



# **Chinese Civil War (Nationalists) Chair Letter**

## **DEAR DELEGATES,**

Welcome to the Chinese Civil War (Nationalists) JCC at CNYMUN 2025! Your chairs this year will be Surin Bong and Eve Winter.

### **ABOUT THE CHAIRS:**

Surin Bong is a Senior at Fayetteville-Manlius High School, and has been involved in MUN for four years. When not preparing for CNYMUN, she enjoys volunteering at Key Club and being a part of the varsity rowing team. She is excited to chair for another great conference!

Eve Winter is a Senior at Fayetteville-Manlius High School. This is her fourth year doing MUN. Eve loves playing soccer, rowing with Surin, and being outdoors. If she isn't doing something competitive she likes thrifting and listening to music.

### **ABOUT THE COMMITTEE:**

Your topic for this committee is the Chinese Civil War surrounding the Nationalists.

### **ABOUT THE CONFERENCE:**

Keeping in line with CNYMUN tradition, all committees will follow Harvard style debate, meaning delegates are prohibited from using pre-written clauses and/or resolutions during committee. Doing so will make a delegate ineligible for awards. To be eligible for awards, delegates must submit a Georgetown style position paper, which should be one page, single spaced, with a font size of 12 in Times New Roman. Position papers should outline the stance of your delegation and demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of your topics. The use of AI is prohibited and will result in disqualification from awards. When deciding on awards, chairs will look favorably upon delegates who have put significant effort into preparation prior to the conference, collaborate with other delegates without being overbearing, remain within the bounds of their nation's policies, and encourage other's voices to be heard. CNYMUN committees are structured using a tiered structure, designating each committee as open, intermediate, or advanced. The Chinese Civil War is designated as an **open** committee. In turn, the Best New Delegate award will be offered to a first-time delegate in this committee. This committee will feature several unique motions including Head to Head debate.

Procedure for this motion can be found on [www.cnymun.org](http://www.cnymun.org).

Please share position papers prior to the start of the conference. The chairs' emails are listed below for you to contact about any research, position paper, or committee inquiries. It is recommended that all delegates share their position papers to both chair's emails, although chairs will ask for any hard copies of position papers at the start of committee session one if necessary. We encourage you to scan our delegate preparation resources and award structure on [www.cnymun.org](http://www.cnymun.org). We wish you the best of luck and can't wait to see what you bring to CNYMUN 2026!

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## **BACKGROUND:**

### *Fall of the Qing Empire*

The fall of the Qing empire began in the middle of the 19th century, as conflict in the empire's court came to a head with the subject of modernization. The general unrest stemmed from not only a clash of conservative values throughout the court, but also from a corrupt government.<sup>1</sup> After the loss to the western powers during the Opium Wars, the Qing were forced into several unequal treaties including the Treaty of Nanjing (1842). This treaty left the military weak and the economy in a state of turmoil. The new 'treaty port system' allowed for more western control (Great Britain and France) over the empire's trade.<sup>2</sup> Along with the loss of land in Hong Kong to Great Britain<sup>3</sup>, climate issues (floods leading to famines) led to fostering dissatisfaction with the Imperial Government and Western Influence overall.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, Sino-Japanese relations regarding Korea and the Republic of Formosa (Taiwan) continued to strain the weak Chinese empire. Through gunboat diplomacy, the Empire of Japan accomplished the unequal signing of the Treaty of Kangwa with Korea. Under the treaty, Korea was liberated from Chinese control and established as an independent state "enjoying the same sovereign rights as Japan".<sup>5</sup> The nation of Japan, too, experienced reform and modernization during this time. Commodore Matthew Perry and the United States notably played a large role in Japan's emergence from isolationism.<sup>6</sup> Despite the treaty, the Korean government would continue to remain close to China, remaining essentially a Chinese Tributary in all but name. This brought China into conflict with Japan

who wished to exercise their influence over the Peninsula.<sup>7</sup>

Diplomatic relations between China and Japan would remain uncertain regarding the influence of Korea from 1874-1894 and would eventually lead to the first Sino-Japanese war.<sup>8</sup> After a bloody war, the more equipped and modernized Japanese army declared victory, and the war ended in the Treaty of Shimonoseki (1895). This forced China to officially recognize Korea as an independent state, give up territories of Pengdu and Liaodong peninsula, and cede the Republic of Formosa (Taiwan) to Japanese troops.<sup>9</sup>

### **Origins of the Nationalist Movement**

An anti-foreign movement originating in Guangdong in the 1850s would fuel anti-colonial nationalism throughout the upper classes.<sup>10</sup> Examples of strong nationalist success in Japan and the concept of Darwinism contributed to support for the idea of revolution in an already declining government.<sup>11</sup> The nationalist's influence from Japan was so strong that the Chinese word for nationality, *minzu*, comes from the Japanese word *minzoku* meaning racial purity. When territories began being taken over by revolutionaries in 1911, they were not met with much resistance due to the rising movement supporting local government power under the name of the nationalist party.<sup>12</sup>

Sun Yat-Sen's return to China after touring the United States and other areas, was caused by the rebellions occurring throughout China.<sup>13</sup> Revolutionaries took over in Sichuan, then Wuhan, and managed to overthrow the monarchy. Then, they

<sup>1</sup> Kuiper, Kathleen. "Qing Dynasty | Definition, History, & Achievements." *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 28 May 2018, [www.britannica.com/topic/Qing-dynasty](https://www.britannica.com/topic/Qing-dynasty).

<sup>2</sup> The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica. "Treaty of Nanjing | Definition, Terms, & Facts." *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 9 Feb. 2018, [www.britannica.com/event/Treaty-of-Nanjing](https://www.britannica.com/event/Treaty-of-Nanjing).

<sup>3</sup> Office of the Historian. "The Chinese Revolution of 1911." *State.gov*, United States Department of State, 2019, [history.state.gov/milestones/1899-1913/chinese-rev](https://history.state.gov/milestones/1899-1913/chinese-rev).

<sup>4</sup> Kuiper, Kathleen. "Qing Dynasty | Definition, History, & Achievements." *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 28 May 2018, [www.britannica.com/topic/Qing-dynasty](https://www.britannica.com/topic/Qing-dynasty).

<sup>5</sup> McKnight, Brian E. "China - Japan and the Ryukyu Islands." *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 12 Oct. 2025, [www.britannica.com/place/China/Japan-and-the-Ryukyu-Islands#ef590580](https://www.britannica.com/place/China/Japan-and-the-Ryukyu-Islands#ef590580).

<sup>6</sup> McKnight, Brian E. "China - Japan and the Ryukyu Islands." *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 12 Oct. 2025, [www.britannica.com/place/China/Japan-and-the-Ryukyu-Islands#ef590580](https://www.britannica.com/place/China/Japan-and-the-Ryukyu-Islands#ef590580).

<sup>7</sup> Treat, Payson J. "Early Sino-Japanese Diplomatic Relations." *Pacific Historical Review*, vol. 1, no. 1, 1932, pp. 18–35. *JSTOR*, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3633744>. Accessed 20 Aug. 2025.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica. "First Sino-Japanese War." *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 25 July 2018, [www.britannica.com/event/First-Sino-Japanese-War-1894-1895](https://www.britannica.com/event/First-Sino-Japanese-War-1894-1895).

<sup>10</sup> "The 1911 Revolution and China's 'Internationalist Nationalism': - the Yale Review of International Studies." *Yris.yira.org*, 25 Sept. 2020, [yris.yira.org/global-issue/the-1911-revolution-and-chinas-internationalist-nationalism/](https://yris.yira.org/global-issue/the-1911-revolution-and-chinas-internationalist-nationalism/).

<sup>11</sup> Deal, Jacqueline Newmyer. "China's Nationalist Heritage." *The National Interest*, no. 123, 2013, pp. 44–53. *JSTOR*, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/42896536>. Accessed 12 Oct. 2025.

<sup>12</sup> Office of the Historian. "The Chinese Revolution of 1911." *State.gov*, United States Department of State, 2019, [history.state.gov/milestones/1899-1913/chinese-rev](https://history.state.gov/milestones/1899-1913/chinese-rev).

<sup>13</sup> Wang, Yi Chu. "Sun Yat-sen". *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 12 Oct. 2025, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Sun-Yat-sen>. Accessed 12 October 2025.

set up the provincial government.<sup>14</sup> Sun's western education and ability to promote nationalism, allowed him to become the new leader of China's anti concessionist movements.<sup>15</sup>

### **Early Leadership in the KMT**

Throughout the autumn of 1911, the revolutionaries' power continued to grow and resulted in several successful protests. An uprising in Wuchang would be the final spark in inciting a national revolt. In fear of threats to their power, the Qing court announced its intentions to reform in accordance to nationalist demands, and form a Constitutional monarchy. However, before their premier Yuan Shikai (a high ranking military officer in the Qing dynasty) was able to reestablish Qing territory, the provinces declared a shift in loyalty to the Revolutionary Alliance. Specifically, they elected Sun Yat-Sen to be the provisional president of the new Republic of China.<sup>16</sup>

Though he had been newly instated as president, Sun Yat-Sen viewed his position as a powerful tool to influence the still-active Qing government. He struck a deal with Yuan Shikai, offering him the position of president in exchange for Shikai convincing the Qing to abdicate their throne. This deal ended with success on February 12th 1912, when the Qing emperor abdicated the throne officially ending 2,000 years of imperial rule.<sup>17</sup> The next day, Sun stepped down from the presidency and transferred leadership to Yuan ShiKai.<sup>18</sup>

The government in its infancy held a popular vote installing the National Assembly in a first step toward democracy.<sup>19</sup> That said, these efforts would be in vain. By 1913, Yuan had dissolved the role of president and reshaped his status into

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Uhalley, Stephen. "SUN YAT-SEN AND CHINESE HISTORY." *Journal of the Hong Kong Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, vol. 8, 1968, pp. 109–18. JSTOR, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23885255>. Accessed 12 Oct. 2025.

<sup>16</sup> Office of the Historian. "The Chinese Revolution of 1911." *State.gov*, United States Department of State, 2019, [history.state.gov/milestones/1899-1913/chinese-rev](https://history.state.gov/milestones/1899-1913/chinese-rev).

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Wang, Yi Chu. "Sun Yat-sen". Encyclopedia Britannica, 12 Oct. 2025, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Sun-Yat-sen>. Accessed 12 October 2025.

<sup>19</sup> Shan, Patrick Fuliang. "China's First Democracy: Post-Revolutionary Situation, Nation-Wide Election, and the Creation of Congress, 1912-1913 - a Talk by Patrick Shan, Professor, Grand Valley State University." *Utxexas.edu*, 2018, [liberalarts.utexas.edu/asianstudies/events/china-1912-1913-a-talk-by-patrick-shan](https://liberalarts.utexas.edu/asianstudies/events/china-1912-1913-a-talk-by-patrick-shan). Accessed 12 Oct. 2025.

dictator-declaring himself emperor in 1915.<sup>20</sup> The assembly was replaced with a political council that drafted a constitution granting virtually all power to Yuan.<sup>21</sup> To the relief of newly independent Chinese, growing internal and external pressures would lead to Yuan deciding to abolish his newly announced monarchy by March 1916.<sup>22</sup>

As World War 1 progressed into 1915, Yuan was preoccupied with foreign affairs as Germany ceded its control of Qingdao, Shandong (during the Siege of Tsingtao) to Japan with the Anglo-Japanese alliance.<sup>23</sup> Yuan would sign the infamous '21 Demands' with Japan permitting the foreign power control over China's financial affairs and other key aspects of government.<sup>24</sup> After Yuan reinstated the imperial monarchy, he mysteriously died in 1916, leaving the political landscape in a state of chaotic local rule of warlords.<sup>25</sup> Although in a period of transition, the Nationalist party guided by Sun Yat-Sen was alive and well. At the Paris Peace Conference, which began on January 18th 1919, Chinese delegates hoped to regain Shandong because the Great War had come to a close.<sup>26</sup> Four months later, on May 3rd, the delegates relayed a telegram back to China revealing that the world powers had elected to let Japan keep control over the territory in Shandong.<sup>27</sup> The next day, a mass protest fueled by the highly educated class of university students in Beijing; resolutions created by the protesting students were sent to Paris essentially calling out the delegates as having failed the Chinese people.<sup>28</sup> Under extreme pressure from the strikes and boycotts, the Chinese politicians refused to sign the treaty.<sup>29</sup> This movement of national strength set the precedent for the Chinese

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<sup>20</sup> Elleman, Bruce A. "Yuan Shikai Preapproves Japan's '21 Demands' (1915)." *The Impact of Coincidence in Modern American, British, and Asian History: Twenty-One Unusual Historical Events*. Anthem Press, 2023. 11–14. Print.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Ch'en, Jerome. "Yuan Shikai". Encyclopedia Britannica, 12 Sep. 2025, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Yuan-Shikai>. Accessed 12 October 2025.

<sup>23</sup> Elleman, Bruce A. "Yuan Shikai Preapproves Japan's '21 Demands' (1915)." *The Impact of Coincidence in Modern American, British, and Asian History: Twenty-One Unusual Historical Events*. Anthem Press, 2023. 11–14. Print.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid

<sup>25</sup> Chicago Public Library. "Timeline of China's Modern History." *Chipublib.org*, 30 Apr. 2012, [www.chipublib.org/timeline-of-chinas-modern-history/](http://www.chipublib.org/timeline-of-chinas-modern-history/).

<sup>26</sup> The National Archives. "May Fourth Movement 1919." *The National Archives*, [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/education/resources/may-fourth-movement-1919/](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/education/resources/may-fourth-movement-1919/).

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

population's influence on western powers and their own government.

Without an organized central government, Sun Yat-sen sought to heighten the Nationalists' strength. He was heavily influenced to structure the party around a 1914 Chinese secret society, and would later follow ideas from the Soviets and the Bolshevik party. The Nationalist party governed most of China between 1928 to 1949, and owed much of its early successes to Soviet aid and advice.<sup>30</sup>

The Kuomintang had many integral leaders throughout its time, one of them being Chiang Kai-shek, Commandant of the Whampoa Military Academy. The military academy was founded by Sun Yat-sen to train the revolutionary army, and as the leader of the group, Chiang Kai-shek held substantial military power that led to his rise to prominence in the party. When Sun Yat-sen died in 1925, Chiang Kai-shek expanded his influence past the academy and became the head of the Nationalist party. He devoted himself to continuing the late leader's goal of Chinese unification, and would be similarly influenced by Soviet ideas.<sup>31</sup> In the first few years of his leadership, Chiang Kai-Shek limited and ended regional warlords' autonomy across China, greatly consolidating the party's power. Though a new central government for the Nationalists was established in Nanjing, their control in China remained unstable. Many of the provincial warlords affected by Kai-Shek would rebel against suppression, and communists continued to grow stronger, founding their own government and military.

During his leadership, Sun Yat-sen introduced the "Three Principles of the People": nationalism, democracy, and people's livelihood (socialism). Though on paper, Chiang Kai-shek committed to implementing these principles in his own era, he lacked a firm grasp on the nation to be able to be actionable.<sup>32</sup> He discovered that it would be an immense challenge to radically reform an ancient feudal social system. Therefore, attempts to improve the people's livelihood or eliminate corruption were unsuccessful, as were efforts to implement a constitution for the government.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Britannica Editors. "Chinese Civil War". Encyclopedia Britannica, 11 Oct. 2025, <https://www.britannica.com/event/Chinese-Civil-War>. Accessed 12 October 2025.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

### **Military Conflicts:**

Before the civil war, the KMT and CCP allied numerous times in attempts to protect the country from imperialist Japan and to unify its people. The battles leading up to the civil war emphasize the importance of the KMT and CCP alliances and the struggle for power after Japan's defeat.

Between 1926 and 1927, relations between communists and nationalists turned sour. The Northern Expedition was a joint effort to defeat local warlords and China's imperialist rulers such as Great Britain, in an attempt to unify the country.<sup>33</sup> During this period, Chiang Kai-shek began purging communists as well as anyone who was seen as "left-leaning" or different in their political ideologies.<sup>34</sup> The Nanchang and Autumn Harvest uprisings were the communists' failed responses to the arrests and executions and marked the beginning of the People's Liberation Army controlled by the communist party.<sup>35</sup> As the nationalists continued the Northern Expedition, the communists' numbers and popularity dwindled with their unpopular revolts<sup>36</sup>.

In 1931, Japan invaded the Chinese province of Manchuria to gain access to the Chinese railway and other resources.<sup>37</sup> War crimes committed against the Chinese by the Japanese military, loss of sovereignty and Japan's continuing advancements into Mongolia

<sup>33</sup> Britannica Editors. "Northern Expedition". Encyclopedia Britannica, 8 Dec. 2017, <https://www.britannica.com/event/Northern-Expedition>. Accessed 12 October 2025.

<sup>34</sup> "The Chinese Civil War | World History." *Lumenlearning.com*, 2025, <https://courses.lumenlearning.com/suny-worldhistory/chapter/35-1-3-the-chinese-civil-war/>. Accessed 12 Oct. 2025.

<sup>35</sup> Chan, Hoklam, Rawski, Evelyn S., Lewis, John Wilson, Young, Ernest P., DeWoskin, Kenneth J., Chen, Cheng-Siang, McKnight, Brian E., Elman, Benjamin, Dull, Jack L., Feuerwerker, Albert, Twitchett, Denis C., Franke, Herbert, Silbergeld, Jerome, Wilbur, C. Martin, Hucker, Charles O., Zürcher, Erik, Hsu, Cho-yun, Keightley, David N., Liu, James T.C., Suzuki, Chusei, White, Lynn, Lieberthal, Kenneth G.. "China". Encyclopedia Britannica, 12 Oct. 2025, <https://www.britannica.com/place/China>. Accessed 12 October 2025.

<sup>36</sup> Britannica Editors. "Northern Expedition". Encyclopedia Britannica, 8 Dec. 2017, <https://www.britannica.com/event/Northern-Expedition>. Accessed 12 October 2025.

<sup>37</sup> "Harry S. Truman." *www.trumanlibrary.gov*, [www.trumanlibrary.gov/education/presidential-inquiries/invasion-manchuria](https://www.trumanlibrary.gov/education/presidential-inquiries/invasion-manchuria).

were the beginnings of the Second Sino-Japanese War.<sup>38</sup>

From 1934 to 1935, Chiang launched five military encirclement campaigns to destroy the main communist base at the Jiangxi Soviet. The communist strategy of guerrilla warfare was insufficient to halt the nationalist advances, and the communists retreated to Yan'an. Communist supporters grew during the Long March (as they retreated) and Mao Zedong was solidified as the communists' leader.<sup>39</sup> In 1937, Chiang was captured by nationalist generals Zhang Xueliang and Yang Hucheng who both agreed that China's biggest threat was the Japanese and insisted that the military should focus on removing Japan from China. With Chiang's release, the nationalist and communist armies joined forces to defeat Japan, with this conflict ending in 1945 after years of stalemate and indirect foreign aid.<sup>40</sup>

After Japan's defeat, the Nationalists and the Communists fought each other for power. Negotiations between the two sides, with the aid of U.S. representatives such as Patrick Hurley and George C. Marshall, ended when Soviet troops were removed from Manchuria. While fighting worsened in the north, the nationalists captured a communist base in Kalgan.<sup>41</sup> In early 1947, the communists continued their push through Manchuria and the nationalists took over the communist base at Yan'an in the spring.<sup>42</sup> Throughout 1947, the nationalists' gains lessened while the communists began their takeover of important transportation avenues. This is seen as a turning point in the Chinese Civil War. By

the end of the year, the People's Liberation Army had entered the domain of the nationalists.<sup>43</sup>

### **Economy:**

Following the Revolution of 1911, China experienced the rise of a genuine silver standard, along with a rise in public debt. Between 1920 and 1936, the total money supply in China tripled. The founding of Nanjing as the Nationalist capital led to the establishment of the "Sinking Fund Commission", a way of saving money for future expenses. The commission was led by the Shanghai banking community and government officials. The Nanjing government collected a high domestic debt.<sup>44</sup>

Nationalists utilized a currency called "fabi" for thirteen years, and "Gold Yuan" for ten. After these currencies both lost 99.999% of their original values, they were abolished by the KMT government. In replacement, Renminbi (Yuan) was issued by the People's Bank of China in December 1948. Renminbi was a much more stable currency than fabi and gold yuan. It was a great shift for a country that was largely characterized by an unregulated money system, and a loose silver standard.<sup>45</sup>

With the expulsion of the Qing dynasty, and push away from foreign goods, China's national industries flourished throughout the 1920s. The nation had also profited from the first world war, as European nations had a high demand for Chinese raw materials and food. This supported the economy not only for the years of the war, but also allowed companies to modernize and develop during this time. However, the agricultural sector would continue to be significantly larger than the industrial sector all throughout the 20s.

A notable intervention the republican government made in the economy was nationalizing most of the railroads throughout China. Countryside farmers cited feng shui concerns over railroad syndicates buying their land due to the many burial sites placed throughout their properties. Syndicates paid higher rates for their land in an effort to avoid conflict, and

<sup>38</sup> Britannica Editors. "Second Sino-Japanese War". Encyclopedia Britannica, 6 Sep. 2025, <https://www.britannica.com/event/Second-Sino-Japanese-War>. Accessed 12 October 2025.

<sup>39</sup> Schram, Stuart Reynolds. "Mao Zedong". Encyclopedia Britannica, 3 Oct. 2025, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Mao-Zedong>. Accessed 12 October 2025.

<sup>40</sup> Britannica Editors. "Xi'an Incident". Encyclopedia Britannica, 5 Dec. 2024, <https://www.britannica.com/event/Xian-Incident>. Accessed 12 October 2025.

<sup>41</sup> Britannica Editors. "Kalgan". Encyclopedia Britannica, 6 Jan. 2025, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Kalgan>. Accessed 12 October 2025.

<sup>42</sup> Britannica Editors. "Yan'an". Encyclopedia Britannica, 20 Feb. 2025, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Yanan>. Accessed 12 October 2025.

<sup>43</sup> Britannica Editors. "Chinese Civil War". Encyclopedia Britannica, 11 Oct. 2025, <https://www.britannica.com/event/Chinese-Civil-War>. Accessed 12 October 2025.

<sup>44</sup> Ma, Debin. "Financial Revolution in Republican China, 1900-1937: A Survey and Interpretation." *CEPR*, 4 June 2019, [cepr.org/voxeu/columns/financial-revolution-republican-china-1900-1937-survey-and-interpretation](http://cepr.org/voxeu/columns/financial-revolution-republican-china-1900-1937-survey-and-interpretation).

<sup>45</sup> Huang, Yanjie. *CONSTRUCTING a NATIONAL OIKONOMIA: CHINA'S GREAT MONETARY REVOLUTION, 1942-1950*. 8 Jan. 2013, [research.nus.edu.sg/eai/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/EWP161.pdf](http://research.nus.edu.sg/eai/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/EWP161.pdf).

maintain support from those who would become future railroad laborers.<sup>46</sup> Railroads were an important mode of transportation because of the scale of agricultural crops that needed to be exported from the nation, and within the nation as well. Throughout the early 1900s, more and more peasants would grow cash crops and produce silk rather than relying on subsistence farming. Increasing commercialization of agriculture, however, was mostly limited to the coastal and central parts of China. Peasants who lived in areas distant from farming centers would instead migrate to cities and work industrial jobs.<sup>47</sup>

### **International Actors:**

The CCP and KMT existed in a network of foreign pressures that were crucial for both parties' developments. The roles of the Soviet Union, Japan, Vietnam and Korea, and the United States shaped parties' strategies, alliances, and ultimately successes or losses.

The USSR was both the CCP's earliest and most important foreign ally. In 1922, the Soviets sought partners in China since it was isolated internationally. The Beiyang government initially rejected cooperation, however, they eventually supported Sun Yat-sen's Nationalist party (KMT). Soviet advisors like Mikhail Borodin helped reorganize the National Revolutionary Army and supplied weapons, which enabled the First United Front between the KMT and CCP. After Chiang Kai-shek's anti-Communist purge in 1927, relations between the USSR and the Nationalists weakened. They shifted to cautious CCP support during the 1930s–40s. But, Soviet aid remained crucial: the CCP's *New China* newspaper declared in 1941: "Over the four years of our sacred war, the most important and reliable foreign assistance has come from the Soviet Union."

Japan invaded Manchuria in 1931, and then a full-scale war occurred in 1937, forcing both the CCP and KMT into the Second United Front. Pressured by the Xi'an Incident, Chiang temporarily allied with Mao to fight Japan. Japan's occupation subsequently

<sup>46</sup> Cunningham, Maura Elizabeth. "Railroads and the Transformation of China: A Q&A with Historian Elisabeth Köll." *Association for Asian Studies*, 18 Nov. 2019, [www.asianstudies.org/railroads-and-the-transformation-of-china-a-q-a-with-historian-elisabeth-koll/](http://www.asianstudies.org/railroads-and-the-transformation-of-china-a-q-a-with-historian-elisabeth-koll/).

<sup>47</sup> Frolich, Hajo. "Wartime and Post-War Economies (China) / 1.0 / Handbook - 1914-1918-Online (WW1) Encyclopedia." *1914-1918-Online (WW1) Encyclopedia*, 9 July 2024, [encyclopedia.1914-1918-online.net/article/wartime-and-post-war-economies-china/](http://encyclopedia.1914-1918-online.net/article/wartime-and-post-war-economies-china/).

destabilized China, as warlord loyalties shifted between the CCP, KMT, and puppet authorities. Many leaders helped on both sides, showing how foreign invasion exploited worsening internal divisions. The CCP used this division to highlight the failings of the Nationalists and thereby won credibility among the population and gained strength during the war years.

Regional struggles also heavily shaped the CCP. In Vietnam, Ho Chi Minh and his movement drew inspiration from Mao's peasant-centered revolution. In Korea, which Japan colonized, Chinese Communists worked with Korean guerrillas in anti-Japanese campaigns. These connections reinforced the idea that peasant-based revolution could succeed in other areas of Asia.

The USA supported the Nationalists, as it feared communist influence. With a basis of the Open Door Policy, they wanted to maintain access to China's ports by ensuring that Japan didn't dominate them. America provided missionaries, traders, and diplomats, as well as military aid and advisers like General Joseph Stilwell. Notably, this assistance was especially clear during Operation Ichi-Go. But, KMT corruption and failures made many Americans question the party, leading some to view the CCP more favorably.

### **Intelligence and Espionage:**

Dai Li was the most notable figure in intelligence for the Nationalist party, and specifically was employed by Chiang Kai-Shek. After he met Chiang as a student at the Whampoa Military Academy in 1926, Dai Li was quickly put to work reporting on the ideologies of his fellow cadets. Those identified as communists would be purged out of the academy in 1927. Many of Chiang's loyalists, like Dai, were alumni of Whampoa and would form multiple secret societies and front organizations for Chiang. While working in Chiang's 10-man intelligence unit (the Liaison Group), Dia Li recruited his own "League of Ten" to make up his own secret service. Dai Li and his League of Ten stood out to Chiang amidst his numerous other groups, and was formed into a formal Special Services Department in 1932. At this point, Dai Li had become the chief of the new independent security agency, widely known as the Juntong. By utilizing kidnapping and torture, the Juntong gathered political information from Chiang's enemies and the communists. Dai Li had grown into a feared figure,

and gained immense respect from Chiang Kai-Shek throughout the course of his career.<sup>48</sup>

Dai Li grew the secret service immensely under his leadership-depending on intelligence from tens of thousands of spies across China and internationally. One of his secret societies was the Blue Shirts, a group of patriots and civilians who were recruited to collect intelligence on the officials of the Japanese puppet regime in Shanghai. While the Blue Shirts were just a sub-organization of the Juntong, the group as a whole carried out more than 930 assassinations of hanjian (Chinese working for the Japanese) between 1938 and 1945.<sup>49</sup>

Another key leader in the Juntong was Liu Geqing, most widely associated with the “Liu Geqing Affair”. The affair refers to an incident during the Second Sino-Japanese war (1939) when Liu and three other men assassinated Chen Lu, a Chinese government leader who was potentially collaborating with the Japanese to disrupt Japanese military plans to establish a peaceful settlement in central China. However, the assassination of Chen Lu spurred the Japanese to create their own Chinese secret service to protect their prominent Chinese collaborators.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Wakeman, Frederic, and Berkeley. "Spymaster: Dai Li and the Chinese Secret Service Intelligence in Public Literature." *Studies in Intelligence*, vol. 53, no. 1, Press, 2009, [www.cia.gov/resources/csi/static/Review-Spymaster-Dai-Li.pdf](http://www.cia.gov/resources/csi/static/Review-Spymaster-Dai-Li.pdf).

<sup>49</sup> Hao, Yuexiang. *White Halo Piercing the Sun: Juntong's Anti-Hanjian Campaigns and GMD's Legitimacy during and after the War Resisting Japan*. 2025, [knowledge.uchicago.edu/record/15539/files/draft%202.pdf](http://knowledge.uchicago.edu/record/15539/files/draft%202.pdf)? Accessed 12 Oct. 2025.

<sup>50</sup> Yeh, Wen-Hsin. "Dai Li and the Liu Geqing Affair: Heroism in the Chinese Secret Service During the War of Resistance." *The Journal of Asian Studies* 48.3 (1989): 545–562. Web.

### **Status Quo:**

The date is January 4th, 1946. The Second United Front has long been dissolved and the Communists have reemerged as a threat to Nationalist control. Both parties must gather and individually determine what their strategies will be to accomplish their goals. Constantly on guard for the actions of the other side, key generals, politicians, and party leaders must defend their positions in this Civil War. The Nationalists have greater manpower -4 million troops compared to the Communists' 1 million troops- yet their men are poorly trained and lack discipline. The Communist forces are prepared for guerrilla warfare and rural terrains. In terms of weaponry, the Nationalists with their American support have access to wartime supplies leftover from WWII (aircrafts, weapons, communications equipment, and more). They also hold the upper hand in land control, controlling most of China's major cities, ports, railroads and national industries. In contrast, the communists were influential in the rural areas of North and Central China-already implementing popular land reform policies and developing self-sufficient agrarian systems. Historically, a temporary peace treaty had been signed by January 31st, 1946 during the Political Consultative Conference, but it is yet to be determined what the result of these two committees will be.

### **QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:**

1. Should the Nationalist government return to its "Three Principles of the People", and will it?
2. What are the Nationalist government's strengths over the communists, and how can they be used to its advantage?
3. How can the government regain its legitimacy in the countryside?
4. What is the goal of the Nationalist party, and is there possibility for a partial victory?
5. How can the Nationalists revive their weary army?
6. In what ways can the American support be used to the Nationalists' advantage, besides for supplies?

### **FURTHER RESOURCES:**

1. Nationalist intelligence network  
<https://www.cia.gov/resources/csi/static/Review-Spymaster-Dai-Li.pdf>
2. Helpful source for some research into delegate assignments.  
<https://sites.asiasociety.org/chinawealthpower/chapters/introduction/>
3. Whampoa Military Academy  
<https://www.usni.org/magazines/proceedings/1968/april/whampoa-academy>

### **DELEGATE ASSIGNMENTS (Nationalists):**

**Lei Chen:** Nationalist politician and military officer, combated Communist forces in southern China during the civil war

**Chen Cheng:** Senior general in the KMT army, military strategist attempting to halt the communist advance

**Chiang Ching-kuo:** Chiang Kai-shek's son, KMT military leader and helped coordinate military strategies, was also a political leader

**Shen Chongwen:** Member of the Nationalist party, shaped political strategies and supported the KMT in maintaining control in key areas

**Wei Lihuang:** Senior Officer in the KMT army and was known for successful defensive strategies, helping the KMT forces hold key territories during early Civil war, position was endangered by the KMT's dwindling resources throughout the war

**George C. Marshall:** (US secretary of state) Was sent to China in 1946 to mediate between the KMT and CCP to prevent a full civil war, failed in his mission and criticized both sides' failure to cooperate

**Soong Mei-ling (Madame Chiang):** Chiang Kai-Shek's wife, greatly involved in the KMT's internal politics, utilized her political skills as an influential diplomat to advance her husband's agenda in the party

**Cheng Qian:** KMT general and political figure, was the governor of several provinces

**Chiang Kai-Shek:** Early leader of the KMT, unified China through the Northern Expedition, fought the CCP in two civil wars

**Sun Li-jen:** Nationalist general, one of the best commanders-fighting the Japanese and the communist forces during the civil war

**Zhang Fakui:** Prominent general in the nationalist army, defended Wuhan against Japanese, and later Communist forces in civil war

**Yu Youren:** KMT politician, helped shape China's national identity (culturally) and united the people behind the KMT

**Du Yuming:** Senior officer in the KMT, fought in the battle of Xuzhou, his failure to defend a key position in the civil war was a turning point for the party

**Zhang Zhizhong:** Senior KMT general, struggled against Communist forces in the civil war, but was instrumental in defense against Japanese forces

**Hu Zongnan:** general in the Nationalist army, defended China's western and southwestern regions against Communist forces

**Li Zongren:** Prominent KMT general, would be vice president of the Republic of China, one of Chiang Kai-shek's top military commanders and his leadership was pivotal

**Yan Xishan:** Prominent warlord during early years of the Republic of China, controlled the Shanxi province and initially aligned with KMT during civil war-later negotiating with communist party

**He Yingqin:** Senior Nationalist general, Chiang Kai-shek's defense minister, critical part of maintaining KMT resistance to the communists during civil war

**Xue Yue:** One of the top military leaders, came to fame during Japanese invasions, known for using tactical abilities to defend strategic points in the south and central regions of China

**Bai Chongxi:** Nationalist general, helped the party maintain control over strategic regions during the civil war

**Chen Lifu:** Political figure, close ally of Chiang Kai-Shek, shaped KMT policies and military+civil governance, promoted political cohesion under the KMT leadership

**Weng Wen-hao:** KMT politician, one of Chiang Kai-Shek's close advisors, organized and supported the Nationalist government

**T.V. Soong:** Finance minister in the Nationalist government, working with the US to secure financial aid to China, influential in shaping Nationalist party's internal and external policies, from the powerful Soong family