

Notes 102N, Copy 2

Col. G. A. Lincoln

Hotel Statler

New York City

December 28, 1957

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Interview with Col. G. A. Lincoln at Hotel Statler, New York City, 28 Dec 1957 by Forrest C. Pogue.

(Col. Lincoln, now head of the History Dept, West Point, was in OPD during the war. A former Rhodes Scholar, he looks and talks more like a teacher than a military man is supposed to look and talk, but then he is like many military men in that respect).

I asked his views on State Dept people of the 1943-45 periods. He said he had never considered them pro-Communist and still doesn't/ He didn't agree with John Carter Vincent and thinks it unfortunate that he was in charge of Far Eastern matters, but didn't think he was pro-Communist. He was anti Chiang Kai-shek and let his dislike of Chiang blind him to our interests.

Ballantine--usually two Scotches ahead--was a man who stayed away from places decisions had to be made.

Not much faith in State Dept as an operation agency. They hadn't done much during the war. The Army had faith in a few individuals with whom they had dealt such as Matthews and Hickerson. Because of leaks from State Dept, they found it necessary to work with individuals they could depend on; they worked through individuals.

On the China business, we got into a ruckus early with them over a directive to Wedemeyer. I don't know what a good one would have been. State was concerned over military power getting involved in fratricidal strife. We said here is a man without a directive. State didn't have a sense of urgency. But we in the Army knew that if you don't have a directive and a plan resources take over strategy. (I said State sometimes use waiting out of the opponent as strategy.)

He said that is all right if you have planned it that way; but they just didn't have the feeling of urgency we did. Mobilization was underway. We wanted to know what to do with the surplus stuff over there. What is the shape of the mission? What is the role of Army-Navy-Air? Where did it fit into the China decision?

The China organization was complicated. Wedemeyer once figured he had 17 autonomous intelligence organizations in China. Was Gen Marshall going into a mess like that, we thought. So we wanted something definite for him.

(L. J. Lincoln is APO 19, Postmaster NYC).

Gen Handy called us in one day and said your job is to write a message to cut off Joe Stilwell's head. Write a message for Hurley. You tend to be fairly impersonal in matters like this. We staff people see projects and programs. Marshall had less knowledge of the projects and put his faith in men. We planners were wondering quite a lot as to whether there was a way to get what we wanted. We were in a position to wonder. Marshall had to back his man.

Marshall picked a lot of his people. He either picked them or he kept them. Of course, there were a number he kept. Didn't pick Somervell and Arnold. He paid a lot of attention to his combat people. Picked personal staff officers for Eisenhower and others with exception of MacArthur.

OPD understood his interest and furnished him information. They picked some. Some thinking was done for him.

McCormick and Bonesteel were giving the job of working on the Eastern problem some months before the end of war. Bonesteel was head of Policy Section. He deserves a lot of credit. McCormick was a top mind. No special knowledge of the Far East, but we preferred a top mind without special training to special tng without a top mind. (These people worked on Potsdam Dec and paper on Japanese surrender).

Check with Matloff to see if he knows about the hot files. We put stuff in there on anything hot; probably broken up by now.

(Don't print this. We had a lot of rows over the phone with Vincent. I remember once he called and said there was no basic difference between us and his version—he was just putting what we wanted in diplomatic language. Don't assume we were angry because we talked straight.

Old China hands in State Dept so hated the Kuomintang they wanted a change no matter what. They had such great hope for China, they were trying to put the mantle of Jeffersonian democracy over the country. But things don't come out so clearly over there.

We had lots of problems near the end of the war. Hadn't thought out everything. Squeaky wheels tended to get the grease. Hadn't thought through adequately all the problems in the Far East.

I used to have check lists drawn up of things to think about. Our great sorrow was that State had no operational sense.

We were not happy about Gen Marshall going out. We saw no conceivable way of our coming out even, let alone win a decision in China.

We were short of resources for influencing affairs in China because of demobilization mania. We couldn't keep the Marines in China. When we can't use the Marines to fiddle with other country's affairs, you have lost your freedom of action.

I went through China in Jan 1946 with Secy Patterson and stopped in Shanghai. Go home group met Patterson at the plane. (We didn't see Marshall on this trip.) Patterson not adequately briefed--I blame myself. His point system statement was interpreted as meaning that he felt points after VJ day should count same as those before. That was blown up in the press. It was unfortunate that he was going around the world because he got hit with the question every place he stopped. The trouble came not from the statement but from the coincidence that he was asked about it every place. Got more attention than anything else. Was the Army staff's responsibility. He should have been briefed on this as something that might come up, but Marshall was gone and Eisenhower had moved in. New guys all around. Hull was there but didn't know if he was to stay on and was not pushing. He hadn't known Ike. Not in position to walk down the hall and say to Ike here are some problems; let's prepare the Secretary. I blame myself. Men were working 14 hours a day. (Under Marshall if the ball was dropped, it was OPD's fault).

Ike came in with a new group who were going to cut OPD down to size and substitute the Gen Staff system. Everybody put a chip on his shoulder and if OPD said any-thing the chip was knocked out. It made us reluctant to say much.

It was characteristic of State not to send any directive. Didn't get anything out. Operational people, however, have to do something.

Marshall turned to his own experience in military staff work. We would work up papers on a Thursday and on Friday the murder section would work it over. On Sunday Wedemeyer and the chief of interested section would work it over.

On the Far Eastern war I had a man (a British staff officer) every morning give ten minutes on a different objective to attack right up the China coast. Every island and atoll north was taken. One of Marshall's ways was to have somebody doing nothing but thinking.

(Off the record he said that Wedemeyer was disappointed. Says in every war you have people who are at the top of their classes and who do well and others who were at the bottom and work up. Wedemeyer near the bottom of his class. Not a great brain. Good worker. Thinks he has become sour and warped.)

I told Lincoln I was sorry he didn't become Asst Sec of State for planning. Said he was glad to be out of it. When E. asked him, he suggested that they try Senate first. Said they didn't handle it very well. Went to that monument--old man Green--without realizing that Fulbright and Mansfield were the important ones. Thinks Dulles didn't handle well. Man who handled before the committee not well briefed. Doubts if Fulbright knew he was a Rhodes Scholar.

Says he will be glad to help me further. Wants to sit down with records. Finds it difficult to recall details; doesn't want to mislead.