." Much has been written, of course, about Chiang's time on Taiwan, but, no English-language biographer or historian has before tried to encompass all of the complicated and dramatic

enforced) political stability-- that is the model that Chiang followed. A more comprehensive list than given earlier of this model's elements includes: appointment of competent main-stream technocrats, mostly following their advice, and chairmanship of the major oversight committees by the national leader. The model also calls for: high priority to holding down inflation; political stability assured by secret police and other oppressive measures; emphasis on exports, beginning with low tech and low capital intensive sectors and gradually moving up the ladder; strong priority to improving infrastructure; raising the level of education, public health, and standards of living; and retaining a high percentage of major industry and infrastructure in the state sector.

It also includes: a sweeping land reform program and projects to aid farmers with loans, fertilizer, mechanization, etc.; conservative financial and fiscal policies (tight control of banks); encouragement of foreign investment, especially Overseas Chinese capital; and permission of an ever less austere life style, a more open and civil society, and (in Chiang's last effective year as leader) the small beginning of very limited free speech in electioneering. The economic transformation occurring during this quarter century had fundamental social and cultural effects: rapid urbanization, a notably more educated and affluent population, and rising political consciousness and contact with the outside world. These transformative trends set the stage for more of the same under Chiang's son, but also a growing demand for full democratic reform and the island's eventual peaceful transition to democracy.

U.S. economic aid of 1.5 billion dollars from 1951 to 1961 played a major role in the early success of this model. But such aid ended in 1964. Chiang Ching-kuo continued this model with the development of export zones and such a flow of increasingly higher tech product to the U.S. market that it provoked much alarm in America and criticism in some U.S. industrial sectors and Congress. It also led Taipei to officially encourage "buying trips" to the States by Taiwan businessmen to diminish the pressure-- a familiar scenario today in US/PRC economic relations.

Taiwan almost certainly was one of the models of development that influenced Deng Xiaoping in his plans to dismantle the Communist economic system. In the eighties, through Lee Kwan Yew, Deng sent greetings to Chiang Ching-kuo, whom he had known in their Moscow days. Naturally, Deng could not indicate an interest in Taiwan's economic model but he was openly attracted to the Sinic model in Singapore and visited that city-state four times.¹⁴ Singapore's model of a controlled democracy also no doubt appealed to Deng. He once said admiringly, "Society in Singapore is quiet orderly. They manage things very strictly. We ought to use their experience as a model."¹⁵

history of that 26 year period in Chiang's life and career, ending with his bizarre experience with Richard Nixon from 1969 to 1975.

¹⁴ Ezra F. Vogel, *Deng Xiaoping and the Transformation of China*, Harvard University Press Cambridge, 2011, pp.267, 289-291, Deng exhorted China to catch up with the "four little dragons" (Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea, and Taiwan," within 20 years." p. 673.

¹⁵ Ibid, p. 673.

Manchuria

My discussion of the White Paper's point on Manchuria is at pp. 390-391 and there should be no contradiction with the later point on p. 392. The White Paper said that "United States military observers" had warned Chiang not to try to occupy Manchuria, leaving the clear impression that such a warning reflected U.S. policy. This is totally misleading. In fact, the United States encouraged Chiang in a number of ways to believe it would support his occupation of Manchuria. It pressed him unsuccessfully to insist on a firm, categorical statement by Moscow--in the July-August negotiations on a Sino-Soviet treaty--that no organization in the Soviet Union would intervene in any conflict inside China including Manchuria. Truman then ordered the U.S. Navy to transport a quarter million Chinese government troops to Manchuria. In November 1945 Wedemeyer on a personal basis told Chiang, as he had earlier told the Pentagon, that Chiang could not win in Manchuria, but policymakers in Washington did not adopt this point of view much less inform Chiang of it. At the beginning of his mediation mission to China in January 1946, Marshall's guidelines from Truman and his original positions in negotiations with the two parties (the KMT and the CCP) greatly favored the Nationalist Government, for example giving it the right to deploy its forces anywhere in Manchuria and a ratio of Government to Communist troops in the region of 14 to 1.

Until the summer of 1946, Wedemeyer was the only American official who privately or otherwise had warned Chiang not to contest Manchuria with the Communists. Chiang himself in July 1945 concluded in his diary that if the Soviets supported the CCP in a civil war the outlook would be "bleak" and at one point after Wedemeyer's conversation with him he told his senior officers that he did not intend to challenge the CCP in Manchuria. But Marshall's initial positions once in Chongqing and the Nationalist string of military victories in 1946 convinced Chiang that he could capture and hold the southern half of Manchuria while leaving the northern half in the hands of the CCP in hopes of avoiding Soviet intervention. Because of these military successes he remained highly optimistic even after he came to believe Marshall favored the CCP and after Washington stopped all military aid and sales to his government. It was only in the summer of 1946 that Marshall told Chiang he could not win the war in Manchuria. But Nationalist victories (with some setbacks in the spring) continued through the end 1946 and this convinced Chiang to pour more troops into the region. He thought he could win his "half loaf" even without American aid. But given the then greatly superior position of the Soviet supported Communists forces in Manchuria, even with such aid he likely could not have won.

The Generalissimo details the extensive Soviet aid to the CCP beginning in 1945 and escalating in a major way in 1947.¹⁶ Professor Esherick has kindly informed me of a new book by the mainland scholar Yang Kweisong that adds new details to the nature of this aid.¹⁷

¹⁶ *The Generalissimo*, pp.314-324, 372.

¹⁷ Yang Kweisong, *Mao Zedong yu Mosike de enen yuanyuan* 毛泽东与莫斯科的恩恩怨怨 [Mao and Moscow: favors and grievances]. Nanchang: Jiangxi People's Press, 1999. I have not yet acquired this book.

The Diary

As with all political leaders who keep diaries or write memoirs, Chiang, it seems clear to me, expected his journals to be part of the historic record. Everything of course is told from his point of view. Usually this is true of most documents recording one or more person's views, opinions, and reporting and analysis of events in whatever manner. Obviously unconscious or conscious distortions and omissions occur in diaries, memoirs, and some histories--such as in the PRC. The reader must assess the material accordingly. Obviously there are great variations in human capacity for objectivity. But one does not write a daily journal for 53 years without telling a great deal about oneself and many other matters as well. Many of the dark and negative stories about Chiang come from his own diaries as in the Confucian fashion he regularly excoriates his own actions. In Chiang's diaries there are clearly many entries that would seem highly embarrassing to him that he and later his son, who took possession, and then beginning in the early 2000's a group of his other descendents in control of the papers left in. About 100 passages, however, have been redacted from the original diaries. (These redactions are to be released in 2035) Some of the deletions were made by the Chiang family before releasing them to the Hoover Institution Archives, and presumably some by Chiang himself or his son. A family member involved told me privately that all of the items redacted by the family involve strictly personal matters--usually about the family. One can believe this individual or not, but knowing him fairly well I take him at his word. In any event, more than ninety-nine percent of the voluminous collection remains. Such diaries of historic figures provide the other side of conversations and meetings when there are conflicting recollections, for example, Chiang's meetings with Stilwell. Few Western observers raised questions about the importance of Stilwell's journals. In general, such diaries over time also usually reflect the mood, thoughts, and temperament of the writer. This is certainly also true of Stilwell. Together with other material, diaries can be key in obtaining a balanced view of the dynamics of historic events and decisions.

The Mass Base

Hayford asks a good question. Why could Chiang not build a mass base, a strong party, and a stable regime? Japan's interference, he correctly suggests, "is only part of the answer." As noted before, during Chiang's twenty-two year reign on the mainland, China was virtually in a constant state of war--with warlords, Communists, and Japanese. But the biggest obstacle to building an effective mass-based party was that the Party he inherited from Sun Yat-sen was infected by factionalism and after a quarter century of struggle many of the middle-aged or older officials lacked "fire in the belly." After its victories at the end of the Twenties, as the new regime consolidated itself, city life and positions in government took a further toll on self-restraint and honesty. Still, when the war came, young Nationalists officers died by the tens of thousands and huge numbers of technocrats and bureaucrats struggled on in exile in Chongqing-- doing, as we suggested, a credible and in some respects even impressive job overall. But the Nationalists were just not as effective as the Communists in organizing behind

the Japanese lines or maintaining discipline in their ranks over their long exile. One main reason is that they were not members of a cult-like political organization that enforced an iron discipline and dedication that a millenarian movement can most easily elicit.

Chiang, however, multiplied the problem of factionalism by the series of agreements he made with various war lords as his Northern Expedition fought its way north. At the time, they seemed like sensible moves to turn enemies into allies but they created powerful and lasting cliques in the party, which Chiang sought to play off against each other. Chiang's diaries on the mainland are full of lamentations about the poor quality of KMT cadres as well Government military officers. His six month embrace of the Blue Shirts reflected his long frustration with this problem. In 1938 he set up a Youth Corps. Why it took him so long to do this is a puzzle. With so many factions already squabbling in the party and the military he very likely feared that a Youth Corps would become some one's power base. Ching-kuo returned from the Soviet Union in 1937 and he reportedly suggested that his father establish the Corps. Ching-kuo was appointed to the central committee of the new Corps and was presumably his father's watchdog in the organization. Factional struggle for control, however, soon broke out.

Then in 1944 Ching-kuo proposed that his father set up an Educated Youth Army and again Chiang leaped at the idea. The Youth Army, with Ching-kuo as its effective leader, originally consisted of 115,000 students who were drafted into the organization and several other thousands who joined. The Youth Army did see some limited service against the Japanese and then in the civil war. On Taiwan, many of its former members, mostly loyal to Ching-kuo, became core members of the internal security forces and other party and government organizations, including the Youth Corps. On the island Chiang did build a strong party with a sizeable base, including notable support from farmers who had benefited from land reform. On the island, he had full control and swept into retirement or exile abroad his main opponents within the KMT. Meanwhile, Ching-kuo consolidated a pervasive and more controlled internal security net and factionalism became a controllable problem.

Again much appreciation to Dr. Hayford for his stimulating review and the opportunity it has given me to rattle on. Meanwhile, Chiang Kai-shek will continue to be resurrected to some extent on the mainland, but for one or more generations he will not likely replace Mao as one of the two historic heroes of Chinese modernization--the post-Mao Deng Xiaoping of course being the other. But outside of China, the world may come ever closer to that judgment.

Response to Steven Levine

Now to turn to the review by Professor Levine and the many interesting points he raises. As he suggests, Chiang's public promises or threats to "counterattack" the mainland were intended to sustain the morale of the mainlanders on Taiwan but also to affirm the basic rationale of his dictatorship on the island-- a supposedly temporary hiatus pending his inevitable and glorious return to the mainland. In his diary in the early 1950s, Chiang revealed that this major part of his internal propaganda was purely a political ploy and then nineteen years later directly to an American Secretary of State (William Rogers). During the Eisenhower and Kennedy years, Chiang astonishingly was able to convince the CIA chief in Taiwan and thus the White House that he was on the brink of launching an attack across the

Strait even if it was doomed to defeat. I suspect Chiang had one or more senior military or intelligence officers leak “information” to the CIA station chief that “the Gimo” was hallucinating but nevertheless serious. John Foster Dulles unbelievably came to think that Chiang might be overthrown or even defect to Mao if the United States did not provide some new largess to the island to offset his and the Taiwan public’s reputed outrage at being denied the opportunity to invade the mainland.

Levine’s “counter factual hypothesis” seems quite logical. But, as remarked in my response to Hayford I would make it a double supposition--if *either* the Japanese or the Soviet intervention in China had not occurred (just one or the other) what would have happened?. If Japan had been the party that chose another fate for itself other than large scale intervention in China, the odds seem high that Chiang would likely have been able to consolidate his rule over all of China, except perhaps Taiwan. History of course would then have been unimaginably re-arranged. But as I argue in the book, Soviet support for the CCP was probably also critical to Mao’s victory over Chiang. The enticing conjectures regarding this era are tauntingly endless if rather pointless. But to mention another: what if the Japanese Army had had its way and in 1937 attacked Russia and not China? If he does become president, Speaker Newt Gingrich might write a fictional book, a product for which he is famous, with this historical scenario.

Only so many subjects can be raised in these reviews, but one related and fascinating topic not discussed is the contest between Stalin and Chiang to try to arrange matters so that Japan would attack the other. Chiang’s persistent effort to persuade Stalin to enter the war in China is striking evidence of the high priority he gave to the early defeat of Japan over the goal of suppressing the CCP. A logical conclusion, it seems to me--not a contra factual hypothesis--follows. If the Soviet Red Army had--as Chiang wished-- swept into China say in 1937 to join the war against Japan and succeeded, it probably would have found itself in the same position it would in fact occupy after its actual invasion of Manchuria in August 1945--that is, in occupation of all of that region and possibly parts of Inner Mongolia and North China. The CCP would have benefited immensely from this situation then as it would in 1945. Chiang was prepared to accept that outcome and deal with it as best he could in hopes that a quick end to the war with Japan would curtail the opportunity for the CCP to expand further its forces and territory and the people it controlled. As the book reports, after Pearl Harbor Chiang suggested to Roosevelt that he condition U.S. military aid to Moscow on the latter’s agreement to enter the war with Japan. Roosevelt declined.

Levine highlights basic aspects of Chiang’s temperament and character. Mao understood at least one aspect. He thought Chiang was an “Ah Qu-like character. That is, in Mao’s view, Chiang truly believed he was a benevolent leader of virtue as Confucius required. Chiang, in fact, was convinced he was a man of honor and benevolence--one of the reasons why, after his release from Xian, he did not order his enormous advancing armies to destroy the CCP rebels or drive them into the USSR. He had made an oral but honor-bound deal with Zhou. He was, in other words, an earnest man--sometimes naively so. He also had decided before the Xi’an incident that the confrontation with Japan was heating up and all-out war was likely to burst out soon. Thus military aid from the Soviet Union would soon be a critical need and thus he could not afford to risk that possibility by at that point seeking to destroy the CCP.

Levine is correct in highlighting the extremely weak position that Chiang found himself in with his foreign enemies, Japan and the Soviet Union-- as well as with his formal ally--the United States. But he knew when to fold his cards and when to bluff depending on his reading of his opponent. He never trusted Truman and in his diaries ranted against that Administration's policies but he generally avoided a serious crisis with it. After serious problems with Eisenhower and Secretary of State John Foster Dulles over Burma and the Korean War Armistice, he was able successfully to exploit the political sensitivity of the Eisenhower White House to any charge of abandoning free China and shamelessly to threaten collapse or defection in order to have his way on major issues. Things started off badly with Kennedy but again by playing on the political situation in America, Chiang was able to extract important concessions from the sophisticated man from Camelot. There was no real bilateral crisis with President Johnson who was consumed with the war in Vietnam, an effort for which Taiwan was providing important support although Chiang believed it was a domed cause.

It was of course Nixon, Chiang's long-favorite U.S. politician, who, in Chiang's view stabbed him in the back--a pretty apt description. As Levine notes, Zhou early on informed Chiang of Nixon's maneuvering for a visit to Beijing. Chiang's inner boil but outer sangfroid in reacting to a situation that again he could not affect vividly underscored his understanding of political dynamics, his pragmatism, and his willingness to bear humiliation. Tactically he was often a pessimist but, Job-like, he was a strategic optimist. Another example of this was when Roosevelt pressed him to appoint Stilwell as commander of all the Chinese armies in the field. He pretended he was ready to swallow this great pill --and perhaps he was--but Stilwell soon grossly overplayed his hand.

The Stilwell case is one of the strangest in U.S. military-dipomatic history. I came to feel Stilwell was an arrogant, ruthless, schemer who was unbalanced. I did not make such a stark judgment in the book, but no doubt it showed. Marshall later changed his mind about "Vinegar Joe." The following quote--not cited in the book for space purposes--is from an interview of Marshall in 1956:

The trouble was, with all his ability, he (Stilwell) dissipated that ability by his open criticism of the Generalissimo and allowing his staff to do the same thing, which is the worst thing you can do. One of them [a Stilwell staff officer] got back to me and started to tell me [about Chiang]. I said, "I don't want to hear a word you have to say. You've already done all the harm you can do..." Of course, staff cliques and staff talk and all play a great part in all these things. But if you permit them to an open development and feed them grist for their mill, why, you've got an awful mess on your hands. And that was the greatest mistake Stilwell did--aside from his open criticism of the Generalissimo--allowing his staff to mill around with these things.¹⁸

When Marshall became Secretary of Defense in 1950 and shortly after the Chinese massively intervened in the Korean War, he also changed his mind about The Communist Party of China and no doubt soured on Zhou Enlai as well. After he retired, Marshall made a point of joining

¹⁸ George C. Marshall Foundation, web site, Pogue Interviews and Reminiscences, tape 12, Nov. 21, 1956, p. 373

the conservative anti-PRC Committee of One Million Against the Admission of Red China to the United Nations. This news item must have gotten back to Chiang and restored his respect for this American gentleman-soldier with whom he had spent so many hours arguing about the Communists and what was going on in the CCP/KMT conflict. In judging the pros and cons of Chiang's career, the simple fact is seldom highlighted that during WW II and earlier Chiang was distinctly right about the Communists--Chinese and Soviet-- while Roosevelt and Truman as well as most senior Americans dealing with him were dead wrong.

Neither review had the space to mention the book's revelation that Stilwell twice ordered subordinates to plan Chiang's assassination. Stilwell's military deputy in China reported one such instruction in his fairly well-known memoirs, but generally unknown in the relevant scholarly field --so far as I am aware--was the confirmation of such an order in the memoir by the SOS chief in India, who served under Stilwell.¹⁹ This twice reported order to kill the Theater Supreme Commander came--as evidence strongly suggests--after Stilwell learned Chiang was about to request his recall.

During the War, Chiang was treated as worse than a second priority ally. General Claire Lee Chennault's 14th Air Force ended up with about 1,000-1,400 warplanes and assuming a similar loss as the 8th Air Force in Europe, would have received a grand total of about 2,500 aircraft during the war. Thus the combined total of Air Transport Service and 14th Air Force planes serving the China Theater received in the course of the conflict was probably around 3,500. This was a very small number compared to the grand total of approximately 60,000 aircraft provided to the European theaters, including the Soviet Union.²⁰ These figures are a striking reflection of the "Europe First" strategy adopted by the Allies. Coincidentally, the equivalent percentage of 5.1% of total U.S. Lend Lease aircraft that were committed to the China Theater is very close to the percentage of total Lend Lease deliveries of all sorts that went to China during World War II--that is \$3 billion out of \$50 billion. ²¹

Finally, it was appropriate, I believe, for Levine to end his review with a reference to the enormous difference in "the legacies" that Chiang and Mao left the Chinese people. The two men's visions reflected monumentally different worlds.

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¹⁹ Frank Dorn, *Walkout With Stilwell In China*, (New York, Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1971), pp. 257-258. Thomas H. Moon and Carl F. Eifler, *The Deadliest Colonel* (New York, Vantage Press, 1975) pp 258-259.

²⁰ The 8th Air Force ended the war with an inventory of 18,000 aircraft, having lost 17,000 during the conflict, and the Soviet Union received 25,000 lend lease planes. The European Theater of course also included the Royal Air Force--a major force.-- The Chinese Air Force played a minimal fighter/bomber role except for some joint units with the Americans.

²¹ *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. "The Hump." Wikimedia Foundation, Inc., 2004-2011. http://www.enotes.com/topic/The_Hump (accessed 20 December 2011).

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Sabah and was posted to Cuba--where he was head of the U.S. "unofficial" mission or "Interests Section" in Havana. In addition, he served in Accra, Pretoria, and Cape Town and as Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Intelligence and Research. He has a B.A. from Vanderbilt and an M.A. in Far Eastern Studies from the University of Michigan. He is the author of five books and wrote, directed, and produced a PBS documentary, *Ubuntu, African and Afrikaner*, broadcast by PBS stations across the U.S. Currently, he is Associate in Research at the Fairbank Center for Chinese Studies at Harvard University.

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