Marshals L. had concluded before he returned to Washington in March that he needed a full-time ambassador in China. Robertson had done outstanding work as Chargé but was now fully occupied with Executive Headquarters duties. Byroade was in charge of the field teams. Colonel George "Bud" Underwood, who had taken Byroade's place, and Colonel John H. Caughey were working overtime with other mission business, so an ambassador was more essential than ever. Marshall had less assistance than at any time since he had become Chief of Staff in 1939. His China files are full of reports and correspondence drafted entirely in his own hand.

Marshall had mentioned the possibility of Wedemeyer's appointment before he returned to Washington for medical treatment of his sinuses, not long before Marshall came back in March. Wedemeyer appeared ideal for the ambassadorship when Marshall thought that the Nationals and Communists were on the verge of concluding several basic agreements. But as the negotiations were drawn out, Marshall asked Secretary Byrnes to delay action on the appointment. Wedemeyer, who had expected to return shortly to China, kept up a stream of correspondence to Marshall, noting his observations on conditions at home and indicating all he had been doing to strengthen Marshall's hand. He reminded Marshall that the Generalissimo had expected him back and worried that his prolonged absence might lessen his influence in that quarter. Marshall replied that if Wedemeyer were announced as Ambassador at this state of the negotiations, the action would be construed as an indication that Marshall was leaving and his negotiating power would be reduced. After the General returned to China,
Wedemeyer continued his letters, making clear that he was defending Marshall's policies, especially to Representative Walter Judd, one-time medical missionary to China and a strong partisan of Chiang Kai-shek's cause. Wedemeyer said he thought he had convinced Judd "that he must continue full support of [Marshall's] plans to eliminate private armies in China."* 

Aware of Marshall's problem, Eisenhower told his former chief that if Wedemeyer's return to China would be embarrassing, he could assign him to another post in the United States. As quarrels and countercharges increased in China, Marshall concluded that it would be unwise just then to name Wedemeyer, because of his close connections with the Generalissimo. At the time, Wedemeyer said he understood the reasoning. Referring to himself in the third person, he wrote General Thomas T. Handy, Eisenhower's deputy, "It is only natural that the Communists will not accept Wedemeyer as a mediator or in any indispensable role in China for they recall that he served two years as the Generalissimo's Chief of Staff." In *Wedemeyer Reports!*, the General expressed deep disappointment that Marshall would allow the Communists to dictate which American representative they would take.3

In early July, Marshall found his Ambassador in the person of an old China hand, John Leighton Stuart, who had spent more years in China than in the United States. Stuart's great-grandfather, a Presbyterian minister, had come to eastern Kentucky from Virginia before Kentucky was a state, at almost the same time that Marshall's great-great-grandfather, a Baptist preacher, was moving there from Virginia. The elder Stuart's wife, a Todd, was an aunt of Mrs. Lincoln. Stuart's father, born in Kentucky in 1840, also became a Presbyterian preacher, and then a missionary to China. The future Ambassador was born in Hangchow in 1876. He did not see the United States until he was eleven, when he was sent back to his mother's home in Mobile, Alabama, to go to school. He went to a preparatory school in Charlottesville, Virginia, was graduated from Hampden-Sydney College four years before George Marshall entered Virginia Military Institute, studied at Union Theological Seminary at Richmond, and was ordained as a minister of the Southern Presbyterian Church.4

After nearly eighteen years in the United States, Stuart went back to China as a missionary. Three years later, he began teaching at Nanking Theological Seminary, where he remained until 1919. In that year he was invited to become president of the newly formed Yenching University, established just outside Peking as the result
Statesman

of the merger of two small colleges, one Methodist, the other Presbyterian. His vice president was Harry Luce, father of the later head of Time-Life.5

A few hours after the Pearl Harbor attack, Stuart was arrested by the Japanese and, with two friends, was kept under house arrest in Peking for the rest of the war. When he was released in 1945, he went briefly to Chungking for a victory celebration, was received by the Generalissimo, and met Ambassador Hurley, Mao Tse-tung, and Chou En-lai. He went back to the United States for several months, then returned to China about the same time that Marshall came back from his March trip to Washington. While he was visiting in Nanking, Chiang urged him to talk with General Marshall. Marshall talked with him at length, was impressed by his knowledge of the Chinese situation and of China, and asked for his help and advice. Stuart promised to come back to Nanking when needed.

Their next meeting came at Stuart's initiative. During an education conference in Shanghai, Chen Li-fu twice discussed Chinese problems with the college president. Although Marshall thought of Chen Li-fu as "the leader of the reactionary forces which were blocking his efforts," Stuart was of two minds about the Chen brothers. He later wrote of them that they

were very intelligent, free from any suspicion of venality, but fervent believers in the Kuomintang and its leaders as well as the necessity of eradicating communism from China. The so-called CC Clique, named after them, was not so much a clique as the members of the Kuomintang organization which they had built up and controlled in all of its ramifications. This and the patronage that went on gave them enormous influence. Their minions exploited this for blackmail and other selfish ends, but they themselves worked with single-hearted loyalty to build up their leader against all rivals within the party and to suppress all outside opposition.

Stuart wrote Marshall of Chen Li-fu's visits and asked if he would like a summary of what Chen had said.6

Marshall already knew in some detail what Chen Li-fu believed. The General must also have seen Time's issue of May 27, 1946, which carried a portrait of Chen on its cover. Discussing China's problems in terms of Chen's career and philosophy, Time said:

If Americans are going to know China they will have to know the grave, gray man with the face of an aristocratic saint, who sometimes wears a rumpled business suit and sometimes a blue mandarin
gown, who sometimes plots little intrigues and sometimes dreams great dreams.

After listing many solid virtues, including freedom from corruption, the *Time* story said that so great was his anti-Communist obsession that he had in fact made new Communists. "So heavy is Chen's hand on all unorthodoxy that many youths who might have taken a middle course choose communism's extreme instead of Chen's." In his years as Minister of Education, he had emphasized practical courses and cut down on history, philosophy, and economics.

*Time* caught the implacable antagonism between the Nationalists and the Communists in reporting an icy exchange some months earlier between Chou En-lai and Chen Li-fu. Chou had said, "In those years when you were working against the Communist Party and I was underground, I once escaped five minutes before your men arrived. Let me compliment you on your skill." Chen replied with deliberate, measured emphasis, "Let me compliment you on your skill in escaping." These were not pleasantries. As the writer remarked, "Men who thus accept the fact that they hunt each other to death are not expected to bury the hatchet except in each other's neck."7

Certainly Marshall was interested in anything Stuart had to add concerning Chen Li-fu. He sent a plane almost at once, and Stuart arrived in Nanking as the temporary truce in Manchuria was about to expire. Stuart was kept so busy he never got around to Chen's conversations. As he made ready to return to Peiping, Marshall pressed him to remain for the Fourth of July celebration at the U.S. Embassy. There, Marshall asked him if he would accept the post of Ambassador.

Protesting that he had passed his seventieth birthday and that he had submitted his resignation to Yenching University, Stuart at last reluctantly agreed to accept. Marshall moved quickly. In less than a week, Truman had sent the nomination to the Senate, which at once approved the choice.*

In common with many American missionaries who had lived long in China, Stuart deplored Nationalists who were corrupt or repressive, but he still saw Chiang Kai-shek as China's most feasible hope against Chinese Communism. He shared Marshall's idea that compromise solutions could be worked out and that perhaps liberal leaders associated with neither extreme might be found.

Marshall needed help so desperately that he made much of the fact that Chiang's secretary was a former student of Stuart's and
might be of assistance for that reason. The General flew with Stuart on July 18 to see the Generalissimo, warning him as grimly as he had Chou that current fighting might well spread into uncontrollable civil war.9

Marshall was especially distrustful because of the recent assassination in Kunming of two professors who had leading positions in the Democratic League, by persons allegedly connected with the Kuomintang's secret police. He was stern with Chiang Kai-shek about the alienation of American public opinion. The attacks were on the best-educated group in China. Marshall pointed out, many of them graduates of U.S. universities. Americans were likely to compare their records with the less educated military leaders who "were participating, in his opinion, in a civil war."10

Chou En-lai hoped to use the assassination of the Democratic League leaders to force a reorganization of the National Government, but any advantage he may have gained with Marshall was lost when Communist guerrillas ambushed a Marine convoy near Anping, between Harbin and Tientsin, killing an officer and two enlisted men. Chou's denial of the official American report did not convince Marshall.11

In the new muddle, Marshall seized on Stuart's proposal that he head a five-man committee that would proceed with plans to reorganize the government. Although weakened by dysentery, Stuart summoned the strength to win a temporary agreement from both sides. Trouble soon developed when Chiang Kai-shek insisted that the committee's formation must await the Communist withdrawal from five positions in North China and Manchuria 12

New leverage was applied on both parties in mid-August. A Truman letter, based on a Marshall-Stuart draft, warned Chiang Kai-shek that if real moves toward peace were not made soon, the United States would have to redefine its position. Soon thereafter, Marshall, who had warned Chou against obstructing a proper investigation into the Anping incident, furnished the Communist leader with evidence supplied by Robertson showing that the Kuomintang and the Marines had not been involved. There was a violent attack on the American General in the *Yenan Emancipation Daily* on August 14, the first press assault Marshall had suffered in China. The next day, he warned Chou that it was increasingly difficult for him to negotiate under such circumstances.13

Chiang was determined to attack in the North, and Marshall warned in mid-August that Chiang's plan of attack would be catastrophic because his extended lines of communication and the mountainous terrain favored Communist guerrilla tactics. Insisting
that the Communists were violating cease-fire agreements, Chiang brushed aside the arguments. Marshall reported to Truman that Chiang had become more demanding in his approach than ever before.

The Chinese Communists responded to National movements by mobilizing troops to hold their defense areas, and the U.S. Embassy alerted Washington to a virtual declaration of civil war in China. Again Marshall prepared to fly to Kuling to appeal to the Generalissimo, but before his trip took place, events in Washington forced the Nationalists to stop and think.

On the morning of August 30, General Yu Ta-wei arrived from Nationalist headquarters to protest that the U.S. State Department had disapproved export licenses that would permit Chinese purchases of certain types of small-arms ammunition from the United States. When Yu remonstrated, Marshall reminded him that he had been warning of such possible action for some time, though this move had been made without reference to him. Marshall was honest in saying that he had not been responsible for this particular ruling, but it had followed logically from his use of powers under his presidential directive to pressure the Nationalist leader.

More than a month earlier, the State Department had told Marshall that the China Aid bill that had been introduced in the current special session of Congress would likely not pass before adjournment unless he issued a strong personal appeal. Marshall replied that, in the present state of affairs, he did not want to push the legislation. At the same time, he did not want it withdrawn. He thought it best for the State Department to put it forward and the Congress not to act upon it. Secretary Byrnes concurred in this view, as did Representative Sol Bloom, Chairman of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs. Not aware of Marshall's message, Bloom declared that, unless the rules were suspended, the bill could not be considered that session, and that an effort to force passage would be defeated. He proposed to let it die on the vine. Marshall accepted this view.

On July 23, the China Supply Commission in Washington had asked for an export license for the delivery of small-arms ammunition from American commercial firms and the War Assets Administration. Colonel Carter asked that Marshall verify his assumption "that until the situation clears, shipment of military end-use items to China obtained from any source should continue to be deferred." Marshall replied on the 26th, "There is no objection that I see for the Chinese to purchase equipment and ammunition in the United States providing it is stipulated that delivery on undelivered
items, whether paid for or not, can be withheld by the United States should that course appear to be in the best interests of the United States. . . .” He added that he had recently instructed General Gillem in the same vein.17

It was not until late September that Marshall made the embargo explicit in orders issued to General Gillem. At this point Colonel Carter interpreted Marshall’s action as “another implement in his negotiations and not a retraction of the over-all United States commitment to equip Chinese peacetime forces.” In October, in giving additional instructions about the embargo, Marshall said he still considered it “preferable, under the circumstances, that my name be kept out of the transaction” Marshall later explained in his official report:

As it became apparent during my mission in China that the continuation, at that time, of some phases of these (military aid) programs [was] not conducive to peace and unity in China nor in the best interests of the United States, action was taken to suspend certain portions of the programs which might have a bearing on the prosecution of hostilities and the internal situation in China.18

American efforts in early September to find a basis for settling immediate problems between the warring parties bogged down over the mixture of military and political demands. The Communists wanted a cease-fire before they were willing to join in a five-man group effort to get agreements on the representation of various parties in the reorganized State Council and the National Assembly. Here the core of the argument lay in the Communist effort to get enough votes to prevent the Nationalists from making changes in the new government once it was started. They wanted a cease-fire in fighting before agreeing to negotiate politically but the Nationalists did not want to stop their winning forces without Communist concessions on political arrangements. Chou En-lai tried to draw from the Americans their guarantee of a cease-fire if he agreed to make political concessions. This they declined to make.19

In reporting developments to Truman, Marshall stressed that his problems arose from the National drive on Kalgan, a rail center in Chahar province, called the “Gate to Mongolia.” He noted, “As the Government campaign in Jehol continues to develop to its advantage, the Government’s stand regarding the Communists has become the more implacable regarding the conditions for the termination of hostilities.”20
Immediately after his talk with Chou, Marshall flew to Kuling to talk with Chiang. Afterward the General reported to the President that the Generalissimo had agreed to some concessions, then nullified their effect by imposing new restrictions on the naming of Communist delegates to the National Assembly, a demand that Chou En-lai rejected totally.  

The Communists blamed Marshall. A Yenan broadcast on September 14 attacked him for not opposing the “aggravation of China’s civil war” and declared that his mediation had failed. The broadcast added that Marshall’s prestige had reached its lowest ebb; even his integrity was in question.  

Chou kept up a flow of memoranda, demanding a meeting of the Committee of Three and threatening to publish minutes of earlier meetings if the committee was not convened. Stung by the Communist attacks on his integrity and honesty of purpose, Marshall saw no reason to mediate. If the Communists so distrusted him, there was nothing for him to do. He would withdraw if that was what they wanted.  

Angry as he was, Marshall doubted that the Communists wanted him to quit. Perhaps they yet “can pull this chestnut out of the crossfire which rages about it,” he cabled the President. If his spirit had needed a vote of approval from Washington, he got it. Truman replied: “I have the utmost confidence in you. I know you can ‘pull the chestnut out of the crossfire,’ if it can be done at all.”  

Thus encouraged, Marshall urged Chou to return to Nanking. However, he failed to take recent military events into consideration. The reason was clear in Stuart’s report to the State Department a short time later. “The loss of Jehol province was a severe blow to the Communists, as it resulted in the cutting of their line of communications between Kalgan and Manchuria.” Government forces were moving on Kalgan, “the largest and most important city in the hands of the Communists south of the Great Wall.”  

Marshall worked at keeping the furious Chou in line by lecturing to him on their mistakes. They had erred, he pointed out, by (1) their failure to submit troop lists after the February 25 agreement, thus playing into the hands of Kuomintang extremists; (2) their attack on Changchun, which gave the Nationals a precedent; and (3) their June offensive in Shantung, which wrecked Marshall’s efforts to get a truce then.  

The next day, Chou En-lai counterattacked. Ignoring the list of errors, he said that if the government did not immediately halt its advance against Kalgan and vicinity, “the Chinese Communist Party feels itself forced to presume that the Government is thereby
Statesman
giving public announcement of a total national split, and it has ultimately abandoned its pronounced policy of peaceful settlement.

Chiang Kai-shek appeared to confirm this view when he returned to Nanking and demanded that the completion of military and other agreements must precede a cease-fire. Marshall felt this made nonsense of his previous proposal and said that under the circumstances he would be unable to continue mediating. He told Stuart that he thought the Nationals were using him as cover while continuing to advance against the Communists. That day Marshall wrote the Generalissimo that unless a basis was found for ending the fighting, he would recommend to the President that he be recalled and U.S. efforts to mediate terminated.

Ambassador Stuart underscored the increasingly strained relations on October 3 when he reported that Chou En-lai, in a recent press conference, had accused the United States of aiding civil war by supplying war materiel to Chiang Kai-shek. Chou had mentioned current negotiations by which the Nationals would get $200 million in munitions from the United States. The United States had given the Nationals warships, extended Lend-Lease, made a surplus-property agreement, supplied bombs, fuel, and spare parts for the Chinese Air Force. Fifty-seven U.S.-equipped divisions had been thrown against the Communists, and U.S. forces had moved 400,000 National troops into North China. If the United States would cease aiding the Nationalists, they would have to give serious consideration to ending the war. The argument that American troops were needed to bar Soviet forces from China was an insult to China, since the Chinese had no intention of becoming a colony of any power. There were areas of China, he noted, free of United States troops where no other foreign troops had entered. Chou had no desire to oppose United States aid once the National Government had been reformed, but if Marshall's mission was to be successful, "American forces must be withdrawn immediately and material aid stopped."

The Generalissimo called a conference at Nanking with Marshall and Stuart on October 4. He was distressed at Marshall's suggestion that he be recalled. "He stated," reported Marshall,

that he had searched his mind for any action that might have been construed as lack of integrity in action on his part without result. Such an action by him was unthinkable—that, aside from his position as head of the Government of China, his own conscience as a Christian would forbid.
But Chiang wanted to keep Kalgan, for Communist possession of that city threatened Peiping. Once National forces occupied Kalgan, in about ten days, he would be ready to cease hostilities.

Marshall recalled that in June the Generalissimo had said that the Communists might have Kalgan but must give up Chengteh, northeast of Peiping. Now, with Chengteh in his hands, Chiang must have Kalgan as well. Marshall did not question the importance of Kalgan, but he could not escape the conclusion that while the Communists were calling for a cessation of hostilities, the government "was actually pursuing a policy of force." Negotiations would be time-consuming as military operations continued, and talks would be at the "point of a gun." Under these conditions Marshall said he could not continue as a mediator.

I based my discussion on the grounds that there must be no question regarding the integrity of my position or actions, that I could not place the United States Government in a position where the integrity of its actions as represented by me could be successfully questioned.

Chiang clearly felt that Marshall was bluffing. His advisers, Marshall believed, thought that "because of Soviet considerations, we would be forced to [go] along with protracted negotiations while the campaign progressed as they desired." Under the circumstances, Marshall thought that despite the current vicious Communist propaganda of misrepresentation and bitter attacks, and their stupid failure to agree to the proposal of Doctor Stuart and me for the five man group to settle the State Council issue . . . the United States Government can not afford before the world to have me continue as a mediator and should confidentially notify the Generalissimo accordingly. 32

Marshall believed that his recall was the only way "to dispel the evident belief of the Government generals that they can drag us along while they carry through an actual campaign of force." If it took as long as a week to decide on a course of action and then wait for a reply, the government troops would probably have Kalgan. What effect this would have on future cooperation with the Communists could only be guessed. Still, Marshall wanted the matter handled confidentially. As long as there was still time for the Generalissimo to reverse himself, "I think it of the greatest importance that no intimation of this action leak into the press where it
could do irreparable injury to the Chinese Government in favor of the Communists." The Communists, he added, probably would not want to see him leave.

Before the message could be delivered to Truman, there were new developments in China. General Peter Pee, aide to the Generalissimo, while visiting Ambassador Stuart on the evening of October 4, learned that Marshall was suggesting his recall. He hurried back to see Chiang and called a half-hour later to ask that Stuart visit the Generalissimo at once. On Stuart's arrival, Chiang said he would suggest a short truce in the advance to Kalgan. This led Marshall to ask Colonel Carter in Washington to delay delivery of his message to President Truman.33

Two days later, Marshall reported that Chiang was now ready to consider a ten-day truce during which the five-man group under Stuart would select members for the State Council and establish the basis for a Communist delegation to take part in the National Assembly. Under Marshall the Committee of Three would arrange for the immediate implementation of the program for the reorganization of the Army, the location of Chinese divisions, and the schedule of movements thereunto. The Generalissimo wanted this put forward as a proposal by Marshall and Stuart, who would also make the announcements on the truce.34

For a moment it seemed that something could be worked out. But Chou En-lai was not impressed, seeing the whole procedure as a National effort to gain time. Marshall found his own position now reversed, since the government had offered a temporary cease-fire and the Communists declined.35

He decided to fly to Shanghai in an effort to persuade Chou to come to Nanking for further discussions. Knowing that Gillem had a house in Shanghai, Marshall asked him to bring Chou there. "I've got to see Chou En-lai once more. I've got to make one final move more...." Marshall was at Gillem's house on the 9th, when Gillem ushered in Chou. As they entered, Marshall stepped from behind a screen. Chou had had no inkling that Marshall was to be there and "damn near died," Gillem recalled, but he stayed for an afternoon's talk.36

Simmering with rage over the attack on Kalgan, Chou declared that only an absolute cease-fire would now be acceptable. He charged Marshall and Stuart with trying to sell a bogus plan for peace and demanded that National troops return to the positions they had held on January 13 in China proper and on June 7 in Manchuria. Marshall recalled to Chou that earlier he had said, "If
you don't trust me, say so. You have now said so. I am leaving immediately for Nanking."  

Displeased as he was, Marshall could recognize the dangers Chou had faced in coming to see him in Shanghai. Gilleni said later, "I had a very grave time with Chou En-lai. When the Nationals found he was in there, some of the gunmen and so on took to positions across the street from my house, and I had to get the secret police and so on. For a couple of days we had quite an episode there. . . ."  

The fall of Kalgan came on October 10, at the same time that the National Government announced that the National Assembly would meet a month later. The Communists declined to take part unless they and their allies got sufficient seats in a projected State Council to block measures they did not like. Ambassador Stuart believed that the Generalissimo was now prepared to go through with the writing of a constitution, with or without the Communists.  

Struggling to keep negotiations alive, Marshall and Stuart drafted a statement that they hoped the Generalissimo would make in an effort to get a peaceful settlement. It proposed an immediate meeting of the Committee of Five under Stuart to discuss the reorganization of the National Government and a meeting of the Committee of Three under Marshall to discuss settlement of other remaining problems. Key points among the nine set forth for the two committees included: (1) National troops in North Central China were to remain where they were until the Committee of Three agreed on relocation of forces; and (2) "whatever understanding is reached by the Five Man Committee headed by Doctor Stuart . . . is to be confirmed by the Steering Committee of the PCC without delay."  

Madame Chiang Kai-shek brought a revised version of the proposed statement to General Marshall on the evening of the 15th. Finding the new version "jumbled in thought and provocative in nature," Marshall struck out a considerable part of the new material. Relating to Stuart details of the development next morning, Marshall said that (1) there must be a clear understanding as to the meaning of the cease-fire; (2) there would be a problem in getting agreement on the location of divisions; and (3) the Communists would oppose Chiang's exclusion of Manchuria from the settlement of local administrative problems. Marshall added that, in view of the vicious personal attacks on him by Communists, he could not handle negotiations until after the Committee of Three was convened.
Marshall analyzed for Truman the recent developments, pointing to the efforts of third-party groups to get Chou back to negotiating and noting the unfortunate effect Chiang's unilateral convening of the National Assembly had exerted on peace efforts. He mentioned current Communist attacks on U.S. policy and the fact that Stuart was now being included in the propaganda attacks. Although it would be months before nonmilitary products of the surplus-property transaction would become available to the government, the Communists believed these items would affect current operations. "They are of course unaware of the restrictions that have been placed on the National Government in the shipment of ammunition, airplanes and similar items." The fact that the surplus equipment went back to a 1943 agreement did not enter into their reasoning. "Their argument, in effect, is that the National Government should be disarmed, which would be the case if denied the use of American munitions which are the basis of their Army organization. I elaborate on this point of view not at all as an argument but merely to assist you in evaluating psychological reactions at the present time."4

A modicum of hope appeared on October 21 when some liberal third-party leaders persuaded Chou En-lai to return to Nanking by agreeing to support the Communists in refusing to name delegates to the National Assembly before the government was reorganized as had been agreed by the Political Consultative Conference. At Marshall's urging, the Generalissimo delayed a trip to Formosa to speak briefly with Chou and third-party representatives. However, Chiang left later that day, a step which the Yenan government promptly branded as an affront. Irked by the Generalissimo's action, Marshall told government officials that a prolonged absence would appear to outsiders as an attempt to avoid negotiations.43 He soothed Chou's hurt feelings by saying that the trip had been planned in advance of any knowledge of Chou's intention to come to Nanking. To Truman, Marshall had explained that Yenan had recalled Chou on hearing of Chiang's departure but that Chou had asked to be allowed to continue negotiations. The General added, "The important point of the interview today was the fact that Chou called on me. . . ."44

The Nationals captured Antung on October 25, during the Generalissimo's absence. Marshall told Chiang, on the latter's return, that recent government advances and the Generalissimo's absence had seriously affected prospective negotiations. He warned that "the Communists had lost cities but not armies." They
have "no intention of making a stand or of fighting to a finish at any place."45

As if the fall of Antung was the signal he had been waiting for, Chiang announced that the time had come to stop the fighting. For Marshall, the situation had become ludicrous. Talking to John Melby, Second Secretary of the U.S. Embassy, about the recent operations which abrogated the June agreement, Marshall said that it had taken three weeks to negotiate that one and it would take longer for the next. "And I can't go through it again. I am just too old and too tired for that."46

He did not stop trying. Beginning on November 5, he had a series of meetings with Chiang, attempting to draft an acceptable statement for a cease-fire. When it was finally completed on November 8, Marshall was disappointed because of certain qualifications the Generalissimo had made. He reported his distress to President Truman, saying that Chiang Kai-shek had missed a great opportunity by threatening to renew battle and by his unfortunate approach to the convocation of a National Assembly.47

Not only did the announcement fail to go far enough; Chiang's advisers opposed even its few concessions. Still, Marshall put a good face on matters when he spoke to Chou En-lai on November 10 to ask that the Communists make a favorable reply. Chou, conscious of borrowed time, said that if Marshall thought there was still another chance for agreement, he would continue his efforts for a little while longer. If the General thought not, he must go back to Yenan. When Marshall requested that he meet again with the Committee of Three, Chou stated, "I will make another try."48

At an informal meeting of the Committee of Three on the morning of the 11th, General Chen Chang presented Chiang's cease-fire proposal. Chou agreed to send it to Yenan but warned that if Chiang convened the National Assembly unilaterally, there would be a political split. Doggedly, Marshall asked that the Communists accept the cease-fire despite political differences.48

In another last-minute effort to prevent a break, Chiang agreed with a nonparty delegation's request to delay the meeting of the National Assembly until November 15. Marshall met again with Chou but failed to shake his demand for a complete halt in calling for the meeting. The Generalissimo replied by convening the National Assembly on November 15 with no Communists present. Of the opponents of the Kuomintang, only members of the Youth Party and a few nonparty delegates attended the sessions.49

The door to negotiations "has now been slammed," Chou an-
Williams announced in his official statement on the 16th. He visited Marshall to say that negotiations had failed despite the General's efforts and that he was now going back to Yenan. "But I feel that I still have high respect for you personally," he told the American General. "The Chinese problem is too complicated and the changes are tremendous." Chou said that he was leaving a representative in Nanking, but warned that if the government were readying an attack on Yenan, as he suspected, all negotiations would be at an end. Summarizing these developments for Truman, Marshall said that if the government did launch an attack on Yenan, "I would feel that it terminated my Mission."50

The President promptly regretted these developments but assured the General that this "in no way detracts from the high estimate we place upon the quality and utility of what you have done." Marshall's presence had prevented many adverse developments, and benefits would follow. "You have my constant gratitude and confidence."51

The words sounded like a valedictory. Marshall was in need of encouragement. He spoke frankly of his disappointments to staff members after Chou had left for Yenan. "I know," Melby wrote, "Marshall now believes he made a mistake in ever thinking coalition was desirable or useful or possible."52 Marshall complained bitterly to Beal about the actions of Chiang's generals, who on several occasions had torpedoed negotiations with their attacks on the Communists. Noting that the National Government was pressing him for loans, he asked Beal to convey his word to the "militarists": "The army is draining 80 to 90 per cent of the budget and if you think the American taxpayer is going to step into the vacuum this creates, you can go to hell."53

Apparently now convinced that he had about reached the end of effective negotiations, Marshall left Nanking for Tientsin on November 23 to discuss the immediate reduction of the garrison there, and then went on to Peiping to determine the future of Executive Headquarters.54 Briefly, the visit to Tientsin cheered him up, for it revived pleasant memories of his 1924-27 stay there. He showed his pleasure by writing to old military colleagues who would treasure his description of changes and vestiges of an older life that still remained.

He was soon drawn back to realities. On the first day of December, Marshall and Stuart spent three hours with Chiang Kai-shek, with Madame as interpreter, a grueling experience that Melby remarked would qualify both men for the Order of Saint Simeon Stylites.55 Marshall commented that the Communists were too
large a military and civil force to be ignored and an effort should be made to bring them into the government. In a flow of words lasting more than an hour, Chiang said that the Communists had no intention of cooperating with the Nationals, that they were under the influence of the Soviet government, and that their purpose was to disrupt the government and influence foreign policy. Marshall reported, "The Generalissimo stated that he felt that it was necessary to destroy the Communist military forces. If that were done there would be no great difficulty in handling the Communist question. . . . He was confident that the Communist forces could be eliminated in 8 to 12 months." Since the Communists had shown no desire to cooperate, Chiang thought the United States should redefine its mission, emphasizing the need for stability in the government and throughout the Far East. "It should no longer be considered practical to consider the Communists as a working part of the Government." Marshall reiterated his conviction that the government could not ignore such a large group and that it was impossible for the government to complete its program of eliminating Communism before the country would be faced with complete economic collapse. Marshall's frankness displeased Chiang. As Marshall reported to John Beal, "His old foot went round and round and round and almost hit the ceiling."

There was a touch of finality about the report. But since he was not completely sure, President Truman left the ending of the mission up to Marshall. "Pat" Carter passed on the heart of the message:

He stated that at such time as you felt the situation called for your return, all you had to do was to notify him how you wanted the matter handled and it would be done that way. He admonished that I should not in any way give you the impression that he or anybody else in a responsible position was attempting to influence you or to urge you to withdraw. On the contrary his only desire is to impress upon you that the matter is yours and yours alone to determine. . . .

The course of events waited now on the Communist reaction to Marshall's earlier query whether or not they wanted him to continue to mediate. The reply was soon forthcoming. On the 5th, he received Chou En-lai's statement of the previous day. Charging that a basis for agreement had been destroyed by the Nationalist manipulation of the National Assembly, the Communist leaders declared that further discussions depended on the dissolution of
the "illegal" National Assembly and the restoration of troop positions as of January 13. When Marshall asked Ambassador Stuart for his reaction, the diplomat called the message unrealistic and added that Chou had still not indicated whether he wanted the Americans to continue their mediation. Marshall saw the Communist challenge as playing into the hands of the reactionaries of the National regime. Believing that he could destroy the Communist forces in the field, Chiang Kai-shek saw no reason to make any concessions to Yenan. Stuart was still hopeful. He believed that Chiang could be separated from the reactionary forces of the Kuomintang and sold on a policy of strengthening China. Marshall was much less certain. He wanted more indication of agreement before he would recommend a new American effort.58