

Second Northern Expedition 1928: Part II

v.1.0 March 7, 2007

An Xiang

With permission from the author, whose page "China's Wars" appears in www.orbat.com [See History]. Formatted by Ravi Rikhye.

Editor's Note



The blue area is under direct KMT rule. Pink is under major warlord coalitions. White is under minor warlords.

A larger version of this map is available at <http://www.dean.usma.edu/history/web03/atlasses/chinese%20civil%20war/chinese%20civil%20war%20index.htm>

The background to the campaign is that following the deposing of the Chinese Qing Dynasty in 1912, China became a republic and a series of civil wars began. He formed the National Revolutionary Army in 1925. His political part, the Kuomintang, and the NRA operated under the guidance of and with material assistance from the Soviet Comintern. The NRA included the Communists, who formed the 4th and 8th Route Armies of the NRA, and both factions cooperated in the Northern Expedition of 1926-27.

The Expedition started from the KMT's power base in Guangdong with a push north against 3 main warlords. In 1927 Chiang purged the

Communists from his alliance. In 1928 he launched the Second Northern Expedition. This culminated in the capture of Beijing and the supremacy of the KMT.

Chiang next turned his attention to fighting the Communists. The situation was very complex because of the arrival of the Japanese. The 3-way struggle became a war between the KMT and the Communists when Japan was defeated in 1945, and culminated in the Communist victory of 1949.

The KMT escaped to Taiwan. The Civil War continues to this day, though there have been no significant hostilities since 1958. Beijing does not recognize Taiwan's independence and is working steadily to regain what it regards as its illegally seceded province.

www.wikipedia.com has extensive details of the Chinese Civil War's campaigns 1926-1949 and several orbats.

Wu Peifu's Fall From Power

At Nanyang, 8th Corps Chief Yu Xuezhong, unable to control his forces, persuaded Wu Peifu into seeking asylum elsewhere while Yu Xuezhong himself defected to Feng-xi's camp to be chief of 20th Corps under Zhang Zuolin's Anguo-jun (pacifying country army). While fleeing, Wu Peifu's longtime counsellor and friend Zhang Qihuang was killed by Fan Zhongxiu's soldiers. With the help of Zhang Liansheng at Xiangyang city, Wu Peifu went on a flee towards Sichuan Prov. However, Zhang Liansheng, a follower of Wu Peifu, defected to Feng Yuxiang and assisted Feng Yuxiang in attacking Wu Peifu's 2nd regiment at a river crossing, leading to a loss of three ships and over hundred people on the part of Wu Peifu. Wu Peifu's entourage then walked along small mountainside roads in northern Hubei Prov, passing through numerous banditry dens, often with bandits serving as guide in respective domains and holding a sign with 'Wu Peifu' characters. At one time, some local army tried to disarm Wu Peifu. By July 13th 1927, Wu Peifu's 5000 men arrived at Ba-dong (i.e., eastern Sichuan Prov) where Yang Sen offered asylum to Wu after assuring Chiang Kai-shek that Wu Peifu, as a personal friend, would act as civilian only in Sichuan Prov. Yang Sen, who himself declared loyalty to the Nationalist Government already, would ask Wu Peifu make a public announcement to the nation about his hermitage.

Chiang Kai-shek's Defeat At Xuzhou & His Stepdown

In northern China, after the relocation of nationalist 7th Corps, Zhi-Lu-jun armies [Xu Kun & Xu Yuanquan] and Sun Chuanfang army mounted a counter-attack. Nationalist 10th Corps incurred heavy loss at Lincheng. On July 27th, Xu Kun's northern army sacked Xuzhou. Wang Tianpei retreated to Suzhou of Anhui Prov. Nationalist 2nd route retreated to northern Jiangsu Prov along Long-Hai Railroad. Chiang Kai-shek, against Li Zongren's advice, insisted on a re-capture of Xuzhou by taking advantage of Wuhan-CCP entanglements. Chiang Kai-shek then personally led a campaign against Xuzhou with two divisions from 1st Corps, with a swear that he would not return to Nanking should he

fail to take Xuzhou. Li Zongren, being worried about Chiang Kai-shek's emotions, left for Wuhu area for defence against Wuhan "eastern expedition" forces. On July 25th, Chiang Kai-shek left for the north. In early August, Chiang Kai-shek initiated a counter-attack with 10th, 27th, 32nd, 40th & 1st corps, while Bai Chongxi fought against Xu Yuanquan & Sun Chuanfang around Huai-shui River with 37th & 44th corps. Chiang Kai-shek fell into a trap by pushing his armies to the city gate of Xuzhou. Northern armies dispatched a column for a surprise attack from the rightside, while launching an attack at the front. Chiang Kai-shek fled all the way southward with no time to sabotage the Jin-Pu Railway.

More available at [Battle of Xuzhou](#).

Battle Of Longtan

Sun Chuanfang came back toward Tuzhou in the south on Aug 15th. Northern armies returned via the Jin-Pu Railway and the Canal, and blasted the southern Yangtze bank for days. On Aug 21st, Zhang Zongchang went to Peking for briefing Zhang Zuolin as to Sun Chuanfang's actions. Zhang Zuolin dispatched Bo-hai Sea Fleet to Wusongkou the Yangtze River mouth. Sun Chuanfang then moved his command center to Liuhe. On the night of 25th, Sun Chuanfang mounted a "Crossing Yangtze" campaign against Nanking. On the southern bank, Nationalist Army had disbursed the first route army to Wulongshan-Longtan-Qixiashan, the second route army to the upperstream Yangtze, and the third route army to the middle segment. Li Zongren, after his return, had ordered that Liao Lei dispatch an extra 8 regiments to Mt Wulongshan.

More available at [Battle of Longtan](#).

Second Northern Campaign

On Dec 11th, communists, under leadership of Zhang Tailei and Soviet Consulate, staged "Canton Commune" rebellion in Guangzhou of Guangdong Prov. On Dec 12th, Heh Yingqin's 1st Route began to attack Xuzhou and took over the Xuzhou airport, and four days later, took over Xuzhou with sacrifice of life by 65th Regiment Chief Cheng Shi in the Battle of Zhilan. On 14th, KMT government rescinded all relationships with USSR. KMT leadership had dispute in regards to Soviet involvement, with Wu Jingheng and Whang Jingwei against each other. Senior KMT leaders, including Deng Zeru and Gu Yingfen, rebuked nine KMT commissars including Whang Jingwei. Whang Jingwei resigned his post for an overseas trip on Dec 17th.



More available at [2nd Northern Campaign](#).

National Humiliation Memorial Day

At Jinan, Japanese army, which landed in coastal Qingdao in the summer of 1927 but evacuated in five batches after protests by Peking

government, would stage a comeback on April 27th 1928. Back in July [June 27th to July 7th per LDF] 1927, Japanese Prime Minister Tanaka convened an "Orient Meeting" in Tokyo. In Aug, Japanese consuls convened a Dalian Meeting inside China. On April 27th 1928, about 5000 Japanese from 2nd division-conglomerate landed in Qingdao. 400 Japanese were sent southward to Jiao-Ji Railway in Shandong Prov from Tianjin's Japanese concession territory. Zhang Zongchang secretly sold out interests in Qingdao and on Jiao-Ji Railway to Japanese for help in fending off the Northern Expedition forces. (Japanese Prime Minister Tanaka, who coerced Manchurian Warlord Zhang Zuolin with construction of Jilin-Heilongjiang railway and later blasted Zhang Zuolin to death on June 4th 1928, would resign in July 1928 under the pressure of Japanese emperor.)

In face of KMT Second Northern Expedition, on May 2nd, i.e., the second day after Jinan fell into revolutionary army, Japanese had taken up positions at Japanese consulate, Japanese school, Jinan Hospital, and Japanese-controlled "*Jinan Daily*" newspaper office. Japanese army set up barbed wires and checkpoints throughout commercial districts of the city and shot dead any Chinese who approached them. Xu Zhen stated that on May 1st and 3rd, Heh Yaozu's 40th Corps had conflicts with Japanese army. Chiang Kai-shek convened a meeting in Jinan for sake of trying to avoid confrontations with Japanese. Hu Zongnan refused to take up the task of garrison for Jinan.

On May 3rd, Japanese refused to let go negotiators sent by the nationalist government and demanded that Nationalist Army retreat 20 kilometers away from Jinan city. At 9:37 am, Japanese attacked Chinese barracks. Fighting ensued for whole day. At night, Japanese army intruded into the office of KMT negotiators, bound the hands of all personnel, and executed them. Japanese soldiers broke the leg of KMT commissioner Cai Gongshi, hit off his teeth, cut the tongue, and shot him. Hu Qiuyuan mentioned that foreign minister Huang Fo [? Huang Fu] was arrested by Japanese. Two regiments, 7th regiment of 3rd division and the first regiment, were disarmed by Japanese while under Chiang Kai-shek's order of "no fighting back". On May 4th, Japanese planes bombed the headquarter of the revolutionary army. When 40th Corps refused ceasefire order and fought the Japanese, Chiang Kai-shek ordered that Hu Zongnan go to the 40th Corps for stopping the war with Japanese. On May 5th, Chiang Kai-shek, leaving an order that Li Yannian's regiment stayed in Jinan city for two days, secretly ordered that nationalist army crossed the Yellow River for the north. Hu Qiuyuan stated that Chiang Kai-shek relocated his HQ to Dangjiazhuang on May 6th and that Japanese Kwantung army came over around May 7th to surround Jinan city. At Yanzhou, Chiang Kai-shek and KMT party and administration officials made a decision to circumvent around Jinan for a continuous campaign towards Peking.

Japanese, learning that nationalist army had crossed the river, waged a war against Li Yannian's regiment in an outrage. Li Yannian's regiment fought Japanese till 9th. On May 11th, while on their way of retreat, Li Yannian's regiment was attacked by Japanese without regard for a ceasefire, and about 500 soldiers broke through the siege. Japanese

army consequently launched a massacre at Jinan city, shooting dead 200 wounded KMT soliders at a hospital and killing over 2000 civilians. Unofficial account stated that as many as 101,062 soldiers and civilians were killed and wounded during "Jinan Bloody Incident". Nationalist Government later decreed that May 3rd be designated the "National Humiliation Memorial Day".

Chiang Kai-shek blamed Jinan Incident on Heh Yaozu, and revoked Heh Yaozu's posts of garrison commander for Nanking and commander-in-chief of 3rd group army. After Tanaka resigned in July 1928 over the June 4th death of Zhang Zuolin, Chiang Kai-shek dispatched Wang Zhengting to goodwill negotiations with the relatively friendly Japanese prime minister Shidehara Kijuro [Biyuan Xichonglang in Chinese]. By March 28th 1929, Japanese foreign minister acknowledged the 'Jinan Incident' as a misfortune and agreed to withdrawing the troops from Shandong within two months. (Wang Zhengting would also be responsible for terminating the Belgian settlment in Tianjin on Aug 31st 1929 and the British lease of Weihaiwei on Oct 1st 1930.)

Unification of China

By mid-May, Nationalist Army approached Baoding and Dezhou. On May 30th, Zhang Zuolin's An-guo-jun army declared a general retreat towards Luan-he River area. The next day, 1st Group Army took over Baoding. On June 1st, Chiang Kai-shek held a meeting with Feng Yuxiang and Yan Xishan at Shijiazhuang in regards to recovering Tianjin & Beijing. The next day, Zhang Zuolin sent a public wire about his exit from Peking. On June 3rd, Zhang Zuolin and his entourage of about 30 rode on train for Shenyang of Manchuria. However, at about 5:30 am, on the morning of June 4th, on the way home, Zhang Zuolin's train was bombed by 30 bags of yellow powder at Huanggudun train station near Shenyang city. Under the pressure, Kwantung army immediately placed two dead bodies at the scene and claimed that spies from southern China had blasted Zhang Zuolin's train. (Japanese later acknowledged that they did the assassination, while some scholar had claimed that it was the Soviet agents who laid the mine.) Manchurian army, i.e., Feng-xi army, swarmed out of Shanhaiguan Pass upon hearing the death of their commander. Zhang Xueliang stealthily returned to Shenyang on June 18th and assumed the post of commander-in-chief on July 4th.

By June 6th, Yan Xishan's 3rd Group Army reached the outskirts of Peking. By June 8th, Sun Chu, an officer under Shang Zhen's rightside column of 3rd Group Army, led three regiments into Peking through Xuanwumen City Gate. 7th Corps Chief Zhang Yinwu entered Peking next and was conferred the post of garrison commander. Revolutionary army then converged upon Tianjin. At Tianjin, Zhang Zongchang and Chu Yuepu fled to Luanhe, and remnants, about 200,000, surrendered to the revolutionary army without a fight. On June 20th, KMT central politics meeting decreed that Zhili be renamed Hebei, and Beijing [Peking] be renamed Beiping. Beiping and Tianjin cities were put under special jurisdiction. Also in June, Governor-general Yang Zengxin declared a change of flag to Nanking Government's "blue sky and white

sun flag".

On June 9th, Chiang Kai-shek issued a public wire as to resigning the posts of commander-in-chief of the northern expedition army and chairman of the military committee on the pretext that northern expeditions were accomplished. The public wire called for a demobilization. On June 12th, Chiang Kai-shek announced the relinquishment of the post as chairman of KMT Central Politics Meeting. Ding Weifen of KMT Party Affairs Department followed suit with a resignation announcement; navy commander Yang Shuzhuang submitted his resignation; and 1st Corps Chief Liu Zhi applied for overseas studies in Europe. Also on June 12th, Feng Yuxiang, being still angry over Yan Xishan's control over Peking-Tientsin area, would first send a wire for disuading Chiang Kai-shek as to resignations. Seeing no reply from Chiang Kai-shek, Feng Yuxiang further wired to express a wish to resign together should Chiang Kai-shek be adamant about it. Thereafter, Yan Xishan, Bai Chongxi, Li Zongren, Heh Yingqin and Li Jishen etc sent in wires for a disuasion of Chiang Kai-shek. On June 17th, Chiang Kai-shek revoked his resignations and returned to Nanking from his hometown. On July 2nd, Heh Yingqin first talked about contracting armies to 80 divisions from 300 divisions nationwide. Hu Zongnan's 22nd division was contracted to 2nd brigade under 1st division in Qufu of Shandong Prov in late Aug. (Hu Zongnan was said to have retained 60 officers on his own payroll.)



On July 3rd, commander-in-chiefs of four routes of Revolutionary Army entered Peking. On July 6th, four commanders went to Biyunshi Monastery on Mt Western Hill for paying respect to Dr Sun Yat-sen's altar. On July 8th 1928, Chiang Kai-shek declared that Dr Sun Yat-sen's coffin be moved to Nanking the capital. In Peking, Feng Yuxiang held a banquet inside of the Forbidden City. During the banquet, Feng Yuxiang suddenly ordered that hundreds of staff workers converge onto the dining hall and shout aloud to the guests, stating that Feng Yuxiang, after kicking out the last Qing Emperor, did not steal "national treasures" as the rumor said.

Sun Yat Sen Image from <http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/CHINAsun.htm>

On Aug 9th, KMT politics meeting decreed that Qinghai, Xikang [western Sichuan], Rehe, Chahaer and Suiyuan be zoned as provinces. On Oct 8th, KMT standing committee made Chiang Kai-shek into chairman [president] of National Government. Tan Yankai, Hu Hanmin, Wang Chonghui, Dai Chuanxian [Dai Jitao] & Cai Yuanperi were made into ministers of five government departments. On Nov 10th, Chiang Kai-shek inspected his crony 1st Division at Xuzhou where he probably first discussed the issue of neo-warlords.

On Dec 29th 1928, Zhang Xueliang, son of late Zhang Zuolin, together

with Zhang Zuoxiang and Wan Fulin, against Japanese threats and coercions, declared in a public wire that the four provinces of Feng [Liaoning], Ji [Jilin], Hei [Heilongjiang], & Ri [Rehe] change flag to that of the Republic of China, obey the National Government, and follow the "Three People's Principles". On Dec 31st 1928, Chiang Kai-shek conferred the "Manchuria border commander-in-chief" onto Zhang Xueliang, and further ceded Rehe Province to be under the jurisdiction of Manchuria. Fengtian was renamed to the Province of Liaoning. (Heh Chengjun, a disciple of Huang Xing while studying at Japan's Zhenwu Military School in 1904, was said to have been responsible for persuading Zhang Xueliang into this move. Li Zongren memoirs stated that Zhang Xueliang dispatched two emissaries [Xing Shilian & Wang Shuhan] to Peking on July 8th 1928 for peace talks with the four leaders of the Nationalist Army Groups. Li Zongren stated that he had advocated peaceful solution to Manchuria, while Feng Yuxiang & Yan Xishan deeply disliked Zhang Xueliang and proposed a military solution.) China was finally reunited again under the National Government of the ROC.

In May-June 1929, Dr. Sun Yat-sen's bronze coffin was moved to Zijinshan Mountain of Nanking from Peking. Warship Weisheng-jian sailed through Pukou and delivered the coffin at Xiaguan Dock, next to Nanking, on June 28th, with honorary cannon shooting to the skies as salutes. Kong Xiangxi, who was reported to be a fat man riding a fat horse at the scene, personally led a staff of 32 men aboard Warship Weisheng-jian. Ships in Yangtze River, domestic and foreign, all fired cannons to show respect. Mme Sun Yat-sen, wearing all black, stepped onto Zhongshan Dock (with a newly built wharf) together with the funeral column. At the dock, Chiang Kai-shek was wearing white robe and black vest while the rest of KMT central executive committee members in blue robes and black vests, all barefoot as a show of respect. Then vehicles carrying the coffin drove to KMT party headquarter for the coffin-waiting ceremony. Three Song family sisters, with tears, followed the coffin in the vehicle column. Sun Yat-sen's long-time Japanese pals also participated. Above the coffin at KMT party headquarter was a banner stating "Spirit Forever Immortal". From May 26th to June 1st, a period of 'holding in peace' was declared, with innumerable civilians and soldiers participating in the coffin relocation ceremony. (Descriptions from "*A Journey Through China - A Pictorial Walk, 1927-1997*", Tian-Xia-Wen-Hua Publishing House, Taipei, Taiwan, 1997)

