



Written by [Steve Byas](#) on September 17, 2018

Published in the September 17, 2018 issue of [the New American](#) magazine. Vol. 34, No. 18

Giving China to the Communists

“He who controls China controls the world.” So said Vladimir Lenin, the first communist dictator of the Soviet Union. American communist leader William Z. Foster similarly remarked, “The civil war in China [between the forces of Nationalist Chiang Kai-shek and the communists, led by Mao Tse-tung] is the key to all problems on the international front.”



And it was not just communists who understood the strategic importance of China. General Claire Chennault, the commander of the famed Flying Tigers, writing in his book *The Way of a Fighter*, put it bluntly: “China is the key to the Pacific.” And not only the Pacific. Chennault added, “If China remains friendly to the United States, the Russians will not dare move deeper into Europe, leaving vitals exposed on their Asiatic flank.”

Had mainland China not fallen to the communists in 1949, the United States would have had a powerful ally, checking all Soviet ambitions in eastern Asia. There would have been no Korean War and no Vietnam War, which together cost America about 100,000 lives. The communist oligarchs who ruled China during the dark days of Mao Tse-tung were responsible for the deaths of between 34 and 64 million people by the time the Senate Subcommittee on Internal Security published its study *The Human Cost of Communism* in 1971.

Imagine China today as a strong American ally instead of the communist nemesis she still is.

But that is not the case. Make no mistake, the communists who rule the world’s most populous nation view the United States as their principal obstacle to world domination. Had the U.S. government acted differently during World War II and its immediate aftermath toward the government of Chiang Kai-shek, instead of China being our enemy today, she would be our friend.

Many, however, argue that it was not American policies that caused China to fall to communism, but rather it was the fault of the Chinese themselves, particularly their Nationalist leader, Chiang Kai-shek. Even a normally conservative historian such as Paul Johnson wrote in his *A History of the American People*, “[President Harry] Truman was bitterly accused by the Republicans and the China Lobby of having ‘lost China,’ but the truth is China lost itself.”

This was also Truman’s explanation — he placed the blame squarely on Chiang. In his *Memoirs of Harry S. Truman*, he wrote, “There is no doubt in my mind that if Chiang Kai-shek had been only a little more conciliatory an understanding could have been reached.”



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To better challenge the assertion of Johnson and Truman that it was mostly Chiang's fault and not the fault of American policy that caused China to fall to communism in 1949, we need to briefly review Chinese history, and Chiang's place in it. For centuries, the indigenous Chinese had been ruled by a dynasty of Mongols, eventually known as the Manchu Dynasty. (Most Americans are familiar with Genghis Khan and his grandson Kublai Khan, both Mongol rulers of China.) At one time, Mongol-ruled China was probably the world's most powerful country, but imperial European powers such as Britain and Russia had taken advantage of the nation's decline to pick at its rotting carcass.

Finally, in 1911, Dr. Sun Yat-sen led a successful rebellion against the Manchu Dynasty, intending to establish a Western-style republic. After meeting Sun in China, Chiang became his right-hand man. Having studied military science in Japan, Chiang became invaluable to Sun's revolution, and led the troops that captured the Manchu stronghold of Hangchow. After Russia fell to a communist revolution in 1917, Lenin, understanding the strategic importance of China, attempted to coopt Sun. But Chiang, after Sun sent him to Moscow, quickly realized he did not want what had happened in Russia to happen in China and became a moderating force.

Chiang Kai-shek Rejects Communism for China

"I became more convinced than ever that Soviet political institutions were instruments of tyranny and terror," Chiang said. After Sun's death in 1925, Chiang succeeded him, and found that the political party Sun had founded, the Kuomintang, was filled with communist intrigue. When Chiang went into northern China to unify the country under his new government, Mikhail Borodin, a Soviet agent, staged a coup in Canton, then the capital. Chiang returned and overthrew the communists, expelled Borodin, and kicked Mao Tse-tung and his scheming communist comrades out of the Kuomintang.

In 1927, Chiang married Mayling Soong, a devout Christian. After undertaking his own reading of the Bible, he also became a Christian. By 1930, Chiang had unified China under what was certainly the most enlightened government in its history. China was moving toward Chiang's ultimate goal of a constitution, creating a republic, with free elections.

But then Japan invaded Manchuria (perhaps China's wealthiest province) in 1931, and the communists established their own base in remote northwest China. For the next several years, Chiang was forced to fight a two-front war inside his own country — against the Japanese and against the communists determined to overthrow the Kuomintang and establish a communist dictatorship.

In 1937, the Japanese took Shanghai and Nanking, forcing Chiang's government inland to Chungking. With Chiang preoccupied fighting the foreign invaders, the communists took the opportunity to expand their own territorial holdings. For the next several years, Chiang stood alone against the Japanese aggressors.

After Pearl Harbor, Chiang announced to President Franklin Roosevelt, "To our new common battle, we offer all we are and all we have, to stand with you." While it is still fashionable among liberal historians to bash China's contribution to the war effort, the fact is that China kept 1.5 million Japanese soldiers tied down on the Chinese mainland — battle-hardened troops that otherwise could have been used against American soldiers.

Complicating Chiang's defense of China was the presence of an armed force of communists in northern



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China, led by Mao Tse-tung. All during the war against Japan, the Nationalist government of China had to keep a watchful eye on these rebels. Chiang knew what communism meant, having seen its heavy hand of tyranny firsthand inside the Soviet Union, and he was convinced that Mao took orders directly from Moscow.

Publicly the Soviets denied any such connection with the Red Chinese, even though Stalin was favorable to them. Unfortunately for Chiang and China, and for America, Mao and the communists in China had American sympathizers, as well.

General Joseph Stilwell's Role in Helping the Communists

A very important enemy of Chiang Kai-shek and friend of Mao Tse-tung was General Joseph Stilwell, sent by President Franklin Roosevelt and Army Chief of Staff George Marshall to lead the military effort in China against Japan. In the end, the role that Stilwell played in bringing communism to power in the world's most populated nation was so significant that the *Daily Worker*, an official Communist Party newspaper in the United States, printed a letter in 1946 that Stilwell had written. "It makes me itch to throw down my shovel and get over there and shoulder a rifle with Chu Teh [commander in chief of the Chinese Communist army]."

Patrick Hurley, Roosevelt's ambassador to China, bluntly assessed Stilwell's critical role in the eventual communist takeover: "The record of General Stilwell in China is irrevocably coupled in history with the conspiracy to overthrow the Nationalist Government of China, and to set up in its place a communist regime." In *The Way of a Fighter*, General Chennault said that Stilwell's staff made "no secret" of their "admiration for the communists, who, they said, were really only 'agrarian reformers' and more like New Dealers than communists."

Photo: AP Images

This article appears in the September 17, 2018, issue of The New American.

Chiang himself declared that Stilwell "was in conspiracy with the communists to overthrow the government."

Writing in *The New American* May 24, 1999, Steve Bonta offered his own harsh assessment of Stilwell: "An early prototype of the self-serving, careerist politician-cum-military officer that now dominates the upper echelons of the American military, Stilwell made every effort to undermine Chiang Kai-shek's authority. He diverted supplies from China to Burma, and pressured Chiang to concede to communist demands."

Stilwell's selection to serve as Chiang's chief of staff was made by President Roosevelt upon the recommendation of Stilwell's close friend, Army Chief of Staff George Marshall. As Don Lohbeck wrote in *Patrick J. Hurley*, "From the beginning, the wartime alliance in the CBI [China, Burma, India] Theater did not run smoothly. The interests of the allied nations were too conflicting."

General Stilwell arrived in Asia in February 1942, and soon moved into Burma to take command of those Chinese troops who were opposing the Japanese invasion there. Chiang had agreed shortly after Pearl Harbor to divert some of his own army to Burma, if there was a comprehensive plan for their use. But Stilwell was quickly routed by the Japanese, and he abandoned the Chinese soldiers to their fate. Stilwell blamed Chiang for the debacle, describing him as "an arrogant, arbitrary, stubborn man." But



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Chiang really had no role whatsoever in the disaster in Burma.

The re-taking of Burma became an obsession to Stilwell, but Chiang opposed any new campaign there, arguing that his troops were more needed to defend his country from the Japanese. General Chennault agreed with Chiang, contending that Stilwell's obsession with the comparatively minor operation in Burma was damaging the more important defense of China itself. The British also opposed Stilwell, wishing to maintain their empire, and they believed this would be better accomplished by the use of British troops in Burma, rather than either American or Chinese forces.

Despite all of this, and despite President Truman's later remarks that Chiang needed to be more "conciliatory," Chiang agreed to a second Burma campaign, if the British would provide naval support. But the British vetoed that suggestion. Later in the war, the British were taking a beating in Burma, and they eventually joined with Stilwell in demanding that Chiang come to their rescue.

Relations deteriorated between Stilwell and Chiang. Stilwell made amazingly harsh remarks about the head of state of an American ally, repeatedly saying he would like to "get rid of the Peanut." Another time, he called Chiang a "crazy little b*****d."

As tasteless as such remarks were, Stilwell's actions were even more serious. According to Frank Dorn, in *Walkout With Stilwell*, he even ordered officers of the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), the precursor to the CIA, to make contingency plans for Chiang's assassination.

His obsession with Burma was rivaled by his desire to provide arms to the Chinese communists. Understandably, Chiang was concerned that an armed communist force in China would present a mortal threat. He knew that once the United States had entered the war, Japan's eventual defeat was sure. His principal concern now was saving his country from communist dictatorship.

Stilwell wouldn't aid this endeavor, however, even refusing the request of Chiang and Chennault for gasoline. In the spring of 1944, Chennault told Stilwell that the security of American air bases in China was threatened. Stilwell dismissed such pleas as "chiseling gasoline for the 14th Air Force." As the Japanese drove toward Chungking, Stilwell still demanded more troops for his Burma obsession. Chennault recalled, "The bulk of the United States wartime assistance to China was expended on a border operation in Burma, while the situation in China deteriorated to near disaster. Ninety per cent of the resources of the China-Burma-India theater were devoted to it."

The Role of the Press and the Foreign Service

Under increasing pressure by Stilwell and others in the U.S. government to allow the arming of the communists, Chiang acted against his better judgment and approved an American Military Observers Mission, which was led by the military attache at the U.S. Embassy, Colonel David Dean Barrett. He was accompanied to the Chinese center of operations at Yenen by John Stewart Service, an employee of the State Department.

As Chiang feared, the mission was a disaster. The arrival of the Americans bestowed great prestige upon the communists. The American press chose to praise the communists as devoted to "democracy and the unity of China." As Lohbeck wrote, "The result was a flood of pro-communist, anti-Kuomintang propaganda in the American press. Under the guise of honest reporting, the National Government of China was denounced as corrupt, venal, evil and reactionary; the Chinese communists were praised as honest, progressive reformers who were not really Communists but more on the order of the colonists



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of American Revolutionary days.” While Chiang was denounced as a “ruthless dictator,” Mao was described as a democratic man of the people. Chiang, they claimed, was selling out to the Japanese, while the communists were “heroically carrying on alone.”

Whether the press came to these conclusions on their own, or whether they were fed this line by pro-communist Foreign Service officers is uncertain, but it is beyond doubt that Service and others in the Foreign Service preferred Mao over Chiang. Political attaché John Paton Davies had arrived in China about the same time as Stilwell. It was Davies who requested that Stilwell ask the War Department to assign three additional State Department employees to his command, including John Stewart Service.

Davies and Service reported back to Washington that Chiang had “narrowly conservative views,” adding that his “growing megalomania” had cost him the “respect of many intellectuals.” Their recommendations were to supply the Chinese communists with American military equipment and force Chiang to accept them into a coalition government. The Joint Chiefs of Staff (which included Marshall, Stilwell’s close friend; while not the official chairman, Marshall usually had Roosevelt’s ear more so than Admiral William Leahy, the actual chairman) demanded that Chiang accept Stilwell as commander-in-chief of all Chinese forces, which would include the communists.

Chiang refused, and countered with three demands of his own. Before he would accept Stilwell’s taking over command of the Chinese armies, he wanted a clear definition of Stilwell’s authority. Furthermore, the command would not include the communists, and control of lend-lease material would be in Chiang’s hands, not Stilwell’s.

President Roosevelt opted to send Patrick Hurley to China as his personal representative, in an effort to effect a reconciliation between Stilwell and

Chiang. Hurley had insisted that he not be responsible to the State Department, which he despised. Roosevelt agreed with Hurley that it would be futile to arm a force intent upon the destruction of the Chinese government, and that no lend-lease material should be made available to the communists “unless and until they acknowledged the National Government of the Republic of China, and the leadership of Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek.”

When he heard of this, Stilwell was fuming, declaring, “The cure for China’s troubles is the elimination of Chiang Kai-shek.” He was particularly troubled that the Reds would get no aid under the proposal. Service similarly denounced Chiang, arguing in a report to the State Department that the United States needed to “force the Kuomintang toward democracy.” In a second report, Service urged that military supplies be turned over to the communists, which he proposed as an “ally” to replace the Kuomintang. Stilwell told T. V. Soong, Chiang’s foreign minister, that either Chiang turn over to him command of all forces in China, or he would recommend that the United States remove all its China operations to the U.S.S.R. Stilwell’s friend, Chief of Staff Marshall, prevailed upon President Roosevelt to send a blunt message to Chiang, demanding Stilwell be given unrestricted command in China. To add to the insult, Stilwell would deliver the note to Chiang, *in person*.

Stilwell’s Recall — Too Late?

Hurley thought, “No chief of state could tolerate such an insult,” and pleaded with Stilwell not to do so. He told Stilwell in a prior meeting that Chiang had already agreed to the conditions for Stilwell’s appointment as Field Commander of the Armed Forces of China under Chiang’s leadership, and that Chiang had agreed to all the other demands found in the letter.



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“Joe,” Hurley told Stilwell, “you have won this ball game, and if you want command of all the forces in China all you have to do is accept what the Generalissimo has already agreed to.”

Stilwell, however, told Hurley that he wanted to “embarrass and publicly humiliate” Chiang, whom he referred to as “The Peanut.”

Chiang read the translated ultimatum from Roosevelt, and set it aside, softly saying, “I understand.”

Stilwell gloated later to Hurley, “The harpoon hit the little bugger right in the solar plexus.”

But that night, as Hurley and Chiang ate dinner together, Chiang told Hurley the time had come to break with Stilwell. Over Hurley’s protests (hoping still there could be a reconciliation), Chiang said there would be no further discussions “while Stilwell remains in China.” If the United States insisted on Stilwell’s appointment, China would go it alone against Japan. Even at this, Marshall insisted that Stilwell not be recalled. Hurley, however, advised FDR to relieve Stilwell because otherwise the United States would lose China. Hurley added that Chiang had led an ill-fed, poorly equipped, practically unorganized army against an overwhelming military foe for seven years. He also dismissed as “absurd” the charge made by the press and the Foreign Service that the Chinese Nationalists were selling their lend-lease supplies.

Admiral William Leahy, the official chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, recalled later that even after Chiang demanded Stilwell’s recall, “[George] Marshall made repeated efforts to induce the President to retain ‘Vinegar Joe’ regardless of Chiang’s objection.” Leahy noted that Roosevelt finally had to give “direct and positive orders” to Marshall before Stilwell was finally relieved.

At this point, one might think this ended the favoritism of the communists over Chiang — Lt. General Albert Wedemeyer had replaced Stilwell, and Patrick Hurley, a man liked and trusted by Chiang, was U.S. ambassador to China.

But the pro-communist Foreign Service officers, such as Davies and Service, remained. Davies continued to insist that the communists had “widespread popular support,” and Chiang ran a “politically bankrupt regime.” Hurley they considered an obstacle to their goal of getting Chiang replaced by the communists. Lohbeck contended that they were “sure of support from their agencies in Washington,” and were not going to be reined in by Hurley. While this group continued to argue that the communists were doing more to fight the Japanese than Chiang, Hurley noted that there really had been no fighting to speak of between the communists and the Japanese — and Japanese armies had been within 100 miles of Yenan, where the communists were located for seven years.

The Davies-Service clique undermined Hurley’s conversations with the communists designed to effect a reconciliation between them and Chiang, telling them that Hurley really did not represent American policy, and that they should just hold out until they received support of the U.S. government over Chiang. No doubt influenced by this group, Secretary of State Edward Stettinius told President Roosevelt, “Chiang could, it is felt, rise above party selfishness and anti-communist prejudice, to head a coalition government.”

Yalta Sells out Eastern Europe — and China

By early 1945, General Douglas MacArthur’s successes were relieving the pressure on China, and it appeared that China’s political and military situation was stabilizing. But as the war neared its conclusion in Europe, the leaders of the Allied Powers there — FDR, Churchill, and Stalin — met in the



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Crimea at Yalta to discuss the issues surrounding the war's conclusion. While the February 1945 Yalta conference is known for its decisions concerning the fate of Eastern Europe, what transpired there would also play a critical role in the fall of China to communism.

In his book *How We Won the War and Lost the Peace*, William Bullitt wrote, "Roosevelt was more than just tired [at Yalta]: he was ill. Little was left of the physical and mental vigor that had been his when he had entered the White House in 1933. Frequently he had difficulty in formulating his thoughts."

In this weakened state, Roosevelt made decisions that would haunt America for decades to come. He relied on advice from the Joint Chiefs of Staff (which essentially meant George Marshall), who told FDR that the war against Japan would go on for a year and a half after the surrender of Germany. He was told that it was therefore essential that the United States obtain the aid of the Soviet army in the final assault upon Japan. Actually, there were two War Department estimates, and one that explicitly advised against Soviet participation on the grounds that it was "not required by our military necessities."

Stalin demanded a high price for entry into the war against Japan. He told Roosevelt that if he was not given use of the warm-water port at the end of the South Manchurian railroad, it would be difficult for him to explain to the Soviet people why Russia had to enter the war (as though Stalin had to explain anything to the Russian people in his totalitarian dictatorship). In addition, he would have to be given joint operation of the Chinese-Eastern railroad and the South Manchurian railroad. Despite this, Stalin said, the Chinese would retain "sovereignty" over Manchuria.

MacArthur, the supreme commander in the Pacific Theater; Patrick Hurley, the U.S. ambassador to China; and Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek were not told of this secret Yalta agreement for some time, four months in the case of Chiang. Of course, Alger Hiss, an American State Department official and a Soviet spy who was present at Yalta, not only saw it, he helped craft it.

About two months after the Yalta Conference, President Roosevelt died. The new president, Harry Truman, was as uninformed as Chiang on the terms of the Yalta deal as it pertained to China, but its supporters would soon begin his education. Truman chose to honor the Yalta sell-out that would bring the Soviet Army into Manchuria — even after being informed of the atomic bomb. Hurley called the Yalta agreement a "blueprint for the communist conquest of China."

Once informed of its provisions, Chiang Kai-shek also knew what the Yalta agreement meant for China, but he still tried to reach a peaceful settlement with his communist enemies, in order to please the Americans. As such, Chiang announced the following steps: 1) All Kuomintang Party headquarters in the army and the schools would be abolished within three months; 2) Within six months local representation councils will be established in all provinces and districts in free China on the basis of popular elections; 3) A law to give legal status to political parties will be promulgated and the government hopes that the Communist Party will qualify thereunder; 4) Measures have been decided upon with a view to improving the position of peasant farmers; reduction of rents; questions of land tenure and land taxation; and 5) A decision to hold a national assembly was confirmed [at the Kuomintang conference recently held] and it is scheduled to convene on November 12, 1945.

The communists accepted none of the proposals, but instead demanded that the meeting of the National Assembly be called off. Yet, President Truman said the problem was that Chiang should have been more conciliatory.

Soviet Army Turns Over Japanese Arms to the Reds



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With the conclusion of the war in Europe, it was anticipated that Stalin's Red Army would be rolling into China, ostensibly to attack the Japanese, thus helping America defeat Japan. The reality is, however, without American lend-lease, the Soviet Army would have been unable to move into the Far East. The reality is that most of the lend-lease sent to Stalin was not used against Hitler, but against Chiang. After China went communist, some of these lend-lease weapons provided by the American taxpayer were used against American soldiers in the Korean War, according to General Douglas MacArthur in his memoirs.

By the time of the Potsdam Conference, held in July 1945, it was becoming increasingly unlikely that Japan's defeat would take several more months. The Japanese had wanted to surrender, with one condition, that the emperor be allowed to keep his throne, and they asked the Soviets (who were neutral with Japan at the time) to transmit that to the Americans. Stalin refused. Sadly, many in the American government already knew of Japan's desire to surrender before the dropping of the atomic bombs.

Truman knew, as he sat down with Stalin, that America was in possession of an atomic bomb, and that after its testing in the deserts of New Mexico, that it would be almost certainly decisive. According to the United States Bombing Survey (Summary Report, Pacific War, page 26), "certainly prior to December 31, 1945, and in all probability prior to November 1, 1945, Japan would have surrendered even if the atomic bomb had not been dropped, even if Russia had not entered the war, and even if no invasion had been planned or contemplated."

Despite this, the United States bullied Chiang into signing the Sino-Soviet Treaty, which gave a veneer of legality to what had been decided for China at Yalta. When Chiang asked Truman to intervene with the Russians, who were going beyond even what was in the Yalta agreement, Truman responded bluntly, "If you and Generalissimo Stalin differ as to the correct interpretation of the Yalta Agreement, I hope you will arrange for Soong to return to Moscow and continue your efforts to reach complete understanding." In other words, it is your problem — deal with it. America betrayed its loyal Chinese ally, and the British, who had done nothing to resist the Japanese taking of Hong Kong, historically part of China but at the time part of the British Empire, now insisted on accepting the Japanese surrender there, completely cutting out the Chinese.

Ambassador Hurley recommended that the terms of surrender for Japan include a provision that all Japanese arms in China be surrendered to the Chinese government. But this was not to be. The Soviet Army entered the war against Japan almost immediately after the first atomic bomb fell on Hiroshima. In his book *Wedemeyer Reports!*, General Wedemeyer wrote, "The Red Army naturally met practically no enemy resistance and was soon in complete control of Manchuria." They then proceeded to receive the surrender of Japanese arms and equipment, which they turned over to their Chinese Communist comrades.

The Final Betrayal of Chiang Kai-shek

Despite this, the Nationalist forces were able to make significant military progress against the rebel communist forces, over the objections of George Marshall, who had been sent to China by Truman after the resignation of Hurley. Marshall kept insisting that Chiang cease his efforts to destroy the communist armies, and instead enter into a "coalition" government with them. When Chiang failed to heed these orders, the United States slapped a 10-month arms embargo on the sale or shipment of arms



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to Chiang. Marshall seemed pleased when he said, “As Chief of Staff I armed 39 anti-Communist divisions; now with a stroke of the pen I disarm them.”

As the military advantage shifted to the communists, Congress finally passed a measure to provide some aid to China’s forces, but the delivery was sabotaged. The Truman administration, Wedemeyer complained, “succeeded in thwarting the intent of the [1948] China Aid Act by delaying the shipment of munitions to China until the end of that critical year.”

In his book *America’s Retreat From Victory*, Senator Joseph McCarthy wrote, “Over the hump in India, the United States military authorities were detonating large stores of ammunition and dumping 120,000 tons of war supplies in the Bay of Bengal — much of it undelivered to China but charged to her wartime lend-lease account.”

In short, McCarthy blamed policymakers in the U.S. government for the loss of China. But lest someone think that this was just partisanship on the part of the Republican McCarthy, consider the words of a young Democrat member of Congress from Massachusetts, John Kennedy, who told the House of Representatives on January 25, 1949, “The responsibility for our failure of our foreign policy in the Far East rests squarely with the White House and the Department of State. The continued insistence that aid would not be forthcoming, unless a coalition government with the communists were formed, was a crippling blow to the national government.” He added later, “What our young men had saved, our diplomats and our President have frittered away.”

Yet Truman lamely placed the blame on Chiang for not being “conciliatory.” In his *Memoirs*, Truman insisted that neither he nor Marshall was taken in by the talk that the Chinese communists were only “agrarian reformers.” But this makes Truman’s culpability even worse — he knew that they were hard-core communists, and still insisted that Chiang form a coalition government with Mao anyway. He did nothing to keep the Soviets out of Manchuria, even though he had to have known this would lead to the transfer of Japanese military equipment to the Red Chinese — in fact, Truman pleaded with them to come into Manchuria.

Then again, in the two volumes of his *Memoirs*, with over 1,000 pages of text, Truman never mentioned Soviet spy Alger Hiss, a Roosevelt advisor at Yalta, or the Rosenbergs, who delivered atomic secrets to the Soviet Union — so perhaps Truman just missed a lot during his time in the White House.

Unfortunately, the lessons that should have been learned by the China disaster have been repeated more than once since. In Cuba, Nicaragua, Vietnam, and Iran, a non-communist government ruler was cast as a corrupt dictator, while his opposition is pictured as just fighting for reform. In the case of Cuba, Fidel Castro was even called the Robin Hood of the Caribbean.

If a student repeats the same mistake repeatedly, a teacher is forced to conclude the student is just stupid. But with American foreign policymakers, one would think that if they were just stupid, they would make an occasional mistake in our favor.

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