

Lesson 19

Questions for the Lesson/What you need to know in this lesson:

What were the causes of the Chinese Civil War?

What was the course of the Chinese Civil War?

What were the reasons for the defeat of the KMT and success of the CCP in the Civil War?

What were the results/impact/outcomes of the Chinese Civil War?

IB Questions

Paper 3

Reasons for the Communist victory in the Civil War

1. Why were the Communists able to defeat the Nationalists in China in 1949? (N07, Q18)
2. Why did the Communists win the Civil war in China between 1945 and 1949? (N08, Q18)
3. 'Mao's leadership was the crucial factor in leading the Communists to victory in the Chinese Civil War 1946-1949.' Discuss the validity of this claim. (N11, Q12)
4. Evaluate the contribution of the Long March (1934-6) to the final victory of the Communist Party. (N06, Q17)
5. "The main reason why the Guomintang (Kuomintang) lost the Chinese Civil War (1946–1949) to the Communists was that they were exhausted after fighting the Japanese in the Sino–Japanese War (1937–1945)." To what extent do you agree with this statement? (M12)
6. How significant was the Japanese invasion and occupation of China from 1931 to 1945 in ensuring the ultimate victory of the Communists in 1949? (N13)
7. To what extent was the victory of the Chinese Communist Party over the Guomintang in 1949 a triumph of nationalism rather than of Communism? (M14)

Paper 2

The origins of Civil War

1. Analyse the reasons for and the results of either the Spanish Civil War or the Chinese Civil War. (M10)

2. Analyse the causes of either the Spanish Civil War or the Chinese Civil War. (Modified M06)
3. Compare and contrast the causes of the Spanish Civil War and the Chinese Civil War. (Modified N02)
4. Analyse the causes and results of one of the following: Chinese Civil War (1945-1949), Spanish Civil War (1936-1939). (M03)
5. For what reasons, and with what results, was there a civil war either in China between 1946-49 or in Spain between 1936-39? (N01)
6. Compare and contrast the causes and results of the Spanish Civil War and the Chinese Civil War. (N01)

Foreign intervention in Civil Wars

1. Examine the impact of foreign intervention on either the Chinese Civil War or the Spanish Civil War. (M07)
2. Compare and contrast the reasons for, and impact of, foreign involvement in two of the following: Spanish Civil War and Chinese Civil War. (Modified N06)
3. Compare and contrast the reasons for, and impact of, foreign involvement in two of the following: Spanish Civil War and Chinese Civil War. (N05)
4. Examine the impact of foreign intervention on either the Chinese Civil War or the Spanish Civil War. (M05)
5. Compare and contrast the effects for the country concerned of **two** of the following: the Chinese Civil War; the Nigerian Civil War; the Spanish Civil War. (M00)
6. Analyse the reasons for, and important of, foreign intervention in one of the following: the Chinese civil war (1927-1949); the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939); the Gulf war (1991). (M12)

The results of the Spanish Civil War

1. Analyse the causes and results of one of the following: Chinese Civil War (1945-1949), Spanish Civil War (1936-1939). (M03)
2. Compare and contrast the causes and results of the Spanish Civil War and the Chinese Civil War. (N01)
3. For what reasons, and with what results, was there a civil war **either** in China between 1946 and 1949, **or** in Spain between 1936 and 1939? (N01)

A. Overview

For the first half of the 20th century, China faced political chaos. Following a revolution in 1911, which overthrew the Manchu dynasty, the new Republic failed to successfully establish strong central control and China continued to be plagued by foreign powers

and domestic problems. The Chinese Civil War was an attempt by two ideologically opposed forces – the nationalists and the communists – to see who will be ultimately be able to restore order and regain central control over China. The struggle between these two forces, which **officially started in 1927**, was interrupted by the Second United Front and the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese in 1937, but started in 1927, **started again in 1946 once the war with Japan was over**. The results of this was to have a major effect not just on China itself, where a communist regime is going to be established, but also on the international stage.

B. Long Term Factors

Socio-economic Conditions

In 1900 China was ruled by the imperial Manchu dynasty. The vast majority of the population were peasants. Their life was hard, working the land and most were extremely poor. It was the peasants who paid the taxes that in turn paid for the great Manchu imperial court. It was also the peasants who faced starvation during floods or droughts, as their subsistence farming techniques often left them with barely enough to feed their families. The population in China grew by 8% in the second half of the 19th century, but the land cultivated only increased by 1%. This imbalance made famines more frequent. Peasants' plots of land were reduced, although at the same time landlords increased rents; some peasants had to pay 80% of their harvest. Peasants would be driven to the cities by poverty, where there was already high unemployment due to improved technology and cheap Western imports.

Political Weakness

Inflation and corruption weakened the financial position of the Manchus. Widespread corruption among local and provincial government also meant that a large portion of tax revenues did not reach the central government.

In 1850, the Taiping Rebellion spread throughout southern China. The rebellion, which lasted until 1864, was part religious movement and part political reform movement. It was only put down after the death of millions of Chinese regional armies. This involvement of regional armies began the move away from centralized control, which would result in the Warlord Era in the 1920s.

Impact of Foreign Imperialism

In the century that preceded the Chinese Civil War, the European imperialist powers had humiliated and exploited China and caused the destabilization of China's ruling Manchu regime. Britain had defeated China in the mid-19th century in the Opium and subsequently the great Chinese Empire was carved up into sphere of influence by the Europeans, Americans and at the end of the 19th century by Japan. China had been forced to sign unequal treaties due to these defeats, which gave the imperialist powers extraordinary controls over Chinese trade, territory, and ultimately sovereignty. Foreigners thus did not have to abide by Chinese laws and they had their own extra-

territorial laws and courts. Missionaries too flooded into China in an attempt to spread Christianity.

There were many attempts to resist Western control by sections of the educated elite in China. However, the Self-Strengthening Movement was divided as to how to modernize China and the Manchus did not coherently support reform. China remained subjugated to the West, and faced the humiliation of defeat in war to Japan in 1895. China lost more territory to Japan when it was part of the settlement in the Russo-Japanese War, 1904-1905. The extent of popular anti-Western feeling turned into widespread violent rebellion against Westerners in the boxer Rebellion in 1899. However, without modern weaponry, the anti-foreign revolt was doomed to fail.

Revolution and the Failure of the Republic government (1912)

By the beginning of the 20th century, China was in a desperate condition, and there was a growing feeling that the ruling Manchu dynasty should be overthrown so that China could be westernized and democracy introduced. The political weakness of the Manchu dynasty intensified with the death of the Emperor and the succession of a two-year-old boy, Pu Yi, in 1908. The former Emperor's brother, Prince Chun, ruled as regent, but was not capable of conducting the essential programme of reform. Indeed, he increased taxation, restricted some of the much-needed reforms during the Late Qing reforms and frustrated many groups of people such as reform-minded elites, reformers as well as the business class.

In Oct 1911, the ruling dynasty was overthrown in a revolution known as the Double Tenth. A republic was created. The Revolution began when the government lost control of the military; soldiers in Wuchang revolted and rebellion spread quickly. Most provinces then declared themselves independent of Beijing. The key tensions and issues that led to this revolution would also be significant in the causes of the civil war 15 years later: the impact of imperialism, anti-foreign sentiment and political weakness.

In 1912 the Republic was established but it came under the influence and presidency of an army general, Yuan Shikai. The revolution became an incomplete one. There was no real introduction of democracy, and most former imperial officials kept their positions. It had been the military who ignited the rising and Chinese radicals had joined in later. Michael Lynch argues that the revolution was fundamentally a revolt by the provinces against the centre, 'The Double Tenth was a triumph of regionalism. It represented a particular phase in the long-running contest between central autocracy and local autonomy, a contest that was to shape much of China's history during the following forty years'. Under Yuan Shikai, the key issues that had led to the Revolution in 1911 remained unresolved. Regionalism continued and became the key obstacle to a united China. During this era of Yuan's leadership, because the KMT did not have military strength, was a lesson for both KMT and CCP that to win a political battle for China military power is crucial.

Yuan's own series of ill-conceived acts eventually led to his downfall. The 1912 Republican constitution had created regional assemblies, which Yuan had abolished in an attempt to centralize power. This act further alienated the provincial powers, especially tax revenues were centrally controlled. Yuan's final miscalculation was to proclaim himself as Emperor in 1916. At this point he lost the support of the military and stood down and died 3 months later.

C. Short-Term Causes of the Chinese Civil War

Political Weakness: regionalism – the warlords 1916-1928

A key cause of the civil war in China was the increasing lack of unity in the country by the second decade of the 20th century. Indeed regionalism or provincialism was to play a significant role not only in the cause of war, but also in its course and outcome.

With the abdication and death of Yuan, China lost the only figure that had maintained some degree of unity. China broke into small states and provinces, each controlled by a warlord and his private army. These warlords ran their own territories independently, organizing and taxing the people in their domains. They had their own laws and even their own currencies. As warlords extended their power and wealth by expanding their territories, it was the peasants who suffered in their continuous wars. None of the warlords was willing to relinquish his armies or power to the central government.

The Warlord Era increased the sense of humiliation felt by many Chinese and coupled with their desire to get rid of foreign influence, led to an increase in nationalism during this period of warlord rule. It was in a state of internal anarchy.

The May Fourth Movement, 1919

During this period, two political movement developed in response to both the warlords and foreign influence in China. The May Fourth Movement began in 1919. Students led a demonstration in Beijing against the warlords, traditional Chinese culture and the Japanese. The hostility had been ignited by the Versailles settlement, which had been given to Japan Germany former concessions in Shandong province. China seem to have been humiliated despite joining the war on the side of the Allies.

The significance of the May Fourth Movement was that it was dedicated to change and the rebirth of China as a proud and independent nation. Some intellectuals and students were inspired by **revolutionary ideology** in order to achieve these goals. The Bolshevik revolution offered a practical example. The new Bolshevik had denounced imperialists, and said that all contested border claims would be dropped. Imperialism was perceived by many as the main use of China's problems.

Other Chinese were inspired by the KMT nationalist party, which had reorganized itself and had grown much stronger as compared to before. The Chinese Communist party was also born in this May Fourth Era and both the KMT and CCP will come into an alliance in 1923.

Attempts to unify China: the First United Front and the Northern Expedition, 1926-1928

By the time Sun Yat-sen died in 1925, the KMT had made little progress towards fulfilling their 'Three People's Principles' they had been both limited by their lack of power beyond the South, and the fact they had to rely on alliances with warlords due to the weakness of their military power.

After the death of Sun, General Kai-shek who took over the leadership and he attempted to unify China. Both KMT and CCP wanted a unified China. They agreed that the first step to this was to get rid of the warlords, and in 1922 they formed the First United Front. Both agreed that China need to be freed of the foreign imperialist powers. The Soviet aid for KMT in the form of training and funds also aided this objective of unifying China by removing the warlords of central and northern China through the KMT's military campaign: the Northern Expedition. By 1927 the KMT campaign had managed to capture Hangzhou, Shanghai and Nanjing and by 1928 Beijing was also taken. Within two years, the United Front seemed to have destroyed the power of the warlords, and the KMT announced that it was the legitimate government of China and the new capital and seat of government would be Nanjing.

D. Immediate cause of (first phase of) the Chinese Civil War: the GMD attacks on the CCP, 1927

Despite the Northern Expedition, China was not unified and the United Front was merely a marriage of convenience for both the parties. The initial reasons that had brought them together was insufficient or was no longer there such as real threat from the warlords.

However, the increasing popular support that the communist were building for themselves made them intolerable for Chiang and KMT. There could be no more cooperation and to Chiang the CCP need to be crushed before China can be unified. The Communists members were eventually expelled from the KMT party, and his attacks reached a peak in Shanghai in the White Terror in April 1927. There were massacre of thousands of communists, trade unionists and peasant leaders and about a quarter of a million people were killed. Despite attempt by the CCP to resist through their urban uprisings and Autumn Harvest Uprising, the CCP was very nearly crushed by the end of 1927.

The CCP decided that its only hope of survival was to flee into the mountains of Jiangxi. The KMT pursued them to destroy them and the first phase of the Civil War began.

The Jiangxi Soviet

Mao arrived at Jiangxi and organized the Jiangxi Soviet around his idea of the central revolutionary role of the peasant – as in a population of 500 million, only 12% were urban areas, whereas 88% lived in rural regions and from a total workforce of

approximately 259 million, 205 million were agriculture and a mere 54 million were non-agricultural or industrial workers – and was successful in recruiting and organizing the peasants in the Jiangxi Soviet. As there were internal divisions within CCP, regarding whether the CCP's revolution should be a proletariat or peasant based one, whether the guerrilla warfare would be a better military strategy and the nature of land reforms to be carried out, the success Mao had at Jiangxi began to win him recognition for his realistic peasant based revolution.

KMT's Encirclement Campaign

Between **1928 to 1936**, **Chiang** had the chance to carry out Sun's Three Principles during what is known as the Nanking Decade. His government, however, was ineffective in achieving many of the reforms (***but understanding the context is important – revisionist historians' arguments**) and did not make much progress towards democracy or socio-economic reforms to improve the plight of the people, especially that of the peasants. Jiang faced the threat of the Japanese since 1931 when the Japanese invaded Manchuria. But Chiang's main goal remained the elimination of the communists and he carried out 5 Extermination Campaign to destroy the Jiangxi Soviet and the CCP. The KMT's strategy was to encircle the Reds and cut them off from supplies and resources. The communist had focused their strategy in survival and was based in the mountains between Hunan and Jiangxi provinces. Here they built up their military force – the Red Army. Mao had explained their strategy as: "The enemy advances, we retreat; the enemy halts, we harass; the enemy tired; we attack; the enemy retreats we pursue."

Only the fifth extermination campaign was successful for the KMT. All the earlier attempts had failed as using Mao's strategy of revolutionary war, the Red Army had allowed the KMT forces to enter their territory and round up the communists, and then they attacked the fragmented units. Their knowledge of the terrain and their use of the local peasants meant that they could choose the place and timing of their engagements. In the 5th campaign, Chiang following an advice of a German general adopted a gradual approach. This time a force of 800000 men were sent in with air cover and artillery, which the Red Army match and hence outnumbered and they could not take advantage of previous strengths of higher mobility and local support.

Facing annihilation, Mao decided that the only chance the CCP had was to break through the GMD's lines and set up another base. They succeeded in doing so on Oct 19 and then embarked on what came to be known as the 'Long March. The Long March was essential for ensuring the survival of the CCP and also for making Mao the unchallenged leader. At the end of the Long March, Mao set up a new base at Yanan. Here his revolutionary warfare and ideology will take shape in the forms of policies and programs. (refer to notes on the policies and programs during the Sino-Japanese War era)

Chiang was still determined to defeat the communists but he also had to deal with the threat from Japan. The threat had begun in 1931 but then Chiang did very little to resist Japan's invasion of Manchuria as he felt that "the Japanese were a disease of the skin while the communists were disease of the heart."

But Japanese advance and their growing control in China led to a great increase in anti-Japanese sentiment. Mao called for the second united front to fight the Japanese and this was supported by many groups. Yet in the end it was Comintern and not Mao that pushed for the united front between KMT and CCP due to Stalin's worry about Japanese invasion in and from Manchuria and as he saw that Chiang was still the only leader in China then who could effectively fight the Japanese. The alliance was sealed after the Xian Incident (1936) when Chiang was kidnapped and shocked both the Chinese and the Soviets.

The first stage of the Chinese Civil War came to an end when Second United Front was formed in 1936/1937 and the outbreak of Second Sino-Japanese War. **The Long March and the new defensible base and socio-economic reforms at Yen-an, in itself a propaganda victory for the CCP, the alliance, Sino-Japanese war and CCP's claim to going north to fight against the Japanese enabled them to win much support. In contrast, the KMT's decision to deal with the CCP before the Japanese lost them patriotic support, which the CCP gained, and their poor treatment of peasants by the KMT forces further degraded their popularity and essentially they had failed to implement the Three People's Principles.**

The Impact of the Sino-Japanese War on KMT and CCP (1937-1945)

Impact of the war on KMT

The KMT withdrew to its new capital of Chongqing but did little to resist the Japanese. Chiang's best troops were sent to Yen-an instead and he gambled on the USA winning the war against Japan for him. As large areas of the KMT's support base were under the Japanese occupation, Chiang lost much-needed tax revenue. He faced the problem of printing money, which led to high levels of inflation and in turn impacted badly in the middle classes, who were the natural supporters of the KMT. The peasantry was also the hardest hit by taxes. Corruption within KMT army, factions within KMT throughout the war, lack of KMT control over many of China's provinces, exhaustion from war after bearing the brunt of the Japanese attacks especially in the early stages of the war and as throughout they continued to meet the conventional battles, which resulted in the heavy losses, and loss of support of the Chinese public as it appeared sitting back and waiting for the Americans to win the war.

Impact of the war on CCP

Mao used the war against the Japanese to carry out his revolutionary warfare as the intention was 70% expansion of CCP, 20% deal with KMT and 10% resist the Japanese. By March 1945, the communist had liberated 678 out of 914 country towns

and implemented their policies in them: socioeconomic reforms and etc. **The CCP provided for the peasants needs through reformist and radical social policies and by providing leadership for the defence of the peasant communities against the Japanese. In this process the Communist won peasant confidence and in the process began the transformation – the modernization of rural China – James Sheridan – refer to earlier notes on CCP’s socioeconomic reforms at Yen’an**

The Hundred Regiment Offensive in 1940 was the only largest single CCP campaign against the Japanese which provoked such a brutal retaliation from the Japanese leading to the “kill all, burn all, loot all” Japanese policy. **However, overall, regardless of how much of actual military contribution the CCP provided in fighting against the Japanese, both in reality and the perception created both domestically and internationally was that the CCP gave a much better leadership during the war than the Nationalist due to all the socio-economic policies. Mao’s guerrilla assaults on the Japanese served as good propaganda too and promoted the CCP as the real nationalist force defending China and he emphasized that the KMT forces were receiving help from the Americans and thus imperialist puppets. Such sentiments fed into the long-held anti-foreign and anti-imperialist popular feelings in China. Hence, the Communist were seen as the true nationalist and the Chinese support went to the CCP rather than to the KMT.**

E. Aftermath of the Sino-Japanese War 1945 onwards

On August 1945 Japan surrendered. The question of the future of China now became critical for the US and its allies. At the insistence of a new US ambassador, John Stuart, Mao was invited to Chongqing. However, before this meeting at Chongqing CCP held its Seventh Party Congress with the aim of showing that the Communist Party as a necessary participant in any future Chinese government and to project Mao as a national leader. At the Congress, Mao gave a report ‘On Coalition Government’ in which he made public and virtually non-negotiable, the Party’s terms for a unified Chinese government. It was backed with figures to show the strength of the Communist position: a population of 95 500 000; a regular army of 910 000 and a militia of 2200000 and 1121000 Party members.

By the end of the war the prestige of the Communist Party in China was high. They had won the propaganda war, if not the Pacific War (Jack Gray). They were regarded in liberal circles as courageous and incorruptible, capable social reformer and democrats. Their strength was regarded as the reward of their virtue.

The Nationalist Chongqing government could project no such image and this was partly because all its action were open to public scrutiny, in spite of attempted censorship, while CCP’s action at Yen’an were seen only by visiting journalists on guided tours. It was, however, mainly because the Nationalist government had now little positive to project. Even its achievement in having finally secured the end of the

'unequal treaties' and the acceptance of China as one of the 5 powers, did it no good; the Nationalist government's war record was so bad that these triumphs were seen for what they were – gifts of the Allies/America.

Repression had grown throughout the war. It was vastly intensified with defection to Japan started to occur such as in 1938 when Wang Jing Wei and his followers defected to Japan and in response to successful Communist infiltration of all branches of Chinese public life and successful Communist appeals to liberals and to students. Nationalist government at Chongqing came to be wholly identified with the denial of political freedom. Hyperinflation had long exhausted China's financial resources and the war had been maintained by the government's printing presses, until in 1948 prices were 5.5 million times those of 1937. The consequence was universal corruption. Those living on public salaries, now made worthless, had no choice but to sell their services.

Chiang was well aware of the situation. Personally honest and well-meaning, he was hemmed in by the untrustworthiness of provincial leaders, the administrative complexity faced at within his Chongqing government, and the ubiquity of Communist influence. He no longer expected his will to be carried out and had no more hopes of the KMT as a reforming party than the Chinese people at large.

China, was thus, in a classical eve-of-revolution situation. The ruling elite had lost its confidence and its will to rule. In these circumstances the final victory of the Communists, although it was gained by war, was actually a political victory (Jack Gray). In 1947 the Communist armies faced Nationalist superiority in men and materials of two-and-a-half to one. **After less than a year of fighting, the KMT had reversed the proportion, as a result of corruption, demoralization, and frequent defection of the Nationalist armies.** In a further year they had driven the last of the Nationalist off the mainland to the shelter of Taiwan. The Nationalist armies voted with their feet, while the war-lord allies of the KMT retreated into their own bailiwicks and from them made their peace with Mao. Only the Whampoa regiments stood firm until they were overwhelmed by numbers.

F. The Course of the Chinese Civil War

The collapse of Japan, after the two atomic bombs, had come sooner than expected. It left the Nationalist government totally unprepared for the consequences of the sudden termination of war. A number of pressing problems now clamoured for Chiang Kai-shek's immediate attention, and foremost among them was the Communist threat to move into the Japanese occupied territories and take over the enemy arms. No less ominous was the situation in Manchuria where Soviet forces had plunged deep into the hinterland and refused to stop with the Japanese surrender. Thus, the end of the war had created an extremely critical military situation for the Nationalists.

Following the Japanese surrender, a mad race took place between the KMT and CCP forces, each trying to reach the occupied territories first to receive the Japanese surrender and thereby harvest the vast quantity of enemy arms and military supplies. In the contest the Communists seemed to enjoy a distinct geographical advantage. They were in control of 18 “liberated areas” in North, South and Central China, with a population of 100 million and boasted of one million regular troops and two million militiamen, who were deployed in the countryside of the Yellow, Yangtze and Pear river valleys. The big metropolises of Peiping, Tientsin, Shanghai, Nanking, Hankow, and Canton, which were located in these valleys, became urban islands in a Communist-dominated rural ocean. **To make full use of this favourable situation**, Mao declared in August 9, 1945 – a day after the Soviet entry into the war – that the collapse of Japan was in sight and that the hour had arrived for the CCP to mount a general offensive. **On August 10, Chu The, commander-in-chief of the People’s Liberation army (PLA), ordered his troops to seize all towns, cities and communication centre under Japanese Occupation, and to receive the enemy’s surrender and military supplies.** Within two-weeks of the Japanese surrender, the Communist expanded their territory from 116 to 175 counties.

The Nationalist forces, scattered along the several battlefronts and in Western China, were less favourably situated in the race, but Chiang was determined not to let the fruits of victory slip from his fingers. He ordered the Japanese and puppet forces to hold out against non-Nationalist troops. To overcome the Communist geographical advantage, **Chiang requested American help to airlift and sealift his troops to the occupied areas. With American help and Japanese cooperation, the Nationalists won the first round of competition. The government regained control of nearly all the important cities and communication centres in Central, East and South China while the Communist forces temporarily retreated to the countryside.**

Yet in spite of this setback, the CCP managed to score some gains during the first two weeks of contest, winning control of 59 cities and vast countryside. The Soviet advance deep into Jehol and Chahar, facilitated the entry of CCP forces into Manchuria, where the Soviets turned over to them considerable quantities of surrendered Japanese arms. However, the Russians did not set the Chinese Communists up for the takeover of Manchuria. **To effect rapprochement with the CCP, Chiang invited Mao 3 times to a conference in Chungking.**

No agreement was however made as to who had the right to receive the Japanese surrender and disarm the enemy. Six weeks of negotiations left no doubt that little progress was made. Mao refused to yield on those basic points that touched the fundamental position of the CCP while the Nationalists negotiating from a point of strength, stubbornly refused to compromise their privileged status. Chiang prestige was at its zenith having led the country to victory against Japan, enjoyed American aid and support and had signed a treaty of friendship and alliance with Stalin and

maintained a vastly superior military strength over his enemy. He was not ready to share his glory with the Communists.

Despite America's involvement, in particular General George C Marshall as the ambassador to China, to prevent a civil war, the two local parties remained deeply resentful of each other.

The Main Development in the second phase of civil war – The Course of the War

1945 - Focus: North China

Overall Outcome: Nationalist gained control over the cities, CCP dominated the countryside

At the time of the Japanese surrender, the Nationalist seemed to hold a considerable advantage in terms of the territorial control. The CCP had very little presence in southern and eastern China. So the Nationalist faced little resistance in establishing control in these regions. However, in northern China the CCP was in a stronger position. By August 1945 they had substantially expanded their areas of control beyond their base at Yanan to include over 19 communist base areas encompassing a population of 95.5 million. This put them in a stronger position to take control of the formerly Japanese occupied regions of Shantung and the resource rich Manchuria.

The presence of Soviet troops in Manchuria, where they had been involved in the struggle against the Japanese in the closing months of the Second Sino-Japanese War, was potentially advantageous to the Communists. CCP could possibly hope for Soviet assistance. The Soviets might provide additional personnel and weapons which could be easily transported over the border into Manchuria. Support from the Soviets however was not guaranteed as the relations worsened between the Soviets and the Americans and as the Cold War began. USA's aid was also necessarily forthcoming at this early stage for the Nationalist. (refer to section of this notes on American policy towards China and the Nationalists)

The CCP's strategic priority in the wake of the Japanese surrender was to expand its territorial control in northern China. Initially, it made significant progress, particularly in the countryside but it was less successful in gaining control of the cities. This was largely because of the rapid advance of the Nationalist troops into northern China. The Nationalist made use of US naval and air transport to move their forces swiftly to the region. By end of August, they had taken control of 17 key cities, including Beijing, Tianjin and Datong, and the majority of the railways in north China. They also captured approximately 179 000 square kilometres of territory within the Communist-liberated areas.

In response to the strength of Nationalist control of the cities in northern China, the CCP's strategy shifted in early autumn 1945. The CCP moved away from

efforts to extend territorial control towards the defence the existing territory and guerrilla-style operation known as mobile defence (a whole tutorial will be used to cover guerrilla strategy). The CCP adopted mobile defence as its primary strategy between the autumn of 1945 and late 1947. It arguably enabled the Communists to win the civil war. Had they continued to pursue offensive, conventional strategies focused on gaining and holding new territory, in particular the cities, they would most probably have been swiftly overcome by the Nationalists, whose numerical and technological advantages were overwhelming. Indeed such strategies had resulted in significant CCP defeats in northern China and later Manchuria in 1945-46. The switch to mobile defence not only enabled the CCP to survive in these years, but contributed significantly to the wearing down of Nationalist forces. Indeed by late 1947 Nationalist forces were so weakened, considerably but not solely, due to the strategy of mobile defence, that when the CCP reverted to attacks on the cities, Communist troops were far more successful.

In Oct 1945, the CCP shifted its offensive priorities to Manchuria. Neither the CCP nor the Nationalist had troops presence in the region, which had been dominated by the Japanese during the war. The Soviet occupation of Manchuria did assist the CCP as it gave the CCP access to Japanese arms depots in the region, such that as Shenyang which contained over 100 000 guns and artillery pieces, transferred the 200 000 Chinese troops of the Manchukuo regime, who had surrendered to the Soviets, to the CCP, thereby substantially enlarging the CCP forces and prevented the Nationalist troops from entering some of the key cities in the region

However, the Soviets were not entirely helpful to the CCP in Manchuria. The Soviets dismantled industrial machinery worth over \$858 million from Manchuria for use in the USSR and Stalin had instructed the Chinese communists to leave the key cities in Manchuria weakening their urban bases.

In response to all these, Chiang deployed an increasing number of troops to the region. **By Sept 1945, 150 000 Nationalist troops, including large groups of elite US-trained divisions, had been sent there. The first major confrontation with the Red Army came at the Shanhaiguan Pass on 15-16 Nov 1945. In this conventional-style battle, the Red Army was decisively beaten. Thereafter, the Nationalist forces made rapid progress in Manchuria, taking many of the key cities.**

Despite this success, Chiang's decision to deploy significant troops to Manchuria may have contributed to his overall defeat. This was because it had diverted troops from northern China before the Nationalist had fully secured the region, adding to the overextension of their forces, which made them vulnerable to the Communists attacks.

1946 - Focus: Manchuria

Outcome: Nationalist gained control of cities, CCP retreated from cities but dominated the countryside, Truce – June to Oct 1946

In early 1946, the Nationalist made further territorial gains, dominating the majority of urban centres in northern China and Manchuria, while continuing to control southern and eastern China. The CCP's strength lay in its control of the countryside in the north. It would take good fortune and skilful strategy to convert this strength into overall victory, but there were signs in 1946 that was precisely what the CCP might be able to do.

While in May 1946 there was a brief extension of CCP control as its troops swiftly move into many of the key cities in Manchuria when the last Soviet troops left finally, the advance of the CCP was short-lived as it took Nationalist troops only weeks to take almost every key cities in the region and the Communists were forced into a northerly retreat, bombarded for much of the way by Nationalist air attacks. By June it seemed likely that the Communist would have to abandon their last urban stronghold in Manchuria.

In June 1946 a ceasefire in Manchuria was agreed between the two sides, a truce that was primarily arranged by the Americans. The CCP however used this truce to strengthen its troops as the truce served as a respite for them. Chiang agreement truce, on the other hand, halted what was successful advance in Manchuria, but he had to agree due to the enormous pressure placed on him by the USA, as his Manchurian forces were over-stretched and would benefit from respite to reorganize and also because he believed that a brief respite could affect his longer-term chances of victory, given the hugely superior position of the Nationalists.

The truce lasted only 4 months, with fighting breaking out in Manchuria again in Oct 1946. However, renewed Nationalist assaults on the city of Harbin failed to dislodge the CCP, which had spent the 4 months of ceasefire building up the city defence, fully utilizing its 800 000 strong population to provide manpower, resources and funding. During this time the CCP also received crucial aid from the Soviets. 2000 wagonloads of equipment, the majority of it captured from Korea on railways which the Soviets had also assisted in repairing. The equipment included desperately needed heavy artillery, machine guns and rifles.

The respite also enabled CCP military commander Lin Piao to reorganize, train and re-equip troops. He effectively transformed the small guerrilla detachments into more professional, larger scale units that could successfully use artillery and engage the enemy in large scale battles in conventional warfare. The results of this transformation of the Red Army were apparent in the success of a surprise attack on the Nationalist camped to the south of the Sungari River in the winter of 1946-47. Although the substantial CCP force of 400 000 failed to take the key railway junction at Siping, it inflicted considerable casualties on the Nationalists and was able to capture vast

amounts of Nationalist weaponry. By the end of 1946, the situation in Manchuria was inconclusive. Although the Nationalist continued to hold the majority of the cities, they had failed to dislodge the CCP from the countryside.

1947 – The high point of Nationalist Success, Focus: central and northern China

Outcome: Nationalist advance, gained majority of cities, CCP in retreat, lost Yen-an but retained countryside bases

The lack of decisive victory in northern China and Manchuria encouraged Chiang to launch a new offensive in May 1947, called the Strongpoint Offensive. In this, the Nationalist focused on **trying to secure the key cities in the central and eastern provinces of Shantung, Shanxi and Shaanxi**. Their troops **initially made rapid advances, forcing the CCP out of almost all the key cities in these regions**. **Nationalist garrisons were then stationed in these cities to defend them from possible CCP counter-attacks**. In March 1947, Nationalist troops achieved the hugely important symbolic, but strategically less significant, **capture of the CCP base at Yen-an**.

This offensive focus on the cities meant that Nationalist did not prioritize the destruction of the CCP in rural areas, allowing the mobile defence operations by the Red Army to continue the focus on holding key cities across multiple provinces without securing the countryside ultimately left the Nationalist over-stretched and vulnerable to ambush, siege and sabotage. This **urban strategic focus reflected long-standing Nationalist priorities** and their relative neglect of building support in the rural areas.

From later 1947, CCP strategy shifted towards large-scale assaults on urban centres, an approach which had been previously avoided. But by late 1947, the CCP was in a stronger position not only because they had increased their stockpiles of weapons, but because the Nationalists forces were thinly spread out in garrison duties in the major towns throughout China, where their supplies and reinforcements were frequently disrupted by CCP attacks. **The city of Shijiazhuang in Hebei province was the first major city the CCP successfully captured, doing so on 12 Nov 1947**. This was followed by the capture of the key Manchurian city of Siping in the winter of 1947.

1948 – The Communist Advance, Focus: central and northern China and Manchuria

Outcome: Nationalist in retreat (losing many cities), CCP launched successful attacks on cities

CCP campaigns of 1948-49 transformed its growing advantage into actual victory. Its urban offensive brought about an end to the war sooner than would have occurred had the mobile defence been continued.

In Manchuria, the CCP's assaults on the cities achieved significant success. They began with the destruction of the Nationalist base at Jinzhou on 15 Oct 1948. This was followed by the capture of Changchun on 26 Oct after a devastating siege of the city which resulted in over a quarter of a million deaths, largely from starvation; the Red Army had prevented even civilians from leaving the besieged city. **The surrender of the city of Shenyang on 2 Nov 1948 finally left Manchuria firmly under the control of the CCP.**

The Huai-hui Campaign

The CCP's Huai-hui campaign from Nov 1948-Jan 1949 continued the strategic focus on cities, this time in China's central provinces. The main focus was the city of Xuchou, a key junction on the Longhai railway. CCP troops attacked the Nationalist troops en route to Xuchou to prevent reinforcements from reaching the cities. They then encircled Xuchou, destroying the villages on its outskirts in a 30km radius. The Red Army then besieged the city through the winter. **Without adequate food or supplies Nationalist troops deserted in increasing numbers.** They were encouraged by Communists propaganda which promised food to defectors. **With the Nationalists units in the city weakened, the Red Army launched an assault making full use of their new artillery power, capturing the city four days later in Jan 1949.**

The Pingjin Campaign assured CCP's control of central China, which ran simultaneously to the Huai-hui campaign. Red Army attacks and increased use of artillery decimated the Nationalist troops, **enabling them to take the cities of Xinbaoan and Zhangjiakou, followed by Taiyuan in 15 Jan 1949.** The culmination of the campaign came with the decision of the **Nationalist commander, Fu Zuoyi, to surrender Beijing on 16 Jan 1949.** Chiang tried to initiate peace talks, proposing that the USA and USSR act as mediators. Stalin advised Mao to engage in talks but Mao refused as with the **Nationalist clearly on the brink of defeat**, he was determined to pursue to a decisive Communist victory.

1949 - Focus: southern China

Outcome: Nationalist in retreat, CCP gained huge amounts of territory and ultimate victory

By 1949, a complete CCP victory seemed to be a foregone conclusion. It's strategies, coupled with problems for the Nationalist, brought swift victory. With the CCP control of north-eastern, north and central China, its **objective in 1949 was the territory south of the Yangzi River.** In contrast to the heavy fighting that had

taken place in northern and central China, **Nationalist forces put up only minimal resistance when the Red Army began to march south.** The city of Nanking was taken by the CCP in April, Shanghai and Wuhan were taken in May, Xian and Changsha in August and Chongqing and Xiamen in Nov 1949.

Chiang and what remained of the Nationalist forces, fled to Taiwan, still asserting that they represented the legitimate government of China. The reality of the Chinese mainland, however, was the CCP now ruled China. Only the outlying separatist regions of Tibet and Xinjiang remained outside their control; areas which were never controlled by the Nationalists. **Mao proclaimed the establishment of the Communists People's Republic of China from the walls of the Forbidden City, the palace of the Chinese emperors, in Beijing in Oct 1949.**

G. Why did the Communist win the Chinese Civil War?

The most important near cause for the downfall of the Nationalist was the 8 year Japanese war, which completely exhausted, the government militarily, financially and spiritually. Had there been no Japanese war, the situation in China would have been very different. Many of the disastrous repercussions of the war discussed in the last chapter continued to plague the Nationalists during their struggle with the Communists. The price the Nationalist paid to win the Japanese war was also was also the first instalment towards its eventual downfall – **Hsu**

While the Sino-Japanese war had a crucial impact on KMT, is that the only factor that cause Nationalist to be weakened? Were there long term causes too for the defeat of the Nationalist and the success of the Communist? How about the strengths of the Communists?

	Weakness of the Nationalists	Strengths of the Communists
1.Military Personnel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nationalist troops significantly outnumbered the Red Army during the early years of the war. In August 1945, the Nationalist army consisted of 2.7 million, approximately three times the size of the Red Army. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> However, the CCP was also able to call for a militia force of some 2.2 million even in August 1945, although this was primarily consisted of untrained and ill-equipped peasants and so was arguably of much lesser military value. As the war progressed and greater amounts of territory and hence potential recruits, came under Communist

		<p>control, numerical superiority swung in favour of the CCP.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The CCP's growing numerical advantage was evident in its ability to launch the huge Huai-hai and Pingjin campaigns simultaneously on Nov 1948 to Jan 1949. • During the CCP's Huai-hui campaign, with a strategic focus on taking over cities in China's central provinces, CCP troops attacked Nationalist troops en route to Xuchou to prevent reinforcements from reaching the city. They then encircled Xuchou, destroying the village on its outskirts in a 30 km radius and the Red Army then besieged the city through the winter.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Without adequate food or supplies Nationalist troops deserted in increasing numbers and they were also encouraged by communist propaganda which promised food to defectors. With the Nationalist units in the city weakened, the Red Army launched an assault and making use of their new artillery power, capturing the city four days later in Jan 1949. • Both the Nationalist and Communists armies relied extensively, although not exclusively, on 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Communists too relied heavily on conscripted peasants. The Pingjin Campaign of 1948 alone, for instance, had about 1.5 million peasant conscripts.

	<p>conscripts. In July 1947, Chiang issued a general mobilization bill giving the Nationalists unrestricted powers of conscription throughout China. Recruitment gangs were sent into the countryside to obtain troops and their methods were often brutal. Reluctant, malnourished conscripts were not infrequently tied together with ropes to prevent them from escaping.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ranks of the Red Army were enlarged by Nationalist defectors and prisoners. Defection was actively encouraged by the Communists through promises of good treatment and nutrition, which appealed to many Nationalist troops who were frequently short of food. • In 1948, Mao insisted that all captured prisoners should be assimilated into the CCP's forces, including large number captured following fighting in Shandong. The swift increase in manpower this provided enabled the Communist to attack Xuchou during the Hwai-Hai campaign before Chiang had the opportunity to reinforce the defences or to bring in reinforcements. • Although the use of former enemy troops was a risk, the CCP's willingness to execute those suspected of duplicity created an atmosphere of terror which minimized the potential dangers.
<p>Overall/Context: Although the Nationalist army emerged from the Japanese war better equipped and trained than ever before, it was a tired and weary force. Already exhibiting signs of fatigue during the last stage of the war. Japan's surrender gave the troops a sense of relief and they longed for a rest. The thought of fighting another civil war was abhorrent to them. Though they fought and did have initial victories such as till mid-1947, lack of supplies and food, low morale, fatigue and defection, loss in terms of casualties suffered all took its toll on the Nationalists. However, the Communists during the war had expanded their</p>		

military forces and as the end of the war became a moment of recognition for them (refer to what Jack Gray's has said), they emerged fresh, vigorous and confident of the future. Difference in such morale and vigour definitely made a difference on who won the civil war.

2. Armaments

The supply of weapons and food to troops was crucial.

Neither side manufactured significant armaments and so both relied on foreign supplies and captured weaponry.

Overall, despite early Nationalist advantages in access to modern armaments, the CCP showed itself able to sustain vital support and supplies throughout the war.

- The Nationalist relied for the majority of their weapons on armaments sold to them by the USA. The USA gave \$2 billion in aid between 1945 and 1949.
- This US assistance included artillery, firearms, ammunitions and airpower.
- However, there are claims **that US support for the Nationalist was less valuable both in monetary terms and in military effectiveness than it is often supposed.** The \$2billion value of American assistance included all US supplies to China rather than just military aid, which actually constituted \$798 million.
- Many of the US supplies also arguably arrived too late to be of maximum assistance to the Nationalist. **The Americans, keen to be broker peace talks in China, actually imposed an embargo on arms sales to China between 1946 and July 1947. This**
- The **CCP too relied heavily on armaments manufactured abroad.** Most of their weapons were captured, **initially from the Japanese and later from the Nationalists themselves.**
- In the early months of the war in the wake of the Japanese surrender, the Communists were able to access huge stockpiles of Japanese weapons in northern China and Manchuria.
- Russian assistance eased the transfer of 900 Japanese aircraft, 700 tanks and almost 4000 artillery pieces and nearly 12 000 machine guns to the Communists.
- The Russians also provided training for Chinese commanders at Russian military training schools.
- But there is **little evidence that the Soviets transferred arms directly from the USSR.**
- **Captured Nationalist weapons later constituted the majority of Communist armaments. These were obtained through attacks and raid on depots and from deserters.**
- The **CCP always lacked airpower and armoured**

	<p>embargo limited the ability of the Nationalist to obtain weaponry at a crucial stage in the war when they were still dominant over the Red Army.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>However, Nationalist tactical incompetency and corruption have to be also taken into consideration in accessing the value of the American military aid to the Nationalist.</u> 	<p>vehicles, which the Nationalists possessed in superior numbers. <u>Knowledge of this deficit informed the choices of CCP tactics; conventional battles were initially avoided and mobile defence was prioritized, in which small arms and artillery was most crucial.</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By the final years of the civil war, <u>the CCP had closed the gap in armaments between itself and the Nationalists.</u> This equalization was evident in the CCP's ability in 1948 to launch decisive urban campaigns, such as the Huai-hui and Pingjin campaigns, for which heavy artillery was a prerequisite.
4. Food supplies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nationalist troops, without access to large access to countryside areas, were far more severely affected by food shortages. Their bases in the cities made them dependent for food supplies on the railways, which were frequently cut by the Communist troops. This resulted in food shortages in the cities. • The foodstuffs that were available were subject to massive inflation, as currency values ran out of control, worsened by the Nationalist reliance on 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Communists seized enormous provisions of food from their countryside base areas to supply their armies. • To this end, food was requisitioned from every household. This ready access to food from the countryside enabled the Communists to pursue the strategy of mobile defence since their troops could effectively live off the land around their countryside bases, a strategy which <u>proved vital to their eventual victory.</u>

	<p>large foreign loans and the practice of printing large amounts of paper money. In 1940, 100 yuan would have bought one pig, by 1946 only one egg.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The situation was exaggerated by the corruption of Nationalist officials who hoarded food to sell for profits. Conscripted Nationalist soldiers not infrequently went hungry. Short of rations, they were sometimes only given mugs of congee, the water in which rice had been boiled. • These shortages and inflationary pressures contributed to a decline in morale in Nationalist-held areas. Demonstrations against the shortages and corruption became more frequent and contributed to a large number of conversions to the Communist cause, particularly among the students. • Such growing animosity towards Chiang's regime contributed to the virtual implosion of Nationalist authority in southern China in 1949, with the key cities surrendering to the CCP within a few 	
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	months and with very little resistance.	
<p>5. Sustaining Civilian Support</p> <p>The ability to sustain the support of the civilian population is crucial in civil war in order to raise and supply troops. Both the CCP and the Nationalist attempted to do this using a variety of means, including propaganda, popular policies and when all these failed, terror and coercion</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nationalist propaganda focused on the social revolution that would be unleashed by a communist government, a frightening prospect to the urban commercial and business elites. However, the Nationalist struggled to halt the disenchantment with Nationalist control that was growing even among their traditional supports due to increasing hardships in the cities, notably the rising rate of inflation and food shortages. Popular discontentment was exacerbated by the widespread perception that corruption was rife among the Nationalist officials. Many believed that the Nationalists had had their chance at reforming China but had failed. Both the CCP and the Nationalists had coerced the civilian population into assisting them, into becoming their conscripts and had imposed economic demands on the civilians. Inhabitants in Nationalist and CCP zones were forced to pay 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communist propaganda and the patriotic songs which were taught to villagers emphasized that they were fighting a people's war in order to bring about profound and lasting social change to ordinary Chinese people. Communist social reform policies, such as land redistribution were successful in gaining civilian support, particularly among the peasantry. The modification of the land reform campaign begun during the war against the Japanese continued. Consequently, official policy was that moderate landlords should not be targeted since Mao was keen not to alienate them by excessive confiscations and violence. However, in reality the extreme violence of class warfare which accompanied land reform frequently continued at a local level. As the CCP took control of urban centres later in the war, it implemented policies to improve the lives of urban populations in an effort to gain supporters. Mao's insistence of the disciplined and respectful behaviour of Red Army troops while carrying out these reforms also helped to project a favourable image of the Communists.

	<p>very high taxes, for instances.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Communist were known to have a policy of not executing anyone who laid down their arms, and to treat prisoners well and this particularly helped to win over the ordinary soldiers, most of whom came from poor peasant families and also made the soldiers stay willingly in the Communist army. The discipline of the Communist soldiers also captured the goodwill of the locals as the Communist army were not engaged in looting or rape and instead many went out of their way to demonstrate exemplary behaviour, which was also in sharp contrast to that of the Nationalist. • CCP's coercion and economic demands on the civilian population took the form of taking ever larger volumes of food in grain tax from the local peasantry, which had been practiced even before the civil war, insisted that the peasantry performed corvee labour, a forced labour tax. Peasants were also forced to carry out repair work on roads and bridges and to transport food and ammunition. Communist campaigns were also set up urging the local population to donate materials such as firewood, food and jewellery. Many volunteered goods in these campaigns more from fear than genuine willingness.
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Overall/Context: In addition to fiscal irresponsibility which brought on rampant inflation, the obnoxious conduct of Nationalist officials who returned to the Japanese-occupied areas after the war did permanent damage to the Nationalist prestige. They returned as conquerors and treated the people with contempt, as if they had been disloyal citizens. The officials took over enemy properties for their own self-fish purposes reinforcing the perception that the Nationalist forces were corrupted. They also monopolized profitable commodities and publicly auctioned relief materials for personal gains. Inflation and financial mismanagement destroyed the livelihood of hundreds of millions of Chinese and totally discredited the government. **The net result of the misbehaviour of the Nationalist officials, the overall failure of Nanking Decade in improving the plight of millions, the growing unpopularity of the regime even among its traditional supporters like the business classes and the middle-classes due to the inflation contrasted greatly with the civilian support that the Communist were enjoying due to their socioeconomic policies as well as the discipline of the Communist troops, which was also so crucial for a mobile war, contributing to their eventual victory.** The Communist seemed to provide the much needed alternative administration that the people will looking forward to as in their eyes the Nationalist regime had been discredited and it had failed in the opportunity given to it to bring the much needed socio-economic reforms and stability to the country.

6. Strategy	Refer to the section on Course of War and identify mistakes in KMT's strategy	Refer to the section on Course of War and identify strengths in CCP's strategy
7. Foreign Aid	Refer to section on Role of American Aid	Refer to section on Role of Soviet Aid

Overall/Context: According to Hsu, the course of events in China could have different course during if the US had followed a different course during the **Japanese War**. First, had its China aid been more substantial during the first four years of the war, 1937 – 1941, it might have beefed up Nationalist finances to the point where inflation could have been checked in its early stages. By nipping the trouble in the bud, the later runaway situation might never have occurred, thus avoiding the ultimate economic collapse. Also, if the US had retained its original strategy of attacking Japan from the Chinese mainland, American soldiers would have landed in the coastal provinces of China, seizing territory from the Japanese and turning it over to the Nationalist government. The change of plan to invade Japan from the Pacific led to by passing of China all-together and this placed the Nationalist in a difficult position of having to compete with the Communists when the war suddenly came to an end. And even when the Nationalist were in a critical

situation during the spring of 1948, the United States had one last chance to intervene militarily but it did not choose to do so.

But should America be blamed?

**8.
Retardation
of Social
and
Economic
reforms**

**(*refer to
Nanking
Decade and
reforms
during
Yenan
period
notes)**

Overall/Context: Aside from all the above-mentioned as well as immediate causes of the **Nationalist downfall** as well as what happened during the war, **a far more fundamental failure was the continuous retardation of badly needed social and economic reforms. – Hsu**

This neglect might have been partially caused by the overwhelming circumstances beyond the Nationalist control as from the outset it was challenged by warlordism, economic problems, lack of central political control in the face of dissident politicians and hardly had it resolved these problems when it was faced with mounting threats of Japanese aggression and Communist aggression. It took all the energy, resources, and skills the Nationalist could muster to fend off a war with Japan while launching 5 campaigns against the Communists. **But as much as there was not much resources and time to tackle the basic problem of economic justice and social reforms in such a context, Hsu argues that, the Nationalists lacked the necessary motivations to initiate social and economic reforms. Established on the coastal regions far away from the hinterland, the Nanking government relied on custom dues and city commercial taxes for its sustenance, paying little attention to agrarian problems.** It did not understand the peasants, **saw no urgency in solving these problems** and was unsympathetic to their plight. It was precisely in this area of neglect of the peasant masses, which had great revolutionary potential, that Mao found its highest and most successful expression.

Do you see limitation in what Hsu is saying about the Nationalist?

Communist victory in the civil war, however, was not a foregone conclusion. Indeed in 1945 it seemed that the odds were stacked against them. That the Communists were able to overcome these odds was primarily due to their strategic and tactical decisions, in particular the strategy of mobile defence which nullified the considerable initial military advantages of the Nationalists and wore down the Nationalists.

However, while mistakes were made, and less than optimal strategies pursued, many Nationalist strategies were based on sound, albeit conventional, military reasoning and

usually resulted in significant, if ultimately, superficial gains. **The fact that Chiang's forces were defeated was due more to Communist skill than Nationalist errors.**

CCP management of the war, in particular its emphasis on the importance of establishing control of the countryside, was crucial in facilitating their victory. This was **because mobile warfare** was only really possible in the context where the troops could be supported and supplied by the local population. **However, while CCP management of the war was fundamental to its chances of victory, it took strategic and tactical skill to exploit these potential advantages and translate them into military victory.**

H. Role of Foreign Intervention in the Chinese Civil War

The Role of the United States

When President Truman dispatched Marshall to China in Dec 1945, President Truman made it very clear that large-scale aid to China was to be contingent on the achievement of national unity. General George C Marshall, the American ambassador to China to prevent a civil war, had repeatedly **warned Chiang in mid-1946 that the US was not prepared to underwrite a Chinese Civil War and that the spiralling inflation might precipitate an economic collapse.** When Chiang ignored these warnings and went ahead with the fighting, the die was cast.

Washington's chief mistake was its inability to evolve a positive policy towards China. It neither disowned the Nationalist regime nor extricated itself entirely from China, but **followed a course of partial withdrawal and limited assistance to the Nationalist government**—such as the **granting of \$2.7 million for economic aid in Oct 1947 and the establishment of a small Army Advisory Group** to offer Chiang counsel. This policy of drift prompted Chiang's friends in Washington and the "China Lobby" to engineer a move to block the European Recovery Program unless a meaningful China aid program was initiated. General MacArthur pressed for greater China aid and sneered at the American pressure for KMT reforms while fighting a civil war: "The two issues are as impossible of synchronization as it would be to alter the structural design of a house while the same was being consumed by flame."

In response to an urgent Nationalist request by the end of 1947 for a 4 year aid program of %1.5 billion – of which \$500 million of economic aid and \$100 million of military aid were to be administered for the first year – Truman recommended on Feb 19, 1948, a grant-in-aid of %570 million for 15 months to retard the Chinese economic collapse. The **China aid bill limped through Congress with a 13% cut at \$400 million, but was not implemented until the second half of 1948 when the Nationalist cause was all but lost.** On July 30, 1948, Mao declared the demise of the KMT regime "not too far away." On August 13 Marshall was reported to have said: "I wash my hands of the problem which has passed altogether beyond my comprehension and my power to make judgments."

The misfortune of the Nationalists was compounded by their entanglement in American politics during an election year. Disappointed with the Democratic Administration, Nationalist diplomats cultivated the Republic on the assumption that the 1948 election would result in a change of administration. However, becoming President again, **Truman twice turned down Nationalist pleas for aid in Nov and Dec 1948. The feeling was strong in Washington, after Chiang's resignation in Jan 1949, that the US sought to get out of China as fast as possible.**

In retrospect, the US, though "guilty" of many acts of omission and default, cannot be held responsible for the "loss" of China which it never "owned." Chinese Communism was an internal development of great vitality spanning 30 years, and it is unlikely that foreign intervention could have altered its course. **Active American armed intervention before the spring of 1948 might have delayed the Communist ascent temporarily but most likely could not have stopped it permanently. Such an intervention would have required, in the view of a China expert, "150 000 American troops, although a million or two seems more realistic given the later Korean and Vietnamese experiences.** The question then arises, how long could American soldiers have been kept in China, when demobilisation and return to normalcy were the order of the day at home.

American's China policy during the 1940s must be viewed in the larger context of United States global strategy, and more particularly in the light of its approach to East Asia and the Pacific. Despite the official rhetoric of friendship for China, the long range goals of **American policy definitely were not based on altruism or sentimental attachment to the Chinese culture or people, but rather on the pragmatic consideration of the strategic and economic interests of the US in post-war East Asia.** Washington wanted to create a new balance of power in the Pacific and East Asia, one in which the US would occupy a dominant position.

However, with Europe as the focal point of post-war global consideration, the Americans wanted to achieve their East Asian goals with a minimum of resource commitment. Such a policy required a strong alliance with a major state in the region: **either China or Japan.** During 1944, although no concrete decision was made, the policy was that if China could fit into their scheme, then it deserved American support, **if not a revitalized Japan could also serve as an anchor for US interest in East Asia, and in particular with regards to American policy on Russian influence in Far East.** It is primarily for this reason that President Truman insisted at the Potsdam Conference in July 1945 that the occupation of Japan should be a sole American enterprise and not a zonal undertaking with the Soviet Union and other powers.

The long-term objective of the US was to encourage the development the development of a relatively and strong and friendly China capable of serving as a counter-weight to the Soviet Union and open to the penetration of American capital. Washington realized that neither a Communist-ruled China nor a weak

China that would invite Russian penetration could fulfil these goals. Hence the policy of promoting the idea of helping develop a united, democratically progressive and cooperative China. Such an objective was partly based on the understanding that China would provide a large-scale market for American goods and capital.

It was for these reasons that the US extended to the Nationalist government Lend-Lease supplies, currency stabilization loans, and other forms of military and economic credits. Washington saw these loans as a way to stop the Chinese “defeatists” from defecting to the Japanese and to encourage the Chinese war effort, thereby tying down a considerable number of Japanese on the mainland which might otherwise be transferred elsewhere to fight the Americans. **Washington never had a high regard for the Chinese military effort, except for the early phase of the war when China alone withstood the Japanese assault while the Allies faced defeat by the Imperial Japanese army.**

In the early phase of the war, the Pentagon seriously considered using China as a staging-area from which to attack the home-islands of Japan. However, this strategy came under subsequent question and was later dropped in Nov 1943 as the Americans wanted to avoid a land war against Japan, in which where the price of victory will be measured in manpower rather than in material. This is the reason that was the central limiting factor of American political and military strategy in East Asia during the war and also the reason behind the American efforts at developing contacts with the Chinese Communists and at drawing the Russians into war against Japan. Furthermore, the Americans were apprehensive that Chiang was attempting to draw United State forces into his civil war with the Communists.

The dread of being embroiled in China led to the American tactic of mediating a political settlement in the dispute between the KMT and the CCP while at the same time Washington vigorously urged Chiang to renovate his government in order to outflank the Communists via reform. Chiang refused to heed the advice and also rejected a political settlement with the Communist on any terms but his own. American observers in China realistically warned Washington that Chiang’s regime could not withstand the impact of a military solution to China’s profound internal problems; the destiny they believed was the Communists’. In fact the policy became one of supporting Chiang for he still offered the best hope for unification and for avoidance of chaos in China’s war effort but if the possible integration of the authority of the existing government occurred, the long-term interests of the US in China warranted flexibility to permit cooperation with any other leadership in China which may give greater promise of a united China, one that could afford an effective and stable government and one that could safeguard the principle of equal opportunities for the commerce and industry of all nations in China.

After Marshall's recall, America had all but given up hope for Chiang and the KMT. With Europe as America's primary consideration and as the area where the US would invest the bulk of its manpower and financial resources, China occupied at best a tertiary position in the American priorities of global commitments. By mid of 1947 China occupied very low on the list of countries which should be given American assistance and by the **second half of 1947 the policy was to rebuild Japan as an alternative base for American power in East Asia, as it would require far less commitment of resources than would be the case for China, and offer more assurance of success.** Thus Japan replaced China as the cornerstone of American interests in East Asia and the Pacific.

American mediation in China won the goodwill of neither the Nationalists nor the Communists. The former blamed Washington for spoiling their chances for destroying the opponent, while the latter attacked the US for ostensibly posing as a neutral mediator while actually aiding the Nationalists. In pursuing his military solution, Chiang undermined his chance of serving as the anchor for American interest in East Asia. Instead of consolidating his existing positions and outflanking the Communists through reforms as the Americans advised, he ripped apart the fragile fabric of post-war Chinese society and opened the door to a communist victory through his military strategy. **Chiang assumed that the Americans would not tolerate a Communist victory but there was nothing in American policy that should have realistically led him to believe that the Americans would not abandon his regime if it became too expensive to uphold.**

American venture in China not only failed in its objective of using the Nationalist government to secure a hold for the US in East Asia, but it also alienated the Communists. Inability to assess the Communists and their capability correctly in a post-war context and to work out a détente with them in order to undercut their dependence on the Soviet Union represented a misjudgement and a lost chance in China. **In the final analysis, American's failure stemmed from its incapacity to bridge the gap between its goal and Chinese realities.**

Soviet Involvement

The Soviets had been reluctant to support the CCP and did not in the end give them the military and economic assistance that the KMT received from the USA. But, apparently, Stalin's position underwent a radical change shortly after the war, when the vigour and resourcefulness of the CCP strongly impressed him.

Once the special rights and privileges in Manchuria granted by the Yalta Agreement and the Sino-Soviet Treaty – had been confirmed by actual Soviet occupation, Stalin saw no need to honour his promise. **In Oct 1945, the CCP shifted its offensive priorities to Manchuria. Neither the CCP nor the Nationalist had troops presence in the region, which had been dominated by the Japanese during the war. The Soviet occupation of Manchuria did assist the CCP as it gave the CCP access to**

Japanese arms depots in the region, such that as Shenyang which contained over 100 000 guns and artillery pieces, transferred the 200 000 Chinese troops of the Manchukuo regime, who had surrendered to the Soviets, to the CCP, thereby substantially enlarging the CCP forces and prevented the Nationalist troops from entering some of the key cities in the region. The Soviets assistance in Manchuria, which also included establishing military training colleges and the training of CCP pilots are seen by some historians as being essential in helping CCP to establish itself as a more modern and effective force.

However, the Soviets were not entirely helpful to the CCP in Manchuria. The Soviets dismantled industrial machinery worth over \$858 million from Manchuria for use in the USSR and Stalin had instructed the Chinese communists to leave the key cities in Manchuria weakening their urban bases. **However, Stalin was worried about America's greater involvement in the Chinese Civil War and attempted to limit Mao's success in the later stage of this conflict.**

I. The Effects of the Chinese Civil War

The Political Impact

- (i) Communist Rule in China**
- (ii) Dealing with political opponents**
- (iii) The reunification of China**

(Refer to the next lesson's notes)

(iv) Communist and Nationalist Rivalries

The legitimacy of the Communist People's Republic of China was challenged by Chiang and his supporters. From Taiwan, where they had fled at the end of the civil war, they maintained that their government, the Republic of China, represented the legitimate Chinese government, a claim that continues till the present day. In the context of the Cold War, most Western countries and the United Nations recognized the Taiwanese government as China's legitimate government until the 1970s.

From Taiwan, Chiang remained committed to the reestablishment of Nationalist authority over mainland China. In consequence, periodic military clashes between the PRC and the ROC arose in the 1950s. These focused on the islands in the Taiwanese Strait. The ROC established troops and fortifications on the islands of Matsu and Quemoy, situated just off the coast of mainland China. The PRC responded by shelling the islands and declaring **that Taiwan must be liberated** in August 1954. This was the first Taiwan Strait Crisis. In the Cold War context, the conflict threatened to enlarge and escalate.

But PRC ceased shelling in May 1955. But the uneasy coexistence between ROC and PRC again flared into military confrontation in the Second Taiwan Strait Crisis in 1958, with similar results.

The Economic Impact

The Civil War had a devastating and profound impact on the Chinese economy. Industrial production, only a tiny proportion of the Chinese economy before the war, was further weakened due to the destruction caused to urban centres by civil conflict and the Second Japanese War and the Soviet removal of much of Manchuria's best industrial infrastructure.

Years of conflict also destroyed and disrupted significant areas of agricultural land, not least because many of the male peasantry needed to work the land were conscripted into the armies of both side. In Communist controlled areas the disruption associated with land reforms created upheaval which was disruptive to crop yields. Years of conflict also had a detrimental impact on the currency, with inflation rising rapidly.

The Communist introduced many economic and social reforms, although the implementation of more genuinely communist principles was largely delayed till after they had consolidated power. In the early months after their victory, the CCP focused on smaller scale social and economic reforms to ameliorate some of the worst hardships and corruptions experienced by the population due to years of warfare, such as ending inflation and eliminating the thriving black market. **(For CCP's social and economic reforms after they had come to power, refer to next set of lesson notes)**

Social Impact

Casualties

Estimates of the number of deaths caused by the Chinese Civil War, including deaths from famine and destructions that accompanied the war, vary considerably. They range from 4 to 6 million for the years 1945-1949 alone, not including the casualties caused by conflict between 1927-1937. In the 3 major campaigns of 1948-49 alone, the Nationalists lost over 1.5 million men and the CCP a quarter of a million. The scale of death pales in comparison to the number of Chinese who were killed in the Second Sino-Japanese War: 3 million combat casualties, 18 million civilian due to famine and conflict.

Impact on Women

Refer to future notes