

Training and Advising Foreign Militaries: We've Done This Before

A Monograph

by

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Abstract

Training and Advising Foreign Militaries: We've Done This Before by Lieutenant Colonel David S. Pierce, U.S.A., 55 pages.

The United States has a long history in the development of foreign militaries. Over the past eight years, the United States spent an insurmountable amount of time and resources developing the Iraq and Afghanistan Armies. Yet, in 2003, political leaders forgot the obligation of developing genuine strategic objectives, leaving the military without a mission beyond the defeat of its enemies.¹

In World War II, President Franklin D. Roosevelt's forward thinking focused his political and military philosophy on short-term and long-term objectives for the benefit of America's post-war national interests. The United States government implemented the activities to accomplish these goals with the training program in North Africa. Politically, it strengthened an old alliance and ensured the United States role as a global power. Militarily, it enabled the Allied forces to engage the Axis, while America continued to build the world's most powerful army. The training program flourished developing a formidable army that led the Allied advance in Italy.

The United States employed the same logic to accomplish strategic objectives for the China-Burma-India Theater of Operations. The United States Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson determined that continued economic and military aid was the best means to keep the Chinese fighting. Subsequent to the 1942 Central Burma defeat, the War Department ordered the improvement of the combat efficiency of the Chinese Army. The intent, strengthen the existing front in the China-Burma-India Theater through the Chinese Nationalist, led by Chaing Kai-shek. Develop a substantial force capable of winning battles that augmented the Pacific Theater by keeping a significant number of Japanese Army Divisions occupied.

In 1950, the United States government provided arms and equipment to build a Vietnamese force capable of providing internal security while defending against the spread of communism. In 1954, the United States military assumed responsibility of the training mission. It began with a small force of less than two hundred advisers. The adviser teams developed a capable force to uphold the American favored Vietnamese government while preventing the communist from gaining total control of Vietnam. The development of the Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces occurred through training centers, schools, tactical maneuvers and finally combat operations. From the beginning, American advisers led the way, providing the subject matter expertise to train and equip a fledgling army.

The United States military ignored history while planning and executing post invasion operations. As American Armed Forces advanced deep into Iraq in 2003, commanders and political leaders alike never anticipated the need to conduct a rearmament, training and advisory mission. It was not until concerns for internal security increased that commanders determined the necessity to recruit, arm and train an Iraqi Army that could assist with the stabilization of a country consumed in chaos. Two years too late, the United States military developed an adaptive comprehensive training program, resulting in an Army capable of conducting independent and combined operations to protect its borders.

¹ James Dobbins, interview by Pete Connors, Fort Leavenworth, KS, December 13, 2005.

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Introduction

Just before midnight on November 7, 1942, the United States and Great Britain began Operation TORCH against French North Africa. United States Navy transport ships, as part of the Allied expeditionary force, began disembarkation of 109,000 men destined for the shores of Fedala, Morocco. Before the end of the month, the former enemy, French Vichy military forces joined the Allies in the fight to clear North Africa and, ultimately, France from German occupation.² By December, French West African forces were participating in the attack on Nazi-held Tunis.³ American commanders were focused on defeating the German Africa Corps, but, necessity added an unexpected training mission to the already over tasked American Army.⁴ That training mission enabled the French North African forces to fight alongside the American and British forces.

The Allied Forces Command preferred to use the French forces as rear guards, protecting lines of communications against enemy paratroopers and other saboteurs, enabling the better-armed American and British forces to remain on the front lines executing offensive operations.⁵ Based on the condition of their arms and equipment the Allied commanders believed that French forces would have suffered devastating losses against the more modern German Army. Politically, however, the French forces needed to fight as they performed well in battle, but the inadequate arms and equipment quickly became a problem. The Americans were convinced the North African troops proved their usefulness and it would be militarily justifiable to rearm and train them as rapidly as possible.⁶ Efforts to do so became a priority for General Eisenhower's Allied Expeditionary Forces Headquarters and General Marshall's War Plans Division. The American forces did not arrive in North Africa with the expectations of training a foreign army. The

² George F. Howe, *Northwest Africa: Seizing the Initiative in the West* (Washington D.C.: Department of the Army, Chief of Military History, 1957), 101.

³ North African Agreement with Darlan and Allies, *Agreement with French, Allied Forces Headquarters*, 1942. Vol. N-15662. 1.

⁴ Howe, 123.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 327, 356.

⁶ Marcel Vigneras, *Rearming the French* (Washington D.C.: Center of Military History, United States Army, 1989), 57.

political and military necessity was significant to the long-term war effort. Developing and executing the mission resulted in a prepared, effective French North African Army that led the allies in breaking the Gustav Line in Italy and seizing Rome.

Training foreign militaries is a mission the United States Army has effectively accomplished throughout its history. Nevertheless, in 2003, the American Army ignored its past, entering a war without considering the necessity of arming, training and advising the Iraqi Army. Historical case studies show that military commanders accomplished strategic and military objectives through training and advising programs. Military commanders must anticipate the needs of the operational environment, which they intend to execute. As the United States military occupied Iraq in 2003, it did not have a mission to arm and train the army it had just defeated because military leaders failed to anticipate the needs of a nation without security forces. Forward thinking commanders must recognize the associated missions of regime change or in this case, the de-Baathification process. The Bush administration was hesitant in its decision to implement one of two models of nation building. The models were quite different and a detailed explanation is beyond the scope of this paper. The significance of either model is the role the military plays during the nation building process.⁷ As a result, the United States military did not incorporate a plan to train a security force at the conclusion of combat operations. Military leaders cannot blame political decisions for the omission of critical military objectives, especially when pertaining to nation building.

The need for internal stability quickly became a political and military necessity. The Iraqi Army disintegrated; most soldiers had simply gone home to avoid combat engagements with coalition forces.⁸ Internal security concerns increased, the United States Department of Defense began recruiting, arming and training Iraqi men, intended to assist in stabilizing the restless country. American soldiers and

⁷ James Dobbins, Interview by Pete Connors, Fort Leavenworth, KS, December 13, 3. Ambassador James Dobbins is currently director of the International Security and Defense Policy Center at the RAND Corporation. Previously, he served as assistant secretary of state for Europe; special assistant to the president for the Western Hemisphere; the George W. Bush Administration's first special envoy for Afghanistan; and the Bush Administration's representative to the Afghan opposition in the wake of September 11, 2001.

⁸ Ibid., 6.

marines developed training programs for Iraq, just as they had done in North Africa sixty-one years earlier. Few of the officers and non-commissioned officers embarking on this difficult task realized that training foreign armies is not a new mission for American conventional forces, yet that belief existed at the start of the training mission. They considered this task a burden because it detracted from combat operations. In the beginning, the Iraq and Afghanistan training missions suffered significant setbacks, mainly in the arming and training methodology. The training units comprised of ad hoc personnel, who were inexperienced. The trainers focused more on solving daily problems of fielding equipment vice training the force. The inefficiencies set the initiatives back two years in Iraq and one year in Afghanistan.⁹ Over time, the United States military created and implemented a comprehensive training program. The Iraq and Afghanistan militaries gained the capability of conducting independent and combined operations to protect their borders.

In June 1940, the fall of France transformed American attitudes towards National Security.¹⁰ For the first time, Americans feared events abroad and concluded that the defense of other nations was vital to their own.¹¹ President Roosevelt used the urgency created by those events to exploit his policy of rearmament and aid to Great Britain. Congress agreed and appropriated ten billion dollars for the rearmament program.¹² The United States viewed the arming and aid program as a mechanism to defeat a common enemy while leaving behind an independent force capable of protecting its own borders. In the months preceding Operation TORCH, Roosevelt, despite strong objections from Great Britain, maintained diplomatic relations with the French Vichy Government.¹³ Roosevelt and his military

⁹ James Dobbins, Interview by Pete Connors, Fort Leavenworth, KS, December 13, 7.

¹⁰ Julian Jackson, *The Fall of France, the Nazi Invasion of 1940* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 238. The fall of France brought panic to the United States but particularly those in Washington D.C., Massive military spending bills rushed through Congress, and over the next year Roosevelt edged closer to the British, bringing the country to the brink of war with Germany even before the attack on Pearl Harbor.

¹¹ George C. Herring, *From Colony to Superpower, U.S. Foreign Relations Since 1776* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 485.

¹² *Ibid.*, 485,520.

¹³ James J. Dougherty, *The Politics to Wartime Aid: American Economic Assistance to France and French Northwest Africa, 1940-1946* (Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 1978), 18.

advisers harbored the belief that the Vichy could be more useful to America when the time came to unify France.¹⁴ A unified France meant a large recruitment pool and additional troops fighting in the alliance against the Axis. This was crucial as the War Department was hurriedly developing its military from the interwar period. Meanwhile, under the advice of the Army Chief of Staff, General George C. Marshall, and The Secretary of War, Henry L. Stimson, the War Department employed the same logic to accomplish strategic objectives in Asia. The intent was to strengthen an existing front in China and Burma through the Chinese Nationalist government led by Chiang Kai-shek. After several years of fighting the Japanese and the Communist Chinese, led by Mao Tse-tung, Chinese Nationalist forces needed arms, equipment and training. Following the attack on Pearl Harbor, Roosevelt moved quickly to expand his policy of providing the necessary resources to all who oppose the common enemy.¹⁵ The rearming and training program strengthen an alliance and opened strategic mainland bases to stage bombers to attack Japanese strong holds and eventually Tokyo. Additionally, it created a significant force capable of winning battles and augmented the Pacific Theater by keeping a large number of Japanese Army Divisions occupied. The United States military would again achieve its strategic objectives through rearming and training Chinese National forces.¹⁶ Finally, the United States government used a rearmament and training program in an attempt to strengthen a weak Army of the Republic of Vietnam. Doing so prevented the spread of communism throughout Indochina, but more specifically, kept the Soviet Union from crossing into Western Europe. Once again, the United States, out of strategic necessity, found itself assisting its oldest ally, France, with a war to reclaim its colonial empire. Initially, the Department of Defense worked to accomplish this without committing an extensive amount of troops or creating the environment to cause the Soviet Union or Communist Chinese to invade Vietnam. In the beginning, the United States government provided economic aid and military equipment to the French so

¹⁴ Julian Jackson, *France: The Dark Years, 1940-44* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 447.

¹⁵ Maochun Yu, *The Dragon's War, Allied Operations and the Fate of China 1937-1947* (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 2006), 34.

¹⁶ Herring, 574-575.

they could equip and train the Vietnamese Army.¹⁷ Following the 1954 Dien Bien Phu defeat, the American Army re-organized and trained the Army of the Republic of Vietnam with a small force of less than two hundred advisers. Their mission was to develop a capable force to uphold the American sanctioned Vietnamese government and prevent the Communist Republic of Vietnam from gaining total control of Indochina.

What success has the United States military achieved in rearming and training foreign militaries in a time of war? The United States military has successfully trained and rearmed foreign militaries since World War II, most notably in French North Africa, China and later the Army of the Republic of Vietnam. Success is not whether America is victorious at the conclusion of the war, but whether or not the fundamentals of rearming and training a foreign military served their strategic necessity, that is the foreign military obtains the comprehensive ability to engage in combined arms operations in combat conditions, independently and in conjunction with United States Armed Forces.

Training foreign militaries is not new to the American military. Yet in 2003, the United States government ordered its forces to war in the Middle East, never considering the strategic importance to implement and manage an extensive training program such as those executed in World War II and Vietnam. Training programs create or strengthen a foreign army with the intention of providing peace and stability to the region with minimal or no American military presence. Therefore, training programs are a necessity in accomplishing the nation's strategic objectives and must be included in all future military plans.

¹⁷ The Army of the Republic of Vietnam did not exist at this time. Following the Geneva Accords and the divide of the country, the Vietnamese Army re-designated as the Army of the Republic of Vietnam.

NORTH AFRICA

In May 1940, German forces managed to break through French defenses forcing them to negotiate a truce with the Nazi Leader, Adolf Hitler. The agreement spawned the beginning of the French Vichy government. Early on the French were content with the German occupation, but soon became intolerable of the actions and policies the fascist party implemented. Forced labor and unjust imprisonment turned most French against the German occupation and rule. Great Britain was in danger of succumbing to the powerful Nazi's, an unendurable act to the United States government. By early 1941, a new sentiment emerged in America and the country realized they would face another war in Europe, so they immediately began the process of building a powerful army.¹⁸ President Roosevelt believed the best interest for the United States of America was the continued existence of Great Britain as a world power. Convincing Congress of the same, they appropriated the funds to produce war materials to build the American Army and strengthen a suffocated British military. France and China also reaped the benefits of American production lines, through the lend-lease program, which enhanced the Allied forces and created a formidable American Army.¹⁹ This section discusses the significant role the American military and national resources played in rearming the French, beginning with the North African Campaign and lasting through the fall of the Third Reich. The discussion carries through the strategic training needs of the North African Army, what the training program entailed, and the significant results of the training program.

The North African Environment

In May 1940, Great Britain's Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, received a phone call from the French Prime Minister, Paul Reynaud, stating,

“We have been defeated...we have lost the battle.”²⁰

¹⁸ Charles E. Kirkpatrick, *An Unknown Future and a Doubtful Present, Writing the Victory Plan of 1941* (Washington D.C.: Center of Military History, United States Army, 1992), 35.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 40.

²⁰ Jackson, *The Fall of France, the Nazi Invasion of 1940*, 9.

France became an occupied territory and the Germans directly threatened London's security from the West Coast of France. In June of the same year, the government of the United States implemented a policy to provide arms and material to the British²¹ and any nation willing to stand against Germany's aggression.²² This policy grew to the well-known Lend-Lease Act, originally intended to aid England with goods and war materials, expanded to include over forty countries and became an invaluable source of military and civilian supply.²³ American resources were nearly limitless. Approximately one quarter of all military material destined for war against Axis forces shipped from American factories directly to the Soviet Union. Great Britain's limited resources fell dangerously low, increasing her dependency on the materials from United States factories.²⁴

The Italian ruler, Benito Mussolini's declaration of war against Great Britain threatened British interest in the Middle East. Axis control of the Suez Canal and oil reserves in the Egyptian deserts placed an even greater strain on British resources.²⁵ Shortly after the United States of America's declaration of war against the Axis, Roosevelt committed American forces to conduct combat operations in North Africa. Roosevelt's insistence to remain in communications with the French Vichy proved vital to building an alliance with the French.²⁶ Several weeks of negotiations persuaded the Vichy government officials and military leaders to forgo their support to Germany and join the Allied nations in liberating all of North Africa and later France.²⁷

At the Casablanca Conference, leaders of the Allied countries addressed the observations of French deficiencies addressed earlier. It led to the Anfa Plan, an agreement between, Roosevelt,

²¹ R. G. D. Allen, "Mutual Aid Between the United States and the British Empire 1941-1945," *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society* 109, no. 3 (1946): 1.

²² Herring, 520.

²³ Dougherty, 3.

²⁴ Mark Perry, *Partners in Command, George Marshall and Dwight Eisenhower in War and Peace* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2007), 147.

²⁵ Douglas Porch, *The Path to Victory, the Mediterranean Theater in World War II* (New York: Farrar, Staus and Giroux, 2004), 40.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 280.

²⁷ Vigneras, 21.

Churchill, Generals Henri Giraud, Commander of French Ground forces and Charles de Gaulle, Commander of the Free French forces, on the rearmament plan for French North Africa. The plan set the North African divisions at ten along with fighter-bombers, fighters, and transport planes.²⁸ During a 1943 New Years address, President Roosevelt stressed the significance of this plan.

“...Thanks to American materiel, the restored French Army will be able to resume at the side of the United Nations a strong and effective action for the liberation of France and of Europe, and for the achievement of a just peace.”²⁹

The North African Training Need

Following the fall of France, the remainder of the French Army consisted of small forces from multiple countries scattered across the French North African colonies. Although most were veterans of World War II, they were not the force that faced the Germans in May 1940. They lacked modern equipment, but more importantly, the training necessary to fight as one united Army. British and American field commanders, together with General Giraud, identified an immediate need to supply French units with anti-aircraft and other equipment. General Eisenhower agreed and made a direct request to the Combined Chiefs of Staff to provide the French with tanks, anti-aircraft and anti-tank equipment. General Eisenhower understood the immediate delivery of equipment demonstrated, to the North African's, America's good intentions.³⁰ The identified needs marked the beginning of a large-scale rearmament program, which converted the considerable sized, yet poorly equipped transition army into a capable striking force with modern arms and the ability of intervening in North Africa and future battlefields.³¹

²⁸ Ibid., 38. Anfa Plan; agreement determines the number of French Divisions the amount of material the United States government provides in North Africa. It was important for British involvement as they often assumed complete control over Lend Lease materiel's, forgetting about other Allies in need.

²⁹ Ibid., 32. Rearming and training the Vichy meant the United States Army did not have to commit as many Army Divisions to North Africa as originally planned. Rearming the French allowed the American military to continue building its forces within the Continental United States.

³⁰ Harry C. Butcher, *My Three Years with Eisenhower* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1946), 108.

³¹ Vigneras, 23. Only, a reconstituted French Army could restore French prestige. It was essential that the initiation of the rearmament plan happened at once.

The availability of cargo space presented Eisenhower with the first problem in the rearmament process.³² Planners carefully designed a system that enabled rearmament supplies and equipment as well as combat sustainment material for Allied combatant units. To manage the multiple demands for arms and equipment General Eisenhower created the Joint Rearmament Committee to oversee all request and shipping requirements. The Joint Rearmament Committee consisted of nine members who were under the direct control of General Eisenhower's Chief of Staff, Major General Walter "Beetle" Smith.³³ The committee played a major role in the rehabilitation of the French North African forces.³⁴

The second problem concerned training the French units on the new American military equipment. General Eisenhower's field commanders recognized the need for French units to effectively operate, care and maintain the new equipment immediately upon receipt. The Allied Forces Headquarters issued the training mission instructions to Lieutenant General Mark W. Clark and the newly established Fifth United States Army, explaining the purpose and scope of the training for French units.³⁵ The Fifth Army assumed responsibility for the development and executions of the training, their duties were vitally important for the French military inclusion as major contributors in future combat operations.³⁶

The weapons and equipment arrived in April 1943; training immediately began preparing troops to use the new resources. American trainers began making ready two French infantry divisions, two armored regiments, three tank destroyer battalions, three reconnaissance battalions, twelve anti-aircraft battalions and ten truck companies. Later American planes began to arrive at sixty per month. Aerial gunners and pilot training could not begin until April and June respectively.³⁷ When the first shipments

³² Howe, 499.

³³ Butcher, 108. Eisenhower placed the agency, Joint Rearmament Committee (JRC), directly under the authority of his chief of staff. JRC responsibilities and functions were to centralize all equipment requests from the French, develop a program for the rehabilitation of the French Armed Forces, to undertake all matters of coordination with the French authorities, to lend lease administration, and other concerns with the rearmament of the French.

³⁴ Vigneras, 25.

³⁵ Ibid., 27.

³⁶ Mark W. Clark, *Calculated Risk* (New York: Harper and Brothers 1950), 141.

³⁷ Howe, 499-500.

of combat equipment arrived in North Africa, French units paraded it down the streets of Casablanca; for the French populace, the occasion symbolized the rebirth of their armed forces.³⁸

The North African Training Program

The United States Fifth Army officially assumed the mission of training French forces in December 1942 with whatever spare arms and equipment they could find. They provided technical training to units designated to receive new modern equipment and supplies from American manufacturers. In May 1943, the Fifth Army mission became twofold; give maximum training assistance to the French and ensured frontline units received adequate training and equipment through comprehensive inspections. Units received limited training in infantry tactics and amphibious landings, as most troops were seasoned fighters. This dedicated the majority of training time to teaching French personnel the capabilities, maintenance and repair of the new American equipment.³⁹ Following Operation TORCH, Lieutenant General Clark, identified several Ally deficiencies during amphibious operations and subsequent land battles. He placed Brigadier General Allen F. Kingman in charge of carrying out the training program and by June 1943, he had the program in full swing.⁴⁰

To capitalize on future operations General Kingman incorporated the lessons learned from the Tunisian invasion into the training programs. He followed the basic principles defined in current Army training manuals, but emphasizing the aspects which American forces were deficient. As an example, they provided instruction on basic tactical principles, such as seizing key terrain, establishing effective fields of observation for artillery observers and the correct application of the disposition and depth of forces. Additionally, basic map reading skills, patrolling skills, movement techniques, ambush avoidance, developing plans and accurate reporting required additional training.⁴¹

³⁸ Vigneras, 60.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 89, 230-231.

⁴⁰ Fifth Army History: From Activation to the Fall of Naples 5 Jan - 6 Oct 1943 "1945", 11.

⁴¹ Howe, 671.

The United States Fifth Army attached training teams to French units while undergoing rearmament fielding. The training teams developed into the French Training Sections. The sections consisted of instructors for new equipment fielding and staff coordination teams. The new equipment instructors taught French trainers the operation, care and maintenance of American equipment. The staff coordination team's responsibilities included training observations and assessment reports back to Allied Forces Headquarters.⁴² Additionally, the United States Fifth Army provided training to French forces in amphibious operations at the newly established American Amphibious Training Center. This training served as the basis of French proficiency for the invasions of Sicily, Italy and France.

By November 1943, the French military organized their own training centers, which provided basic training to new soldiers. The French training programs followed the United States Army training manuals and doctrine; United States Army assigned advisers to each training center as liaisons to oversee operations. In addition to standard drill and ceremony, the recruits participated in three months of physical fitness, armament training, which focused on individual weapons, crew served weapons and light anti-tank weapon systems. Here the soldiers learned infantry tactics, survivability skills and signal communications. Following basic training, the soldiers moved to the replacement training centers for assignment to a French Expeditionary Force regiment. At the replacement training centers, they received advanced infantry tactics, vehicle drivers-maintenance training, heavy weapons gunnery training, maneuver tactical training and combined arms training. The culminating event consisted of combined arms training exercises with American Forces.⁴³ In all, they developed forty training centers for new recruits and existing soldiers. The French initiative to develop their own training facilities proved lucrative for the Allies, enabling the American training teams to maximize efficiencies.⁴⁴

⁴² Vigneras, 231. The United States Army trained French instructors how to operate and maintain the new equipment. Additionally, French trainers received training on tactics from the United States Army doctrine, which incorporated General Clark's lessons learned from the invasion of Tunisia.

⁴³ Howe, 180.

⁴⁴ Clark, 152. The United States Fifth Army could not have trained all of the French and later American forces. Creating French trainers best suited the efforts to create a unified French force.

North African Training Results

The 1943 rearmament and training program established by General Kingman made it possible for the United States military to reduce its combat forces in the Mediterranean and European theaters of operation by eight to ten divisions.⁴⁵ By September 1943, the United States Fifth Army in conjunction with the French Army, re-equipped or were in the process of re-equipping four infantry divisions, two armored divisions, a headquarters corps troops and several service units. They mobilized, rearmed, trained and deployed the Second Moroccan Infantry Division to the Italian Campaign in just seven months. On November 15, 1944, the training of French troops in North Africa under American guidance was over. General Kingman's organization accomplished what originally seemed like the impossible. They brought into combat action eight fully equipped divisions and three hundred supporting units.⁴⁶

There are three principle variables, which enabled the rearmament and training of French North African forces, to have accomplished such a substantial task. The first is General Kingman's leadership and his understanding to engage the mission through a combined effort between the French and American Armies. Kingman, a subject matter expert on United States military equipment, especially armor, also held an overwhelming knowledge of the French language and army organization. French officers praised him for his keen understanding of the training and material problems and his ability to work through setbacks to accomplish the mission.

The second variable contributing to the success of the program centered on creating the French-American training teams. Under Kingman's direction, the French training teams consisted of both American and French advisers. General Kingman's bipartite organizations created the openness necessary for accurate assessments of French units, it also made the development of training agreeable

⁴⁵ Vigneras, 401.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 89, 401. The French Training Section also mobilized and trained partial French units to one-third its table of organization. These units were rearmed and trained in France following D-Day 1944. They trained three divisions and forty supporting units, nineteen air squadrons and sixty supporting units, totaling approximately seventy thousand men.

amongst the French because it aligned with French capabilities and desires. The French representative acted as liaison between the French training section and the French unit commanders.⁴⁷

The final variable and the most significant result of the program was the performance of the French North African forces in battle. The Allied Force Headquarters ordered all French units to gain combat experience in the Italian Campaign. Vindication of the decision that led to the arming and training of French North African forces came promptly after their commitment to battle.⁴⁸ French forces operated in the mountainous sectors since their arrival in Italy; all of their soldiers were colonials who lived in the mountains of North Africa and could manage the terrain skillfully. It was in the mountains where they experienced hard, tough, bitter, fighting against the Germans. The French surprised the enemy, quickly seizing key terrain and in just two days of fighting, the Second Moroccan Division penetrated the mighty Gustav Line.⁴⁹ The Moroccan division sparked the Fifth United States Army's drive for Rome; the entire French Expeditionary Force demonstrated aggressiveness that impressed both Allied and Axis commanders.⁵⁰ General Alexander, Commander in Chief for Allied Armies and Lieutenant General Seigfried Westphal, Chief of Staff to Field Marshall Kesselring, praised the efforts of the French as a sensational advance that drove across the mountainous terrain like the wind, overrunning the enemy, forcing him to pay a heavy toll in casualties and prisoners.⁵¹ The Italian campaign was the testing ground for the French ability to make the fullest use of modern weapons in combat. Fighting the Germans on equal terms, the French demonstrated they possessed the ability to defeat a formidable enemy.⁵²

⁴⁷ Ibid., 295.

⁴⁸ Clark, 178.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 348.

⁵⁰ Martin Blumenson et al., *Command Decisions*, ed. Kent Roberts Greenfield (Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History, United States Army, 1987), 340.

⁵¹ Clark, 178,348.

⁵² Vigneras, 404.

The United States involvement in the re-arming and training North African forces was indeed out of necessity for the survival of the United States during the initial phase of a long war. Upon entering the war, America's efforts to arm and train the French forces brought stronger alliances against the Germans in preparation for the invasion of Europe and ultimately the liberation of France. The training program flourished and could not have happened without clearly defined strategic objectives.

NATIONALIST CHINA

As the American War Department struggled to rebuild the French Army in North Africa, a similar situation was taking place on the other side of the world in war-torn China. The 1937 Japanese attack on Shanghai inaugurated the Second World War in the Pacific. From the beginning, it was a complex conflict as General Chaing Kai-shek led his Nationalist forces against the Japanese invaders. Simultaneously, Chaing was involved in a civil war with Mao Tse-tung's Communist Army. Although the political pronouncements by both camps portrayed the Japanese as the common enemy, both parties eyed each other with a view towards the post-war era. This section discusses the strategic significance that led the Roosevelt administration to commit vital resources to the China-Burma-India Theater. The necessity to build the Chinese Army, the role the American military and resources played in the rearming program and the actual training program and associated outcomes.

The Chinese Environment

In 1923, the Kuomintang Government embraced the newly formed Chinese Communist Party and accepted them as members in the Kuomintang, thus making a nationalist alliance. Leading the organization was Sun Yatsen who believed that all groups in China were suffering from some type of oppression and encouraged the alliance to stand together.⁵³ In 1925, Chaing Kai-shek became the Kuomintang government's top military leader. By the end of 1926, he subsequently removed left wing members from leadership positions and curtailed communist influences within the government, breaking the united front established by Sun Yatsen. Chaing, as the Commander-in-Chief, began his northern expedition to destroy the warlord powers, intending to unify the country and end foreign control. Chaing's expedition was initially successful but ultimately split the alliance achieved by Sun Yatsen, throwing the country into a civil war against the Communist.⁵⁴ By 1931, the Communist established a

⁵³ Lawrence K. Rosinger, *China's Wartime Politics, 1937-1944* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1944), 7.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 8-10.

Government with Mao Tse-tung as its Chairman. This began the internal struggles between Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalist and Mao-Tse-tung's Communist.

The Japanese attack on Shanghai in August 1937, forced the Nationalist Chinese to join forces with the Communist to fight the invaders, but they never enjoyed the trust necessary to expel the Japanese in a united effort.⁵⁵ The loose and uncoordinated alliance forced both parties to wage separate wars against a common enemy but there was no purpose to the alliance. Once America entered the war against Japan, they attempted to create a Chinese coalition with both regimes, but it was not as effective as the Roosevelt Administration expected. The two regimes continued to skirmish and the leaders exercised political maneuvering for popular support throughout the war. As the Japanese Empire began its aggression across Asia, American strategic interests in the region were directly threatened.⁵⁶ The Japanese policies and behavior towards China violated the spirit of international political development, leading the Pacific Nations deeper into war.⁵⁷ Military support to China was in the best interest of the United States yet the American military did not have sufficient forces to fight a long war in Asia. Five years of fighting the Japanese, and internal fighting between the Chinese Communist and Nationalist parties was costly, without assistance the Chinese would not be able to continue the fight, allowing the Japanese full control of Asia.⁵⁸ The Roosevelt administration faced a difficult decision in regards to material and equipment support. To avert a looming civil war, it continued efforts to bring the Nationalist and Communist into a coalition that produced some semblance of order while maintaining American influence in the post-war era.⁵⁹ A coalition was the most efficient measure to fight and defeat the

⁵⁵ Jonathan Clements, *Mao* (London: Haus Publishing Limited, 2006), 82, 85.

⁵⁶ LaFeber, Walter, ed., "Roosevelt, Churchill and Indochina: 1942-45" *The American Historical Review*, American Historical Association, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1852060.1287>.

⁵⁷ Charles F. Romanus, *Stilwell's Mission to China* (Washington D.C.: Office of the Chief of Military History, Department of the Army, 1953), 3.

⁵⁸ Yu, 10. President Roosevelt declared that helping China defend itself against Japan was vital to the defense of the United States. He encouraged Congress to extend the Lend Lease Program to China.

⁵⁹ Herring, 578.

Japanese.⁶⁰ The Communist possessed a more powerful, cohesive military force and a more efficient government; it could greatly contribute to defeating the Japanese.⁶¹ However, the Administration feared the Communist favored Soviet interest in the post-war era, eliminating American regional influence. Roosevelt hoped that with assistance from the United States military, Chaing could strengthen his army and keep American regional influence alive.⁶² These post-war concerns outweighed the role of support to Mao's regime.⁶³ Chaing Kai-shek benefited from the United States government assistance throughout the war.

In September 1939, the Nationalist party requested from the United States government, American military support. The European powers were not in a position to assist China, because they were opposing German aggression across the continent. The Roosevelt Administration responded initially with a loan, valued at forty-five million dollars, stipulating its use to purchase goods and material for the civilian populace.⁶⁴ In June of 1940, the Chinese Nationalist government again asked for arms and economic support, that December the United States granted a second loan of one hundred million dollars.⁶⁵ Although the nation was still in the grips of a depression American sympathy towards China was strong and fell in line with the government's goal of protecting its interest in Asia. According to the United States Department of State, Division of Far Eastern Affairs, China's efforts to keep Japan at bay and commitment to defending the continent of Asia allowed the American government to achieve some of its principle objectives including the preservation of natural resources, such as rubber and tin, but more importantly the safeguarding of the Philippine Islands.⁶⁶ Nevertheless, the United States government was

⁶⁰ Christopher Thorne, "Chatham House, Whitehall and Far Eastern Issues: 1941-45," *Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944- 54*, no. 1 (1978): 9.

⁶¹ China, Burma, Japanese Army 1941-43, "Army Operations in China December 41-45", 1956, Japanese Monograph no.71, Archive no. N17807.71-2, Combined Arms Library, Fort Leavenworth, KS. 141.

⁶² Herring, 577-578.

⁶³ La Feber., 1280.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 1281.

⁶⁵ Romanus, 11.

⁶⁶ U.S. Department of State, Foreign Relations of the United States, Diplomatic Papers 1941, The Far East, edited by E.R. Perkins (Washington D.C., 1956), 288-289.

careful not to provoke the Japanese to ally with the Germans and attack American territories in the Pacific. Chaing Kai-shek requested Dr. Lauchlin Currie, President Roosevelt's administrative assistant to visit China and assess its current military and economic situation.⁶⁷ Chaing realized foreign support was China's only hope to rid Japan from mainland China and remain in a position to defeat Mao after the war.⁶⁸ Currie's assessment determined that providing supplies and resources to China was necessary for America to accomplish her regional objectives.⁶⁹ Upon his return in 1941, the President, despite overwhelming concerns of provoking further Japanese aggression, extended the Lend Lease Act to the Chinese Nationalist government.⁷⁰

Concerned with the coordination of the first request for arms and equipment, the War Department directed the United States Army to create the wartime aid delegation, American Military Mission to China in 1941. Its primary mission, assist Chaing Kai-shek in the procurement of lend lease goods to better train its army and allow a more acceptable flow of material from American production lines directly to his forces.⁷¹ America fully committed to supporting Chinese efforts in defeating the Japanese.

The Need for a Chinese Training Program

During the July 1942 Central Burma Campaign, Japanese forces proved superior in all regards. Chinese forces were ill prepared to execute combat operations in the jungles and were equipped with antiquated weapons from multiple sources. China, until 1928, was a country full of warlords building armies in an attempt to control the government, making it a perfect place to sell arms. The warlords built

⁶⁷ Ibid., 81-85.

⁶⁸ Barbara W. Tuchman, *Stilwell and the American Experience in China, 1911-45* (New York, New York: The Macmillan Company, 1971), 165.

⁶⁹ Perkins, "U.S. Department of State, Foreign Relations of the United States, Diplomatic Papers 1941, The Far East" (Washington D.C.: 1956) , 289.

⁷⁰ Yu, 89., Romanus, 14.

⁷¹ Yu, 89. China and the U.S. were concerned that any foreign aid not delivered directly to the Chinese risked complete absorption by the British. The British were protective (politically and militarily) of the lend lease materiel and believed all was designated for them. Perkins, 791. Cable from Secretary of State Hull to the Consul General in Shanghai. The United States policy on the control of exports related to the needs of the American industry in carrying out its own defense program. When an exportable surplus was available, Great Britain and other countries engaged in resisting aggression and of the American Republics received preference.

their forces with outdated weapons and equipment, primarily from World War I German surplus. German weapons performed extremely well throughout World War I, some twenty years earlier, but were inferior to Japanese weapons. Warlord armies were disadvantaged in the basic knowledge and uses of modern weaponry, as most never saw an airplane, tank or rifle-grenade. Warlord military operations were not sharp and disciplined. As the army reached the field of battle soldiers stood for several minutes, raised their rifles and fired a few haphazard shots. Cannon fire was extremely reckless, often missing their targets by a quarter mile or more.⁷² These inefficiencies in arms, equipment and training plagued the Chinese Nationalists forces and ultimately led to the First Burma campaign defeat.

Leading the American effort in the China-Burma-India Theater was Lieutenant General Joseph W. Stilwell, a vibrant field commander with tactical and operational experience in World War I and China during the interwar period. Prior to Stilwell's return to China, Chaing Kai-shek and the United States Secretary of War agreed on the American generals role and functions as the Chief of Staff and Commander of Ground Forces in China. The agreement stated that Stilwell was to supervise and control all United States defense aid affairs for China, command under the Generalissimo, all American military forces in China and Chinese Nationalists units assigned by Chaing. Lastly, represent the United States government on any international war counsel in China and act as the Chief of Staff for the Generalissimo.⁷³ The Chinese willing gave a considerable amount of power to a United States Army general, which prevented the British from routinely taking control of the lend lease defense material sent from American factories.⁷⁴ General Stilwell possessed the qualities necessary to straighten out Sino-British differences of opinion, handle the multiple problems of the Burma Road and control the supply of

⁷² Tuchman, 70, 239. Army historians asked General Marshall after the war if Roosevelt had an explanation of the policy towards China if it existed. Marshall's response; he could only say to treat China as a great power. Chaing Kai-shek and the Communist forces fought against one another as the Communist never stopped their effort to gain control of the country. The two Chinese forces actually fought each other as well as the Japanese. The Communist were known to attack the Nationalist (Chaing Forces) from the rear, during Nationalist operations against the Japanese.

⁷³ Yu, 165.

⁷⁴ Thorne, 7.

the Lend Lease material entering China.⁷⁵ More importantly, it presented Stilwell an opportunity to develop a plan to arm, equip and train Chinese forces to engage the Japanese. Following the central Burma defeat, the rearmament and training program became Stilwell's priority.

General Stilwell arrived in China in February 1942 and was on the frontlines by the beginning of March. Three Chinese Nationalist divisions marched into central Burma with the intent to stop the Japanese northern advance and gain control of the strategic lines of communication, namely the North-South railway that connected central Burma and China to the port city of Rangoon. With permission from Chaing Kai-shek, Stilwell assumed command of the first Chinese operation to stop the Japanese advance through Burma. A successful operation meant the isolation of Chinese and Allied forces in India, preventing the possibility to combine forces to route the Japanese.⁷⁶ The Chinese Army entered Central Burma intending to assist the British in establishing a defensive belt, with responsibilities stretching from Toungoo – Prome.⁷⁷ The Japanese sustained a twelve-day attack against the front until they managed to envelope the Chinese, forcing their withdrawal. Stilwell organized and planned a counterattack against the Japanese 143rd Regiment. He ordered General Tu Yu-ming to attack as planned but Chaing Kai-shek contradicted his orders. Chaing did not truly relinquish command of the forces as he promised Stilwell, sending conflicting orders to his Chinese generals throughout the campaign.⁷⁸ Chaing's opposition to Stilwell's operational plan resulted from his desire to control all lend lease supplies, setting conditions for post-war efforts against Mao.⁷⁹ Chaing's primary concern was that Stilwell did not execute enough caution in his use of Chinese forces in combat. Chaing could not afford to lose men or supplies, as it would give Mao's army an advantage now and in post-war China. In just over two months, four Japanese

⁷⁵ Charles F. Romanus and Riley Sunderland, *Stilwell's Command Problems*, ed. Kent Roberts Greenfield, 3 vols., The United States Army in World War II, vol. 1 (Washington D.C.: U.S.A. Chief of Military History, 1956), 19.

⁷⁶ Romanus, *Stilwell's Mission to China*, 84-85.

⁷⁷ Julian Thompson, *The War in Burma 1942-1945* (London: Pan Books, 2003), 27.

⁷⁸ Romanus, *Stilwell's Mission to China*, 103-116.

⁷⁹ The Stilwell Controversy: A Biographical Review, *Military Affairs*, ed. Kenneth Ray Young, in the Society of Military History, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1986929> (accessed 2-2-10), 66.

divisions and two tank regiments defeated the Chinese forcing their retreat back to Imphal, India. After a three-week trek through the jungles and mountains of northern Burma, nine thousand Chinese soldiers escaped the battlefield.⁸⁰ Renamed the X- Force, it formed the nucleus of the American retraining effort to strike back toward the Burma Road and upper Assam.⁸¹

The Central Burma defeat sparked a renewed effort by the War Department to develop strategic objectives for the China-Burma-India Theater of Operations. The sole purpose of the American forces is to prosecute the war against the Axis powers, principally to aid and support China in her war of resistance against Japan.⁸² Initially, economic aid served as the only means to support Chinese efforts to keep the Japanese Empire at bay.⁸³ Subsequent to the Chinese defeat, the United States War Department supports Stilwell's decision to improve the combat efficiency of the Chinese Army.⁸⁴

Stilwell believed the Chinese could muster an effective army with the current ground forces and available recruits; however, to accomplish American objectives it was necessary to provide additional armament, equipment and training.⁸⁵ Supporting Stilwell's plans to arm and train the Chinese, Marshall made efforts to ensure the China-Burma-India Theater received the allocated lend lease material.⁸⁶

⁸⁰ Ibid., 66.

⁸¹ Joseph W. Stilwell, *The Stilwell Papers* (New York: Schocken Books, 1972), 109. During General Stilwell's march out of Central Burma to India, he led nine thousand troops from the battleground to India to refit and retrain.

⁸² U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States, Diplomatic Papers 1942, The British Commonwealth, The Far East*, edited by E.R. Perkins (Washington D.C., 1960), 713.

⁸³ Romanus, *Stilwell's Mission to China*, 64.

⁸⁴ Young, 66.

⁸⁵ Romanus, *Stilwell's Mission to China*, 66-68.

⁸⁶ Tuchman, 286.

The Chinese Training Program

The horrific Burma defeat in July 1942 weighed heavily on Stilwell. Throughout the long arduous march out of the jungles back to friendly lines, he contemplated how to retake Burma and energize the Chinese Army to defeat the Japanese Empire.⁸⁷ Still sick with dysentery and severe malnourishment the wary commander immediately began laying out the requirements necessary to open the Burma Road, the vital communications line that linked India, Burma and China, inevitably enable the retaking of Burma. He devoted his time developing a troop-training program for thirty Chinese divisions using lend lease material.⁸⁸ Chaing Kai-shek was not totally in favor of Stilwell's thirty-division plan. The two bantered over everything involved in the concept. Nevertheless, after nearly a year's delay, the Chinese leader released the troops necessary to begin the training program.⁸⁹ Chaing was not willing to move divisions to training centers because once trained those forces would be committed to offensive operations under the aggressive nature of the American commander. He could not withstand Stilwell or Roosevelt's political pressures to keep those forces out of the fight. The Generalissimo's concern was always the maintenance of power using principally a defense in depth as a means to conserve resources, avoiding a major battle with the Japanese.⁹⁰

Stilwell believed the Chinese recruits could learn his trade as well as any soldier and developed long-term objectives to build the individual soldier's combat efficiency while preparing a land base of operations for an offensive against Japan.⁹¹ In August 1942, he requested the necessary artillery, automatic weapons and ammunition, to field and prepare those divisions. Stilwell's intent, carve out the best men from the existing units to create the thirty-division force, realizing it was near impossible to retrain the entire Chinese Army, primarily due to the lack of American trainers and resources. The

⁸⁷ Stilwell, 106.

⁸⁸ Young, 66. Romanus, *Stilwell's Mission to China*, 235.

⁸⁹ Stilwell, 142.

⁹⁰ Young, 66.

⁹¹ Romanus, *Stilwell's Mission to China*, 75.

Europe first agreement between the Allies severely limited the amount of resources required to prepare the Chinese, therefore, limiting the number of forces that could realistically go through Stilwell's program. Once Chiang approved Stilwell's concept, troops moved to Yunnan Province, China, where they began the process of receiving new equipment and training. The forces trained in Yunnan were renamed the Yoke Force or Y-Force.⁹²

Individual and unit intensive training began under the watchful eye of American instructors. They focused on small unit tactics, believing platoons could train individually then placed into larger formations. The small unit training philosophy better suited jungle warfare. Soldiers conducted six weeks of intensive training on individual weapons, light and heavy machine guns, mortars, rocket launchers, hand grenades and anti-tank guns. The artillery sections underwent six weeks of training on seventy-five millimeter pack howitzers and one hundred five millimeter howitzers. The rapid progress the Chinese soldiers made in learning difficult skills as an artilleryman, left a lasting impression of the British Field-Marshal Viscount Slim, commander of British forces in the China-Burma-India Theater.⁹³

While Chinese soldiers worked to master individual combat skills in a jungle environment, the Chinese officers engaged in learning basic tactics appropriate for jungle warfare. Half of the six-week course was dedicated to tactics, taking the officers progressively from platoon level through regimental level.⁹⁴ Line officers and non-commissioned officers alike received instruction on medical care and field sanitation, which proved just as dangerous as the Japanese Army. Chinese Colonels and Generals received advanced schooling on the functions of command and staff, modeled on the wartime course at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. The wartime version of the command and staff school was an abbreviated course, but nonetheless focused on the principles of staff processes and operational planning. The senior Chinese officers finished the school, but never mastered the art of staff work itself. Following the initial six-weeks of training and indoctrination, the Chinese conducted their own training program guided by

⁹² Tuchman, 185. The Kunming Training Center, often referred to as the Yunnan Training Center.

⁹³ William Joseph Slim, *Defeat into Victory* (London: PAPERMAC, 1956), 214.

⁹⁴ Romanus and Sunderland, *Stilwell's Command Problems*, 28.

training center directives. At the conclusion of the training, the forces moved to northern Assam along the Burma border to prepare for offensive operations to protect the Ledo Road and drive deep into Burma, eventually reaching the Chinese border.⁹⁵

As the training of the initial divisions continued, Stilwell convinced Chaing to open a second facility to train Chinese troops in India. According to Field Marshall Slim, Stilwell's efforts to create the new facility were magnificent. He persuaded the Indian government to allow a large Chinese force into India, the British government to pay for it, accommodate, feed and clothe the force and the Generalissimo provided the troops. The later being the most difficult as moving men from various locations within the theater was anything but easy. Chaing Kai-shek agreed to slow aerial resupply efforts from Burma to ferry an initial thirteen thousand men over the "hump", the great mountain range between Assam and China, to airfields in the Brahmaputra Valley, India, where they were moved by rail to Ramgarh.⁹⁶ In all, the Chinese flew some sixty-six thousand soldiers to Ramgarh, the first large scale air movement in the theater and proved to be the hinge pin to the successful training mission.⁹⁷

Activated on 26 August 1942, the Ramgarh training center, located in Calcutta, India, was an abandoned Italian prisoner of war camp, under British control. It was a large facility capable of housing some twenty thousand troops, accommodated a tank range, infantry maneuver tactics and artillery training. The training program increased the existing Chinese medical personnel, field sanitation, dentistry and veterinarian service.⁹⁸ From May 1941 until April 1942 Chinese forces received new arms and equipment from the United States, lend lease program that supplied 110,864 long tons of material, equipment and ammunition. Chaing's forces received 11,398 long tons of ordnance, 1,286 long tons of various weapons and 8,725 long tons of associated ammunition.⁹⁹

⁹⁵ Stilwell, 261.

⁹⁶ Slim, 144.

⁹⁷ Stilwell, 136, 144.

⁹⁸ Romanus, *Stilwell's Mission to China*, 214.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 49.

At both the Yunnan and Ramgarh training centers, Chinese officers were responsible for discipline and administration while American officers and non-commissioned officers were responsible for equipping and training. The Ramgarh training program followed the Yunnan training center model, which intended on producing a trained combat force during the winter of 1942-1943. Basic training and indoctrination lasted six-weeks, followed by an additional training course run by the Chinese but supervised by American trainers.¹⁰⁰ Hundreds of Chinese interpreters paired off with American instructors and taught a variety of tasks including, small arms, the delivery of artillery fires and changing flat tires.¹⁰¹ By December 1942, thirty-two thousand troops actively trained at Ramgarh.

Stilwell's short-term objective was to create two full divisions, three artillery regiments and support units ready for combat by February 1943.¹⁰² Over the next two years, fifty-three thousand Chinese troops passed through the Ramgarh training center producing an organized combat ready force in the China-Burma-India Theater. Utilizing the new concept of Chinese trainers, Stilwell furthered the capabilities of both American and Chinese forces. His plan to train the Chinese expanded to the development of embedding United States Army personnel as adviser and liaison teams. In all fifteen hundred American instructors trained to perform duties as adviser teams. The teams assigned to Chinese units assisted in command and control while improving communications efforts between the Chinese commanders and Stilwell's headquarters. The creation of the teams resulted from the first Burma campaign lessons learned. Throughout the battle, he could not enforce his orders, nor could the staff communicate effectively with forward units.¹⁰³ The adviser teams filled the gap created by language and culture. The growing role of the United States Army personnel quickly minimized the number of instructors available, thus, slowing the training efforts. As a result, Stilwell augmented United States Army trainers with Chinese trainers, without whom, Stilwell could not meet his goal of training thirty

¹⁰⁰ Chin-tung Liang, *General Stilwell in China 1942-1944: The Full Story* (St. John's University: St. John's University Press, Center of Asian Studies, 1972), 82.

¹⁰¹ Stilwell, 137.

¹⁰² Tuchman, 327.

¹⁰³ Slim, 120.

divisions. Once trained and certified by Army instructors the new Chinese trainers collaborated with United States military personnel to begin making improvements on Chinese units.¹⁰⁴ The augmentation concept enabled the continued training of Chinese divisions; it began the creation of a solid foundation the Chinese used to train future forces.

As training efforts continued at Yunnan and Ramgarh, early in 1943, Stilwell suggested opening a third training center. He called upon Brigadier General Thomas Arms, the commander of the Yunnan Infantry Training Center, to establish the new Kweilin facility in East China.¹⁰⁵ That same year, twenty-two hundred United States Army personnel arrived at Kweilin, of which over one hundred officers and seventy non-commissioned officers prepared to train Chinese forces. In November 1943, the Chinese committed to the prospects of the new training center and in December began training the newly designated Zebra Force. Like the other centers, the six-week training course initially focused on infantry and artillery tactics, later engineering, veterinary, medical and signal courses.¹⁰⁶

Results of the Chinese Training Program

Despite the Europe first-Asia-second strategy, the China-Burma-India Theater overcame great deficits to conquer regional failure. From March 1941 to the end of the war, China never received more than two percent of the available material generated through the Lend Lease Act. China contained an army of almost a million Japanese troops for four years.¹⁰⁷ They received a higher percentage of support before the attack on Pearl Harbor than after¹⁰⁸ yet, in just over a year's time, Stilwell's plan to train and equip the Chinese Army appeared successful. The training program produced enough forces to begin a Chinese offensive back into Burma. The results were immediate and proved to the Allies, but particularly the Chinese themselves, that they were a formidable force. In October 1943, the first two Chinese

¹⁰⁴ Liang, 83.

¹⁰⁵ Romanus and Sunderland, *Stilwell's Command Problems*, 26.

¹⁰⁶ Liang, 82.

¹⁰⁷ Perkins, 289.

¹⁰⁸ Yu, 93.

Divisions, the 22nd and the 38th having completed the training, conducted an offensive operation from India into North-Central Burma.

Stilwell's plan called for the Chinese divisions to move to the lowlands of North-Central Burma, seizing two key towns Mogaung and Myitkyina. With the villages secured, he continued to push east towards Yunnan, constructing a road along the way. Once complete, he ended the Japanese blockade and linked the X and Y forces together for continued offensive operations. The mission began with approximately fifty thousand newly trained and equipped Chinese soldiers. Opposing them was forty to fifty thousand battle-tested, entrenched Japanese troops.¹⁰⁹ The Chinese divisions pressed hard toward Yunnan, pushing the Japanese back at every engagement. For the first time, they attacked and defeated the Japanese Army, demonstrating their effectiveness as a cohesive fighting force.¹¹⁰ The training program kept the Chinese in the fight, just as Secretary Stimson directed.

The trained armies' initial success maintained a limited peace between the two rival Chinese leaders, Chaing Kai-shek and Mao Tse-sung. It did not stop either from continued maneuvering to maintain control and initiative of all Chinese forces. Chaing Kai-shek knew, like Mao, that whoever ruled China had to have the most powerful army. Therefore, Chaing Kai-shek spent more time posturing loyal forces to protect himself and his interest, to remain in control of the country and in favor of the United States government.¹¹¹ He did not release control of the untrained forces to Stilwell in an effort to prevent Mao from maneuvering against him.¹¹² With continued backing from the American government, he believed, surviving the war with an army is all he needed to gain total control of the country. His post-war plan included the use of his modern equipment and well trained force to defeat the communist. The Japanese defeat returned China to the conditions of 1937 when the Communist and the Nationalist were

¹⁰⁹ Stilwell, 273-279.

¹¹⁰ Slim, 253.

¹¹¹ Elizabeth Mauchline Roberts, *Mao Tse-Tung and the Chinese Communist Revolution* (London: Methuen and Co. Ltd, 1970), 54.

¹¹² Robert Payne, *Mao Tse-Tung, Ruler of China* (New York: Henry Schumaning, 1950), 205.

fierce enemies. The Americans left China and did not involve themselves in Chinese politics as Chaing Kai-shek originally anticipated.¹¹³

Though Stilwell developed a program to train and equip thirty Chinese divisions, he only trained four before his removal from China in November 1944. Stilwell's setbacks were a result of political constraints such as the Europe first strategy, Chaing's initial unwillingness to cooperate for internal political conditions, namely the instability with Mao Tse-tung, and personality conflicts with the Generalissimo. By the end of 1944, more than thirty divisions completed training or started the process of training.¹¹⁴ Following the December 1943 triumphant Burma operations, Chaing's reluctance towards the program changed, as did his operational strategy. He agreed to continued offensive operations against the Japanese. The United States military accomplishments in training Chinese forces contributed to keeping a significant Japanese fighting force occupied in the China-Burma-India Theater. Arguably, it prevented the Japanese from reinforcing failing defensive operations on the Pacific Islands.

¹¹³ Ibid., 205-206.

¹¹⁴ Yu, 21.

VIETNAM

American efforts to bring success and stability to the China-Burma-India region did not end in 1945. Following the Second World War, Mao Tse-tung ousted Chaing Kai-shek and the Nationalist party, creating Communist China. Meanwhile, France began to reclaim colonial territories within Indochina, specifically Vietnam. The Vietnamese people moved towards revolution in an effort to self-govern. Ho Chi Minh, a known Communist supported by Mao, led the movement. The United States feared the spread of Communism into Indochina, strengthening the Soviet Union with another Cold War victory. This section discusses the political and military necessity to support the French government efforts to re-establish control of Indochina by re-building the Vietnamese Army with American resources and the need for the United States military to develop and execute a comprehensive training program that lasted for more than ten years.

Re-Building the Vietnamese Army

It was 1940 before the United States government established any formal relationship with Indochina, by opening a diminutive consular in Vietnam's Northern City of Hanoi.¹¹⁵ Throughout the Second World War President Roosevelt and Secretary of State Hull understood the vital importance of Indochina for American interest.¹¹⁶ American exports to Indochina, such as, petroleum products, canned goods and machinery, increased during the interwar period but never amounted to any significant business opportunity for the export industry. Economic development opportunities lagged because of the French Colonial system and their unwillingness to compromise, dissuading American interest both

¹¹⁵ Ronald H. Spector, *Advice and Support: The Early Years; The U.S. Army in Vietnam* (Washington D.C.: Center of Military History, United States Army, 1985), 7-8.

¹¹⁶ La Feber, 1278.

politically and economically.¹¹⁷ The uncooperative nature within the French Union fueled the United States government belief that Indochina lacked significant strategic importance.¹¹⁸

Throughout the Franco-Viet-Minh war, the United States executed the Truman Administrations hands off policy. The Viet- Minh leader, Ho Chi Minh, remained in Vietnam throughout the Japanese occupation during World War II, fighting for an independent nation free from foreigners. The people witnessed his efforts towards independence and the repression brought by the French Colonial system. In March 1946, the French reluctantly concluded the Viet-Minh gained an insurmountable amount of power throughout Vietnam. The peoples support naturally coincided with the Viet-Minh. Therefore, the French proposed incorporating the two most Northern Provinces, Annam and Tonkin, as a single territory recognized as a free state within the French Union. This course of action rectified the existing drain on the French economic and military resources. Ho Chi Minh agreed to the French territorial proposal and did not oppose the return of French forces for a period of five years.¹¹⁹ The new French High Commissioner for Indochina, Admiral Georges Thierry d'Argenlieu, insisted the accords signed by Ho Chi Minh and the French Government had no application to the Southern Province of Cochinchina and the ethnic minorities of the Central Highlands (Annam). He ignored the agreements in a deliberate effort to sabotage the negotiations in Paris, which caused an increase in fighting vice the intended truce.¹²⁰ The United States interest in the region dramatically change in 1949 when Chaing Kai-shek's Nationalist Chinese fell to Mao Tse-tung's Communist Chinese.

The fear of Communism spreading to the Indochina states brought the region to the forefront of the Cold War and spirited the United States government's national policy of Communist containment.¹²¹

¹¹⁷ Virginia Thompson, *French Indochina* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1937), 181.

¹¹⁸ Mark Atwood Lawrence, *Assuming the Burden: Europe and the American Commitment to War in Vietnam* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 2. The French Union consisted of the countries that comprise Indochina. They include Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia.

¹¹⁹ Marvin Kalb and Elie Abel, *Roots of Involvement, the U.S. In Asia 1784 - 1971*, First ed. (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1971), 53.

¹²⁰ Spector, 79.

¹²¹ U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1052-54, Indochina*, edited by John P. Glennon and Neal H. Petersen, Part 2 (Washington D.C., 1982), 1487.

Key to the containment policy was the ability of the threatened countries capacity to resist a Communist takeover.¹²² In addition to the Communist victory in China, Soviet threats in Eastern Europe, and the Eastern Mediterranean increased concerns of further global Soviet expansionism. The Soviet aggressiveness reached its pinnacle when they announced the development of their first atomic weapon. Collectively, these events provided a natural climate for Truman's decision to support the French war effort as one prong of a global front to stop communist expansion.¹²³

In May 1950, the American government provided ten million dollars of military and economic aid to the French War in Vietnam. Secretary of State, Dean Acheson announced to the European leaders that the United States would indirectly assume part of the burden of the Franco-Viet-Minh war. Shortly after the announcement France and the President of the United States signed the Pentilateral Agreement, later termed the Mutual Defense Assistance Program. Within the agreement, America was committed to furnishing military supplies, material and equipment to the French to halt Communist expansion. To oversee the efforts the United States Department of Defense established the Military Assistance Advisory Group.¹²⁴

The American government recognized Ho Chi Minh as an active Communist and directly associated his initiative for an independent state, free of colonialism, as a step towards the spread of Communism.¹²⁵ Senior officials within the United States government never considered Ho Chi Minh's rationale to extinguish one hundred years of French Colonial repression. Their perception of his aggression against the French revolved around an image of Soviet directed international Communism. With increasing accusations of being "soft" on this ideological movement, the Truman administration felt pressured to take action. Following Ho Chi Minh's requested and accepted support from Mao's China,

¹²² William Rosenau, *U.S. Internal Security Assistance to South Vietnam Insurgency, Subversion, and Public Order*, ed. Odd Arne Westad and Michael Cox (New York: Routledge, 2005), 1.

¹²³ Lawrence, 4.

¹²⁴ James L. Collins, *Development and Training of the South Vietnamese Army, 1950-1972* (Washington D.C., 1975). 1.

¹²⁵ Spector, 37-38.

the perception was explicit. In actuality, Ho Chi Minh's alliance with Mao was one of necessity and convenience.¹²⁶ He preferred to continue his fight independently; fearing external assistance invited additional obstacles in the path of freedom. The Truman Administration's, Containment Policy and the Eisenhower Administrations, Domino Theory, blended Cold War ideology and hurried miscalculated decisions, which elevated Vietnam's importance as a national strategic interest and eventually the development of regional strategic policy.¹²⁷ National Security Council document number sixty-eight outlined an array of measures to combat Communism. It proposed the strengthening of Western European defenses with increased financial aid while extending the containment policy to East Asia through military and economic assistance programs.¹²⁸ Once again, America found itself assisting France, its oldest ally, initially with arms and equipment to prevent the advancement of the Soviet machine in Europe and Vietnam. Multiple world events involving the spread of Communism heightened American concerns to its global interest; a clear picture of future Soviet-Communist intentions developed in the Far East during the Korean War. Soviet actions forced America to develop a stronger interest in Indochina. That relationship eventually formed a new strategic policy that brought the United States of America to war in Vietnam.¹²⁹

The Need for a South Vietnamese Army Training Program

Vietnam was a strategic move by the United States government in the deadly and very real game of the Cold War.¹³⁰ President Truman's decision to provide military and economic aid was a cursory effort by an Administration that understood the importance of containing the Communist; however, they were hesitant in the level of involvement because of the current war on the Korean peninsula. In accordance with the new American Indochina policy, a Viet-Minh victory was unacceptable; no matter

¹²⁶ Mao and the communist party supported Minh with the necessary weapons, ammunition, food and other material to continue the fight against the French.

¹²⁷ James H. Willbanks, *The Vietnam War* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2006), 27.

¹²⁸ Herring, 638.

¹²⁹ Lawrence, 4.

¹³⁰ Rosenau, 10.

the dollar amount, the French must not suffer a Communist defeat. Avoiding a loss concerned American interests more than the French pursuit to regain the colony, as Communist containment, at the time, remained America's most important strategic objective.¹³¹ The United States government vowed to provide enough resources to the French until the Viet-Minh could no longer fight. Providing resources to the French reinforced a strong deterrent in Western Europe and enabled the French to continue its sponsorship of the Vietnamese Army.

The next question for the United States government was who to provide the resources, the French government or the fledgling Vietnamese government. Delivering the resources directly to the French gave the perception that America supports colonial repression and all things associated with the French actions in Vietnam. More importantly, providing the material to the Vietnamese promoted the independence of the newly established Dai government. Since 1947, the French collaborated with Bao Dai, the former Emperor of Vietnam, who lived in Hong Kong since 1946 following a disagreement with the Viet-Minh. In June of 1948, the French convinced Bao Dai to return to Vietnam. Dai's government was a "phantom state" used by the French to maintain control of the country. The French government convinced thirty pro-western nations to recognize Dai as a leader of the new Free State within the French Union, which appeared as if it was moving towards independence.¹³² The Truman Administration accepted the French solution and recognized Bao Dai's provisional government. The United States government insisted the French transfer complete sovereignty to the Dai government, relinquish its colonial tenets and acknowledge that military pacification of Indochina is not possible.¹³³ The American government understood that it was to their greater interest that Bao Dai's government succeeded.

The French quickly refused and countered American pressures, informing the Truman Administration that they could not continue to deter further aggression from the Soviets in Western Europe; they must commit all resources, including men to Indochina. A French decrease in European

¹³¹ Spector, 104.

¹³² Kalb and Abel, 56.

¹³³ Spector, 102.

support meant another Cold War victory for the Soviets, so the Truman administration backed down. The United States government delivered the material directly to French authorities in Vietnam even though providing military and economic aid directly to the free and independent state of Vietnam was a superior option for America internationally. The Military Assistance Advisory Group's responsibilities included overseeing thousands of tons of material arriving to Saigon supporting the Mutual Defense Assistance Program. From 1950 – 1954 the United States contributed one billion dollars to France, including more than seven hundred million dollars worth of Army material.¹³⁴ The Advisory Group's primary concern was accounting for and requesting supplies submitted by the French Army Headquarters.

American supplies and material could not prevent the French defeat at Dien Bien Phu. In November 1953, three thousand French paratroopers descended upon a valley in Northern Vietnam near the small village near on the Laotian border to establish a lodgment for the conduct of future offensive operations.¹³⁵ Over the next two months, the Viet-Minh moved four infantry division, approximately thirty-five thousand soldiers and an artillery division into the mountains around the lodgment area. The Viet-Minh harassed the French continuously with artillery, mortars and recoilless rifle fires. Finally, in March 1954 the Viet-Minh executed a powerful combined arms assault on three objectives. The French lost three major strong points in four days of fighting and realized it was only a matter of time before they lost the lodgment.¹³⁶ Facing certain defeat, France appealed to the United States government to intervene,¹³⁷ but the United States Congress refused to endorse intervention without the participation of Great Britain and a French promise of independence for Vietnam.¹³⁸ The French continued to defend against the Viet-Minh siege until May 1954, after fifty-five days of fighting, the Viet-Minh captured all

¹³⁴ Collins, 1.

¹³⁵ Spector, 182.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 190

¹³⁷ Herring, 661.

¹³⁸ Glennon and Petersen, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1952-54*, pt 2 (Washington D.C., 1982), 1224.

French positions. The total defeat at Dien Bien Phu provided the Viet-Minh and the Communist the additional political advantage needed in the ongoing Geneva Accords.

The United States Secretary of State used the 1954 Geneva Accords as a diplomatic play to save Vietnam from complete Communist control. Most officials considered it a major defeat for the Eisenhower administration's policy in Southeast Asia.¹³⁹ President Eisenhower's Secretary of State John F. Dulles did all he could to block Ho Chi Minh from gaining complete control of Vietnam. The conference concluded with an agreed upon resolution dividing the country at the Seventeenth Parallel. The Viet-Minh consolidated its forces to the north and the French to the south. Additionally, the conference leaders scheduled an election in July 1956 to determine the country's next leader.¹⁴⁰ The people throughout the country adored and supported Ho Chi Minh, except a few sects that would not affect a majority vote. He would surely win the election and reunite the country as an independent state. The United States government and the Bao Dai government did not agree to these terms, they feared Vietnam would become Communist.¹⁴¹ However, the American government pledged to refrain from the threat of force to disturb the process. The Geneva Accords amplified the Communist influence within Vietnam; increasing the difficulty to achieve American national objectives.¹⁴²

One week after the Accords, the French government unilaterally recognized Ngo Dinh Diem as Bao Dai's new Prime Minister, giving him complete civil and military authority over South Vietnam.¹⁴³ The French defeat at Dien Bien Phu marked the beginning of their departure from Vietnam. In an effort to keep as many French in the fight as possible, the French Chief of Armed Forces, General Paul Ely, agreed to the United States military proposal to train existing Vietnamese troops and provide advisers

¹³⁹ U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1952-54, Indochina*, edited by John P. Glennon and Neal H. Petersen, Part 1 (Washington D.C., 1982), 29.

¹⁴⁰ Willbanks, 26.

¹⁴¹ Kalb and Abel, 87.

¹⁴² Spector, 221.

¹⁴³ Tran Van Don, *Our Endless War* (San Rafael: Presidio Press, 1978), 223.

down to the battalion level.¹⁴⁴ President Eisenhower authorized the training mission, issuing National Security Council Directive 54291/1, which stipulated the Department of Defense to create an indigenous military force for internal security while developing an independent Army.¹⁴⁵ The United States military developed a comprehensive training plan that provided the Vietnamese Army with modern weapons and equipment. Previously, under the French training system, the best weapons provided by the American aid program frequently remained in French control, leaving second-rate equipment to the Vietnamese. The French made minimal efforts to train the Vietnamese Army, primarily, so they could maintain control of the country without an additional armed threat. The French lack of performance to equip and train the Vietnamese Army left the force unorganized and incapable, never using the Vietnamese Army to its full potential. The United States military's training plan had to salvage a depleted, unorganized army that possessed the potential to defend and protect its borders.

Arming and Training the South Vietnamese Army

The French defeat at Dien Bien Phu, the Geneva Accords, and the French departure from Vietnam forced the Eisenhower administration to accept complete responsibility for arming and training the South Vietnamese military.¹⁴⁶ Lieutenant General John W. O'Daniel arrived in Vietnam in June 1953¹⁴⁷ as part of a special envoy to determine the requirements for additional aid and training requirements.¹⁴⁸ He was always an advocate of incorporating the training task into the Military Assistance Advisory Group mission. The Military Assistance Advisory Group viewed its training

¹⁴⁴ Krepinevich, *The Army and Vietnam* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), 20.

¹⁴⁵ Spector, 228.

¹⁴⁶ Frederick Walter Schneider, *Advising the ARVN: Lieutenant General Samuel T. Williams in Vietnam, 1955-1960* (Ann Arbor: UMI, 1990), 5.

¹⁴⁷ Spector, 174.

¹⁴⁸ Glennon and Petersen, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1952-54*, pt 1 (Washington D.C., 1982), 118.

mission in terms of creating a conventional army of divisional forces and supporting units.¹⁴⁹ Senior American military leaders, like O'Daniel and later General Williams envisioned a Korea-type threat in Vietnam, a cross border invasion by North Vietnam heavily supported by Chinese forces, equipment and supplies.¹⁵⁰ President Eisenhower's directive to train and advise the South Vietnamese Army sparked the creation of the training relations and instruction mission. An organization designed with the specific mission of training and advising. O'Daniel assumed command of the new organization and began initiatives to start the improvement of the newly designated Army of the Republic of Vietnam. Initially, the organization was an American-French coalition consisting of two hundred French officers and one hundred twenty American officers until the French pulled out of Vietnam completely.¹⁵¹

His plan called for the immediate reorganization of the Vietnamese eighty separate battalions into nine divisions each consisting of three regiments of three battalions.¹⁵² O'Daniel's training program followed the same methodology as the United States Army and the theories of a linear battlefield. Lieutenant General Samuel T. Williams, who led the South Korean Army training initiative throughout the Korean War, succeeded him as the Military Assistance Advisory Group, Vietnam commander.¹⁵³

In 1956, the French departed Vietnam and the United States Army assumed total responsibility to train and build the Army of the Republic of Vietnam into an effective deterrent against the spread of Communism.¹⁵⁴ The individual American adviser had two types of missions, combat training and operations. The first was to operate as advisers down to the regimental level, instructing Vietnamese soldiers how to maintain and operate the more modern American weapons, equipment and teach small unit tactics. Advisers led specific instructions on intelligence, psychological warfare, communications,

¹⁴⁹ Graham A. Cosmas, *United States Army in Vietnam*, ed. Jeffrey J. Clarke (Washington D.C.: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 2005), 11.

¹⁵⁰ Krepinevich, 21

¹⁵¹ Spector, 240.

¹⁵² The re-organization of battalions into nine divisions consisted of four light divisions and five medium divisions.

¹⁵³ Krepinevich, 24.

¹⁵⁴ Schneider, 5.

civil affairs, logistics and medical training.¹⁵⁵ The second was to advise while living and working with provincial chiefs and their respective militias, providing advice in both military and local political matters,¹⁵⁶ even though most advisers knew little about Vietnam, its culture or people. American advisers often accompanied their units into battle providing the expertise needed when requesting close air support and artillery fires.¹⁵⁷ A limited number of Vietnamese soldiers, trained by American special operations units in counterinsurgency tasks, sent small saboteur teams north to destroy propaganda facilities such as radio stations and printing facilities.¹⁵⁸

The Army of the Republic of Vietnam did not have the capacity of conducting effective military operations primarily due to deficiencies in their officer and non-commissioned officer corps, lack of modern weapons, equipment and training.¹⁵⁹ Under the French control, French officers and non-commissioned officers commanded Vietnamese units, which led to Vietnamese leadership inefficiencies.¹⁶⁰ Out of the entire force only one division, the First Field Division had a full complement of troops and equipment but they had never trained as a unit.¹⁶¹ The Military Assistance Advisory Group, Vietnam had to overcome years of French neglect to develop the South Vietnamese military into a force capable of conducting independent operations. Poor training or its complete absence was a continual handicap for all South Vietnamese armed forces.¹⁶² The Army of the Republic of Vietnam was susceptible to the homogenous threat of Communism, so the military strategy built the army to a strength that could at a minimum delay a conventional Communist attack long enough for the South East Treaty

¹⁵⁵ Collins, 33.

¹⁵⁶ Don, 151.

¹⁵⁷ Gary R. Hess, *Vietnam and the United States; Origins and Legacy of War*, ed. Akira Iriye, Twayne's International History Series, vol. 7 (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1990), 74.

¹⁵⁸ Kenneth Osgood, *Total Cold War; Eisenhower's Secret Propaganda Battle at Home and Abroad* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2006), 119.

¹⁵⁹ Cosmas, 12.

¹⁶⁰ Krepinevich, 21.

¹⁶¹ Spector, 278.

¹⁶² Schneider, 35.

Organization forces to conduct a counter attack into North Vietnam.¹⁶³ In an effort to fix organizational problems and basic skills knowledge within the new indigenous forces, South Vietnamese soldiers attended American training schools.

Three hundred select Vietnamese officers and enlisted personnel attended military schools in the Philippines, United States and Japan.¹⁶⁴ By 1961, four major school systems existed in Vietnam; the military's basic training center at Quang Trung, capable of handling nine thousand new recruits. The sixteen-week training cycle incorporated discipline, drill and ceremony, physical training, weapons training, map reading and basic infantry skills. The Dalat Military Academy was capable of training eight hundred newly commissioned officers in basic military skills. The Duc School Center housed the major branch schools such as, armor, infantry, transportation, signal, administration, engineers, ordnance, artillery, and quartermaster. Seventeen hundred students could train in each branch simultaneously.¹⁶⁵ A review of course content occurred regularly to ensure it met field requirements, particularly, leadership training, small unit night operations, marksmanship training, and ambush patrol tactics.¹⁶⁶ Following the re-organization process the Military Assistance Advisory Group, Vietnam began to equip Vietnamese forces with American equipment shipped earlier during the Truman Administration. Leading this effort was a team of Americans designated as the temporary equipment recovery mission. Their task was simple, identify, recover and rehabilitate the equipment scattered over South Vietnam during the French-Viet-Minh War.¹⁶⁷ The French kept poor accountability of the one billion dollars worth of equipment. Stored in large open air facilities throughout South Vietnam, most equipment was unserviceable.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶³ Ibid., 21. The South East Treaty Organization consisted of forces from Indochina. The forces pledged support for one another should the occasion arrive.

¹⁶⁴ Spector, 18, 282.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 285.

¹⁶⁶ Collins, 104.

¹⁶⁷ Don, 151.

¹⁶⁸ Schneider, 24.

Properly organized, equipped and trained the Vietnamese forces became an effective fighting force capable of defending against a Communist invasion from the north.¹⁶⁹

Results of the Training and Arming Efforts

The United States military completed the Army of the Republic of Vietnam transformation in September 1959. They were a force modeled after the United States military, poised to fight on the plains of Europe whom boasted seven standard division and four cavalry regiments.¹⁷⁰ The conduit for accomplishing the training and advisory mission revolved around the United States Army training methods and doctrine. Training centers, schools, tactical maneuvers and combat missions served as the instrument for force development. From the beginning, American advisers led the way, providing the subject matter expertise needed to train and equip a fledgling army. In just two years, Vietnamese training centers indoctrinated some one hundred sixty-eight thousand new recruits. Thirteen infantry battalions, forty-four regional forces and more than eight hundred various types of combat platoons rotated through training sites simultaneously. General O'Daniel's reorganization methods enabled force consolidation and flexibility while establishing a comprehensible command and control structure. Throughout this period, the adviser's mission increased slightly, but changed drastically when President Johnson committed a complete build-up of American forces in Vietnam.

The American troop build-up forced a significant change to the adviser mission, but the mission principles remained the same, provide advice and subject matter expertise to Vietnamese forces. By 1965, the focus of the established American advisory effort in the South Vietnam training mission changed dramatically. It began by advising a peacetime army and evolved to advising one at war.¹⁷¹ Unfortunately, the changes degraded the adviser's normal duties, affecting the fundamental purpose. As American conventional forces increased, they directed field tactical advisory detachments operating in the

¹⁶⁹ Hess, 73.

¹⁷⁰ Cosmas, 15., Schneider, 30.

¹⁷¹ Jeffrey J. Clarke, *Advice and Support: The Final Years, the U.S. Army in Vietnam* (Washington D.C.: Center of Military History, United States Army, 1992), 49.

command territories to provide liaison teams to their headquarters. Additionally, they stood up twenty-four hour operations centers to exchange information.¹⁷² The additional tasks served a purpose for American military conventional forces, but created a huge burden for the six-man field detachments. The tactical adviser teams spent more time fulfilling the requirements previously mentioned than providing advice and mentorship to the Vietnamese units. Along with the continued American troop buildup the field advisory network expanded, the field tactical teams increased to forty-seven hundred in 1965 with one hundred completely autonomous teams.

Regardless of the increase in teams and the additional tasks placed upon them, their mission to advise the Vietnamese commander and staff on all aspects of military operations and coordinate all direct American assistance remained unchanged.¹⁷³ General Westmoreland summed the progress of the adviser up in the simplest of terms, stating the adviser evolved from training to tactical advice to combat support.¹⁷⁴ Although overshadowed by dramatic combat actions on Vietnam battlefields, the training mission became one of the most critical aspects of the United States involvement in Southeast Asia.¹⁷⁵ By the time American forces left Vietnam, they had not created an effective force necessary to stop the insurgency that unfolded amongst them. However, they had created a force capable of fighting a conventional war as previously experienced in World War II and Korea. Despite the Army's tremendous growth, their inability to fight a guerilla war portrayed them as poor performers by many senior military and civilian leaders including General Creighton Abrams.¹⁷⁶

The United States Army advisory mission in Vietnam was challenging. Losing the war led's most to believe that the advisory program used flawed methods to train and equip the Vietnamese. By design the Vietnamese forces were organized, equipped and trained to fight as a conventional force on a

¹⁷² Ibid., 60.

¹⁷³ Ibid., 56.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., 60.

¹⁷⁵ Collins, 123.

¹⁷⁶ Lewis Sorley, *Vietnam Chronicles: The Abrams Tapes, 1968-1972* (Lubbock, Texas: Texas Tech University Press, 2004), 329.

linear battlefield. The implementation of counterinsurgency training did not occur until late in the war. At that point, they could not overcome the perception of an insufficient fighting force. Justifying the post 1963 perceptions, the majority of Vietnamese forces failed to prove themselves in combat. Therefore, American combat forces pushed the Army of the Republic of Vietnam aside, executing combat missions as a single force leaving them to combat support missions.¹⁷⁷ Until the end of the war, American combat forces never conducted combined operations with the Army of the Republic of Vietnam. The United States 1st and 25th Divisions were the first to assist in the continued training and development of the Army of the Republic of Vietnam forces.

Placing advisory teams under the direct control of divisional units might have enabled them to perform their duties more effectively, resulting in a useful fighting force; however, without counterinsurgency training, they lacked the skills needed to defeat the threat at hand. The Military Assistance Advisory Group, Vietnam failed to recognize the emerging enemy threat, neglecting to make changes to the training plan, ultimately decreasing the capacity of the Army of the Republic of Vietnam.

¹⁷⁷ Krepinevich, 196.

Conclusion

Training foreign militaries is not a new mission for the American Army. The historical case studies presented demonstrate the success the Armed Forces had in achieving United States national objectives. However, in 2003 the mission to train and develop the Iraqi Army was a complete surprise to those who had to execute the mission. American Soldiers were unprepared to execute the single most important mission to re-establish peace and stability within Iraq. The genesis of this paper was a result of this frustration, observing the American Army wrestle through several attempts to develop a comprehensive training program. Two years passed before the United States Army developed a program that produced a capable Iraqi fighting force. The North African and Chinese training plans produced multiple combat divisions in the same amount of time. Army planners could have prevented the struggle with an examination of the United States militaries historical experiences.

America's rich history in training foreign armies offers planners a unique opportunity to refer to several examples to copy, create or combine to develop a program for the application of its newest training mission, the Iraqi Army. Planners must assume a training mission will evolve regardless of vague political objectives. History provides enough evidence to validate the assumption. Incorporating the training mission from the onset allows for the proper resourcing of equipment, but more importantly the identification of a higher headquarters and subordinate units to serve as trainers. Additionally, planners package a standard program of instruction with associated milestones and assessment mechanisms. The training package allows the unit to become familiar with the tasks prior to the reception of recruits, enabling the trainers to focus on training and not developing a program to execute. Training programs are a necessity in the accomplishment of strategic objectives. They have existed for more than sixty years and will become more prevalent in the future.

In North Africa, Roosevelt's policy to gain French support and alliances served several purposes. In the short-term, the immediate effects of Roosevelt's political maneuvering successfully eliminated the Vichy French as an additional military threat to American forces, an excellent example of Clausewitz's

theory of war as an instrument of power.¹⁷⁸ Lastly, the alignment increased the prospects of the French people supporting, not resisting the Allied invasion and liberation of France. The American training programs solidified and strengthened the alliance and enabled the accomplishment of strategic objectives. The United States Army began the Second World War with limited forces and experience. The nation's industry provided the resources necessary to build the world's strongest military and assisted the Allies defeat of a common enemy. In 1942, the Allies had to make a stand against Axis aggression, conducting its first combat operations in North Africa. Opposing the landings for Operation TORCH was an experienced and formidable army who possessed the ability to damage the United States' limited Army. Gaining an additional ally required less development of American combat divisions, prevented immediate growth in German units and their use of North African resources. From a distance of sixty years, we can see that North Africa was a pivot point in American history, the place where America began to act like a great power – militarily, diplomatically, strategically, and tactically. It is where she first emerged as the dominant force it remained into the next millennium.¹⁷⁹

The China-Burma-India campaign was little different from North Africa. The United States War Department understood the importance of keeping the Chinese Nationalist Army aligned with the Allies, but more importantly, the American government. Roosevelt's choice to support and ally with Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalist party was a calculated decision focused on future and immediate American regional interest.¹⁸⁰ After the attack on Pearl Harbor, the immediate objective was to win the war; keeping the Chinese in the fight provided the best means to accomplish this. The United States military could not produce the troop strength to conduct large-scale combat operations in Asia and Europe simultaneously. Instead, America provided arms and other resources to support the existing Chinese efforts to oust the Japanese. The United States militaries training program became the centerpiece for

¹⁷⁸ Carl Von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. Michael Howard and Peter Paret, trans., Micheal Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), 605.

¹⁷⁹ Rick Atkinson, *An Army at Dawn; the War in North Africa, 1942-1943*, III vols., Vol. I (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2002), 251.

¹⁸⁰ Dougherty, 134.

accomplishing the primary strategic objective. A competent fighting force in Asia required the Japanese to maintain a sizeable Army on the mainland, away from the American Pacific island campaign. General Stilwell's second drive into Burma demonstrated their effectiveness as a fighting force and the effectiveness of the training program. Like North Africa, the program enabled the accomplishment of both political and military objectives.

The 1949 Communist Chinese success in ousting the Nationalists, led American political and military leaders to believe the Chinese would move to assume control of Indochina, forming a stronger partnership with known Communist and popular Vietnamese leader Ho Chi Minh.¹⁸¹ The increased Communist threat brought new regional foreign policy. The new policy focused military efforts on preventing Indochina from falling into Communist control.¹⁸² In 1950, the United States government provided arms and financial assistance to the French war efforts, including its training program for the South Vietnamese Army, as a means to assist the French in denying a Communist take-over. Increasing the French-Viet-Minh war aid program ensured the French remained a capable, functioning participant in the defense of Western Europe, another objective of the United States government.¹⁸³ Following the 1954 French defeat at Dien Bien Phu, the United States Department of Defense assumed responsibility of the training program in the hopes of developing a Vietnamese Army capable of providing stability and long-term peace in Vietnam. Like North Africa and China, the American military developed a capable Vietnamese Army ready to fight on linear battlefields. The training program failed to adapt to the enemy's guerilla tactics, contributing to the Army of the Republic of Vietnam's notable combat failings after the American military build-up.

The commonalities amongst the three studies are relevant in recent political and military activities within Iraq and Afghanistan. Training programs commence out of necessity to accomplish strategic

¹⁸¹ Glennon and Petersen, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1952-54*, pt. 1 (Washington D.C., 1982), 398.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*, 28.

¹⁸³ Ian F. W. Beckett, *Modern Insurgencies and Counter-Insurgencies, Guerillas and Their Opponents since 1750* (London: Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group, 2003), 114.

objectives, to create a competent force holding the qualities to sustain long-term regional peace and stability. The significant difference between politics then and now is America went to war in 2003 without a political strategy, resulting in the military's inability to accomplish political objectives.¹⁸⁴ The military objective was to defeat the Iraqi Army and remove Saddam Hussein from power. Re-building the Iraqi army was an afterthought.

Today, the United States military is involved in two extensive training programs in the heartland of Central Asia and the Middle East. What the United States Department of Defense failed to do is begin Operation Iraqi Freedom with a nation-building parlance - a plan for the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of the Iraqi military and police. The operational plan should have included a nation-building parlance similar to the ones developed for Bosnia and Kosovo. Specifically, the omission of mobilizing the Iraqi Army quickly, to organize, train and equip them became part of the internal security issues that plagued American forces for the first twenty-four months of the war.¹⁸⁵ History demonstrates that training programs are not ad hoc functions of the military, but planned operations with a dedicated chain of command and support mechanisms. The immediate establishment of the Military Assistance Advisory Group, Vietnam headquarters with specific departments to manage everyday aspects of the training mission is a perfect example. The Department of Defense failed to apply these lessons while planning the 2003 invasion of Iraq.

The application of these historical lessons could have prevented the two-year delay in establishing a comprehensive training program.¹⁸⁶ Unlike Vietnam, the Iraq and Afghanistan training programs quickly adapted to enemy tactics, updating training frequently to meet the needs of battlefield

¹⁸⁴ H.R. McMaster, February 16, 2010, AMSP Seminar 2 discussion concerning the United States political and military goals and objectives prior to the 2003 Iraq invasion. Conflicting or the lack of political considerations directly affected how the military executed the mission given, defeat the Iraqi Army, and change the existing regime.

¹⁸⁵ Dobbins, interview by Pete Connors, Fort Leavenworth, KS, December 13, 2005, 5. A nation-building parlance is a systematic plan to disarm, de-mobilize and re-integrate foreign armies. The plan provides the invasion force with time to first secure military objectives then focus on the planned training operation. In Iraq the army disintegrated on their own, therefore the American Army would start by mobilizing the former members through screening processes and initiating a stipend plan to keep the mobilized group at bay.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., 6

commanders. Adviser teams influence doctrine and procedures based on the effectiveness in combat. Existing command structures for arming, training and advising foreign militaries must exist prior to the commitment of United States forces. We should not make this mistake again.

This topic needs further research. The focus of the research should include nation-building tasks for military commands, specifically, the development of military objectives to accomplish vague political strategies. Determining the proper command and control structure of the training and advisory headquarters that enables the immediate organization of a foreign military, allowing commanders to incorporate current environmental conditions to the program objectives as was evident in Vietnam. Lastly, the development of a comprehensive training program that prepares American soldiers to train foreign armies without depleting required combat skills.

Since the Second World War, the United States Department of Defense has successfully trained foreign militaries. The training programs produced forces that proved themselves in battle.¹⁸⁷ Each program developed effective fighting forces capable of conducting operations independently or as a coalition. Today, the Iraq and Afghanistan armies are developing slower than expected; however, both forces are executing operations with coalition forces accomplishing operational objectives independently. Understanding our past will preclude the Army from making the same mistakes in the future.

¹⁸⁷ The Military Assistance Advisory Group, Vietnam training mission was successful prior to the full commitment of United States forces. The Army of the Republic of Vietnam conducted several independent training operations in preparation to block a North Vietnam and Communist China invasion. The training mission foundation was towards a linear battlefield, not the counterinsurgency tactics the enemy adopted later in the war.

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