FUELLING A WAR MACHINE
Canadian Foreign Policy in the Sino-Japanese War, 1937-1945

By

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ABSTRACT

The subject of Canada’s policy-making in relation to the Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945) has been neglected for over half a century. Therefore neither the scope of Canada’s official assistance to the Chinese during their War of Resistance against Japan nor the motivations behind this assistance have been fully explained or adequately contextualized. Through research using archival records and other primary and secondary sources, the thesis sheds light on the ways in which Canadians chose to respond to Chinese efforts to secure an ally against Japan. Revealing unscrupulous opportunism on the Canadian side during China’s struggle against Japan, the thesis contributes to a revisionist trend which takes aim at romantic mythology about Canadians’ virtuous role in the Second World War.

From 1931 to 1941, the Government of Canada sought to maintain a neutral position regarding Japanese encroachments in China. This was partly to honour a friendship established in the First World War but also to protect Canadian exporters’ valuable sales of strategic minerals to Japan. After the attack on Pearl Harbor, pro-Japanese sympathy among Canadians eroded and trade with Japan became politically untenable. In 1942, already five years after the beginning of full-scale war between Japan and China, the Canadian government began preparations to provide material assistance to the beleaguered Chinese. Increasing dialogue between Mackenzie King and Chiang Kai-shek, especially communications through Chiang’s wife Song Meiling, nurtured a promising friendship despite King’s unwillingness to commit “the lives of white men” to war in China and apparently ensured that several shipments of arms and munitions were provided to Chiang’s armies. As the research reveals, the assistance was motivated by hopes of cultivating “goodwill” in China that would favour Canadian businesses after the war. However, the official decision to assist China against Japan sparked a new controversy. Doubts about China’s postwar political stability gave rise to questions about the danger that Canadian munitions would be used in an imminent Chinese civil war. Such warnings, as it turned out, were merited. A bloody conflict between the Communists and Nationalists would erupt in China shortly after the end of the Second World War, in part waged with Canadian weapons.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

From its inception, this project would have been impossible without the patient guidance of Dr. Emily Hill, my supervisor for this Master’s degree. I am deeply grateful for her insightful suggestions and her tireless efforts in polishing my writing. Working with Dr. Hill over the past several years has been both a pleasure and a privilege that I will not soon forget. In addition, my sincere thanks go out to Dr. Howard Coombs, whose undergraduate seminar in Military History opened my eyes to the possibilities that the study of history can offer. I am also indebted to Dr. Mike Mason, a historian whose memory and intellect inspired me every week in his undergraduate lectures on the “Third World.” Without Dr. Mason’s suggestion to take a leap of faith and pursue an opportunity to study in China in 2007, I cannot guess where I would be today. Tracing the thread of my academic career back to its source, I cannot neglect to thank David Parsons for his inspired instruction of history at Colonel By Secondary School which helped mould my thinking during a formative period of my life. It was largely thanks to the enjoyment I drew from Mr. Parsons’ classes that helped me settle upon a future in history.

Of my more recent instructors, I would like to thank Dr. Ariel Salzmann and Dr. Rosanne Currarino for challenging me to think in new and interesting ways and for providing a stimulating environment in which I could voice my thoughts. I am also grateful to my friends and colleagues in the History Department, in particular Kendall Garton, Deng Jie, and Jawad Qureshy, whose advice and encouragement helped replenish my creative juices when they were running low. In my hometown of Ottawa, many friends have supported me throughout this long journey despite my yearly migration away from them to resume my studies. Among these friends, Jonathan Thibeault and Patrick Beaulac deserve special recognition for their steadfast friendship. I am blessed to have such friends. My family too deserves enormous thanks for the incredible role they have played in my life, and ultimately, in my ability to succeed in academics. Despite constantly berating me for pursuing History, and not Geography (as they did), I am deeply fortunate to be a member of such a supportive family. A special mention needs to be made of my mother, Kristi Francoeur, whose fierce courage in the face of a merciless disease has constantly inspired me to demonstrate the same ‘joie de vivre’ and never give up in the face of adversity. Finally, I am indebted to my beloved partner, Angelica Bitton, whose unfailing support and love have helped me overcome obstacles that previously seemed insurmountable.
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Transliteration

There are two different methods of transliterating Chinese characters into the English language. The first, known as Wade-Giles, is a system originally developed in the mid-nineteenth century and was the preferred method of transliteration for publication during most of the twentieth century as well as the state-approved method of romanization in Taiwan until 2008. The second, officially known as Hanyu Pinyin, but more commonly referred to simply as pinyin, is a system originally developed and officially adopted by the People’s Republic of China (PRC), and is now commonly used by scholarly texts published outside China. In this text, romanization of Chinese words follows the conventions of pinyin, with the exception of the name Chiang Kai-shek (pinyin: Jiang Jieshi), which in this discussion has retained its earlier rendering of the Chinese leader’s Cantonese name. To assist readers unfamiliar with the pinyin romanization of well-known names, Wade-Giles spellings will be provided in brackets.
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DRAMATIS PERSONAE

Attlee, Clement
British Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs from 1942-1943, the United Kingdom’s Deputy Prime Minister from 1942-1945, and Prime Minister from 1945-1951.

Bennett, Richard B.

Bruce, Robert R.
Canada’s Minister Plenipotentiary to Japan from 1936-1938.

Chen Guofu (陈果夫)
Member of the Guomindang’s Central Audit, Head of the Department of Organization, and President of the Central Financial Committee. Together with his younger brother Chen Lifu, he organized the famous “Central Club Clique,” a powerful rightist faction within the Guomindang.

Chiang Kai-shek (蒋介石) “The Generalissimo”
Successor to Sun Yixian (Sun Yat-sen), Chiang was China’s head of state from 1928-1949, and President of Taiwan from 1950-1975.

Christie, Loring C.
Legal adviser to the Department of External Affairs from 1935-1939, and later Canadian Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to the United States from 1939-1941.

Crerar, Thomas A.
Canada’s Minister of Mines and Resources from 1936-1945.

Dandurand, Raoul
Leader of the Government in the Canadian Senate from 1935-1942, and Canadian delegate at the Brussels Conference in 1937.

He Yingqin (何应钦)
Chinese General and China’s War Minister in 1937.

Heeney, Arnold
Canada’s Clerk of the Privy Council, Secretary to the Cabinet from 1940-1945, and responsible for organizing the work of the Cabinet War Committee.

Howe, Clarence D.
Canada’s Minister of Munitions and Supply from 1940-1945. With enormous power and influence, this “minister of everything” was responsible for Canada’s war production program and one of the main architects behind the Mutual Aid provided to China.
Hu Shi  (胡适)  China’s Ambassador to the United States from 1938-1942.

Isley, James L.  Canada’s Minister of Finance from 1940-1946.

Johnston, John F.  Canadian Minister of Parliament from 1935-1940.

Keenleyside, Hugh  Canada’s Chargé d’Affaires at the Tokyo legation from 1929-1936, and Assistant Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs from 1941-1944 where he specialized in Far Eastern matters.

King, W.L. Mackenzie  Canada’s Prime Minister from 1935-1948, and Secretary of State for External Affairs from 1935-1946.

Kong Xiangxi  (孔祥熙) “H.H. Kung”  Graduate of Yale University and 75th generation descendant of Confucius, Kong was one of the most important statesmen in China. He held, among other offices, the position of China’s Minister of Finance from 1933-1944. He was married to Song Meiling’s elder sister, Song Ailing.

Lattimore, Owen  American advisor to Chiang Kai-shek from 1941-1944.

Liu Shishun  (刘师舜)  Chinese Minister Plenipotentiary to Canada in 1941, promoted to Ambassador in 1944.


MacInnis, Angus  Canadian Member of Parliament from 1930-1953.

Massey, Vincent  Canadian High Commissioner to the United Kingdom from 1935-1946.

McGreer, Edgar D.  Canada’s Second Secretary at the Tokyo Legation from 1936-1938, First Secretary from 1938-1942, and Chargé d’Affaires from 1939-1942.

McNaughton, Andrew  Canadian Chief of the General Staff from 1929-1935. With the outbreak of war in 1939, McNaughton was chosen to lead the First Canadian Infantry Division, which grew to a corps (1940) and then to an army (1942) under his command. He resigned in
December 1943, following the disastrous Dieppe Raid, and assumed the position of Minister of National Defence from 1943-1945.

**Menzies, Arthur**
China specialist at the Far Eastern Affairs division at Canada’s Department of External Affairs from 1944-1945.

**Murchie, John C.**
Canadian Chief of the General Staff from 1943-1945.

**Odlum, Victor**
Canada’s High Commissioner to Australia from 1941-1942, and Ambassador to China from 1943-1947.

**Pearson, Lester B.**
Canadian Ambassador to the United States from 1944-1946, and Under Secretary of State for Canada’s Department of External Affairs from 1946-1948.

**Pierce, Sydney D.**
From the Canadian Department of Munitions and Supply in 1940, and later Head of the Economic Division at Canada’s Department of External Affairs in 1945.

**Pope, Maurice**
Chairman of the Canadian Joint Staff Mission in Washington from 1942-1944, and the Prime Minister’s Military Staff Officer from 1944-1945.

**Reid, Escott**
Second Secretary at Canada’s Department of External Affairs from 1941-1944, and First Secretary at the Canadian Embassy in Washington from 1944-1945.

**Robertson, Norman A.**
Skelton’s successor, Robertson was Under-Secretary of State for Canada’s Department of External Affairs from 1941-1946.

**Skelton, Oscar D.**
Under-Secretary of State for Canada’s Department of External Affairs from 1925 until his death from a heart attack in 1941. The leading civil servant of his time, and founder of the modern Department of External Affairs, Skelton was one of King’s trusted advisors.

**Song Meiling** (宋美齡)
“Mme. Chiang Kai-shek”
“Missimo”
American-educated and youngest of three Song sisters. She was the wife of Chiang Kai-shek and an important spokesperson for China, and later, for Taiwan. She has frequently been dubbed one of the most powerful women of the twentieth century.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
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<tr>
<td>“T.V. Soong”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Song Zheyuan (宋哲元)</td>
<td>Chinese General and Commander of the 29th Route Army stationed near the Marco Polo Bridge where hostilities broke out with Japan in July 1937.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Woodsworth, James S.</td>
<td>Methodist Minister and the leader of the CCF from 1932-1942.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wrong, Humphrey Hume</td>
<td>Hume Wrong was Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs from 1941-1946. He would later become Ambassador to the United States, holding the position from 1946-1953.</td>
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CHAPTER 1: Introduction

Although Canada’s participation in the Second World War has been carefully scrutinized by Canadian historians, the country’s involvement in the Sino-Japanese War of 1937-1945 remains a neglected topic both at home and abroad. Partly born of Canada’s perpetual relegation to the sidelines of North American historiography, the obscurity of the subject also reflects an unfortunate lack of interest in Sino-Canadian history. It is now well known that China’s Anti-Japanese War cost the lives of millions, wreaked incalculable damage to Chinese property, and scarred its people’s psyche. The conflict also played a decisive role in the victory of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) over the forces of the Guomindang (Kuomintang) government in 1949. Given the enormous impact of China’s war with Japan, even Canada’s minor role in these events calls for evaluation. This thesis examines the complex story of Canada’s wartime policies in the Pacific and the ways in which domestic priorities and foreign pressures shaped what would become disturbingly short-sighted Canadian actions regarding China.

Existing literature on Canada’s role in the Second World War has made much of the fact that Canada was at the mercy of the United States and Great Britain, and had little autonomy in developing its own foreign policy during this period. Indeed, although Canada was raised to the status of a Dominion in 1867, a Canadian politician noted bitterly in 1939 that despite “a quarter century of proclamation and achievement of equal and independent status, we have thus far been relegated to the role of a Crown Colony.” While it is undeniable that Canada was frequently

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1 This is despite Canadian soldiers’ costly defence of Hong Kong against the Japanese in late 1941. The mission to East Asia in 1941 reflected Canada’s duty to defend a holding of the British Empire rather than a decision to help China. For a recent discussion of Canada’s mission to Hong Kong, see Nathan M. Greenfield, The Damned: The Canadians at the Battle of Hong Kong and the POW Experience, 1941-45 (Toronto: HarperCollins, 2011).

2 For the effects of warfare on China in the mid-twentieth century, see Diana Lary and Stephen MacKinnon, Scars of War: The Impact of Warfare on Modern China (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2001).

pressured and manipulated, its strong ties to the United States and ‘filial’ obligations to the British Commonwealth do not sufficiently explain Canadian policies toward East Asia during the 1930s and 1940s. As discussed below, the decisive role of financial incentives and the disproportionate influence of certain key Canadian politicians not only frustrated some specialists at Canada’s Department of External Affairs, but also brought stern reprimands from Canada’s two closest allies.  

Long plagued by an unrealistic romantic mythology, the historiography of Canada and the Second World War has made immense strides in recent decades. According to Greg Donaghy, “The notion that this war was uniquely ‘Canada’s War’ seems [today] increasingly old-fashioned.” Beginning only in the 1970s and 1980s to break away from this kind of self-serving “national history,” historians “sought a more elaborate and nuanced understanding of Canada’s wartime experiences.” In diverse fields of expertise, academics including Michael Bliss have now concluded that Canada’s wartime record “was not a triumph of organization and intelligence, but rather a riot of irrationality and mismanagement, waste and savagery.” Others, like Angelika Sauer have taken careful aim at the notion that Canada acted as a “responsible middle power” throughout this period.  

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4 Established in 1909, Canada’s Department of External Affairs (now known as Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada) was an understaffed, unsophisticated, and disorganized unit throughout the first half of the twentieth century. Functioning in 1939 as little more than an “elaborate post office” and described by Lester B. Pearson as a complete “mess,” the onset of war would place incredible strain on the department’s “inadequate administrative structure” which employed a paltry total of 16 officers. Until 1946, when Pearson modernized the department under Prime Minister Louis St. Laurent, the office was organized almost entirely by its poorly equipped Under-Secretary, who from 1935-1946 reported directly to Prime Minister Mackenzie King in his capacity as Secretary of State for External Affairs. See Library and Archives Canada (LAC), Punching Above our Weight: A History of the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade; and Greg Donaghy, “Coming off the Gold Standard: Re-Assessing the ‘Golden Age’ of Canadian Diplomacy,” presented at symposium: “A Very Modern Ministry? Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada” (University of Saskatchewan, 2009).

Japanese War, this thesis contributes to a project of scholarly revisionism, one which must still contend with unrealistic and tenacious representations of “Canada’s War.”

By illuminating the long neglected tale of Canada’s military assistance to the Chinese, this discussion will also provide a broader international understanding of China’s foreign relations during the Sino-Japanese conflict. It is no doubt revealing that even the most recent studies specializing in China’s quest for foreign military aid focus only on Chiang Kai-shek’s collaboration with the United States, the USSR, Great Britain, and Germany, and fail to offer even the slightest mention of Canadian assistance. Historians will also benefit from a discussion which reveals the relationships between key Chinese and Canadian officials, as well as the central roles played by Chiang Kai-shek and his wife Song Meiling in securing Canadian aid.

Existing literature on the wartime Sino-Canadian relationship remains fractured and incomplete. Also troubling is the lack of a cohesive interpretation of Canadian actions with both the Japanese and Chinese from 1937-1945. In 1978, Kim Nossal provided an early investigation of Canada’s role in the Pacific during the 1940s. His focus was on Canadian involvement in the Chinese Civil War (1946-1949), however, rather than the preceding Sino-Japanese War. Writing in a Cold War context, Nossal’s purpose was to determine whether ideological considerations contributed to Canada’s decision to assist the Chinese Nationalists (Guomindang) rather than the Chinese Communists in their bitter struggle for supremacy. He concluded that an “anti-communist tone was notably absent in deliberations at the bureaucratic level,” and that Canada’s

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actions were shaped rather by economic considerations and bureaucratic politics. More recently, Gregory Johnson has analyzed how Mackenzie King and other Canadian politicians reacted to Japan’s imperial aggression in 1939. Through research in the Mackenzie King archives, Johnson demonstrates that Prime Minister King was suspicious and fearful of the Japanese and even expressed concern that an attack on Canada’s Pacific shore was forthcoming. Johnson repeatedly stresses the importance of Canada’s weak diplomatic position vis-à-vis Britain and the United States, and suggests that though Ottawa closely watched developments in the Far East, it “could do little to influence their outcome.” Most important to Mackenzie King, Johnson argues, was the need to “prevent Canada from being placed in a situation where it could be held responsible for creating an incident” that would compromise the United States or Britain’s neutrality with Japan. While Johnson’s findings are useful in determining what key Canadian politicians thought at the time, they complicate explanations of why Canada maintained its controversial trade relationship with Japan throughout the late 1930s. In fact, the article’s suggestion that Mackenzie King genuinely feared Japanese invasion in 1939 makes Canada’s policy of trade with Japan as it became an aggressive Pacific power all the more perplexing. This discussion aims to bridge the gap between these seemingly contradictory realities.

A major shortcoming of the existing literature is that it has generally treated Canadian policy toward Japan and toward China as separate topics, when neither can be understood without reference to the other. Historians and political scientists have also tended to set particularly narrow temporal boundaries to their research of these complicated events. Though

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10 Ibid., 272.
valuable to specialists, such an approach suffers from inevitable pitfalls. In this case, researchers’ self-imposed limitations leave readers with an incomplete picture of Canada’s ‘Far Eastern’ policy during the pivotal Sino-Japanese War. This investigation is intended to provide a more comprehensive and thus more accessible account of Canada’s involvement in the Sino-Japanese War, integrating separate narratives in the process. In the discussion below, emphasis will be placed on determining the full extent of the official military aid provided to China between 1937 and 1945, and also on clarifying the true motivations behind Canada’s provision of assistance. An effort will be made to contextualize Canada’s official policy toward China throughout the period. For instance, governmental aid is juxtaposed with public fundraising efforts for Chinese relief undertaken by concerned Canadians. More importantly, context will also be established through a careful look at the relationship between Japan and Canada during the early years of the war, during which time Japan was Canada’s foremost diplomatic and commercial partner in East Asia. Evidence at hand suggests that much like the Americans and the British, Canadians maintained a valuable export trade with Japan up until the eve of Operation Z – better known as the ‘Attack on Pearl Harbor’. Until then, not only were Chinese pleas for help largely ignored, but Canada provided the resource-strapped Japanese with vital military materials which enabled them to launch their invasion of China. Consistent with evaluations that the 1930s were a “low dishonest decade” for Canada, it was only in the days after the attack on Hawaii in December 1941, that Canada officially suspended its lucrative trade with Japan, and began to offer any real assistance to the Chinese. Between 1942 and 1948, Canada cemented its strategic alliance with China through increased political dialogue, but more importantly, with significant loans and

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several shipments of military supplies. This program of aid to China never reached the scale of the aid to Britain, due in part to the severe logistical difficulties of shipping cumbersome material to landlocked parts of China but also to the simple fact that Canada’s wartime priorities lay elsewhere. What might appear to have been humanitarian aid extended to the Chinese from the Canadian Government simply cannot be reconciled with archival sources from the period. As this thesis will suggest, the seemingly generous hardware and financing offered to the Chinese Nationalists reflected a self-serving Canadian policy for East Asia which was not justified by Canadian officials on humanitarian or even political grounds.¹³ Instead, despite the conspicuously friendly relations between Mackenzie King and Chinese officials, aid was provided primarily to cultivate “goodwill” and thereby secure Canada a favourable place in post-war economic dealings with China.

¹³ In this context, ‘political grounds’ refers to the notion that Chiang Kai-shek could be provided with military supplies in order to bolster his hold on power and prevent his regime from falling to the Communists during the 1940s.
CHAPTER 2: The Chinese and Japanese Backdrops

Shaping Canada’s relations with Japan during the late 1930s were years of history between the two nations. As John Meehan suggests, Dominion Day 1929 seemed to mark a historic step in Canadian relations with Japan. On that humid day in July, a diverse crowd of well-wishers assembled to welcome the recently appointed Canadian Chargé d’Affaires, Hugh Keenleyside, to his post in Tokyo. The ceremony marked growing ties of friendship between the two countries and cemented Canada’s diplomatic presence in Japan. In part, this was the result of a close partnership between the two countries during the First World War, in which the Japanese navy had patrolled Canada’s west coast against German U-boats. Following the war, some Canadian soldiers even served under Japanese commanders during the Allied intervention in Siberia.¹⁴ A vibrant trade partnership paralleled this military cooperation. By 1929, Japan was the fourth-highest importer of Canadian goods – purchasing metal, lumber, foodstuffs and other raw materials amounting to nearly $38 million that year alone. In fact, despite the Great Depression, Canada’s trade with Japan consistently generated a healthy surplus throughout the interwar period.¹⁵ Japan’s invasion of the Manchuria region in 1931 did not discourage the trade as Canada continued to export millions of dollars worth of strategic materials to Japan every year.¹⁶ In 1936, the year before the expansion of Sino-Japanese hostilities into full-scale war, Canada exported goods to Japan worth nearly $20 million and the ratio of trade surplus between the two countries had increased to 4.6 in Canada’s favour.¹⁷ As noted by John Johnston in the House of Commons two years later, in 1936 Canada had provided Japan with 71.7% of its aluminum for

¹⁵ Ibid., 9.
¹⁶ Strategic materials refer to materials required for the industrial support of a war effort such as the metals needed to produce weapons.
¹⁷ Meehan, The Dominion and the Rising Sun, 11.
the construction of aircraft, 79.11% of its total supplies of copper, and 100% of its nickel.\textsuperscript{18}

Furthermore, Japan’s purchases of scrap iron ($639,940), nickel ($1,223,667) and pig lead ($3,140,296) were all nearly double the amounts sold in 1935.\textsuperscript{19} Doubting this was a coincidence, Johnson declared that Canada had become the “arsenal” of Japan, and that without Canadian resources, Japan would have been unable to begin its full scale invasion of China in 1937.\textsuperscript{20}

Nonetheless, in 1936 most Canadians continued to view Japanese expansion into China in a neutral light, while Prime Minister Mackenzie King and his policymakers continued to cultivate a friendship with Japan that supported this profitable trade relationship.

Though Canada’s relations with China throughout this period were by no means hostile, they were less well established, due in part to China’s political instability. In 1929, Chiang Kai-shek had only just completed the Northern Expedition – an ambitious military campaign intended to wrest power from local warlords and unify China under the control of the Guomindang-led government established in Nanjing in 1927. Despite the overall effectiveness of the campaign, the China of 1929 was plagued by civil unrest, foreign dominance in its major ports, and by undeveloped and decentralized military strength compared to the industrialized world. China’s low level of prestige in the wider world was reflected in the fact that Chinese migrants across the Pacific were faced with much harsher immigration controls than were the Japanese. In Canada, the first wave of Chinese immigration began in 1859 with the discovery of gold in Fraser Valley, British Columbia. A second, much larger wave arrived in the 1880s.

\textsuperscript{18} John Johnston, \textit{ Debates}, 18\textsuperscript{th} Parliament, 3\textsuperscript{rd} Session, 1938: vol. 3, 2879-80 (13 May 1938).


\textsuperscript{20} Johnston, \textit{ Debates}, 18\textsuperscript{th} Parliament, 3\textsuperscript{rd} Session, 1938: vol. 3, 2879-80 (13 May 1938). Johnston’s statement is exaggerated. The United States was at this time Japan’s primary source of oil, steel, and other strategic materials and thus it is doubtful that even a complete ban of Canadian exports would have had a serious impact on Japan’s war planning. See Alan Axelrod, \textit{The Real History of World War II: A New Look at the Past} (New York: Sterling, 2008) 142.
following Prime Minister Sir John A. Macdonald’s decision to bring several thousand labourers from China to aid in the construction of the western section of the Canadian Pacific Railway. At the height of its construction in 1881 and 1882, over 11,000 Chinese came by ship to Victoria from China. Known as “coolies,” the Chinese labourers were paid one-third the amount paid to white, black and native workers, and were frequently engaged, and occasionally killed, in the most dangerous aspects of the project, such as working with explosives. Beginning shortly after the first migrants entered British Columbia in the late 1860s, the Chinese became the target of overt racial discrimination, reflected in perceptions among the white population that the Chinese selfishly hoarded their money and returned little or nothing to the country that sheltered them. Another major concern for white working men was that many business owners saw the Chinese as ideal workers. As Rosanne Currarino relates, “One of the most troubling aspects about the Chinese was their perceived willingness to work for low wages and […] their apparent determination to work furiously hard for long hours, like machines, desiring nothing in return.”

Grounded in fears that the Chinese were stealing the jobs of white workers, these concerns were amplified by assumptions that the migrants were a degraded, contaminated and immoral people. Seen as inferior, inassimilable, and as parasites sucking the blood from working class livelihood, the Chinese problem demanded immediate eradication, and newspaper articles across North America often said as much.

Soon after the completion of the Canadian Pacific Railway, when it seemed that there was no further need for Chinese labourers, the government of Canada passed the Chinese

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Immigration Act of 1885 which levied a $50 head tax on any Chinese entering the country. This proved to be an unsatisfactory deterrent and was increased to $100 in 1900, and three years later to $500 – the equivalent of nearly $10,000 today.\textsuperscript{24} The Chinese Immigration Act of 1923, often referred to as the Chinese Exclusion Act, replaced the head tax with an outright ban.\textsuperscript{25} These discriminatory policies, applied only to Chinese migrants, accurately reflected the anti-Chinese sentiment prevalent in that era, and a current redress movement recently prompted an apology from Prime Minister Stephen Harper.\textsuperscript{26} This pernicious anti-Chinese ideology was common throughout the Pacific, taking hold in Australia, Mexico, the United States, New Zealand, and Tasmania. Evidently, Canada was no exception.\textsuperscript{27} Japanese immigrants’ exemption from such restrictive and discriminatory policies speaks volumes to the success of Japan’s national, and racial, ‘marketing campaign’ during the 1920s and 1930s. Since 1919, when Japan had been humiliated by its second-class treatment at the Paris Peace Conference, where, as Margaret Macmillan describes, “the Japanese were generally ignored or treated as something of a joke,” the Japanese had striven to model themselves after the Western “Imperial Powers” and demonstrate that they were the civilized caretakers of a ‘backward’ region.\textsuperscript{28} As an article in the \textit{New York Times} impassively stated in January 1932, “Japan’s political strategy has been designed to win the United States to the concept of a Japanese Monroe Doctrine over China.”\textsuperscript{29} It seems that Canada was won over as well. Although a few Canadians in the 1930s expressed interest in what Kim Nossal described as “the century-old (and somewhat mythical) prospects of

\textsuperscript{24} Using estimates from the Bank of Canada Inflation Calculator.
\textsuperscript{25} Meehan, \textit{The Dominion and the Rising Sun}, 11.
\textsuperscript{26} The recent apology also included a promise for monetary compensation. See “Harper Government Issues Full Apology for Chinese Head Tax” in CityNews, 22 June 2006; and Peter Li.
\textsuperscript{27} In fact, Adam McKeown has recently argued that repeated attempts in the 1880s to legalize Chinese exclusion in British Columbia were only struck down due to the tempering influence of the British. See Adam M. McKeown, \textit{Melancholy Order: Asian Migration and the Globalization of Borders} (New York: Columbia UP, 2008) 131-32.
opening the massive Chinese market to Canadian manufactured goods,” this potential for lucrative trade came with much more risk and uncertainty than prospects with Japan. Thus, when added to Canadians’ anti-Chinese sentiment, China’s political instability effectively stalled diplomatic relations between the two countries.

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30 Nossal, “Business as Usual,” 137.
CHAPTER 3: Canada Clings to its Japanese Alliance (1937-1941)

By July 1937, Canada found itself in a difficult diplomatic position. While trade with Japan was reaping substantial financial rewards, it was becoming more difficult to ignore Japanese aggression in East Asia. A week after the Marco Polo Bridge (Lugouqiao) Incident on July 7, a Canadian diplomat in Japan, Edgar D’Arcy McGreer, drafted a report on what the Japanese had referred to as the “North China Incident.” He noted that both sides were holding one another responsible, but felt deeply suspicious of the Japanese and left no doubt that he believed the Japanese had orchestrated the incident. As evidence for his position, McGreer highlighted the fact that while Japanese leaders were immediately accessible in Tokyo, Chinese military leaders such as Chiang Kai-shek, He Yingqin (Chinese War Minister), and Song Zheyuan (commander of the forces near the Marco Polo Bridge), were all away from their headquarters and unprepared to respond to the outbreak of renewed hostilities. The next day, the chargé d’affaires confirmed that the situation had escalated, and that a peaceful solution to the conflict had already become impossible.³²

A month after the Lugouqiao Incident, Canadian Prime Minister Mackenzie King recorded in his diary that despite the tragedy unfolding in China, the conflict was “not worth the lives of white men for ‘Business Interests’.³³ His ethical principles clearly did not extend to all complexions. From the very beginning of the conflict, it was clear to the prime minister that because Canada’s interests in China were limited, Canadians would not be inclined to participate

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³¹ The incident involved an exchange of fire between units of Chinese and Japanese armies both stationed in the vicinity of the Marco Polo Bridge, 15 kilometres southwest of Beijing. Unfolding on 7 July 1937, the incident is commonly used as the marker for the start of the Sino-Japanese War of 1937 to 1945.
³³ William L.M. King, Library and Archives Canada (LAC), Diaries, MG26-J13, 30 Aug 1937, 1. Gregory Johnson and John Meehan have also commented upon this phrase.
in a war “in which our national interests and freedom are not affected.”\textsuperscript{34} Despite this viewpoint, King made it evident from the onset that his personal sympathies lay with the Chinese, writing that “Japan has acted like a brutal aggressor – been very treacherous and cruel, so it seems. It is an effort to steal a country without any justification.”\textsuperscript{35}

While his advisors began to contemplate whether it would be desirable to prohibit the shipment of munitions to Japan and China, the prime minister was growing increasingly fearful of the influence of the League of Nations, an organization which he privately abhorred.\textsuperscript{36} He worried that the League would force Canada to impose trade sanctions on Japan and that this would inevitably lead to war. Never an advocate of such forms of what he called “modern diplomacy,” King also dreaded the debut of the Brussels Conference, a council representing the signatories of the Nine Power Treaty of 1922, which convened in Belgium in November 1937 to find means of conciliation between China and Japan.\textsuperscript{37} Fearing the dangers of such a conference, King wrote in October that he preferred the “old fashioned democracy of nations dealing quietly with one another.”\textsuperscript{38} In any case, with Japan refusing to attend, the conference resembled “Othello without Iago” and could achieve little.\textsuperscript{39}

Throughout these early months, Canadian diplomatic rhetoric followed closely that of the British and Americans. In fact, during the Brussels Conference, the prime minister advised the Canadian delegate Raoul Dandurand to simply follow the lead of its British and American

\textsuperscript{34} Meehan, \textit{The Dominion and the Rising Sun}, 153.
\textsuperscript{35} King, \textit{Diaries}, 26 Aug 1937, 1.
\textsuperscript{37} The Nine-Power Treaty was an agreement affirming the sovereignty and territorial integrity of China, but lacked any kind of enforcement apparatus.
\textsuperscript{38} King, \textit{Diaries}, 20 Oct 1937, 4.
allies.\textsuperscript{40} As Michael Fry has argued, the Brussels Conference concluded with “a call for an end to the hostilities and a resumption of peaceful processes, but there was to be neither coercion nor denunciation of Japan, and no aid to China.”\textsuperscript{41} In effect, the American and British delegates had confirmed Japan’s status as the civilized caretaker of East Asia, and with Canada happy to follow their lead, a carte blanche to effectively annex parts of China had seemingly been extended to Japan.

Canada’s unwillingness to take a stand against Japanese aggression, however, was beginning to raise objections from some groups at home. The League of Nations Society of Canada (LNSC) and the Canadian League for Peace and Democracy (CDLP), for instance, called for a national boycott of Japanese goods and a complete embargo on the export of arms and strategic materials to Japan.\textsuperscript{42} The outcry grew when the Canadian public learned that trade with Japan had actually increased in 1937, to an annual value of nearly $26 million from under $20 million the previous year.\textsuperscript{43} This was a development many saw as complicity with Japanese aggression. In the words of John Meehan, the “invasion of China had coincided with the largest increase in Canada’s trade surplus with Japan since 1924. By far the most significant increase was in the export of nonferrous metals suited to military use.”\textsuperscript{44} Reports indicated that in 1937, Canada had provided Japan with 100% of its nickel, 95% of its copper and 77% of its aluminum.\textsuperscript{45} In this context, a few officials, including Ian Mackenzie, Canada’s Minister of National Defense, told Prime Minister King that he had become “alarmed by the quantities of

\textsuperscript{40} Loring C. Christie, no. 841, \textit{DCER}, vol. 6: 1936-1939, 1032 (29 Oct 1937).
\textsuperscript{42} Meehan, \textit{The Dominion and the Rising Sun}, 157.
\textsuperscript{43} Ibid., 11.
\textsuperscript{44} Ibid., 158. Emphasis added.
\textsuperscript{45} Ibid., 158-159.
timber and mining rights that Japan was buying in British Columbia.” Loring Christie, a legal advisor to the Department of External Affairs, however, objected to the restriction of exports to Japan, a move which he said violated existing trade agreements.46

The profitability of this trade was well publicized. An article appearing on the front page of the *Globe and Mail* in April announced that new legislation was before Parliament which would provide the government with more power to curtail or prohibit the traffic in machinery and munitions of war with certain foreign countries. The article begins with a discussion of Canada’s “lucrative business” with countries including Japan, Germany and Italy;

During the past two years particularly, there has been a large and lucrative business done in Canada in the sale of important raw materials to the Orient and to countries on the continent of Europe. Nickel, copper, lead, aluminum bars and scrap iron have been exported in steadily growing quantities. Any stoppage in the movement of these commodities to Japan or Germany or Italy would obviously be a serious blow to their military preparations. Complete stoppage of such exports would be regarded as the imposition of economic sanctions … [which] are closely related to a declaration of hostilities, [and therefore] this Dominion would be extremely hesitant to make such an extreme move, except under some extraordinary circumstances…47

The article repeatedly stressed that Canada had “no present desire or intention to exercise the enlarged power ruthlessly” while admitting that a “considerable amount” of important war materials were reaching Germany, Italy and Japan – three countries in “feverish military preparation.” The article’s bold subtitle, “NO IMMEDIATE MOVE”, further emphasized the fact that Canada’s profitable trade relationship would not be compromised. In general, Canadian businesses were unperturbed by the notion that they were profiting from a distant conflict. Fairchild Aircraft of Longueil, for instance, “had inquired [to the Government] about the

possibility of selling bombers to Japan."48 Although new measures were imposed to modernize Canada’s trade apparatus such as an amendment in 1937 to the Customs Act which required permits be issued before trading war materials, this legislation had little impact on decision-making in the Canadian Parliament as permits were issued to both Japan and China later that year.49 Such evidence only seemed to validate accusations that Canadian resources had become a vital cog in Japan’s war machine. Even more immediate, as the Canadian Labour Herald claimed, these “shipments of death … [might fall] with murderous force upon our own roofs.”50 Partly because of such fears, several groups including the China Aid Council and the Vancouver Embargo Council “protested shipments bound for Japan and sought a million signatures for an embargo petition to Ottawa.”51 As Johnson describes, fines and arrests did not deter union members, clergy, and women’s groups from making clear their opposition to shipments of strategic metals to Japan. Despite disagreeing on the appropriate response, various Canadians groups rallied together to protest in late 1937 when a representative of the Japanese Sumitomo conglomerate visited Canada and “confirmed their purchase of $4 million worth of nickel, aluminum, chrome, and other metals.”52 In addition to overt dissent, ordinary Canadians were also beginning to offer the Chinese financial support though Canadian humanitarian agencies and Chinese patriotic groups. Even more alarming to Canadian officials sensitive to controversial press coverage in Japan were reports “of Canadians enlisting in the Chinese armed forces” – an embarrassing rumour later proven to be untrue by a national defence investigation.53

49 Meehan, The Dominion and the Rising Sun, 177.
50 Ibid., 174.
51 Ibid., 173.
52 Ibid., 175.
Despite the growing tide of opposition, and evidence of over 250,000 Chinese casualties by the end of 1937, both the Canadian press and mainstream public remained divided on the issue and were unwilling to explicitly support any action against Japan. At least in official rhetoric, the main reason for this hesitancy was the fear that unilateral action by a ‘minor power’ would be ineffective in halting Japan’s war effort, and would also cause significant damage to Canada’s economy. Officials like Norman Robertson at the Department of External Affairs argued that applying economic sanctions to the Japanese would injure Canada’s relations and trade with Japan “proportionately more” than those of the United States and Britain. Even more significant was the concern that applying trade sanctions to Japan would bring Canada into a war it did not want, and more importantly, one it could not win without massive military support from the United States. John Meehan argues that although these concerns severely hampered Mackenzie King’s ability to develop a strong response to Japanese aggression, Canada had an opportunity to take a leadership role in these matters and even influence the leaders in London and Washington. Instead, King’s preferred response was to do nothing until the United States or United Kingdom had first taken a stand. In Parliament, leader of the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation (CCF), James Woodsworth, worded a strong critique of the morality of such a stance, and argued that “Through its sale of war materials to Japan […] Canada was morally responsible for the death of Chinese civilians.”

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55 Meehan, The Dominion and the Rising Sun, 178. The Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) was a Canadian political party founded following the Great Depression by a number of left-wing, socialist-minded politicians. James S. Woodsworth was its leader from 1932-1942 but was never able to effectively challenge King’s Liberal government for control of the Canadian ‘left’. In 1961, it disbanded and was succeeded by the New Democratic Party (NDP).
Figure 1. In this editorial cartoon which appeared in the *Vancouver Sun*, Les Callan illustrates the profitable connection between Canadian industry and the Japanese “War Machine.” Entitled “Yes, There’s One Way He Could be Stopped,” the sketch suggests that trade sanctions could halt Japan’s invasion of China.  

Another clergyman from Hamilton argued that “Canada’s criticism of Japanese aggression was a hypocritical farce… [since] we are willing to forget it, if we can make money out of the Japanese.”  

In October 1937, the *Winnipeg Free Press* reported that Canada had “swung behind the Fascist powers” after its delegate – joined only by Switzerland and Poland – had abstained from condemning Japan’s actions and expressing moral support for China at the League of

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56 Les Callan, “Yes, There’s One Way He Could Be Stopped,” *Vancouver Sun*, 27 February 1933.  
57 Meehan, *The Dominion and the Rising Sun*, 175.
Nations’ Far East Advisory Committee.\(^{58}\) When pressed on its laissez-faire attitude, King chose to highlight the dangers of unilateral action and stressed that Canada was hardly the sole supplier of metals and arms to Japan. One of King’s many advisors counselled privately that the moral and humanitarian grounds for the embargo were the most difficult to counter as they had little to do with the effectiveness of a punitive campaign against the Japanese, and the prime minister therefore ought to “steer discussion towards economic and political aspects of the question.”\(^{59}\) Canada’s muted response later that year to reports of atrocities committed by Japanese troops during the occupation of Nanjing (Nanking) beginning on 13 December 1937 was equally troubling. Preliminary reports of the casualties in Nanjing surfaced in the West, and newspaper articles which reported on abhorrent killing contests allegedly carried out by Japanese soldiers were widely available.\(^{60}\) The cover story on the Toronto Star’s 2 February 1938 issue, for instance, bore the bold headline: “Japs Charged with Terrible Atrocities.” The article wrote in detail of the sadistic slaughter of Chinese civilians and captured soldiers which had claimed the lives of at least 20,000 people in Nanjing. It went on to describe numerous eyewitness accounts which reported the brutality with which women were raped and left for dead, men and children were bayoneted, and hundreds were shot en masse or herded into houses to be burned to death.\(^{61}\)

\(^{58}\) The Canadian Government later reversed its position, and thereby avoided criticism, by supporting the resolution by early October. Meehan suggests that Canadian officials only consented to the motion because it did not call for sanctions and only offered a vague pledge of support for China. See Meehan, “Steering Clear of Great Britain,” 265.

\(^{59}\) Meehan, The Dominion and the Rising Sun, 177.


\(^{61}\) “Japs Charged with Terrible Atrocities,” Toronto Star, Feb 2, 1938: 1-7. Research since then has confirmed such reports. Over the course of Japan’s six-week “Rape of Nanjing,” between 260,000 and 350,000 Chinese people lost their lives. Female rape victims have been estimated at between 20,000 and 80,000. See Iris Chang, The Rape of Nanking (Toronto: Penguin, 1997) 6, 100-103.
Despite such coverage in the Canadian press, official statements were lacking. Meehan states that “the atrocities at Nanking went virtually unnoticed in Ottawa.”

Throughout 1938 and 1939, the Canadian government continued to support the profitable trade with Japan despite questions about Japanese actions in China. King’s diaries, however, demonstrate that these years marked expanding diplomatic dialogue with China as well as growing fears of Japanese aggression in the Pacific. The prime minister wrote that he was deeply touched by a speech given in Toronto in 1938 by Dr. Hu Shi, China’s Ambassador to the United States. Hu described China as fighting a losing battle, courageously enduring sacrifices in the face of a merciless invader. In his conclusion, Hu compared the cowardice of Pontius Pilate to the inaction of the Allied nations standing aside and “washing their hands of [China’s] innocent blood.” Meanwhile, a heated debate was taking place in the House of Commons. On one side were individuals such as Robert Bruce who argued that Japan’s invasion of China was for “the purpose […] of bringing decent government to China” and that the occupation of Manchuria had prompted countless Chinese to flock there for protection. Others, including the former Prime Minister Richard Bennett, vehemently disagreed, arguing that thousands upon thousands of innocent civilians were being slaughtered due to Japanese aggression and that Canada should not be complicit with such actions. Soon it seemed that Bennett had not been exaggerating, as reports reached Canadian officials by the end of 1938 suggesting that at least two million Chinese had been killed since the outbreak of hostilities in July 1937. Yet, that same year, Canada’s export of strategic materials to Japan had substantially increased. Remarkably, in comparison to 1937, Canada had shipped to Japan nearly three times the annual combined

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63 King, *Diaries*, 12 March 1938, 1.
quantities of nickel, copper and aluminum – a total of over $11.5 million worth of these three metals alone.\textsuperscript{66} This amount again increased in 1939, to a total of nearly $16 million when supplies of lead are included.\textsuperscript{67}

\textbf{Table 1. Canadian Metals Exports to Japan, 1934-1939}\textsuperscript{68}

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In June 1939, Canada’s major exporters of war materials to Japan and Germany were asked to provide the government with data on current contracts and future commitments. The survey’s findings indicated that The Asbestos Corporation, the Hudson Bay Mining and Smelting Company, the Consolidated Mining and Smelting Company of Canada, the Granby Consolidated Mining, Smelting and Power Company, the Aluminum Company of Canada, and the International Nickel Company of Canada, “all reported healthy orders from Japan, the anticipation of even greater sales in the future, and the expectation that it would be business as usual, without government interference.” As Michael Fry suggests, such statements were consciously suggesting “that [Canada] should provide Japan with some of the essential sinews of

\textsuperscript{66} These metals were vital elements in the production of aircrafts, ships, military vehicles, shell casings, explosives, rifles and rifle rounds.

\textsuperscript{67} Meehan, \textit{The Dominion and the Rising Sun}, 159.

\textsuperscript{68} Figures are rounded to nearest $1,000 and do not include indirect shipments. Table is based on data found in Meehan, \textit{Dominion and the Rising Sun}, 159.
war, rather than seek to restrain Japan or develop a form of deterrent based on economic factors.”

Access to Canadian materials supported the Japanese military forces in making great strides in its occupation of China. By the beginning of 1939 the Japanese had occupied more than 1.5 million square kilometres of Chinese territory, at the cost of untold numbers of lives. In a controversial outburst in Parliament, Angus MacInnis, Member of Parliament for Vancouver East, argued that no obstacles had been put in the way of Japan because British leadership believed “the people [in China] were proper material for exploitation by predators.” Further impeding any British response, he continued, was the fact that Britain’s own behaviour in India meant that interference in China could easily lead to an accusation of hypocrisy from Japan. MacInnis decried the fact that in Canada, “There is not a word about the lives of the men, women, and babies who were being torn asunder, blown to bits by the war machine of Japan, fed in part by materials from Canada at a handsome profit.” Although his diaries indicate that Mackenzie King viewed Japan as a brutal aggressor, Canada continued to provide Japan with materials that fuelled its army’s capacity to wage war. MacInnis urged Canada’s leadership to develop a policy independent of that of the United Kingdom, and declared that this should include an immediate embargo of shipments to aggressor nations. At the official level, however, opinion remained steadfast in its opposition to an embargo of Japan.

This inaction – what may even be considered tacit support for the Japanese war effort – is particularly striking in light of the findings made by Gregory Johnson in his analysis of King’s diaries from 1939. For instance, he describes an entry from September 1939 where King

69 Fry, 38.
70 Johnson, 271.
exclaims “There are [Japanese] raiders and submarines on both the Atlantic and the Pacific coasts, and pocket cruisers. I have no doubt that we shall have some bombing of our coast and possibly some inland bombing as well.” 72 As Johnson suggests, by 1939 “there was a genuine held belief that a Japanese attack on Canada, however limited, was a possibility.” 73 Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs, Oscar Skelton, captured the general sense among Canadian officials when he cautioned in August 1939: “Clearly any [Japanese] attack will be on a minor scale, but that minor scale may be greater than our shore and off-shore defences can meet.” 74 King’s diaries indicate that he was so concerned by the dangers posed by Japan’s powerful navy that he secured cabinet approval on 11 January 1938 for two additional destroyers for the west coast. 75 Yet this knowledge did little to limit the lucrative trade in strategic materials exported from Canada to Japan, despite the fact that it was then considered likely that Japan would enter into an alliance with Italy and Germany. Having privately written of his fears of Japan as early as January 1938, by the following year King began to suspect the Japanese had entered into a clandestine alliance with Germany and Italy. In late January 1939, in response to reports that Japan had ignored overtures from Italy and Germany to form an alliance, King told a visitor that he did not trust Japan. “I think there is some subterfuge here. I am sure all three have had an understanding from the beginning,” the prime minister said. 76 His fears were apparently justified. By November 1936, the Germans and Japanese had already signed an Anti-Comintern Pact, which formally recognized their military cooperation. 77 The Italians joined the agreement

72 Johnson, 270.
73 It was considered likely enough that Canada’s Chief of the General Staff, General Thomas V. Anderson, drafted a memorandum projecting “scales of attack” by Japan. Johnson, 276.
74 Johnson, 281.
75 King, Diaries, 11 Jan 1938, 2.
76 Johnson, 270.
77 See “German-Japanese Agreement and Supplementary Protocol, Signed at Berlin, November 25, 1936” online at The Avalon Project run by the Yale Law School <http://avalon.law.yale.edu/wwii/tri1.asp>.
the following year, in November 1937. Despite his fears, which in retrospect appear to be well-founded, King continued to oppose calls for an embargo on Japan, justifying this stance by repeatedly stressing Canada’s strict commitment to ‘neutrality’. Yet, as James Woodsworth contended in parliament in May 1938, neutrality was clearly a fiction when one observed the close personal ties between Canada’s prime minister and representatives from Tokyo. In fact, Woodsworth added, Baron Tomii Shu, Japan’s Minister in Ottawa, had recently “applauded King’s position in public.”78

Tensions rose the following year as concern grew for Canadian nationals still on Chinese soil. A report from Keenleyside in Tokyo in April 1940 reported that at least four Canadian missionaries had been killed as a result of recent Japanese military actions in China, while over twenty aerial bombings of Canadian establishments had been reported.79 Causing further strain on relations was Japan’s accidental bombing in September 1940 of the Canadian Pacific liner, the Empress of Asia, which had been sailing just off the coast of Japan. Four crew members were injured when Japanese training planes dropped bombs upon the vessel. Fortunately, damage to the ship was negligible and it continued on to Vancouver.80 In an internal memo to the prime minister, Skelton suggested that “we will have some bright CCF man saying that this bomb was made out of Canadian copper or nickel.”81 The accident caused Canadian policymakers to begin to reconsider the relationship with Japan. In addition to worries about the safety of Canadians overseas, several other factors contributed to Ottawa’s firmer stance vis-à-vis Japan, such as breakthroughs in Allied intelligence. American cryptologists, for instance, had begun to decipher

78 Meehan, The Dominion and the Rising Sun, 179.
80 The vessel was later attacked and sunk by Japanese dive bombers in February 1942. Meehan, The Dominion and the Rising Sun, 188.
Japan’s “Purple” code\(^\text{82}\) which revealed that Japanese espionage on the West Coast was considerable.\(^\text{83}\) Several historians, including Graeme Stewart Mount, have suggested that by 1939 the Japanese consulate in Vancouver was spying on British Columbia, and that “the Canadian government had at least some knowledge of this.”\(^\text{84}\) How much Mackenzie King knew about Japanese spy networks in Canada is hard to discern, yet merely knowing they existed must have contributed to the prime minister’s suspicion of Japan.

Beginning in the summer of 1939, as Britain and the United States began to exert progressively tighter economic constraints on Japan, Canada had few policy options but to march in step with its allies. The Americans cancelled the United States-Japan Commercial Treaty in 1939, meaning that Japan’s exports lost ‘most favoured nation’ status in the United States and would therefore be subject to much higher tariffs.\(^\text{85}\) While Mackenzie King realized that Canada’s well-being was premised on toeing the Anglo-American line, he sought to temper any sanctions with safeguards which would avoid overly antagonizing the Japanese and minimize the negative impacts on Canada’s economy. Canada opted to implement a gradual embargo of specific exports to Japan – a compromise policy which would theoretically shield Canada from provoking retaliation from Japan. As a result, strategic material exports to Japan were progressively terminated: shipments of scrap-iron and steel in October 1939, zinc and nickel in February 1940, aluminum in April, cobalt in August, and finally, copper exports were halted in October 1940. The contract with the Granby Consolidated Mining and Smelting Company, for

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\(^{82}\) Purple was the name given to the primary cypher used by the Japanese Foreign Office to encrypt diplomatic messages. Referred to as “Magic”, the intelligence garnered from Purple traffic was diplomatic, and not military in nature and therefore was of no use warning the Americans about the Pearl Harbor attack. The more secure code used by the Imperial Japanese Navy for military matters, codenamed “JN-25”, was only broken by late May 1942, helping to provide the vital forewarning which contributed to the U.S. victory at the Battle of Midway in June.

\(^{83}\) Meehan, *The Dominion and the Rising Sun*, 185.

\(^{84}\) Graeme Stewart Mount, *Canada’s Enemies: Spies and Spying in the Peaceable Kingdom* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 1993) 89.

\(^{85}\) Fry, 39.
instance, under which Japanese buyers had purchased the entire output of the firm’s copper mines, was cancelled in October. Following these steps, exports to Japan fell significantly from the fall of 1939. By 1940, they had dropped to less than one-half of the previous year’s total, while strategic metal exports had decreased to less than one-third the values of 1939.

In an internal memorandum from 17 June 1941, Escott Reid of External Affairs recommended that Canada should consent to the continued invitations from China for the establishment of a Canadian diplomatic presence in Chongqing (Chungking). Reid argued that “next to Great Britain and the United States, China is the most effective ally which we have in the war,” and that an official Canadian presence in China would significantly strengthen China’s morale. Although similar discussions were being held regarding the now-vacant post in Tokyo, the appointment to Japan was postponed in August amidst allegations from the Japanese that a Canadian friar residing in Japan had committed sexual assault and conducted espionage. Ultimately, Canada refused to appoint a replacement for Robert Bruce who had left the Japanese legation in the fall of 1938. In Canada, the government justified its position using the unconvincing line “that all Canadians of sufficient standing and ability were required at home.” In this context, as poorly veiled excuses were offered to the Japanese, the push towards appointing an official diplomatic representative in China took on added significance and marked a critical turning point in Canada’s wartime relationship with the nations of East Asia. By the end of July 1941, Japan had made a push southward and occupied southern Indochina, prompting

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86 Ibid., 40.
87 Meehan, *The Dominion and the Rising Sun*, 159.
88 Escott Reid, no. 130, *DCER*, vol. 7: 1939-1941, 89 (17 June 1941).
89 Vincent Massey, no. 149, *DCER*, vol. 7: 1939-1941, 100 (5 Aug 1941).
90 Fry, 41.
the United States, Britain and Canada to freeze Japanese assets in their respective countries and to suspend all commercial relations with Japan.

A few days after the announcement to sever friendly ties with Japan, Japanese Minister to Canada Seijiro Yoshizawa visited Mackenzie King and expressed his keen disappointment in Canadian actions, complaining that they were “altogether out of proportion to any step Japan had taken.” On this occasion, King stood his ground, replying that Canada was independently obligated “to assist China against what was clearly an act of aggression on the part of Japan” and that any response was in direct correlation to the mounting violence displayed by Japan in the Far East.  

In September 1941, initial discussions took place between Canada and Britain regarding Canadian contribution to the defense of Hong Kong. Meanwhile, King had become increasingly anxious about the outcome of the war as Chinese officials declared that China’s resistance would soon falter if aid was not forthcoming. Similarly pessimistic appraisals were frequently offered to American officials as well. According to Jay Taylor, a recent biographer of Chiang Kai-shek, such declarations implied that without immediate assistance China would have no choice but to make peace with Japan and were designed to pressure the allies into providing military assistance. As Taylor suggests, “Chiang, feeling he had no other leverage, was again employing the tactic of threatened collapse.”

This threat certainly had an impact on Mackenzie King, whose diaries describe a man tormented by the prospect of losing China, believing that with the fall of this first ‘domino’, Russia would soon follow, leading to a victory for Hitler and the Axis. By the summer of 1941, Chiang’s armies had thirty-six Japanese divisions tied down in

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91 King, Diaries, 26 July 1941, 1-2.
China, which equated to about 1.3 million men and nearly 67 percent of the Japanese Army.\textsuperscript{93}

Considering the impact that these soldiers could have if released from China, King remarked that “the world has never felt anything quite so terrible in the course of its existence.”\textsuperscript{94}

Around 3:30pm on 7 December 1941, the prime minister was informed of a rumour about a Japanese attack on Hawaii. His immediate reaction was relief that this attack had been made against the United States and not the United Kingdom. An hour later, the rumour was confirmed and King quickly summoned his entire cabinet for an emergency meeting. The following day, Canada officially declared war on Japan, as reports began flooding in of Japan’s attack on Hong Kong, where nearly two thousand soldiers from the Winnipeg Grenadiers and Royal Rifles of Canada had been stationed. By Christmas Day, the Canadian force had been completely overrun, and every one of its soldiers had been killed or become a prisoner of war.\textsuperscript{95}

\textsuperscript{93} After the attack on Pearl Harbor, Tokyo transferred nine divisions from China to new fronts in the Pacific, leaving about a million soldiers and airmen in China. Taylor, 189.

\textsuperscript{94} King, Diaries, 6 Nov 1941, 3.

\textsuperscript{95} Of the initial force of 1,975 men defending Hong Kong, 550 never returned to Canada. Those who survived were forced to endure four years of captivity in prisoner-of-war and Japanese work camps. See Canada Remembers Hong Kong at Veterans Affairs Canada.
CHAPTER 4: The Rise and Fall of the Sino-Canadian Partnership (1941-1948)

By the end of 1941, China’s Anti-Japanese War had merged with the broader conflict known as the Second World War, and completely changed the way the Allies responded to China’s plight. In the words of Jonathan Spence, “China was now treated – on paper at least – as a ‘great power’ by the Western Allies, and given military advice, massive loans, and such equipment and aviation fuel as could be flown over the mountains from India.” However, many observers then overlooked and still forget today that China had already been fighting Japan on its own since 1931, and had been in desperate need of assistance for years while the Allies had instead clung to their trade relationships with Japan. In the case of Canada, a commercial partnership had, in essence, supported Japan’s invasion of China. In a speech delivered at the Empire Club in 1941, Reverend James Endicott reminded his audience that the battle of Dunkirk had highlighted some of the best qualities of the British people. However, he argued, the Chinese people had been through “a whole series of Dunkirks” and each time had risen to the formidable challenge. Though estimates vary, from 1937 to 1941 between two and three million Chinese soldiers had lost their lives resisting the Japanese, and millions of civilians had perished as a result of the war.

From early in the Sino-Japanese conflict, Chinese-Canadian communities from around the country had been organizing fundraising efforts to aid their countrymen, and these were well publicized in newspapers across the nation. For instance, the Globe and Mail praised the

97 James G. Endicott (1898–1993) was a pastor, Christian missionary and outspoken socialist. Born in China into a Canadian missionary family, he initially was a supporter of Chiang Kai-shek’s government before becoming disillusioned with what he saw as the Guomindang’s corruption and dictatorial nature. Thereafter, he would become an outspoken supporter of the Chinese Communist Party, earning him harsh criticism back home in Canada.
98 James Endicott, “China, the Democratic Front in the Far East” (speech, The Empire Club of Canada, 13 Nov 1941).
99 Spence, Modern China, 460.
independent efforts of George Cook, owner of Waldorf Restaurant on Merrick Street, who had personally canvassed the homes of the three hundred Chinese residents in Hamilton for donations towards a Red Cross campaign for China relief. These residents “give 25 cents, 50 cents, or a dollar, or whatever they can afford,” Cook told a reporter in 1940. Fundraising efforts, however, were not limited to ethnic Chinese communities. Calls for Chinese relief were made from coast to coast, and began seeing significant success with the formation of the Chinese War Relief Fund (CWRF) in September 1941. By the summer of 1942, a supervisory committee headed by Victor Odlum, then the High Commissioner to Australia, had been organized and convened in Chongqing to oversee the joint disbursement of funds from both the Canadian Red Cross and the Chinese War Relief Fund. Though the funds continued to be collected and administered independently, the new committee allowed the distribution of funds in China to be better coordinated, in response to shifting needs. For instance, of the donations received in 1943 by the Canadian Red Cross, a large proportion of funds were allocated to famine relief in the province of Hunan. Throughout the war, funds would be contributed towards varying causes including food, clothing, medical supplies, child welfare, nursing education, and the rehabilitation of soldiers. Many Canadians were particularly interested in funds being allocated without regard to the political affiliation; that is, to be distributed across both Nationalist (Guomindang) and Communist-controlled regions. Another popular sentiment was that some

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100 “Chinese Helping Britain in Every Possible Manner,” *Hamilton Spectator*, 19 Dec 1940.
101 Between 1942 and 1943, the province of Hunan experienced a devastating famine that is estimated to have caused the deaths of two to three million people. See R.J. Rummel, *Death by Government* (New Brunswick: Transaction, 2009) 134.
funds be specifically earmarked for the International Peace Hospitals founded in Northwest China by Dr. Norman Bethune.102

Between 1942 and 1945, Canadian newspapers carried frequent updates of progress towards fundraising targets and even listed in detail the contributions made by local residents and businesses. Publishing the CWRF’s appeal in January 1943 to raise $500,000, Toronto’s Globe and Mail called upon the men and women of Canada to contribute sums toward the “crying need of stricken China.”103 Canadian readers were repeatedly informed that even small donations were extremely helpful. As one article detailed: “$20 will keep a Chinese refugee alive for one year, $5 will disinfect 500 Chinese wounds, $1 will provide treatment for 1,000 burns.”104 Though it remains impossible to provide a precise dollar value of the total contributions made by Canadians towards China relief, fundraising efforts for the Chinese seem to have been quite successful. Archival records indicate that by 1945, Canadian fundraising by the Chinese War Relief Fund had provided China with $4,331,383.11 worth of goods that year alone. Not all relief was monetary, however. Of this total, $2,929,316 was composed of used clothing – over 1.4 million pounds of clothing valued by Canadian officials at two dollars per pound.105 In addition to gifts from larger relief organizations such as the Red Cross and the CWRF, there were countless smaller gifts made by a wide variety of organizations, including a broad collection of Canadian churches such as the Presbyterian Church in Canada and the United Church of Canada.

102 Geo. S. Patterson to King, in LAC, King Papers, microfilm C-7054, vol. 368, 318879 (21 Mar 1944). Norman Bethune remains, to this day, one of the few near-universally recognized Canadian names in China. He was an innovative physician and devoted Communist who travelled to China in 1938 to aid Mao Zedong and the Red Army in Shaanxi province during their struggle against the Japanese. In November 1939, he died of blood poisoning from a cut received performing surgery while with the Eighth Route Army in Hebei. Shortly after his death, he would be immortalized by Mao Zedong in his essay “In Memory of Norman Bethune,” a text that would become required reading in China’s elementary schools during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976).

103 “Appeal Made for Canadians to Aid Chinese,” Globe and Mail, 30 Jan 1943.


Canadian officials estimated that these smaller organizations had together raised approximately $70,000 for China in 1945.\textsuperscript{106} Even more difficult to trace are contributions made from organizations such as the various regional Chinese Patriotic Federations scattered around the country which sent funds directly to Chiang Kai-shek.\textsuperscript{107}

**Table 2. Canadian Fundraising Efforts for China\textsuperscript{108}
Approximate Value of Goods Shipped (CAN$)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>RED CROSS</th>
<th>CHINESE WAR RELIEF FUND</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1942</td>
<td>112,000.00</td>
<td>119,546.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1943</td>
<td>816,916.00</td>
<td>677,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1944</td>
<td>550,000.00</td>
<td>455,713.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1945</td>
<td>1,250,000.00</td>
<td>4,331,383.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,728,916.00</strong></td>
<td><strong>5,583,642.71</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the picture that remains today, however, it is clear that the Canadian public was generous in its private contributions towards the Chinese cause, and if the substantial press coverage is any indication, there was a heartfelt sympathy for the Chinese among ordinary Canadians. This exemplary record stands tall even without the acknowledgement of the heroic contributions of individual Canadians like Norman Bethune who risked their own lives by volunteering their services in China during the war. These altruistic efforts take on special significance when juxtaposed with the official policies of the King government, whose motivations for eventually aiding Chiang Kai-shek’s Nationalist regime would be better characterized as self-interested. Though free of many of the same constraints facing the Canadian

\textsuperscript{106}“Canadian Relief Activities in China,” in LAC, Chinese War Relief Fund – 1945, RG44, vol. 37 (7 Jan 1945).
\textsuperscript{107}Though not discussed in detail, archival documents indicate that the Chinese Patriotic Federation of Eastern Canada contributed the equivalent of £10,000 to Chiang Kai-shek in 1945.
\textsuperscript{108}Sadly, data for the Red Cross is available only from 1942 forward despite indications that grants had been made from early on in the conflict. For the Red Cross, see Odlum to King, “Canadian Red Cross in China,” in LAC, King Papers, microfilm C-7054, vol. 368, 318840-47 (31 Jan 1944). For the CWRF, see D.H. Clark to P.L. Browne in LAC, RG44, vol. 55, Chinese War Relief Fund: Purchasing - File 403 (16 Mar 1946).
government in allocating aid to China, Canada as a nation does in this respect at least, live up to its reputation as a “responsible middle power.”

The year 1942 marked a turning point in Canada’s diplomatic relations with China. In many ways, the actions of the Japanese at Pearl Harbor and Hong Kong had simplified Canada’s diplomatic dilemma. Canada could now focus its Pacific efforts solely on China. Unfortunately, Canada’s ambivalent response to Japanese aggression since 1937 had damaged Canadian prestige in China. It would be the hope of dissipating these ill-effects that would primarily guide Canada’s policy in East Asia during the next several years. Towards this aim and with an eye to the attractive postwar trade opportunities with China, Canadian officials began discussing the idea of generating “goodwill” in China. In Kim Nossal’s description of Canada’s attitude, “If goodwill was to spur trade, aid was to spur goodwill.” This attitude would guide policymakers as Canada began to pursue its limited and self-serving involvement in China’s war against Japan in 1942.

In the early months of 1942, a growing concern among the Allies was that the Burma Road – the major route by which supplies were brought into China – could be threatened by Japan. In February, Canadian General Andrew McNaughton met with the prime minister and explained that the Burma Road was one of the three decisive areas in the World War. With the Chinese coast cut off by the Japanese occupation, the Burma Road, he argued, “was the only means of keeping supplies going to China. If those supplies were stopped, China might drop out of the picture, which would be very serious indeed.” Later in February, King was introduced to the new Chinese Minister to Canada, Dr. Liu Shishun. Upon shaking hands with Liu, King

\[109\] Nossal, “Business as Usual,” 137.
\[110\] King, Diaries, 11 Feb 1942, 6.
expressed Canada’s deep admiration for China’s heroic struggle, while Liu thanked the prime minister for the “help given by Canada.”

At a banquet held in honour of his appointment at the Royal York Hotel in March, Liu emphasized his pride in coming to Canada at a time when the two countries had joined hands in their common struggle against Japan. Reminding his audience that Canada was the first country to declare war on Japan after Pearl Harbor, Liu suggested that:

“This fact is always remembered by the Chinese people, because it shows that, of all the Allies who are now fighting with China against our common enemy, Canada was the first to rally to our side. Even before Canada became China’s ally, she extended effective assistance to China in various ways. An instance of such assistance was the freezing of Japanese and Chinese assets in Canada. This step was a most important one, inasmuch as it constituted an effective economic sanction against Japan.”

Liu Shishun was a distinguished scholar, diplomat, and author, whose impressive credentials and selection as official liaison between Canada and China indicated the importance that Chiang Kai-shek placed on improving relations with Canada. Following his appointment as envoy to Canada in 1942, Liu assumed a prominent position in raising awareness of China’s plight. Speaking regularly around the country in the years that followed, Liu made efforts to generate sympathy for the Chinese predicated on reassuring Canadians that Chiang Kai-shek was a leader committed to the modern democratic values so highly valued in the West.

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111 Ibid., 18 Feb 1942, 2.
113 A native of Hunan province, Liu graduated from Tsinghua University, Beijing, in 1920. Following his graduation, he was sent by the Chinese Government to pursue higher studies in North America – receiving a B.A. from Johns Hopkins in 1921, an M.A. from Harvard in 1923, the Ph.D. from Columbia in 1925, and an LL.D. from the University of British Columbia in 1944.
114 Considering their mismatched records, it is no doubt revealing of each leader’s priorities to compare the selections of Liu by Chiang Kai-shek, and Odlum by Mackenzie King.
Throughout this period, King continued to be deeply worried by the threat of Japan to world peace, and commented privately that Japan might be audacious enough to attempt cutting off Canadian supply routes or even to attack the West Coast. A few days after meeting Liu, the prime minister received a visit from Song Ziwen (T.V. Soong), China’s Minister of Foreign Affairs and unofficial liaison between Chiang Kai-shek and the West, who reminded King that China was in a desperate situation. Song declared to King that terrible mistakes committed by the British and Americans had hampered the war effort in China, and that British prestige in his country was at an all-time low. He described how an over-confident British leadership had refused help from Chinese troops in South-East Asia, and had even seized American military material destined for Chinese use. Song then relayed an interesting story from Chiang Kai-shek, who had been extremely frustrated by British disregard for Chinese intelligence, which in one

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116 “China’s Minister to Canada Gets Royal Welcome from Countrymen,” *Globe and Mail*, 21 March 1942.
instance had even caused the British to lose two battleships, the *HMS Prince of Wales* and the *HMS Repulse*, to Japanese attack off the east coast of Malaya.\footnote{According to Song, Chiang had intercepted a secret communiqué from reconnaissance planes to Tokyo that reported two undefended British battleships had been spotted. Immediately reporting this to British sources in the Orient, Chiang was rudely told that “this could hardly be correct.” Renewed attempts to warn the British were made later that day when further communiqués were intercepted by the Chinese, who again received a curt reply. A few hours later, it was reported that both ships had been sunk. See William L.M. King, *Diaries*, 28 Feb 1942.} Before parting ways, the Chinese Foreign Minister described his country’s great appreciation of Canada’s promised assistance with munitions.\footnote{King, *Diaries*, 28 Feb 1942, 3.}

Despite General McNaughton’s warning the previous month, a renewed Japanese offensive in March 1942 drove British and Chinese forces out of Burma in a steady retreat towards India, allowing the Japanese to capture Rangoon in March. By the end of April, the strategically important Burma Road had been severed, and would remain closed until early 1945. As a result, further supplies transported to the Chinese faced unprecedented logistical constraints. The only remaining supply route was “the Hump” – a strategic air-lift of unparalleled scale from the Assam airfields in northeastern India across the towering 20,000-foot Himalayas to Kunming in southwestern China. As one American Air Force account described, “The five-hour, 1,130 kilometer route was considered suicide by the pilots, with freak winds, monsoons, unpredictable turbulence, and the most treacherous landscape on earth.”\footnote{“Adventures of a Flying Tiger,” *The Standard* (Hong Kong), 19 August 2006.} Not only was the route incredibly dangerous, but it severely limited the type and amount of supplies that could be transported into China.\footnote{The air route was often referred to as the “Aluminium Trail” (or the “Skyway to Hell”) because of the litter of crashed aircraft that marked its path through the mountains.} The Hump was managed and flown by the United States Air Transport Command, which strove to reach a monthly delivery target of 10,000 tons of munitions, the great majority of which were reserved for the American *Flying Tigers* under the leadership of Major-General
Claire Chennault. To illustrate, this target of 10,000 tons was first reached in September 1944, and of this total, only 500 tons (20%) was reserved for supplies to Chinese armies.\footnote{Robert B. Bryce, 	extit{Canada and the Cost of World War II: the International Operations of Canada’s Department of Finance 1939-1947}, ed. Matthew J. Bellamy (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2005) 158.}

On 15 April 1942, at a meeting of the Pacific War Council in Washington, Mackenzie King explained that despite Japan’s entry into the war, Canada’s planning for the war remained largely unchanged.\footnote{Many of the pages in King’s extensive entry for this day are unreadable, making it very difficult to decipher the proceedings of the council.} All decisions were generally made in consultation with London, and the British Isles were considered the foremost priority for the Empire. This was another clear reminder that Canada was uninterested in providing China with military personnel. Despite the obvious emphasis on Europe, King pointed out that Canada was very anxious to assist wherever possible with munitions supplied to “strategic theatres of war.” In May, Owen Lattimore, an American advisor to Chiang Kai-shek, spoke to King after addressing the Canadian Club, reassuring the prime minister that “the Chinese would hold off all right” but strongly recommended that the Allies provide China with some airplanes that they could operate behind Japanese lines. He also mentioned that the new generation of Chinese were very proud to fight shoulder-to-shoulder with foreigners, in contrast to previous generations.\footnote{King, 	extit{Diaries}, 7 May 1942, 3-9.} In a private memorandum to the prime minister in July 1942, Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs, Norman Robertson, wrote that Chinese officials had indicated that though they understood the difficulties involved, they sincerely hoped Canada would soon open a legation in Chongqing, as this would “be a new encouragement to the Chinese people at this critical time” and serve to confirm Canada’s alliance with China.\footnote{Norman A. Robertson, no. 10, 	extit{DCER}, vol. 9: 1942-1943, 7 (28 July 1942).}
During the next several months, King’s discussions with various political figures convinced him that China’s impression of the United States had significantly improved since it began providing China with financial aid in 1941.\textsuperscript{125} In contrast, anti-British feeling in China had intensified. Canada’s Minister of Mines and Resources, Thomas Crerar, stated in September 1942 that Canada’s standing was similarly weak, due in part to the Chinese Exclusion Act. He was convinced that the continued application of this act was viewed in China as a formal “badge of inferiority” and that Canada’s failure to appoint a Minister to China had caused further offense to Chinese sensibilities.\textsuperscript{126} Crerar suggested that the act be immediately removed from Canadian statute books, and that if Canada could provide an Air Force Squadron to help China, it would dramatically affect Canadian standing in the “Far East.” His note to the prime minister provides one of the first clear hints of Canada’s motivations for helping China. In this private message, he wrote that in the post-war epoch China would undergo rapid development and in this context, “it will be worth much to Canada to have goodwill in that country.”\textsuperscript{127} For this reason, he suggested that we “should endeavour to put ourselves in at least as good a position as the United States to share in that trade and development.”\textsuperscript{128} King replied promptly to Crerar, drafting a response the following day in which he stated that he was wholly sympathetic to the repeal of the Exclusion Act, and in fact, had already attempted to do away with it some years earlier. With regard to sending an air force unit, King explained that the allocation of fighting forces was not a matter to


\textsuperscript{127} “Goodwill” was a term frequently used between Canadian officials to represent the notion that China would “return the favour,” so to speak, in the post-war period by establishing preferential trade relations with Canada.

be decided upon by individual nations – implying that Canada’s contribution would be
determined by Britain and the United States.129

By the end of 1942, China had gained a position, at least in official discussion, equal to
Britain, the United States, and the Soviet Union, as one of the “Big Four” wartime allies and
debate continued regarding the appointment of a Canadian diplomatic representative to China.130
King was convinced that Victor Odlum would be the best choice for the post, and approached
him with an invitation in October 1942. A decorated Brigade Commander from the First World
War, Odlum’s political connections cultivated during the interwar years enabled him to take
command of the 2nd Canadian Infantry Division in 1940. Thus, as Jack Granatstein has written,
“Victor Odlum, in his sixtieth year and fifteen years removed even from militia experience, was
a major-general and a division commander.” This appointment, however, was viewed by other
Canadian generals as politically orchestrated and during training exercises it quickly became
apparent that Odlum was “too old” and unable to adapt to modern warfare.131 Canadian Corps
Commander Andrew McNaughton agreed, writing to Canada’s Chief of the General Staff that
Odlum should be removed from active command. Attempting to “relieve a difficult situation,”
the Canadian prime minister eventually suggested that Odlum be made High Commissioner to
Australia – a post, where it was believed, he could do little damage. During his time in Canberra
from 1941 to 1942, however, Odlum’s poor judgement repeatedly caused his government
embarrassment.132

130 This was sometimes referred to as the “Big Three” (United States, Britain and China) as suspicion mounted
regarding the Soviet Union.
131 J.L Granatstein, The Generals: The Canadian Army’s Senior Commanders in the Second World War (Calgary:
132 Ibid., 39.
Perhaps to finally relieve Chinese pressure to appoint a Canadian diplomatic representative, by October 1942, King had decided to offer the position to Odlum. Although Odlum was initially disappointed because he had hoped to be appointed minister to the Soviet Union, he was eventually won over by King’s proposal. The prime minister told Odlum that he was someone toward whom the Chinese would feel sympathetic and he had the qualities necessary to establish a strong friendship between Canada and China. An important part of his task would be to justify why “nothing could be offered from Canada in the way of divisions or squadrons or navy,” but also to study the opportunities for trade in post-war China. Later that month, in a revealing testimony, Norman Robertson drafted a memorandum to King explaining that Canada was the only country which was systematically refusing entry to Chinese migrants. This was having such a profound effect on the Chinese that their Ambassador to the United States, Hu Shi, had recently requested that a conference on Pacific affairs not be held in Canada. In what was representative of the feelings of Canadian policymakers, Robertson’s concern for the Chinese was not the product of humanitarian principles, but rather for the economic benefits this could bring Canada. He suggested that the solution was to find a way to repeal the Exclusion Act in a manner which would continue nonetheless to “maintain the barrier against Chinese immigration to Canada.” Declassified documents such as these memos from Robertson do little to explain why Mackenzie King, whose personal diaries seemingly reveal a genuine sympathy for the Chinese, did not propose any plans to help them in a less self-serving fashion.

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135 Ibid.
By early February 1943, the Canadian government announced plans for Canada’s own ‘Lend-Lease’ program which would henceforth supervise all Allied purchases in Canada. Chaired by C.D. Howe, the Mutual Aid Board finally allowed Chiang Kai-shek’s armies to begin receiving Canadian material aid. Archival records at our disposal, however, suggest that unofficial promises of assistance from Canadian representatives had been extended to the Chinese at least as early as February 1942, when China’s Minister of Foreign Affairs, Song Ziwen, and a Chinese delegation toured the John Inglis Company ordnance plant in Toronto (see Figure 3 and Figure 4). The Chinese showed particular interest in the ‘Bren gun’ – a lightweight quick-firing machine gun which had proven itself to be robust, reliable, and accurate.136

136 Chris Bishop, ed., The Encyclopaedia of Weapons of World War II (New York: Metrobooks, 2002) 243. As one Canadian infantryman wrote after the war: “There is nothing more discouraging than to attack in the face of a Bren gun.” Charles D. Kipp, Because We Are Canadians: A Battlefield Memoir (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2005) 75.

137 “Visit of Chinese Officials to John Inglis Co. Ltd.” TA, Alexandra Studio, fonds 1257, series 1057, item 2174 (27 Feb 1942).
Since March 1938, when it had won a contract to supply the British Commonwealth with Bren machine guns, the John Inglis Company had been busy expanding its military production facilities on Strachan Avenue in Toronto. With government financing, Inglis’ Ordnance Division was enlarged to 1,000,000 square feet and equipped with new machinery at a capital cost of $25 million, making it the single largest producer of machine guns in the Commonwealth. At its peak, it was producing 10,000 Brens a month. By war’s end, some 186,000 Bren guns had been produced at Inglis and were eventually shipped to over fifty destinations around the

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139 Jack L. Granatstein, *Arming the Nation: Canada’s Industrial War Effort 1939-1945* (Ottawa: Canadian Council of Chief Executives, 27 May 2005). The contract had not technically been ‘won’ as the Canadian Government never invited competing firms to offer bids for the contract. Such improprieties, as well as the particularly lucrative incentives offered to Inglis owners (profit was set at the unusually high rate of 10% above cost) eventually led to a full-fledged scandal when a sensational article was published in Maclean’s magazine entitled “Canada’s Armament Mystery.” For a description of the scandal and a history of Inglis during the Second World War, see David Sobel and Susan Meurer, *Working at Inglis: The Life and Death of a Canadian Factory* (Toronto: James Lorimer & Co., 1994) 37-77.
world.\textsuperscript{140} The facility in Toronto was frequently visited by politicians, soldiers, and celebrities, and throughout the war the factory served the media as an important source of morale-boosting propaganda. During his visit to the plant in January 1943, Liu Shishun praised Canadian industry and the Inglis workers – highlighting the important contribution of Canadian women. Quoted in the \textit{Globe and Mail}, Liu described his deep admiration for Canada’s ability to build up its war production capacity from nothing to extraordinary heights in such a short time. Although “Canada is small in population, she is great in her war effort,” the article reported. China was deeply grateful to Canada’s disproportionate contribution to the war, Liu added, declaring that a country of twelve million people was “producing like a [country of one] hundred million.”\textsuperscript{141}

Despite the earlier contact between China and Canada, Canada’s official confirmation of assistance in 1943 was a vital step in strengthening the bonds of friendship between Chinese and Canadian leaders, as demonstrated by the flurry of correspondence between Mackenzie King and Chiang Kai-shek. In the first announcement of the Mutual Aid Program in early February, Finance Minister James Isley stated “We want to play our part in providing China with everything that can be transported to her so that she may strike back at Japan quickly and effectively.”\textsuperscript{142} From China’s perspective, this announcement was a belated one, but Guomindang representatives realized the importance of such an offer. In March, King met again with Liu Shishun who presented the prime minister with a beautiful painting, saying that it was “a symbol of the closer relation between China and Canada.”\textsuperscript{143} This was followed up by a meeting with Song Ziwen the following month in which King was thanked for Canada’s

\textsuperscript{140} John De Navarre Kennedy, \textit{History of the Department of Munitions and Supply: Canada in the Second World War} (Ottawa: Edmond Cloutier, 1950) 1:197.
\textsuperscript{141} “Canada Output ‘Like Country of 100 Million’,” \textit{Globe and Mail}, 5 Jan 1943.
\textsuperscript{142} Bryce, 158
\textsuperscript{143} King, \textit{Diaries}, 3 March 1943, 3.
contribution to the war. The Chinese Foreign Minister mentioned that his country had sensed a
great shift in Western perceptions of China. Privately, he told King that “the Chinese today sense
a very different type of human attitude on the part of the white men through the kind of speeches
Roosevelt and [you] have made.” In this regard, Song Ziwen also observed that Churchill had
not “yet caught the same spirit.”\textsuperscript{144} For instance, the British prime minister’s omission of China
in a recent speech about the war had not been well received by the Chinese. In the coming
months, the Chinese would be constantly neglected in the British prime minister’s addresses,
forcing King on at least one occasion when he was present to remind the elder statesman to
mention China’s efforts before concluding.\textsuperscript{145} Clearly, King’s attitude towards the Chinese was
appreciated as he continued to be lavished with gifts from Chinese officials, including boxes of
Chinese tea, porcelain bowls, ivory carvings, and signed portraits.

During one of her many international tours, Song Meiling (Madame Chiang Kai-shek) made a brief visit to Ottawa in mid-June after a visit to the United States, leaving a deep
impression on the prime minister and the Canadian public alike. Modern, well-educated, and
highly cultured, China’s ‘First Lady’ was an invaluable asset to the Chinese war effort. In this
regard, she was particularly successful during her time in the United States. As one journalist
described, she had led a “relentless and sophisticated lobbying effort” in Washington, securing
billions of dollars in aid from the American government. Simultaneously, “mesmerized by her
passion, determination, and striking good looks” countless Americans were also persuaded by
the youngest Song sister to support the Nationalist regime. Commemorating her death in October
2003, the \textit{New York Times} explained her impact on Americans in the following way:

\textsuperscript{144} Ibid., 22 April 1943, 2.
\textsuperscript{145} Ibid., 24 Aug 1943, 2.
As a fluent English speaker, as a Christian, as a model of what many Americans hoped China to become, Madame Chiang struck a chord with American audiences as she traveled across the country, starting in the 1930s, raising money and lobbying for support of her husband’s government. She seemed to many Americans to be the very symbol of the modern, educated, pro-American China they yearned to see emerge.146

As this article implies, it was also Song’s ability to challenge persistent notions of Chinese inferiority and ‘backwardness’ which made her impact on the West so profound. Indeed, she was so well-regarded that she became the first Chinese national and second woman to address both houses of the United States Congress in February 1943. At the Hollywood Bowl in California on 4 April, she drew a crowd of over 30,000 people to her stirring speech about China’s desperate struggle against Japan.147

Despite her success, Song Meiling’s visit to the United States was unfavourably received in certain quarters, prompting both Song Ziwen and Chiang Kai-shek to request that she return to China.148 Apparently, Madame Chiang had displeased the British with statements about the importance of freedom for India and the necessity of liberating Jawaharlal Nehru from prison, which had been widely reported by nationalist media in India. The British Viceroy and Governor-General of India, Victor Hope, complained vigorously about this indignity to the British Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, Clement Attlee, who served as the official liaison between Britain and its Dominions. Hope demanded that “every effort must be made to check such statements by Madame Chiang Kai-shek on India Affairs” and that this be done through a direct protest to Chiang Kai-shek. In a cable to the prime minister, however, Attlee questioned the prudence of approaching Chiang directly, fearing that he might resent a complaint

about his wife’s conduct, and that such an approach might embitter budding relations between Canada and the Chiang family. Because Chiang’s wife did not hold an official position in the Chinese Government, Attlee proposed instead that an informal complaint be made to her brother, Song Ziwen, who would be more understanding of the difficulties for Canada if similar statements were made in the British Dominion.\(^\text{149}\) In his personal evaluation of Song Meiling’s visit to the United States in late April, Attlee suggested that Madame Chiang appeared to have irritated politicians and members of the United States administration for “appealing over their heads to the general public” for aid, although he could not deny that popular sympathy toward China in the United States had been heightened by her visit.\(^\text{150}\)

Though unable to draw crowds to match those gathered in the United States, Song Meiling’s visit to Ottawa in June was trumpeted by the Canadian media as a historic moment in Sino-Canadian relations. Hundreds gathered to catch a glimpse of the distinguished visitor when she arrived by train from the United States in mid-June 1943. Presented with a bouquet of flowers by a young girl, Madame Chiang was also presented with cheques totalling CAN $287,000 on behalf of the Red Cross, the Junior Red Cross, and the Chinese War Relief Fund.\(^\text{151}\) Repeatedly featured on the front-page of several newspapers throughout the month, Song Meiling’s visit received substantial attention from the Canadian press. The *Globe and Mail* prominently announced that the First Lady, “A slender woman, whose appearance of fragility masks a power unique in history” captured Ottawa “single-handed with personal charm,” while her masterful speech to assembled senators and members of parliament – what one in attendance

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\(^{150}\) Attlee to King, *King Papers*, microfilm C-7044, vol. 350, 302683 (22 April 1943).

called a “classic in English prose” – swayed the parliamentarians to China’s cause.\textsuperscript{152} Frequently reporting on her “slim, delicate figure” and “striking beauty,” writers in Ottawa, like elsewhere, seemed unable to contain their admiration for the woman they dubbed “Missimo.”\textsuperscript{153} One article appearing on the \textit{Ottawa Citizen}’s front-page in June was devoted entirely to description of Song’s appearance and attire, commenting that “Madame Chiang’s costume was outstanding but her striking beauty added a certain luster and color to what might otherwise have been a dull outfit.”\textsuperscript{154} While in Ottawa, the Canadian press relayed in great detail her calls for Chinese aid, even reproducing in entirety the text of her address made to the House of Commons. Although her esoteric vocabulary left some listeners confused, Song did highlight what she viewed as Canada’s heroic role in the war effort and emphasized that “per capita Canada has produced more for the war effort than any other member of the United Nations.”\textsuperscript{155} The press reported that hers was a “thoughtful speech that pointed out the mistakes of the past and the way to hope for the future, and it swayed the packed chamber as it has been seldom swayed by the association of greats in the past.” Several in attendance were so moved that they recommended the speech be made ‘required reading’ in schools throughout the country.\textsuperscript{156} Song then made a brief visit to Montreal, where she stayed at the historic Windsor Hotel and appeared on her balcony to receive the applause of thousands of Canadians who had gathered to welcome her. The public interest in


\textsuperscript{154} “Variety of Color Greets Heroine of Modern China on her Arrival in Ottawa,” \textit{Ottawa Citizen}, 15 June 1943: 1. The obsession with Madame Chiang’s appearance was not restricted to Canada alone. An article \textit{LIFE} magazine reporting on her speech in the United States Congress stated that “When the slim and graceful ‘Missimo’ appeared a gasp went around the galleries and people leaned forward to have a better look.” “Speech to Congress by Mme. Chiang Kaishek” \textit{LIFE} 14, no. 9 (March 1943): 26.

\textsuperscript{155} “Text of Madame Chiang’s Address,” \textit{Ottawa Citizen}, 16 June 1943: 11.

\textsuperscript{156} Cragg, “Words of Mme. Chiang Strengthen Bonds of Friendship between Canada, China,” \textit{Globe and Mail}, 17 June 1943: 1
her visit to Montreal was so significant that the manager of the Windsor Hotel personally cabled King to thank him for being given the opportunity to receive the special guest.\footnote{J.A. Raymond to King, \textit{King Papers}, microfilm C-7043, vol. 349, 300974 (23 June 1943).}

Behind the scenes, China’s First Lady also made important inroads with Canada’s prime minister, successfully initiating a vibrant dialogue between the two. After his first meeting with Song Meiling in her New York hotel suite, two weeks before her visit to Canada, King left the meeting mesmerized, writing in his diary that evening: “I confess I do not recall ever having had an interview in which I instantly felt so much at home […] She is a very bright and exceedingly

\footnote{“Wins New Friends for China,” \textit{Globe and Mail}, 17 June 1943.}
intelligent and beautiful woman. I was deeply impressed by my meeting with her.”\textsuperscript{159} After they met again mid-June, King wrote in great detail of a lengthy and intimate meeting between the two at Laurier House, King’s private residence, where Madame Chiang lavished the prime minister with praise and reportedly told him she was very interested in corresponding with him in the future. She added “that she had felt from the moment [they] met, that she was talking with a friend and not simply officially.”\textsuperscript{160}

\textbf{Figure 6.} Song Meiling is greeted by King on the steps of the Parliament buildings in Ottawa.\textsuperscript{161}

Upon her departure, Song left King with a small gift, a translucent porcelain bowl and two boxes of Chinese tea. These made a deep impression on the prime minister, and he immediately telegraphed Madame Chiang to thank her: “I cannot thank you enough for so precious a

\textsuperscript{159} King, \textit{Diaries}, 1 June 1943, 3.
\textsuperscript{160} Ibid., 15 June 1943, 3.
remembrance of your visit. The gifts will ever be a treasured possession. Your visit to Canada’s capital will remain for all time a memorable event in the history of our country.\textsuperscript{162} King immediately reciprocated the gifts, sending Song a copy of his book \textit{Industry and Humanity}, one of his photographs, and a reproduction of a painting, which he called “the last of its kind,” of his late mother, Isabella Grace Mackenzie.\textsuperscript{163} Judging by these gifts, and the letter that accompanied them, it is clear that King was profoundly touched by Song’s visit, and his correspondence with her seemed to have expressed genuine sentiment.

Meanwhile, in the spring of 1943, the Mutual Aid Board had held its first meeting and approved in principle “that Canada should provide supplies to China, within limits, if there was a satisfactory guarantee that the supplies could be transported safely.”\textsuperscript{164} Song Ziwen quickly submitted to Howe a list of supplies that China desired, totalling some 60,000 tons of equipment. By July, the Board approved a dispatch of small arms, ammunition, and small numbers of artillery and anti-aircraft guns.\textsuperscript{165} Following consultation with the United States War Department and members of the new Joint War Aid Committee, however, the Canadian offer was significantly reduced.\textsuperscript{166} The shipment would be limited to light artillery, ancillary equipment, small arms and ammunition totalling only 12,500 tons - less than one quarter the original amount. Though it remains unclear if this drastic reduction was primarily due to logistical constraints or to Washington’s desire to monopolize aid to China, the latter seems more likely. As Kim Nossal argued in 1978:

\begin{flushright}
\begin{itemize}
\item[\textsuperscript{162}] King to Song Meiling, \textit{King Papers}, microfilm C-7035, vol. 338, 290464-68 (17 June 1943).
\item[\textsuperscript{163}] Ibid., 290469 (17 June 1943).
\item[\textsuperscript{164}] Bryce, 158.
\item[\textsuperscript{165}] Ibid., 159.
\item[\textsuperscript{166}] Due to the fact that the United States controlled the sole transport route into China (the Hump), the Joint War Aid Committee was established in the summer of 1943 to enable better coordination between American and Canadian authorities on the question of supplying China with material aid. See Bryce, 159.
\end{itemize}
\end{flushright}
[The Americans] were not at all pleased that the Canadians were interfering in what they considered an American theatre of war. Although there were suspicions that the United States wanted to dispose of its excess production in China, it is apparent that the War Department wanted to use the supply of material to Chiang to increase its leverage over the conduct of Guomindang military operations against the Japanese.\(^\text{167}\)

In addition, Kim Nossal considers it likely that President Franklin Delano Roosevelt was dangling an “American aid carrot over Chiang’s head” to pressure the Chinese leader to avoid pursuing offensives against the Communists. This is certainly a plausible explanation. Drawing on Chinese sources, Zhang Baijia has recently suggested that by 1942 Roosevelt was facing enormous pressure to ensure American aid was “given conditionally and used as a lever to force Chiang Kai-shek to fight Japan and to reform the Chinese military.”\(^\text{168}\) Perhaps illustrating this strategy, an American representative of the Combined Chiefs of Staff (CCOS) even “offered to buy the entire Canadian allocation for China – for cash.”\(^\text{169}\) Whatever their motivations, it was made eminently clear that the Americans did not support Canada’s program of aid to China.

When Song Ziwen learned of the drastic reduction to his initial request, he protested to President Roosevelt, and vainly attempted to have the missing items reinstated in the order.

Despite these policy issues, a bond was forming between Roosevelt and King. In a private meeting at the end of August, the two leaders spoke at length of the situation in China, agreeing that it was vital to keep China in the picture, as much to serve as a buffer state between Russia and the United States as to fight Japan. Roosevelt deplored Churchill’s archaic view of the Chinese as “so many pigtails,” and wished the British leader could begin to appreciate the positive change in China’s new generation.\(^\text{170}\) Simultaneously, King had also made great strides.

\(^{167}\) Nossal, “Business as Usual,” 138.
\(^{168}\) Zhang Baijia, “China’s Quest for Foreign Military Aid,” 299.
\(^{169}\) Nossal, “Business as Usual,” 138.
\(^{170}\) King, Diaries, 25 Aug 1943, 12.
in his relationship with Chiang Kai-shek. In July 1943, the Canadian head of government received an encouraging telegram from Chiang in which he thanked King for his sentiments of amity, writing “I believe that our traditional friendship which has been enhanced by comradeship in arms not only strengthens our united war effort to crush our common enemy but will stand us in good stead in our postwar cooperation.”  

In October, Chiang again telegraphed King, declaring that “The Chinese people are deeply grateful for the assistance you have been giving us and they are confident that with the defeat of Japan will dawn a new era of closer Sino Canadian cooperation.” Several other telegrams exchanged between the two leaders outlined King’s continued commitment to assist China, while Chiang emphasized his pride in fighting “shoulder to shoulder” with Canada and his belief that Canada and China would remain “the best of friends” in the postwar period. A private internal memorandum between Canadian officials earlier that year, however, painted these encouraging developments in a different light. As one senior official at the Department of Finance optimistically wrote in February, “Trade with the Far East is one of the really large possibilities after the war – economically a gamble admittedly, but one of the few which might turn out successfully on a very large scale […] I think Canada is probably in a position to get a substantial share of this trade if we make an effort.”

Similar debate was taking place in the United States between 1942 and 1943, as American officials also debated the benefits of repealing Chinese exclusion laws. According to John Dower, “Many observers felt that once Japan had been eliminated as both a military drain and a ruthless economic rival, China’s potential for economic growth would prove substantial.”

A congressman from Illinois, Noah Mason, echoed the sentiments of many Canadian officials

171 Chiang Kai-shek to King, King Papers, microfilm C-7035, vol. 338, 290471-72 (1 July 1943).
173 Chiang to King, King Papers, microfilm C-7035, vol. 338, 290483-84 (7 Dec 1943).
when he suggested that “our potential trade with China after this war is over should furnish jobs to hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of our boys when they return from the war.”\textsuperscript{175} In this light, old labels took on new meanings. The “Yellow Peril” was now a question of “losing” the vast Chinese market, rather than limiting the influx of Chinese immigrants. Indeed, across North America, China came to be seen by many as a vital escape valve without which nations like the United States and Canada would “confront a monumental crisis of overproduction and underemployment once the war ended.”\textsuperscript{176} To give one example, in September 1943, Fraser Bruce of the Aluminum Company of Canada wrote to Assistant Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs, Hugh Keenleyside, thanking him for arranging a meeting between company officials and Liu Shishun, who was visiting the Maritimes. He reported that the company was only too glad to receive such a distinguished visitor, adding: “as you know, the Canadian aluminum industry has grown to such an extent that it is going to have to look even more to the export field than it did before the war.”\textsuperscript{177}

In a ceremony in late February 1943, the 100,000\textsuperscript{th} Bren gun made by the John Inglis Company of Canada was presented to the Chinese minister, Liu Shishun. Accepting the gun on behalf of the Chinese Army, Liu was greeted by cheers from thousands of Inglis employees who had gathered to witness the ceremony (see Figure 8). Speaking to the formidable achievement of the Canadian arms factory, Canada’s Deputy Minister of Munitions and Supply, G. K. Shiels, proudly pledged that a large volume of weapons and military supplies had been earmarked for China and that they were urgently being produced for the “brave Generalissimo and Mme.

\textsuperscript{175} Dower, 171.
\textsuperscript{176} Ibid., 171.
Meanwhile, Chinese press in Chongqing suggested that two recent events had been pivotal in strengthening friendly ties between Canada and China: the visit of Song Meiling, and the Quebec Conference of August 1943. An article from China’s Government-sponsored English language publication, the *National Herald*, applauded the contribution of Canada’s new Minister in China, Victor Odlum. It was thanks to “his utterances and public appearances” in China, the article wrote, that “the Chinese people have learned much of Canada’s gigantic efforts in war production.”

![Figure 7. Major-General P. Kiang, chairman of the Ordnance Department, China Defense Supplies; and June Pattison, “Miss Inglis 1943,” posing with the Bren gun.](image)

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Figure 8. Major-General Y. L. Chen speaks at the ceremony celebrating the 100th Bren gun made at Inglis in August 1943. In the background thousands of plant employees gather to watch.\footnote{TA, Alexandra Studio, fonds 1257, series 1057, item 2183 (20 Aug 1943).}

Figure 9. (left to right) Major-General Y. L. Chen; Chinese Minister Dr. Liu Shishun; Deputy Minister of Munitions and Supply, G. K. Shiels; and personnel officer, Mrs. James Bradley; pose with the 100,000th Bren gun manufactured at the John Inglis munitions plant in August 1943.\footnote{Chinese Official at 100,000th Bren Gun Ceremony, John Inglis Co., Ltd,” TA, Alexandra Studio, fonds 1257, series 1057, item 2183 (20 Aug 1943).}
In early 1944, Americans officials were reporting that they had begun investigating ways to decrease their own shipments to India as the limited harbour and rail facilities had already been heavily overtaxed by materials destined for China. Nevertheless, following continued pressure from Song Ziwen, the first shipment of Canadian-made arms and munitions was assembled and shipped to Karachi by the end of February. Not surprisingly, Chiang Kai-shek would not see this material for over a year due to the logistical difficulties involved. While this assistance had already strained relations between Canada and the United States, Howe and his colleagues would soon discover it had also seriously displeased Canada’s other major partner. Shortly after the materials left Canadian docks, British authorities expressed stern disapproval of Canada’s decision to extend aid, fearing that a strong China could eventually threaten Britain’s re-establishment of power in Southeast Asia. In addition, British military officials were shocked to find that the cargo manifests included some 644 trucks, which they argued were in short supply and more urgently needed elsewhere. They sharply criticized Canada for such “obvious foolishness” and were convinced not only that the material would never reach China, but that it would create significant congestion at the already overcrowded port in India. Existing literature explicitly states that Canada was chastised only after the shipment had already left Vancouver. However, declassified documents from this period demonstrate that as early as

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182. “Chinese Minister and unidentified officials pose with 100,000th Bren gun at its commemoration ceremony at the John Inglis Company plant.” LAC, fonds R1196-14-7-E, series WRM, item 3982 (Aug 1943).
183. Karachi was a port in India (present-day Pakistan) outside of American control where the Chinese had requested Canadian supplies be shipped. Two American generals in China – deputies of General Joseph Stilwell – argued that using Karachi as a destination was proof that the Chinese had no intention of using the equipment in the Anti-Japanese War because it would be impossible to transport the supplies in time for them to be used against the Japanese. Bryce, 161.
185. Howe and the Mutual Aid Board disputed this claim.
February 3, the question of avoiding British objections was being discussed between high-level Canadian officials, yet no steps were taken to prevent the ensuing fiasco.  

By the end of February, the first shipment was at sea. It consisted of “5,490 tons of artillery, automatic small arms, vehicles and ammunition, including 108 6-pounder guns, 48 Bofors A.A. guns, 644 trucks, tractors and other vehicles, 7,000 Sten and 5,700 Bren machine guns and 2,220 tons of ammunition for the artillery and Sten guns.” Despite disagreements with the United States and the United Kingdom, Canada’s actions were at least having the desired effect on one party: the Chinese. Around the time their shipment was leaving Vancouver, Liu Shishun was in Ottawa presenting King with the letters of credence officially designating him as China’s first Minister Plenipotentiary to Canada. This step was followed just weeks later by another when Victor Odlum, who had been Canada’s Minister to China, was promoted to become the first Canadian Ambassador to China. In a speech made to Chiang Kai-shek on the occasion, Odlum emphasized his “high hope” and “humble resolve” to contribute in “some small part in strengthening the bonds that unite our nations.” In the president’s reply, Chiang assured him that “China and Canada, two great democracies bordering on the Pacific, have many interests in common. This community of interests, coupled with friendship born of mutual respect and understanding, has now developed into a comradeship-in-arms, which will no doubt

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furnish a basis for still closer cooperation between them in the future.”190 Such amicability had taken years to establish and highlighted the improved relations between the two countries.

Private correspondence between King and Chinese officials also underlined this friendship. Indeed, the degree of intimacy displayed by King in his correspondence with Song Meiling, which had begun in earnest the previous year, was almost startling. Writing to her in March 1944 for the first time since her visit to Canada, King apologized for not writing more frequently, asking her: “Please do not judge of my friendship by its lack of expression.” The prime minister assured Madame Chiang that he had been following every event of her life from all the sources at his disposal, and confided that having “so many ideals in common makes me feel that I [know] General Chiang almost as well as I know you, and I know how happy I would be should the day ever come that we might all meet and talk together.” In one of the most revealing statements of all, King thanked her profusely for the framed photograph of herself. He continued: “I cannot tell you the thrill it gave me to receive your [portrait] from New York shortly after you left, and how happy and proud it makes me to have yours and the Generalissimo’s side by side to look at and show my friends, and above all, for me to be able to say ‘These are friends of mine’.”191 Declaring himself envious of Churchill’s and Roosevelt’s time spent recently with Chiang and his wife, King urged Song to tell him more about herself and whether she had sufficiently recovered from her prolonged illness – what she termed a “nervous rash [of the skin].”192 In another three-page letter to Madame Chiang in October, King confessed that the writing of the letter had greatly occupied his “heart and mind” and that she

190 Chiang, “Reply of President Chiang Kai-shek to the Speech Made by General Odlum on the Occasion of his Presentation of his Letters of Credence as Canadian Ambassador to China,” King Papers, microfilm C-7054, vol. 368, 318885 (15 March 1944).
192 Song Meiling to King, King Papers, microfilm C-7049, vol. 356, 309325, (1 April 1944).
had been in his thoughts “at all times.” He further wrote that “I felt happier than words can express […] just to have you feel that we are talking together again.”¹⁹³ Song readily reciprocated with similar declarations. Replying to his first long letter in April, she confessed that on the day she had received his letter, she had been feeling “very low” as a result of her poor health. Upon reading his letter, she wrote,

I forgot that we have been at war for seven long years, I forgot the suffering of our people who find life increasingly difficult, and I forgot that for nights insomnia has been my constant companion. I remembered only that a friend – and what a friend – is thinking of me, and my people, and wishing us well. Of course the worries of war cannot long be lifted, but even to escape them for a little while in the knowledge of the affection of a friend helps to break the vicious cycle. And that is what your letter did for me, my dear good friend.¹⁹⁴

During this same period, Canadian officials were feverishly communicating with one another in an attempt to secure another visit to Canada by Madame Chiang. Concerned about Song Meiling’s health, and her reported desire to get “away to a cool place with a higher altitude,” Odlum proposed that she be invited to stay at Lake Louise or Banff to recover. As he wrote, “This would be the best single investment Canada could make as far as China is concerned.” The Ambassador to China suggested that Chiang Kai-shek be invited to join his wife in Canada, as their visit together would be of the utmost importance in cementing friendship between the two countries. Odlum had high hopes for Chiang, a man whom he had come to respect during his time in Chongqing. He suggested the Generalissimo was “on the verge of a new burst of character growth” which could transform his potential.¹⁹⁵ Instead of being merely a “good man,” Odlum was convinced Chiang could become a “great man” if he followed the right course. As he would later tell King: “As a dictator, [Chiang] will not be great. He is too balanced, and

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balancing. He is neither a Stalin nor a Hitler. But as a shepherd of China on the hard road to democracy, he may become great and even deeply significant. He is growing. And today there is no one to replace him capable of saving China from turmoil, confusion and armed strife.”

While views regarding Chiang Kai-shek were becoming polarized, his wife seemed to have a more consistent effect on virtually all the Western officials she met. Her speaking tours in the United States swept the public off its feet, and left leaders with the impression that she was a “charming, intelligent, and fascinating” woman who represented a new, highly-educated, Chinese generation. Song Meiling evidently directed her charm for political purposes. Illustrating her allure to foreign leaders, several recent publications have described an alleged “steamy one-night stand” between Song Meiling and Wendell Willkie, Roosevelt’s unsuccessful opponent in the 1940 Republican presidential nomination. Recognizing his enormous popularity at home, his winning charm and formidable political skills, the American president had enlisted Willkie as an ally and dispatched him as an American envoy on a whirlwind fact-finding and goodwill tour of the world in 1942. During his visit to Chongqing, it became apparent that Willkie had fallen under Song’s powerful spell. Willkie’s travel companion, the publisher Garner Cowles, described an evening in mid-October during which Madame Chiang and her American suitor had quietly slipped away from a state dinner to her secret penthouse apartment. Only returning to the guest quarters at four in the morning, Willkie provided Cowles with a “play-by-play account of his alleged amorous conquest of the Madame.” Cowles agreed that Madame Chiang was “one of the most beautiful, intelligent, and sexy women either one of

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196 Odlum to King, King Papers, microfilm C-7049, vol. 352, 318993-95 (7 June 1945).
197 Taylor, 229.
us had ever met,” but realized the potentially disastrous political consequences of the extra-marital affair. With indications that the Chongqing press corps were already gossiping about the pair, Cowles forbade Willkie from pursuing further contact with Chiang Kai-shek’s wife, calling him a “goddamn fool.”199 In his recent work, Jay Taylor doubts that Willkie and Song were lovers, but like other recent biographers, hints at the notion of Chiang Kai-shek’s wife as something of a “seductress,” who used her charm, allure, and sex appeal to persuade foreign leaders to lend the Chinese assistance.200 The conspicuously friendly correspondence between Song Meiling and Canada’s bachelor prime minister perhaps indicates that this strategy was also employed with Canada’s leadership.

Despite having just completed their first shipment of munitions to China in early 1944, Canadian officials were already offering a grim evaluation of its application towards the war effort. Assistant Under-Secretary of State at External Affairs, Hume Wrong, complained that the Canadian supplies would remain at Karachi “indefinitely” and raised questions concerning Chiang’s ultimate purpose for the equipment. As a result of his concern, he wrote to Howe, suggesting that

The state of confusion, corruption and inefficiency now rampant in China, the virtual cessation of active operations against the Japanese forces, and the inclination of many influential Chinese to regard the Chinese communist armies as the greatest menace, are general factors to be taken into account in deciding what more should be done in extending Mutual Aid to China.201

Despite Wrong’s pessimism, Howe and the Mutual Aid Board agreed on 1 March 1944 to the assembly of a second shipment of munitions which could be ready as early as May. In response,

199 Li, 182-86.
200 Taylor, 217. Other recent authors have suggested that Song’s association with Willkie was in fact an attempt to bolster her own power. “If Wendell could be elected, then he and I would rule the world. I would rule the Orient and Wendell would rule the the Western world,” she reportedly said. See Peter Carlson, "Wendell Willkie Romances Madame Chiang Kai-shek," American History 45, no. 3 (Aug 2010): 20-21.
Robertson told King that the policy of aid to China required immediate review. He explained that the logistical constraints simply did not permit large Canadian shipments, and that the supplies intended for China could be redirected to other nations, in accordance with strategic need, while Canada investigated other means of assisting the Chinese.\textsuperscript{202} Learning of this debate for the first time, Arthur Menzies, a China specialist at External Affairs, seemed a solitary figure in expressing concern regarding the broader consequences of Canadian policy. He noted that American supplies, when shipped for Chinese use, were consigned to General Stilwell who ensured they were “effectively employed against the Japanese enemy.” Canadian shipments, in contrast, were being provided without “any strings attached.” Therefore Menzies was concerned that Canadian supplies would be used “as the principal Central Government heavy equipment in a civil war against the lightly armed Communist troops is fraught with grave consequences for the future of Sino-Canadian relations.”\textsuperscript{203} Further reports bolstering the allegation that Chiang had no intention of using the weapons against the Japanese frequently made their way to the Canadian leadership. In fact, thanks principally to Stilwell’s influence, Allied leaders were becoming increasingly frustrated by what they saw as Chiang’s unwillingness to confront the Japanese. Several months earlier, during the Cairo Conference, Roosevelt had asked his son “why Chiang’s troops aren’t fighting at all […] and why he kept thousands of his best men […] on the borders of Red China.”\textsuperscript{204} Partly as a result of these concerns, King would note on more than one occasion that he agreed that a review of Canada’s China policy was in order. As a result, on March 22, King signed the Mutual Aid Agreement with China which stated that China agreed

\textsuperscript{204} Taylor, 247-48.
to use Canadian supplies only in accordance with the “joint and effective prosecution of the war.”

Always an advocate of Chiang, Odlum frequently provided King with evaluations of the Chinese leader. In late March, he told the prime minister that “greatly as I admire [Chiang] and proud as I would be to work with him, I sometimes feel that he has chosen the wrong group [to represent].” Through conversations with many of Chiang’s associates, Odlum was able to gather significant pieces of information from highly-placed Chinese sources. During one such meeting, Odlum highlighted the fact that Canada was eager to help China, “but not in the way of charity […] China should be too proud for that.” His contacts informed him that many in China were aware of the first shipment of Canadian munitions, admitting “we know that they were shipped before we signed the Mutual Aid pact. This impressed us very much.” They then went on to express their admiration for the Canadian prime minister, a man they believed possessed both a “long vision” and “courage.” Leaving this meeting, Odlum “felt that for the first time, the curtain had been drawn and the stage revealed.” Declaring that by talking to him they were putting their very lives at risks, these Chinese ministers and officials had informed Odlum that the leaders of China did not truly believe their country was a ‘great power’, and that such statements were merely “big talk” from the Chinese leadership. As the Ambassador would later phrase it in a private letter to King, “China is struggling between a desire to appear big (as a ‘great power’) and a consciousness of the long drawn out effort that must be made to gain that

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205 “Agreement between Canada and China on the Principles Applying to the Provision by Canada of Canadian War Supplies to China under the War Appropriation (United Nations Mutual Aid) Act of Canada, 1943,” signed at Ottawa, 22 March 1944, Canada Treaty series, 1944, no. 9 (Ottawa: Edmond Cloutier, 1948).
206 Odlum did not reveal the names of these personalities to King, though he suggested they were “all men whose names are very prominent in public circles.” Deeply fearful of “betraying someone,” Odlum promised King he would provide him with a “key to persons concerned” at a later date.
standing.”  

This fixation on ‘big’ rhetoric was a mechanism for Chinese leaders to compensate for what they perceived as Britain’s refusal to “realize all that China, in spite of her weakness, has done” in securing their mutual interests in the Far East. As one Chinese informant asked Odlum bluntly: “If China had not resisted, but instead had given into Japan and after that had been used by Japan, what do you think would have happened in India?”

Throughout April 1944, there was a great deal of confusion and contradiction in Canada surrounding conditions in China. King wrote that some officials in Chongqing had given him “so black an account of internal conditions in China as to suggest that the Central Government may disintegrate” and had alleged that the Chinese forces were not actively engaging the Japanese due to their constant pre-occupation with the Communists.

Others, including Clarence Gauss, the United States Ambassador to China, frequently reported that the situation in China was “very grave” and had “never been worse.” As he reportedly told Odlum in July 1944, he believed that “The very fact that there was no alternative group [to replace Chiang’s regime] made [China’s] position all the worse. It meant fragmentation, provincialism,” he said. Despite reporting to King that mercenary soldiers were being hired to bolster the Chinese army, Odlum disagreed with Gauss’s “gloomy view of things,” maintaining his faith in Chiang and his optimism that a Guomindang-Communist clash was not inevitable. He suggested that “Chiang Kai-shek knows that if the National Government chooses to waste its limited resources on a civil war it will

207 Odlum to King, King Papers, microfilm C-7054, vol. 368, 319009 (15 June 1944).
208 Odlum to King, King Papers, microfilm C-7054, vol. 368, 318889-95 (28 March 1944).
210 Odlum to King, King Papers, microfilm C-7054, vol. 368, 319033-35 (2 July 1944).
211 Regarding mercenaries, Odlum reported that the Canadian Press in Chongqing had been asked by Chinese officials to “pay into a fund to ‘buy’ men for the army.” After some haggling, it seems that Odlum grudgingly agreed to part with a substantial sum with which fighting men would be purchased. As he exclaimed, “My, what a system of conscription!” Odlum to King, King Papers, microfilm C-7054, vol. 368, 319033-35 (2 July 1944).
rapidly lose the sympathy of those countries from which it expects so much.”

Writing to King of the political situation in China in early July, Odlum told King that he felt obliged to advise the prime minister that the “diplomatic press and foreign informed opinion believe that [the] political position is as precarious as are [the] economic and military ones.” Despite agreeing in general with charges that corruption in Chiang’s regime had become a serious problem, Odlum disagreed with popular evaluations that the Chinese leader was losing control of his own ministers and the country. On the contrary, Odlum argued, “not one of the Ministers is able or has influence enough to handle Chiang Kai-shek nor is there a group that is using him. He is absolute master. He has not grown as I hoped he would, but neither has he thrown aside his decision to build a democratic China.”

Odlum agreed that China’s economic and military situation were precarious, but refused to admit, without “convincing facts,” that the political situation was similarly perilous. Others including the Canadian High Commissioner in London seemed to agree with Odlum’s evaluation, suggesting that the Nationalist Government’s disintegration was unlikely, and that it was equally unlikely that Chiang Kai-shek would prosecute a civil war until the Japanese threat was eliminated. Aware of these concerns, and the potential impact such fears might have on shipments of aid, China’s Ambassador to Canada, Liu Shishun, frequently deplored stories of China’s “disunity” in his public addresses around the country. To the Hamilton Association for the Advancement of Literature, Science and Art, for instance, he explained that although it had always been Japan’s goal to keep China weak and disunited, “there is much exaggeration in reports of disagreement in that country” and that Chiang Kai-shek was committed to resolving any differences between the Nationalists and Communists by political

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212 Odlum to King, King Papers, microfilm C-7054, vol. 368, 318905 (6 April 1944).
213 Odlum to King, King Papers, microfilm C-7054, vol. 368, 319036-39 (3 July 1944).
means. Though Odlum objected to reports of a united China – calling them “fatuous doctrine” – he agreed that reports of Chiang’s plans for war against the Communists had been greatly exaggerated. Describing the conflicting pictures given of Chiang in Canada and the United States, Odlum argued that

Apart from [Ambassador Clarence] Gauss and [General Joe] Stilwell, both of whom were ‘old China hands’ with the usual hypocritical attitude of that class towards all things Chinese, most of those who have bitterly criticized Chiang Kai-shek either had a pro-Communist bias, or a sense of personal grievance, or both; and most had little opportunity to know the man intimately and to study him closely.215

Such reassurances may have helped convince King to continue providing the Chinese with war materials despite the risk of an impending civil war in China, which made it unwise to do so. King wrote in early April that it would cause substantial “embarrassment” to now reduce or suspend Canada’s aid program for China.216 By mid-May, the Allied Combined Chiefs of Staff (CCOS) drafted a formal response to Canadian inquiries regarding the continued supply of military hardware to China. The CCOS suggested that China should continue to be supplied with as much equipment as possible, assuming the materials could be transported, and would be used against Japan. However, due to the current impossibility of transporting any heavy materials, and no foreseeable increase in transport capabilities, the CCOS concluded that Canadian shipments should be suspended, except for light equipment that could be easily transported over the Hump.217 Despite these suggestions from the Allied command, and the complete absence of evidence that the criteria under the Mutual Aid Treaty would be satisfied, Howe and the Mutual Aid Board decided on May 20 that a second shipment of about 5,000 tons should proceed, but

215 Odlum to King, King Papers, microfilm C-7054, vol. 368, 318904 (6 April 1944).
that it would be “regarded as the final shipment, at least until conditions change.”\(^{218}\) External Affairs immediately suggested that it was unwise to proceed with this shipment without first consulting Washington.\(^ {219}\) In a typically authoritative reply, Howe insisted that the opinion of the CCOS did not apply to the shipment currently assembled, but only to future shipments.\(^ {220}\) Despite concern voiced by External Affairs that the Chiefs would be offended by Canada’s disregard for their advice, Howe was optimistic that any difficulties would be minimal. Moreover, he was confident that the second shipment would allow Canada to claim it had honoured its obligations to China, and would finally relieve the continuous pressure from the Chinese.\(^ {221}\) On 15 June 1944, as the second shipment left Canada, Ambassador Liu expressed his “deepest thanks” for the rapid assembly of the supplies, and stated that the Canadian munitions would “be of tremendous assistance to the war effort being put forth by my country.”\(^ {222}\) Included in this instalment were 13,500 Bren guns with ancillary equipment; 16,000 Sten guns; 4,000 pistols; 180 six-pounder guns with ancillary equipment; 480 vehicles for A/T transport; 12,800,000 rounds of 9 mm and 90,000 rounds of six-pounder ammunition. With this new shipment, total tonnage shipped and stockpiled in India of Canadian supplies for China had reached 12,500 tons, the maximum amount agreed to by the United States and Great Britain. In a memo justifying the second shipment, King reported shortly afterwards that although it seemed doubtful that the equipment would reach China in the near future, he “felt that the Chinese had been led to expect that the shipment would go forward.”\(^ {223}\) Should delivery be impossible, he added, he hoped that the Chinese would make the material available to any other member of the

\(^{219}\) Robertson, no. 484, DCER, vol. 10: 1944-1945, 522-23 (23 May 1944).
\(^{222}\) Liu Shishun, no. 492, DCER, vol. 10: 1944-1945, 528-29 (7 June 1944).
\(^{223}\) King to Odlum, King Papers, microfilm C-7054, vol. 368, 319013 (23 June 1944).
United Nations who could make use of it. Underlining that a new, more stringent, procedure would be followed before approving future shipments, King asked Odlum to consult the theatre commander in China, General Stilwell, regarding the need for items already requisitioned in Canada on Chinese account, in particular the Sten machine carbines and the Browning pistols, which were being produced almost exclusively for China.224

Meanwhile, in a reversal of established Canadian rhetoric which had left little doubt since 1937 that “white men” would not participate in military operations in China, Canadian officials began considering the possible form and extent of Canada’s military participation against the Japanese in the context of an impending German surrender.225 Despite warnings from General Maurice Pope that Canada would be left behind unless it began organizing itself immediately, preparations continued to progress slowly.226 Lieutenant-General John Carl Murchie, Chief of the General Staff, suggested that Canada’s participation, proportional to that of the United States and Great Britain, would equate to between one and two divisions.227 This would serve as “a means of avenging Hong Kong and restoring Canadian military prestige in the Far East.”228 Canadian interest in such an operation remained high despite suggestions from the United States that help was neither required nor desired. Although retribution for Canada’s painful defeat at Hong Kong was a strong motivator, it seems more likely that this abrupt shift in policy was due to the realization that providing China with munitions had, as Norman Robertson said at the time, not had the expected impact.229 American military authorities in Chongqing again reported that the equipment delivered could not feasibly play a role in the war against Japan, and that Chiang

224 Ibid., 319015-16 (23 June 1944).
227 Chief of the General Staff was the most senior position in the Canadian Army from 1904 until 1964.
was probably reserving this equipment for use following the defeat of Japan. In August 1944, with the arrival of the second shipment in India, the stockpile of Canadian arms in Karachi had grown to a substantial size, yet none of the material had been moved since the first load was delivered several months earlier. At the same time, Prime Minister King, for one, was becoming increasingly concerned about the state of Canada’s finances. He admitted that the costs of the war and mutual aid “have far exceeded anything deemed possible in the early years of the war.”

King’s concerns were certainly warranted, as the desire to establish “goodwill” in China had fuelled increased spending on Canada’s part during the past year. For the fiscal year of April 1943 to March 1944, which would have only included the first shipment of arms to China, Canada had spent over $4 million. During the next fiscal year, the spending had increased to over $14.5 million. Although this was a formidable increase, it is important to note that the figure of $14.5 million only amounted to 1.83 percent of Canada’s total annual expenditures in the Mutual Aid program, the vast majority being provided to the United Kingdom.

Deeply troubled about rumours concerning Chiang Kai-shek, Odlum sent an unusually personal letter from Chongqing in late June 1944. Since his arrival, the Ambassador wrote, he had made it his foremost priority to observe Chiang and learn what he could about China. As he had maintained from the beginning, he continued to believe that China depended on Chiang more than on any other human being. However, he had long ago detected strain within the Generalissimo’s household. As he wrote:

I have watched [Chiang Kai-shek] for months, realizing his fine qualities and hoping, yes praying, that he might grow and become great. But always there came to me stories of irritable acts – little things, in a way, for which I could not wholly condemn him, but which made me wonder if he really was growing. I felt that there was something wrong,

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231 Canada, Department of Finance, Budget Speech, 1944 (Ottawa: Edmond Cloutier, 1944) 56-67.
but I did not know what it was. [...] I took to the Generalissimo and to Mme. Chiang Kai-shek from the start, and I know that they liked me. But I did not have the easy entrée there that I have found elsewhere, and that was suggested by their friendly words.  

Odlum went on to describe a recent dinner held in Chongqing, a glittering spectacle where all three Song sisters, the Generalissimo, and Song Ziwen, had played their parts to perfection. Behind the polished veneer of normalcy, however, lay a “tragedy.” Through his observations of the couple, and conversations with Chinese sources, the Canadian Ambassador had become convinced that Chiang Kai-shek was having an affair with another woman. Although it appeared on the surface to be a problem pressing heavily upon Madame Chiang, Odlum disagreed: “It is even more of a tragedy for him; for he needed, and still needs her.” Ever discreet and fearful of ruining reputations, Odlum avoided sending this letter via the official channel, instead choosing the unusual practice of addressing the communiqué directly to Mackenzie King himself. In addition, he was uncomfortable with providing the name of the woman in question, though he described her as “no plaything [but] a real woman – a woman of quality” who had already borne a daughter to Chiang, and noted that another child would soon follow.  

The Ambassador did append the woman’s identify, if vaguely, by hand to the end of his letter, suggesting she was the niece of Chen Guofu (Chen Kuo-fu), who was then the Guomindang Party Minister of Organization and a long-time friend and colleague of Chiang’s. Nevertheless, the story was deeply felt by Odlum, and he clearly took great care in composing his letter breaking the news to the prime minister. Certain that the Generalissimo “must be weakened” by his own infidelity, Odlum decided that he had not changed his opinion of Chiang, nor his general evaluation of

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233 Ibid.
234 Chiang and Chen had known each other for over thirty years since first meeting in 1911. Odlum believed that there was “no single person who stands in a more intimate relation to Chiang Kai-shek than does Chen Kuo-fu.” Odlum to King, *King Papers*, microfilm C-7054, vol. 368, 319076-76 (18 July 1944).
China. In another memo to King the following week, the Canadian Ambassador described a recent intimate conversation he had had with Song Meiling and her sister Song Ailing. He reported that both women were suffering intensely. Odlum even suggested that it was Chiang’s infidelity which was the primary source of friction among Chiang’s top deputies, Kong Xiangxi (H.H. Kung), Song Ziwen, and Chiang himself. Somewhat relieved, however, he added that between Chiang Kai-shek and his wife, he had been assured “there will be no breach. Even if things are as bad as some people paint them, Mme. Chiang’s love for China will keep her playing the game until the war is over.”

On 6 July 1944, the Canadian Ambassador reported that Chiang had arranged an informal gathering of his main associates where he had vehemently denounced the rumours about his private conduct. Standing stoically by his side, Madame Chiang had assured those gathered that she stood by her husband. Throughout these difficult circumstances Odlum had come to deeply admire the three Song sisters – whose ability to rise above personal difficulties in order to perform their national duty had inspired him. Regarding Chiang Kai-shek’s alleged infidelity, Odlum would later write that he now believed “that the stories about the Generalissimo were deliberately ‘planted’ to injure him.” He alleged that it was no coincidence that these defamatory tales had been spread at the same time as other rumours circled about dissatisfaction in the army, and the possibility of an officers ‘putsch’.

He reported that by early August 1944, the inflammatory rumours about Chiang’s alleged infidelity had died down.

Odlum’s tale is an intriguing one. It is significant because of the fact that the two recent biographies of the Generalissimo by Jay Taylor and Yang Tianshi both maintain that Chiang was...

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236 Odlum to King, *King Papers*, microfilm C-7054, vol. 368, 319047 (8 July 1944).
faithful to Song Meiling throughout their marriage. Even though Odlum eventually concludes that the story about Chiang had been planted, the tale nevertheless does reveal important information about Chiang’s character and Odlum’s credibility. In his private correspondence with Mackenzie King, the Canadian Ambassador described in detail the response to Chiang Kai-shek’s denunciation of the allegations. What is certain is that Chiang’s decision to address them at all indicates the rumours had a sufficient base of adherents to make such an acknowledgement worthwhile. Indeed, Odlum describes how Chiang was severely criticized by his own officers and other foreign diplomats for having “lost face” by even addressing the allegations. Odlum evaluated the response more positively. He believed that Chiang’s response was that of a good leader dedicated to unifying his people, and that of a man committed to higher ideals than his own personal aggrandizement. Whether one accepts Odlum’s interpretation, Chiang’s decision to denounce the rumours openly certainly does raise many questions about the accuracy of his carefully polished public image. In addition, if the rumours were indeed fabricated, as Odlum later suggested, their existence and acceptance reveals a great deal about internal conflicts within the Guomindang. From the Canadian perspective, Odlum’s access to such personal information about the Chiangs – a tale so obscure that no published works contain a trace of it – does seem to suggest that the Canadian Ambassador had managed to gain the trust of an exclusive inner circle within Chiang’s regime. Odlum’s interpretation of events, however, also raises questions about his credibility. One explanation for the uniqueness of his tale is that he simply misunderstood the Chinese political landscape. Kim Nossal has argued that Odlum suffered from “astigmatism in the diplomatic eye” which made him an unreliable judge of events in China. Odlum’s reports appear to match Nossal’s assessment.

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In Canada, Chinese frustration with Canadian exclusion laws continued throughout 1944. In August, an issue of the *Dongfang zazhi* (Oriental Miscellany Monthly) published an article upbraiding the British Dominions for continuing to maintain their discriminatory barriers against Chinese immigration. Canada was singled out as the worst offender of all. After complaining that several British Dominions had only made some “minor and temporary” improvements in their treatment of the Chinese, the article continued: “And as for Canada, down to the present time she has not made the slightest concrete gesture.” To China, this was a particularly glaring insult in light of the fact that the United States had done away with their own Chinese Exclusion laws in December 1943. In Chongqing, Ambassador Odlum reported that although efforts had been made in Canada to negotiate a new immigration treaty with China, the Chinese people as a whole were completely unaware of this, and this continued to damage Canadian prestige. Odlum therefore advised King that “if a satisfactory treaty cannot be secured from the Chinese, the Canadian ‘Exclusion Law’ should be amended by unilateral action on Canada’s part.” Despite such counsel, the Exclusion Act of 1923 was not repealed until 1947, and certain elements of the discriminatory policies were kept in place until 1967.

By early 1945, determined fighting by the British and Americans in Southeast Asia had successfully re-opened the Burma Road. Even more significant, Allied efforts had cleared for the American Air Transport Command a more direct route over the Hump, allowing for a great increase in the amount of materials that could be flown into China. In February, Ambassador Odlum suggested to King that despite there being “no real chance of Chinese troops proving to be of military value in defeating the Japanese,” Canada should still send arms and munitions in

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(Summer 1977): 559.
240 Ibid.
order to maintain Chiang Kai-shek’s hold on power. Hume Wrong completely disagreed, arguing in another communication to King that following such a course would violate the Mutual Aid Agreement and could be regarded as “aiding one side in any prospective civil war.”

Meanwhile, the improved logistical situation spurred the Chinese to ask Howe in March 1945 to re-activate China’s Mutual Aid program. A new list of desired material was provided, again including small arms, light artillery and trucks. This time the United States War Department advised Canadian officials that it had no objection to the shipment of small arms but that the heavier items such as anti-aircraft artillery should be withheld until a Chinese port was open. Agreeing to these terms, the Mutual Aid Board assembled and quickly shipped a third shipment in mid-May, this time limited to small arms. By mid-August, with its major cities in ruins, Japan had surrendered. The Mutual Aid Board reported that although hostilities with the Japanese had ceased, there were some materials previously ordered by the Chinese that were “so close to completion that it would have been uneconomical to halt production.” It was decided that these items would be completed and shipped, and that their cost would be covered by Mutual Aid funds.

Chinese requests for postwar reconstruction supplies from Canada had appeared as early as November 1944, when Ambassador Liu Shishun requested a Canadian credit of $50 million. At the time, External Affairs rejected the idea on the grounds that providing the Nationalists with funds might encourage Chiang Kai-shek to reserve his own spending for the purchase of

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242 Victor Odlum seems to have been the only Canadian official to openly suggest that Canada should attempt to keep Chiang Kai-shek in power. See Wrong, no. 1129, DCER, vol. 11: 1944-1945, 1827 (5 Feb 1945).
244 Bryce, 162.
245 Ibid.
246 Bryce does not elaborate on this point, leaving some ambiguity as to whether the supplies were ever shipped. However, the context of his statement does seem to suggest they were provided to the Chinese.
munitions for use in a civil war.\textsuperscript{247} Such a cautious decision went many degrees further than anything seen before by Canada’s leadership. The rationale at External Affairs was that by funding Chinese projects, even humanitarian reconstruction projects, Canada would help to liberate resources that Chiang could allocate to his post-war army. Presumably, this logic would imply that direct military assistance like that provided by the Mutual Aid Board was even less wise. Clearly, a major ideological fault line separated the officials at External Affairs from their colleagues at the Mutual Aid Board and also from Mackenzie King. Though it is difficult to fathom how Canadian politicians could completely ignore the advice of their China specialists who suggested that Canada should exercise caution, this is precisely what happened. In the spring of 1945, Chinese representatives again approached Canada, requesting $220 million in reconstruction and military aid. This time, the request was forwarded to a more receptive committee. Kim Nossal’s research revealed that over the renewed objections of individuals like Sydney Pierce at External Affairs, the committee suggested to Cabinet that “while there were political and economic risks involved in credits to China the risks might well be considered worth running, in the interest of improving the well-being of China, and improving in turn trade prospects.”\textsuperscript{248} Despite a tight Canadian budget, King sided with Howe in rebuffing the arguments of the Minister of Finance, and according to Nossal, argued that Canada “was certainly bound to get the market if we preserved a real friendship with the Chinese.”\textsuperscript{249} Chinese officials were happy to encourage this notion. Liu Shishun, for instance, frequently suggested that in China he saw a great potential market for many Canadian products.\textsuperscript{250} Whetting the appetite of Canadian politicians eager to replace the profitable pre-war trade relationship with Japan, Liu emphasized

\textsuperscript{247} Nossal, “Business as Usual,” 141.  
\textsuperscript{248} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{249} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{250} “Defends Part China Plays in War on Jap,” Hamilton Spectator, 22 Jan 1945.
the practical needs of his country in the context of post-war rebuilding, suggesting:

“Development of good modern roads and the need for road-building machinery after the war would be another outlet, no doubt, for Canada’s industries.”251

Discussions of the credit to China continued during the summer. In September 1945, Chinese officials requested a loan in the amount of $100 million to buy Canadian goods deemed “necessary for the prosecution of the war and for the immediate period following the peace.”252 Again it was argued that although China’s credit risk was unfavourable, there were reasons that the proposal should go forward. This was driven by the belief that the credit would further enhance “goodwill” in China, and lead to trade advantages in the future. Later that month the Mutual Aid Board agreed to a proposal which included a $25 million credit for military hardware and a $35 million credit for reconstruction supplies – all conditional on an additional cash purchase of $15 million. The ordnance programme included pistols, Sten guns, Bren machine guns, Bofors, anti-tank rifles, anti-tank guns, anti-aircraft guns, self-propelled mounts, field equipment, range-finders, binoculars, ammunition, and motor vehicles.253 Even before the Mutual Aid Board approved the proposal, most of these items had already been produced, seeming to suggest that Howe and his colleagues were eager to empty Canadian military warehouses while something could be gained from selling the equipment. The delivery of these munitions was delayed, however, after reports in early November 1945 indicated, in Wrong’s words, that the “outbreak in China of open fighting between the Communists and the forces of the Central Government has brought about a state of affairs in which it is even more than usually

251 “Progressing Toward Aim of Democratic Government,” Hamilton Spectator, 20 Jan 1945. In the United States, Madame Chiang had made similar statements about lucrative post-war opportunities in China. In March 1943, during a press conference, she emphasized “We have great need of your engineering and technical skill and of your manufactured products. In return, we have raw materials and we are a market of 450,000,000 people.” Pakula, 437.
difficult to predict the course of events.”\textsuperscript{254} Later that month, a memorandum by China specialists at External Affairs highlighted the urgent need to consider the political repercussions of providing further munitions to China. Even more significant, they argued, was “the effect which the extension of such aid may have on the future relations of Canada with China,” especially when one considered that the Communist movement in China was widespread and seemed to have very solid grounds for support.\textsuperscript{255} In light of the potential risks, External Affairs suggested that Canada should assume a “hands-off” policy. Robertson seemed to agree, telling the prime minister that the wisest course of action would be to honour the original credit but “stipulate that none of this amount be spent on munitions.”\textsuperscript{256} Ironically, a short-lived ceasefire between the Nationalists and Communists arranged by American negotiator General George Marshall in early 1946 provided Howe and the Mutual Aid Board with the excuse they needed to push for delivery of the Canadian munitions. Citing the economic consequences of halting production, Howe overruled External Affairs once again and convinced Cabinet to approve the deal, which it did on 5 February 1946.

During the next two years, as civil war raged in China, the Canadian government provided $35 million in reconstruction supplies and $16 million of the proposed $25 million in military hardware.\textsuperscript{257} As King predicted in 1946, these loans would never be fully repaid.\textsuperscript{258} The story did not end there. In 1947, Howe approved Chiang Kai-shek’s purchase of 174 Canadian Mosquito fighter-bombers – an order which also included guns, bombs, and ammunition.\textsuperscript{259} The Mosquito was a twin-engined fighter and bomber made of wood which was recognized as “one

\textsuperscript{254} Wrong, no. 148, DCER, vol. 11: 1944-1945, 240 (1 Nov 1945).
\textsuperscript{255} Third Political Division, no. 149, DCER, vol. 11: 1944-1945, 241 (27 Nov 1945).
\textsuperscript{256} Robertson, no. 150, DCER, vol. 11: 1944-1945, 242-43 (29 Nov 1945).
\textsuperscript{257} Bryce, 356.
\textsuperscript{258} William L.M. King, Diaries, 8 Feb 1946, 1.
\textsuperscript{259} Nossal, “Business as Usual,” 143.
of the the fastest, most versatile, and most manoeuverable aeoplanes of the whole Allied Armoury.” Two high-ranking officials at External Affairs, Arthur Menzies and Escott Reid, strongly objected to the sale, arguing that it “would only serve to strengthen the hands of China’s militarist clique […] and thereby postpone much needed internal social and political reforms,” not to mention the grave political repercussions that Canada might face if these fighter-bombers were used in a bloody civil war. These arguments were ignored, however, even when the Chinese reneged on their offer to pay for most of the order in cash, and instead requested that the total cost, some $6 million, be applied to their munitions credit. Fearing that their requests would be denied, the Chinese again sought Howe’s help. According to Kim Nossal, Howe was “happy at the prospect of clearing the obsolete Mosquitos from War Assets Corporation warehouses,” and again got his way. The Mosquitos arrived in China by early 1948, marking Canada’s last major shipment of military hardware to the Nationalist regime, and were reportedly used in Nationalist air force attacks on Communist-held cities – claiming the lives of untold numbers of Chinese civilians.

During the final two years of the war, Canada allocated nearly $2.5 billion worth of Canadian-produced goods at no charge to Allied nations, mostly to the United Kingdom and Commonwealth countries. Under the Canadian Mutual Aid Program, over $39 million worth of

260 Kennedy, 27. The Mosquito was manufactured in Canada by the de Havilland Aircraft Company and was colloquially known as the “Wooden Wonder” and the “Timber Terror.” The aircraft was praised by Hermann Göring in 1943: “It makes me furious when I see the Mosquito. I turn green yellow with envy. The British, who can afford aluminum better than we can, knock together a beautiful wooden aircraft that every piano factory over there is building, and they give it a speed which they have now increased yet again. […] There is nothing the British do not have.” The Pathfinder Museum, “Pathfinder Aircraft – De Havilland Mosquito,” RAF Brampton Wyton Henlow, Royal Air Force, Online <http://www.raf.mod.uk/rafbramptonwytonhenlow/aboutus/dehavillandmosquito.cfm>.
261 Nossal, “Business as Usual,” 144.
262 Ibid., 144.
263 Ibid., 134.
material was shipped to the Chinese.” In total, including monetary loans and credit that did not fall under the lend lease program, Nossal suggests that “$100 million was given or loaned to the Nationalist government, much of it for military equipment.”

Table 3. Canadian Mutual Aid Expenditures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COUNTRY</th>
<th>TOTAL AID ($MILLIONS)</th>
<th>PROPORTION OF TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>2,112.150</td>
<td>85.47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soviet Union</td>
<td>167.255</td>
<td>6.77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>87.325</td>
<td>3.53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>39.742</td>
<td>1.61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>25.105</td>
<td>1.02%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>18.826</td>
<td>0.76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>15.279</td>
<td>0.62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>British West Indies</td>
<td>5.518</td>
<td>0.22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>0.012</td>
<td>~0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,471.212</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Considering that China received a mere 1.61 percent of all Canadian aid, it is clear that the China programme occupied a miniscule fraction of the total Mutual Aid bill. This was partly due to the logistical constraints of shipping cumbersome military equipment to a Chinese regime which had no access to its ports or overland shipping routes. As Barbara Tuchman has noted, “The effort to supply China, and the air and ground forces in China, presented the greatest logistical challenge of the [Second World War], probably of any war.” As a result of this unique situation, from 1941 to 1944, during what Zhang Baijia has described as “the most difficult stage of the war when China most needed foreign assistance”, aid to China was small, a mere $280 million. In 1945, after the ground routes into China had been reopened, Chiang Kai-shek received aid worth $1.07 billion, nearly four times the cumulative total of the preceding four years. For the majority of the Sino-Canadian partnership, however, China and Canada were both at the mercy

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264 Kennedy, 421.
266 Kennedy, 421.
267 Bryce, 158.
of the American-controlled “Hump” which reserved the vast majority of traffic for American purposes.\textsuperscript{269}

\textsuperscript{269} Though large discrepancies exist between American and Chinese estimates for American Lend-Lease during the war, figures from the “China White Paper” suggest that the United States provided $846 million worth of aid to China from 1941 to the end of the war, $517 million of which was strictly “military equipment.” See Zhang Baijia, “China’s Quest for Foreign Military Aid,” 303.
CHAPTER 5: Conclusion

As this discussion has shown, despite voluminous evidence that Canadian officials, and Mackenzie King himself, were fearful of Japanese Imperial aggression as early as 1938, policymakers consistently prioritized the financial gains that came along with the booming trade in strategic materials vital to the Japanese war machine. As the Dagongbao (Independent) reported in December 1943: “For twenty years, thanks to Britain’s support, Japan was able to have her way in the Far East [...] Our British friends must deeply deplore that chapter of history.” During this period, Canada unerringly marched in step with Britain, and so too must deeply regret its involvement in helping to fuel Japan’s devastating invasion of China. Although unpleasant to acknowledge, it is revealing that trade ties with Japan were only severed after its direct attacks on Americans at Pearl Harbor and Canadians at Hong Kong in 1941. These two Japanese assaults claimed the lives of 2,400 and 550 military personnel, respectively, while China had by then suffered military and civilian losses into the millions.

Following these attacks, Canada focused its attention and aid efforts solely on China, suddenly offering it the military assistance that China had desperately sought as early as 1937. In contrast to the selfless fundraising efforts carried out by the Canadian public, declassified documents and correspondence between officials at the highest levels of government unequivocally demonstrate that the primary impetus behind Canada’s aid program for China was the desire to establish advantageous post-war trade relations with the Chinese. As expressed by several high-ranking Canadian politicians, including Mackenzie King himself, Canada wanted to

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271 For losses at Pearl Harbor see Williamson Murray and Allan R. Millett, A War to be Won: Fighting the Second World War (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001) 178; for Canadian losses at Hong Kong see Canada Remembers Hong Kong at Veterans Affairs Canada.
ensure it too had access to a substantial slice of the ‘Chinese pie’. Thus, King’s record in both instances – with Japan from 1937-1941, and China from 1942-1948 – suggests a similar pattern of profiting from a distant conflict. The costs of these policies, at least for the Chinese, were disastrous. Estimates vary, but between 1937 and 1949, tens of millions of Chinese war-related deaths were recorded. In this sense, the prime minister’s chilling diary entry of 1937 reveals much more than Canada’s planned military commitment in the Second World War. More precisely, this statement reflected a deep-seated belief in the inferiority of Asian peoples – a notion which ensured that an “Asian conflict” need not be taken seriously, and which made questions about the morality of Canadian businesses’ profits at the expense of Asian lives much easier to ignore. Tragically, Canada’s opportunistic attitude in the Pacific indicates that “business interests” were worth the lives of men after all, so long as they were not ‘white men’. Though it remains impossible to measure quantitatively the correlation between Canada’s policies and Chinese loss of life during this period, this shameful saga engineered by Canadian officials leaves a lasting blemish on Canada’s otherwise admirable efforts in Europe and Hong Kong during the Second World War.

Of course, one should not minimize the degree to which Canadian policymakers felt constrained by the actions of the British and Americans in East Asia. Nevertheless, first-hand evidence has demonstrated that the partnerships Canada established in Asia during this period were motivated primarily by unilateral economic self-interest and not by humanitarian concern. Nor were they fully motivated by a grand strategy imposed by the United States or Great Britain. All this is particularly perplexing when one considers King’s correspondence with Song Meiling, 272 For the most rigorous breakdowns of Chinese death tolls between 1937 and 1949, see Rudolph J. Rummel, China’s Bloody Century: Genocide and Mass Murder Since 1900 (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1991) 103-204.
Chiang Kai-shek, and other Chinese officials, who were evidently pivotal in securing Canadian supplies for their country. Whether these exchanges between the two country’s leadership reflected real friendships, or merely masked a form of strategic duplicity may never be fully known. Recent research into the international exploits of Song Meiling may hint at an effective Chinese strategy borne of desperation which was to a certain extent successful in cajoling allies into providing assistance to China. While more thorough examination of the recently released Chiang Kai-shek diaries may shed further light on the Chinese perspective, Mackenzie King’s policies in the Far East remain difficult to explain, even with access to his voluminous diaries. Seemingly impressed by Madame Chiang, and increasingly sympathetic to her husband, it is not easy to explain why the prime minister repeatedly sided with individuals like C.D. Howe, who were clearly more concerned about bolstering Canada’s future financial prospects, rather than truly assisting the Chinese. In light of these revealing choices, it would seem that King was simply more interested in securing his country’s interests, even if this came at the expense of Asian lives. In this sense, perhaps he did not significantly diverge from Churchill’s archaic view of the Chinese as mere “pigtails.”

Such an evaluation of the prime minister’s leadership need not diverge from the many positive evaluations of King’s time in power, as it could be argued that both national interest and real friendship can co-exist, and that Mackenzie King was particularly adept at separating his personal and public feelings in order to make policy decisions in Canada’s best interest – or perhaps in the interest of his re-election prospects. To many, this is the very definition of what makes a great leader. The ability to separate personal feelings from executive decision-making may come as no surprise to historians who have evaluated Mackenzie King’s entire twenty-one years in office. Indeed, when twenty-five historians were asked to participate in a survey of
Canada’s prime ministers in 1997, Mackenzie King was ranked by fourteen historians as Canada’s best. While none admired King as a man, few denied his political brilliance. This dichotomy is perhaps best summarized by Hector Mackenzie, who suggested in a recent article that “King’s circumspect and unheroic approach was attuned to the mood of the nation that he led. […] Seen from the perspective of those who wanted and expected more, however, King’s posture could be depicted as unhelpful and unreliable.”

Suggesting what Mackenzie King truly felt is of course, simply speculation. What is certain is that more investigation into Mackenzie King’s motives for helping the Chinese is required before the two contradictory realities can truly be reconciled. Nevertheless, this Canadian leader fails when judged by his own rigorous standards of good leadership. In 1936, King stated “It is what we prevent, rather than what we do that counts most in Government.” Under the prime minister’s stewardship, the Canadian government provided the Japanese with arms and strategic materials well into its war in China, eventually ceasing this activity in time to provide the Chinese Nationalist armies with military hardware for use in a major civil war. By his own definition, King and his government failed miserably. Their policies did little to prevent unnecessary bloodshed in the Far East. Perhaps King’s most famous quotation of all: “A true man does not only stand up for himself, he stands up for those that do not have the ability to [do so]” is a maxim poorly upheld in these events and King’s own role in seeing them through. The behaviour of the Canadian Government during the Japanese invasion and occupation of China, whether ‘good politics’ or not, can find justification only in the government’s financial portfolio, for away from his private diaries, King did little to live up to his own pronouncement about

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 justice and defense of the vulnerable. Compounding this failure, the efforts of Canadian policymakers to transform postwar China into a friendly trade partner were disastrous. With the victory of Mao Zedong over Chiang Kai-shek in 1949, Canada could never hope to be compensated, let alone thanked by the new government in Beijing, for military aid given to the Guomindang. Relations between Canada and the People’s Republic of China thus began on shaky foundations, the effects of which plagued diplomatic dialogue between the two for the next two decades.
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SECONDARY MATERIAL


