Soong Mayling's 1943 American Speech Tour:

A Study in the Rhetoric of Public Diplomacy

By

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Abstract

This dissertation studies Soong Mayling's phenomenal 1943 American speech tour, one of the most consequential episodes of public diplomacy in Sino-American history. From February 18 to April 4, 1943, Soong visited the United States and traveled from the East Coast to the West, addressing both houses of Congress and the general public in New York, Boston, Chicago, San Francisco, and Los Angeles. During the tour, she called for a strong Sino-American alliance to fight against Japan and to establish a new world order after the war. Explicating the origin, evolvement, and culmination of the tour, this dissertation analyzes how Soong's diplomatic rhetoric: 1) enhanced the joint front line in the Far East and forged a new dimension in U.S.-China relations; 2) elevated China's position in the international community and helped assure China's place at the Cairo Conference and in the new United Nations Security Council; and 3) by reconstructing American perceptions of China and the Chinese people, contributed to repeal of the Chinese Exclusion Act in December, 1943.

Chapter One introduces Soong Mayling's life experiences and discusses her establishment of a rhetorical forum in China and creation of a cross-cultural channel for reaching a substantial American audience. This chapter also explains how influential transnational discourses shaped the American imagination of China and how Soong adapted to those discourses. Chapter Two deals with Sino-American wartime diplomacy across the years 1937-1943. This chapter explains how President Roosevelt initiated a private diplomacy project to build connections with Allied leaders, a project that eventually paved the way for Soong Mayling's visit to America. It also traces Soong's activities before the official start of her tour in February 1943 and examines the

construction of her February 18, 1943, addresses to Congress. Chapter Three analyzes those addresses to demonstrate how Soong adroitly combined epideictic and deliberative elements so as to identify shared values, to shape perceptions of Sino-American relations, and to propose an alternative war policy. Chapter Four examines the constitution of Soong's national American audience and the exigencies produced by different responses from mainstream journalists and minority newspapers, conflicting feelings of the Roosevelt administration, challenges posed both by isolationists and Winston Churchill, and expectations from religious groups and liberal feminists. This chapter explicates Soong's responses to these exigencies and how she sought to construct a new image of China that would help transform public views of Sino-American relations. Chapter Five deals with Soong's speeches and activities in San Francisco and Los Angeles. By examining how she employed a rhetoric of unity to elevate China's status within the alliance and how she utilized the stage set by a Hollywood director to present China as a courageous and reliable ally for the United States, this chapter explains Soong's growing support from the general public and the minority press, both of which helped form a favorable public opinion to counteract the anti-Chinese discourse that had prevailed on the West Coast since the beginning of the exclusion era. The Conclusion discusses the influence of Soong's discourse on repeal of the Chinese exclusion laws and provides a final assessment of Soong's tour, its impact on American foreign and domestic policy, and its long-term historical and rhetorical implications.

Introduction

Public Diplomacy and National Image

> *You, as representatives of the American people, have before you the glorious opportunity of carrying on the pioneer work of your ancestors, beyond the frontiers of physical and geographical limitations. You have today before you the immeasurably greater opportunity to implement these same ideals and to help bring about the liberation of man's spirit in every part of the world.*
>
> —— Soong Mayling, speech to the United States Congress

> *The hundred-sixty years of traditional friendship between our two great peoples, China and America, which has never been marred by misunderstandings, is unsurpassed in the annals of the world. We, in China, want a better world, not for ourselves alone, but for all mankind, and we must have it.*
>
> —— Soong Mayling, speech to the United States Congress

On February 18, 1943, Soong Mayling, known to most Americans as Madame Chiang Kai-shek, spoke to the House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate to call for a strong Sino-American alliance to fight against Japan and to establish a new world order after the war. Soong's speeches won the hearts of congressmen and senators alike and were a harbinger of the successful addresses she would give in other parts of the nation during the next few weeks. Congress rose to its feet as one after the conclusion of Soong's remarks to give her thundering applause. President Franklin D. Roosevelt also expressed wholehearted support and "gave pledges that the United States would rush 'as fast as the Lord will let us' to transform China into a base for offensive operations against the Japanese."[1]

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[1] W. H. Lawrence, "President Tells Mme. Chiang More Arms Will Be Rushed," *New York Times*, Feb 20, 1943.

In the following six weeks, Soong undertook a nationwide speech tour for which there was no precedent among foreign leaders. She addressed large audiences in New York, Boston, Chicago, San Francisco, and Los Angeles. Americans all over the nation could hear her speeches via radio, yet thousands still came to mass meetings and stadiums to cheer and listen to China's delicate and lovely first lady.[2] All told, more than 100,000 people attended her speech events.[3] Her audience size increased from 17,000 to more than 30,000 as she traveled from the East Coast to the West Coast.[4] Also increasing were donations and public support. According to a *New York Times* report, during the first two weeks of her tour, Soong received at least $310,000 from various organizations and individuals.[5] A survey conducted by the American Institute of Public Opinion reflected a striking change in American attitudes about war strategy after Soong's speaking tour. Those who regarded Japan (as opposed to Germany) as the first enemy of

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[2] The media coverage about Soong Mayling's speech tour often emphasized her stature and called her "China's lovely first lady." See, for example, Lucy Greenbaum, "A Camera Report of Mme. Chiang Kai-shek's First Official Visit to New York," *New York Times*, March 2, 1943; "Governor Greets Missimo," *Nevada State Journal*, March 27, 1943.

[3] According to newspaper accounts, 20,000 people witnessed her Madison Square Garden speech, plus about 3,000 at her New York Chinatown speech. More than 2,000 listened to her at Wellesley's Alumnae Hall, 23,000 at Chicago Stadium, 12,000 at San Francisco's Civic Auditorium, 10,000 at San Francisco, Chinatown, and 30,000 at the Hollywood Bowl. These figures do not include her congressional addresses, reception speeches, press conferences, and remarks on other occasions.

[4] "Mme. Chiang Voices China's Resolution to Continue Fight," *New York Times*, March 3, 1943; "Mme. Chiang Gives Freedoms Pledge," *New York Times*, April 5, 1943.

[5] "Mme. Chiang Receives $310,000, in Gifts for Chinese War Relief," *New York Times*, March 17, 1943. This report details the largest single donation and publishes a letter from Mrs. Authur Simons, who sold her ring to support China's war orphans.

the United States increased from 25 percent in June 1942 to 53 percent in March 1943.[6] Having gained support from the American government and the public, Soong's diplomatic rhetoric enhanced the joint front line in the Far East and forged a new dimension in U.S.-China relations. Her discourse also elevated China's position in the international community and helped assure China's place at the Cairo Conference and in the new United Nations Security Council.[7] In addition, by reconstructing American perceptions of China and the Chinese people, Soong's speeches contributed to repeal of the Chinese Exclusion Act ten months later.[8]

Born in Shanghai in 1898, Soong Mayling was a member of the most influential family in modern Chinese history.[9] Her father, Charles Soong, was educated and baptized in the United States and, after returning to China in 1886, married Ni Kwei-tseng, a pious Chinese Christian whose forebear Xu Guanqi (1562-1633) was perhaps "China's most famous Roman Catholic convert" of the early seventeenth century.[10] Soong had a successful printing business in Shanghai and used his wealth to

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[6] M.S.F., "Mme. Chiang and Dr. Gallup," *Far Eastern Survey*, 12 (Mar. 8, 1943): 45.

[7] Ronald Heiferman, *The Cairo Conference of 1943: Roosevelt, Churchill, Chiang Kai-shek and Madame Chiang* (Jefferson: McFarland, 2011), 21-33.

[8] Fred W. Riggs, *Pressures on Congress: A Study of the Repeal of Chinese Exclusion* (New York: King's Crown Press, 1950), 1.

[9] Sterling Seagrave, historian and biographer of the Soong family, claims that the Soong's family "played . . . a disturbing role in human destiny" and "shaped the history of Asia and the world." Sterling Seagrave, *The Soong Dynasty* (New York: Harper & Row, 1985), 8.

[10] Daniel H. Bays, "The Soong Family and the Chinese Protestant Christian Community," in *Madame Chiang Kai-shek and Her China*, edited by Samuel C. Chu (Norwalk: EastBridge, 2005), 27.

support the 1911 revolution led by Dr. Sun Yat-sen, the founding father of the Republic of China. Believing that China would soon go through a modernization process, the Soongs sent all their children to the United States to receive a Western education. Mayling came to America with her sisters at age ten and attended boarding school in Georgia. After graduating from Wellesley College in 1914, she returned to China in 1917 and became the first lady of the Republic of China, after marrying Chiang Kai-shek in 1927.

She worked as China's Red Cross Director-General, as a member of the Legislative Yuan from 1930 to 1932, and as Secretary-General of the Chinese Aeronautical Affairs Commission from 1936 to 1938.[11] She also engaged with other women activists to help pass constitutional amendments in 1946 promoting women's political rights.[12] Besides fighting for Chinese women's suffrage and mediating domestic political issues, Soong was in charge of building China's air force and taking care of the orphans of Nationalist soldiers. Her diplomatic campaigns brought crucial allies and aid to China during the 1940s. Attending the Cairo Conference with her husband, who spoke little English, she negotiated with Western political leaders, explained China's positions, and helped sign the Cairo Declaration. In the first half of the twentieth century, no other Chinese woman, and very few women in the world, played such an active role on the domestic and

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[11] The Legislative Yuan is one of the five branches of government stipulated by the Constitution of the Republic of China, which follows Sun Yat-sen's *Three Principles of the People*. The Yuan is sometimes referred to as a "parliament," but it does not have the power to amend the constitution or to elect the president.

[12] Yufa Zhang, "Er shi shi shi qian ban qi zhongguo fu nv can zheng quan de yan bian," [Development of women's political participation in the early half of the twentieth century], in *Wu Sheng Zhi Zheng* [Voice of the Unheard], eds. Jiurong Luo and Miaofen Lu (Taibei: Zhong Yang Yan Jiu Yuan Jin Dai Shi Yan Jiu Suo, 2003), 71.

international political stages. The *New York Times* called Soong "beyond doubt the most influential woman in China," and *Life* magazine deemed her "probably the most powerful woman in the world."[13]

Soong's power came not only from her family background and standing as the first lady of China. It had an important rhetorical dimension as well. Her childhood experiences and education helped her cultivate a unique insight for understanding and overcoming cultural differences. Her participation in China's political affairs created opportunities for her voice to be heard at home and abroad. That voice was noticed by pro-China Americans such as Pulitzer Prize winner Pearl S. Buck, media magnate Henry Luce, and American foreign missionaries, all of whom helped Soong reach a wide international audience. By publishing articles in mainstream American newspapers and magazines and speaking to the world directly via radio, Soong was an influential figure before coming to the United States and was regarded by many as the symbol of modern China.

The peak of her oratorical achievement came with her 1943 speech tour in the United States. Throughout American history, there had never been (and, to this day, has not been again) a non-white, non-American woman attaining such a high-level rhetorical platform and casting so much influence on American foreign and domestic policies. Nor has there been a speech tour of comparable length or impact by a major foreign leader. Soong's accomplishments were impressive for many reasons, including the myriad of challenges she faced while striving to achieve her goals. Sixty years' enforcement of

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[13] "Mei-ling ('Beautiful Mood') Helps Her Husband Rule China," *Life,* August 16, 1937, 20; Nathaniel Peffer, "Madame Chiang Kai-shek Speaks for China," *New York Times*, April 21, 1940.

Chinese exclusion laws had reinforced deep-rooted negative stereotypes of China among Americans.[14] The loss of the first Burma war in mid-1942, Britain's distrust of the Chinese Nationalist government, and the misunderstandings between Chiang Kai-shek and American advisors had brought the U.S.-China military alliance to the verge of collapse by 1943. In addition, conventional gender norms and political culture in the United States imposed powerful restrictions on women orators regardless of their station or background.

Soong was so successful in meeting all these challenges that one newspaper opined that her "matchless eloquence" swayed Americans just like "Demosthenes enthralled the ancient Greeks."[15] After her congressional address, commentators praised her remarks on "the making of human liberty," saying that "Thomas Jefferson could hardly have excelled the clarity of that expression."[16] Journalists likened her to the great Anglo-American orators, stating that she spoke "with the polish of the scholarly Wilson" and matched President Roosevelt's "charm and persuasiveness." "No leader in the world today," it was said, "with the possible exception of Churchill, has the same command of

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[14] The United States federal government passed the first immigration regulation law in 1882 to restrict the entrance of Chinese immigrants. This law was extended in 1892 and 1904 and remained in force until 1943. See Mary R. Coolidge, *Chinese Immigration* (New York: Holt and Co., 1909); Andrew Gyory, *Closing the Gate: Race, Politics, and the Chinese Exclusion Act* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998); Jack Chen, *The Chinese of America* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1980).

[15] "Power of Oratory," *Zanesville Times Recorder*, March 8, 1943.

[16] "Speech to Congress, Madame Chiang Kai-shek Calls Upon the U.S. to Join China—in War and in Peace," *Life*, March 1, 1943, 26.

the classically simple eloquent phrase."[17] Such praise increased as Soong's tour proceeded. After she arrived on the West Coast, a *Los Angeles Times* editorial claimed that "no one who has heard Mme. Chiang speak, or has even read her speeches," could doubt the impact of her "tremendous forensic power, logic and emotional effect" on the American public.[18] Her long-term impact was so great that it has been said that "China, the UN, the Korean War, McCarthyism—the fragile skein of history snaked back to a delicate, small-boned lady of fierce determination."[19]

Yet Soong's 1943 speech tour has not been accorded the scholarly attention it deserves. There have been no full-length published rhetorical studies of the tour.[20] Historians also give the tour short shrift, focusing instead on military events and political negotiations. There are brief discussions of the tour in scattered biographical works and Asian-American historical studies by such writers as Laura Tyson Li, Hannah Pakula,

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[17] "Mme. Chiang's Mission," *Danville Bee*, March 5, 1943; W.H. Lawrence, "President Tells Mme. Chiang More Arms Will Be Rushed," *New York Times*, February 20, 1943; Dorothy Dunbar Bromley, "Mme. Chiang's Talent for World Leadership Shown in Review of Her 1942 Speeches," *New York Herald Tribune*, February 7, 1943.

[18] "A Welcome to Mme. Chiang," *Los Angles Times*, March 31, 1943.

[19] Mark Steyn, "Half Dragon Lady, Half Georgia Peach," *Atlantic Monthly* (January/February 2004): 44.

[20] Unpublished studies include Angela Chen, "Rhetorical Analysis of Madame Chiang Kai-shek's Two Speeches to the Joint Session of Congress," (Master Thesis, Mankato State University, 1995); Daniel Paul Lintin, "From First Lady to Dragon Lady: Rhetorical Study of Madame Chiang's Public Personae Before and During Her 1943 U.S. Tour," (PhD diss., University of Minnesota, 2001); Daniel Marshall Haygood, "Uncovering Henry Luce's Agenda for China: A Comparative Analysis of Time, Incorporated and Other Media Coverage of Madame Chiang Kai-shek's Trips to America, 1943-1948," (PhD diss., University of North Carolina, 2004).

Yong Chen, and Karen J. Leong.[21] Yet none of their accounts explore the rhetorical dynamics of Soong's speech tour; nor do they explain how her speeches helped shape American public opinion, reconstruct China's image, or influence U.S. policies.[22]

Inattention to Soong's tour reflects in part a gendered perspective in both public address and historical studies. As T. Christopher Jespersen argues, Soong Mayling would be taken more seriously by historians if she had been a man.[23] The same is true of rhetorical scholars. As noted by Karlyn Kohrs Campbell, the study of public address in the early years of the field focused exclusively on the discourse of white male political leaders.[24] Although rhetorical scholarship in general has expanded to include women, African Americans, and Latino/Latina rhetors, Asian and Asian-American public speakers remain almost completely unexplored. Lack of attention to Soong's rhetoric

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[21] Laura Tyson Li, *Madame Chiang Kai-shek: China's Eternal First Lady* (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 2006); Hannah Pakula, *The Last Empress: Madame Chiang Kai-shek and the Birth of Modern China* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2009); Yong Chen, *Chinese San Francisco, 1850-1943: A Trans-Pacific Community* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), 239-60. Karen J. Leong, *The China Mystique: Pearl S. Buck, Anna May Wong, Mayling Soong, and the Transformation of American Orientalism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 106-54.

[22] Discussions of Soong Mayling's general influence on Sino-American relations can be found in works such as Fred W. Riggs, *Pressures on Congress: A Study of the Repeal of Chinese Exclusion* (New York: King's Crown Press, 1950); Barbara Tuchman, *Stilwell and the American Experience in China, 1911-1945* (New York: Macmillan, 1970); T. Christopher Jespersen, American Images of China, 1931-1949 (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996); and K. Scott Wong, *Americans First, Chinese Americans and the Second World War* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005).

[23] T. Christopher Jespersen, "Madame Chiang Kai-shek and the Face of Sino-American Relations: Personality and Gender Dynamics in Bilateral Diplomacy," in *Madame Chiang Kai-shek and Her China*, ed. Samuel C. Chu (Norwalk: EastBridge, 2005), 123.

[24] Karlyn Kohrs Campbell, *Women Public Speakers in the United States, 1800-1925: A Bio-critical Sourcebook* (Westport: Greenwood Press), xvii.

reflects this cultural bias as well as long-standing gendered historical accounts of the Second World War. Investigating her 1943 speech tour adds an important case of women orators to current public address scholarship. It also provides a revealing study in diplomatic rhetoric.

In a seminal 1950 article, Robert T. Oliver pointed out the importance of studying the rhetoric of diplomacy. He argued that "in a world bound tightly together by mass communications, our concern with speech can no longer be confined within national boundary lines" and that diplomatic speech will have an "increasingly vital significance to human survival."[25] Though many communication scholars have shared Oliver's concern about "the dire consequences of global misunderstanding," few have heeded his call for systematic study of international diplomacy.[26] This area has been neglected partially because of two challenges that Oliver noticed from his diplomatic experience in Asia—students of speech are often not familiar with complex diplomatic negotiations and they lack the foreign language skills required to "judge the nuances, stereotypes, idioms, and emotional overtones" of diplomatic discourse.[27]

Nonetheless, as conceptions of diplomacy have expanded beyond the traditional sphere of confidential negotiations between governments in closed sessions to include how diplomats speak in open meetings to national audiences across the world, rhetorical scholars have begun to pay more attention to the rhetoric of diplomacy in the public

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[25] Robert T. Oliver, "The Speech of Diplomacy as a Field for Research," *Central States Speech Journal* 1 no. 2 (March 1950): 24-28.

[26] Robert Shuter, "Robert T. Oliver: Trailblazer in Intercultural Communication," *China Media Research* 7 no. 2 (2011): 121-26.

[27] Oliver, "The Speech of Diplomacy as a Field for Research," 24.

arena.[28] "Diplomacy," as Oliver explained, "is no longer merely government speaking to government; it is government appealing directly to peoples."[29] The fact that diplomacy has increasingly fallen under public scrutiny in all its processes has generated a new area of interdisciplinary inquiry—public diplomacy—whose adherents include scholars of international relations, public relations, diplomatic studies, strategic studies, and communication.

The phrase "public diplomacy" was coined in 1965 by former U.S. Foreign Service Officer Edmund Gillion and was defined by Robert Finley Delaney, political sociologist and director of the Edward R. Murrow Center of Public Diplomacy, as "the ways in which both governments and private individuals and groups influence directly or indirectly those public attitudes and opinions which bear directly on other governments' foreign policy decisions."[30] This definition draws attention to the public aspects of diplomacy and implies that, in the process of diplomacy, communication can play as

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[28] See, for example, Martin Carcasson, "Unveiling the Oslo Narrative: The Rhetorical Transformation of Israeli-Palestinian Diplomacy," *Rhetoric & Public Affairs*, 3 no. 2 (2000): 211-45; Chris Tudda, *The Truth Is Our Weapon: The Rhetorical Diplomacy of Dwight D. Eisenhower and John Foster Dulles* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2006); Martin J. Medhurst, "George W. Bush at Goree Island: American Slavery and the Rhetoric of Redemption," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 96, no. 3 (2010): 257-77; Michelle Murray Yang, "President Nixon's Speeches and Toasts During His 1972 Trip to China: A Study in Diplomatic Rhetoric," *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 14, no. 1 (2011): 1-44.

[29] Robert T. Oliver, "Speech in International Affairs," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 38 no. 2 (1952): 171-76.

[30] Robert F. Delaney, "Introduction," in *International Communication and the New Diplomacy*, ed. Arthur S. Hoffman (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1968), 3. Also see Nancy Snow, "U.S. Public Diplomacy—Its History, Problems, and Promise," in *Readings in Propaganda and Persuasion*: *New and Classic Essays*, eds. Garth S. Jowett and Victoria O'Donnell (Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, 2006), 225-28.

important a role as military and economic measures. As stated by Osgood and Etheridge, public diplomacy is a nation's "ability to persuade."[31]

Persuasion in public diplomacy inevitably involves a cultural component. As Deibel and Roberts argue, the "tender-minded line" in public diplomacy scholarship rejects the equation of public diplomacy with government-initiated propaganda and defines its function as creating "a climate of mutual understanding" by portraying a given "national society in toto to foreign audiences."[32] J. M. Mitchell identifies public diplomacy as "cultural diplomacy," in which the goal is to convey a favorable image of one's culture in "the quest for convergence between conflicting national interests" and in "overcoming conventional barriers that separate peoples."[33] Such elaborations of public diplomacy bring to mind what I. A. Richards called a "new rhetoric"—a study of "misunderstanding and its remedies" by exploring how the strategic use of language may help avoid grievous disorders and large-scale disasters.[34]

Soong's 1943 speech tour provides an instructive study in the rhetoric of public diplomacy. Not only did Soong seek to offer remedies for long-existing misunderstandings between China and the United States, but she was remarkably successful in doing so. Within a few weeks, she built a rhetorical common ground

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[31] Kenneth A. Osgood and Brian C. Etheridge, "Introduction," in *The United States and Public Diplomacy: New Directions in Cultural and International History*, eds. Kenneth A. Osgood and Brian C. Etheridge (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2010), 13.

[32] T. Deibel and W. Roberts, *Culture and Information: Two Foreign Policy Functions* (Newbury Park: Sage, 1976), 15.

[33] J. M. Mitchell, *International Cultural Relations* (London; Boston: Allen & Unwin, 1986), 2-4.

[34] Ivor Armstrong Richards, *The Philosophy of Rhetoric* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1965), 3.

between the two countries that helped overcome entrenched cultural misunderstandings and influenced the course of international relations. She challenged long-standing negative American perceptions of China and created rhetorical space for Americans to imagine and to build new connections with a physically distant ally. Her speeches demonstrate the power of oratory to transmit cultural knowledge, to mediate between nations, and to shape "the contours of history" at critical moments.[35]

In the process of explicating Soong's rhetorical strategies in her speech tour, I pay special—though hardly exclusive—attention to her construction of a new China image for American audiences. As pointed out by Kenneth E. Boulding, foreign policy makers inevitably respond to images rather than the objective facts of a given situation because people's perceptions of the world determine their behavior.[36] Works by international relations scholars demonstrate the importance of images in U.S.-China diplomacy. John J. Hamre maintains that "throughout modern history, the U.S.-China relationship has been shaped as much by American misperceptions of China—romanticized or demonized images—than [by] the reality."[37] Oliver Turner contends that discursively constructed images of China "have always been central to the formulation, enactment and

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[35] Stephen E. Lucas and Martin J. Medhurst, eds. *Words of A Century: The Top 100 American Speeches, 1900-1999* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), xv.

[36] Kenneth E. Boulding, "National Images and International Systems," in *International Politics and Foreign Policy: A Reader in Research and Theory*, ed. James N. Rosenau (New York: Free Press, 1969), 423. Also see Kenneth E. Boulding, *The Image: Knowledge in Life and Society* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1956), 11.

[37] John J. Hamre, "Foreword: Images Revisited," in *China in the American Political Imagination,* ed. Carola McGiffert (Washington, D.C.: CSIS Press, Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2003), x.

justification of U.S. China policy in Washington."[38] As Jespersen points out, "the history of Sino-American relations contains a range of varied and long-lasting cultural constructions on the American side, ranging from racism and xenophobia to naiveté, paternalism, and awe."[39] While these works focus on how media coverage constructed various images of China, this study explores how Soong challenged long-existing negative images and created a positive image of China to achieve her larger diplomatic goals of promoting an Asia-first war policy and securing a prominent place for China in the postwar world.

Many questions arise about Soong's speech tour. How did she attain an opportunity to speak to the U.S. Congress and address the entire nation from the East Coast to the West Coast? How did she deal with the tensions between public diplomacy and private diplomatic negotiations? What were the major exigencies and constraints she faced during her tour? How did different audience groups respond to her speeches and how did she adapt to them? Were her rhetorical strategies consistent throughout the tour? What long-term and short-term impact did the tour have on American diplomatic and domestic policies?

To answer these questions, I approach Soong's tour as an organic entity, not unlike a social movement, from conception to completion. After setting the tour in its diplomatic, military, and cultural context, I study its origin, evolution, and culmination and scrutinize her speeches at key moments during the tour. I integrate situational analysis, chronicling

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[38] Oliver Turner, *American Images of China: Identity, Power, Policy* (New York: Routledge, 2014), 7.

[39] T. Christopher Jespersen, *American Images of China*, *1931-1949* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), xv.

of the tour, and analysis of the development of the tour to explain how she responded to a complicated net of diplomatic and rhetorical constraints, including new exigencies that emerged as the tour processed. Close reading of prominent speeches and analysis of Soong's strategies in different rhetorical venues explicate how she responded to challenges from both Axis war propaganda and other Allied leaders, and how she addressed multiple American audience groups with conflicting interests to achieve her rhetorical and diplomatic objectives.

The texts of Soong's major speeches come mainly from two sources: the *Congressional Globe* and a collection published by the Chinese Women's Anti-Aggression League.[40] Two pamphlets published immediately after Soong's tour are valuable because they contain detailed information about the tour's procedures and its physical settings. They are Harry J. Thomas' *The First Lady of China: The Historical Wartime Visit of Mme. Chiang Kai-shek to the United States in 1943* and *Jiang Fu Ren You Mei Ji Nian Ce* [Album Commemorating Madame Chiang's Trip to America].[41] The latter, sponsored by Chinese Nationalist Daily, is a bilingual source that has the added benefit of including a full text of Soong's Mandarin speech delivered in San Francisco's Chinatown. I also utilize a variety of Chinese-language archives, biographies, memoirs, historical studies, and diplomatic commentaries, including the cables between

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[40] Mayling Soong Chiang, *Madame Chiang Kai-shek Selected Speeches*, *1943-1982* (Taipei: Chinese Women's Anti-Aggression League, 1984).

[41] Harry J. Thomas, *The First Lady of China: The Historic Wartime Visit of Mme. Chiang Kai-Shek to the United States in 1943* (New York: International Business Machines Corp., 1943); *Jiang Fu Ren You Mei Ji Nian Ce* [Album Commemorating Madame Chiang's Trip to America] (San Francisco: Chinese Nationalist Daily, 1943).

Soong and Chiang Kai-shek throughout her American trip. These sources are invaluable for understanding the evolution of Soong's diplomatic goals and rhetorical strategies. To gauge the impact of her speeches on American public opinion, I turn to the hundreds of newspaper reports, editorials, and commentaries published during her tour. These sources include leading national newspapers such as the *New York Times*, the *New York Herald Tribune*, the *Chicago Daily Tribune*, and the *Los Angeles Times*; prominent African-American newspapers such as the *Atlantic Daily*, the *Pittsburgh Courier*, and the *Chicago Defender*; and local newspapers throughout the country.

Chapter One examines the background of Soong's tour. It starts with a brief introduction to Soong's life experiences and discusses her family and educational background to demonstrate how they provided a foundation for her later rhetorical achievements. After discussing how the New Life Movement launched by the Nationalist government offered Soong an opportunity to establish a rhetorical forum in China and to create a cross-cultural channel for reaching a substantial American audience, the chapter explains how influential transnational discourses shaped the American imagination of China and how Soong adapted to those discourses. Placing Soong's rhetoric in relation to the large volume of writings and speeches about China produced by American missionaries, media figures, and influential writers allows us to see how she constructed herself as the symbol of a progressive China and established her credibility as the spiritual leader of a transforming nation.

Chapter Two deals with Sino-American wartime diplomacy across the years 1937-1943. After exploring conflicts within the Grand Alliance and each nation's responses to these conflicts, the chapter explains how President Roosevelt initiated a

private diplomacy project to build connections with Allied leaders, a project that eventually paved the way for Soong Mayling's visit to America. Understanding this channel and the complexity of the issues at play in Sino-American relations illuminates the diplomatic context for Soong's tour. This chapter also traces Soong's activities before the official start of her tour in February 1943 and examines the construction of her February 18, 1943, addresses to Congress.

Chapter Three analyzes those addresses, which in addition to being singularly successful in their own right, provided the foundation for the rest of Soong's tour. Speaking first in the Senate and then in the House of Representatives, Soong adroitly combined epideictic and deliberative elements so as to identify shared values, to shape perceptions of Sino-American relations, and to propose an alternative war policy. By tracing Soong's telegraph exchanges with Chiang Kai-shek prior to her appearance in Congress, this chapter explicates the rhetorical situation she faced at the beginning of her speech tour. It then analyzes Soong's Senate speech to demonstrate how she strove to build common ground between China and the United States in such a way as to invite new perceptions of Asian nations. Discussion of her speech to the House explores how she sought to encourage an Asia-first military strategy and to secure China's position in the postwar world. The chapter concludes by exploring Soong's rhetorical performance to understand how she enacted the metaphor of a "corporate body" in the service of reconfiguring the American imagination of China.

Chapter Four opens by examining the constitution of Soong's national American audience as her tour shifted from Congress to major cities on the East Coast and the Midwest, beginning with New York, moving to Boston, and going from there to Chicago.

The change in audience from policy makers to average Americans, different responses from mainstream journalists and minority newspapers, conflicting feelings of the Roosevelt administration, challenges posed both by isolationists and Winston Churchill, and expectations from religious groups and liberal feminists all generated new exigencies for Soong. Her responses to those exigencies demonstrated her statesmanship and diplomatic skills in a variety of venues, including press conferences, reception ceremonies, and addresses to mass audiences. By defining the foundational values of a new modern world, reflecting upon women's contributions to world civilization, and employing a traditional Chinese rhetorical strategy to criticize racism, isolationism, and Churchill's efforts to marginalize China in the international community, Soong sought to construct a new image of China that would help transform public views of Sino-American relations.

Chapter Five deals with Soong's speeches and activities in San Francisco and Los Angeles, the last two stops of her tour. Facing entrenched anti-Chinese attitudes on the West Coast, she called for U.S.-China military cooperation during the war and for sustained unity after the war. By exploring her use of spatial rhetoric at San Francisco's Civic Auditorium, her emphasis on patriotism while addressing Chinese Americans, and her achievement of identification with union workers, the first part of the chapter shows how she employed a rhetoric of unity to elevate China's status within the alliance. The second part analyzes her most dramatic speech of the tour—delivered at the Hollywood Bowl—to understand how she utilized the stage set by a Hollywood director to present China as a courageous and reliable ally for the United States. The chapter concludes by examining Soong's growing support from the general public and the minority press, both

of which helped form a favorable public opinion to counteract the anti-Chinese discourse that had prevailed on the West Coast since the beginning of the exclusion era.

The Conclusion contains two parts. The first part discusses the influence of Soong's discourse on repeal of the Chinese exclusion laws ten months after her tour. Not only did the pro-China public opinion created by Soong produce opportunities for American lobbying groups to accelerate their efforts on behalf of repeal, but she met privately with prominent Senators and Representatives during her stay in the United States to help accelerate the repeal effort. Even though she was no longer in the United States when debate over repeal proceeded in Congress, she remained rhetorically present and was quoted by pro-repeal congressmen to refute major arguments undergirding exclusion and to respond to questions about the qualification of Chinese immigrants for American citizenship. The second part of the Conclusion provides a final assessment of Soong's tour, its impact on American foreign and domestic policy, and its long-term historical and rhetorical implications.

As we shall see, Soong's tour in the United States represented the triumph of a Chinese woman's public diplomacy during the Second World War. Her speeches touched American hearts and influenced American perceptions of China to such an extent that China and the United States experienced a kind of honeymoon in the last stages of the war, as old stereotypes were modified by new perceptions. It was within these new perceptions that American legislators and average citizens were able to explore the possibility of a cultural common ground between China and the United States and to imagine a new political relationship with the country on the other side of the Pacific. Those developments would be cut short by the emergence of the Cold War and the

victory of the Communists in China's civil war, as new stereotypes and misunderstandings quickly overwhelmed the pro-China attitudes created by Soong in 1943. Yet this does not diminish the magnitude of her rhetorical accomplishments during her time in the United States. Even today, more than seventy years later, her tour provides an important study in the rhetoric of public diplomacy as a vehicle for bridging the gaps between cultures and dispelling the misunderstandings between nations. As more actors now participate in public diplomacy and national image building, such concerns are no longer exclusively reserved for diplomats, but are relevant to anyone who seeks to improve intercultural and transnational communication in today's world

Chapter One

The Symbol of Modern China and American Transnational Discourse

> *I came to your country as a little girl. I know your people. I have lived with them. I spent the formative years of my life amongst your people. I speak your language, not only the language of your hearts but also your tongue. So coming here today I feel that I am also coming home.*
>
> —— Soong Mayling, speech to the United States Senate

In her opening speech to the United States Senate, Mayling Soong Chiang, the first lady of the Republic of China, introduced herself as one with profound affection for the American people and inseparable connection with the nation. These touching words earned enthusiastic applause from the Senate and distinguished her from any other Chinese rhetor speaking to American audiences during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Although over half a million Chinese had visited, lived, died, or been born in the United States by the 1940s, hardly any of them would have claimed America as their "home" in such a passionate way before repeal of the Chinese Exclusion Act in December 1943.[1] This rhetorical move was designed to enhance Soong's ethos and to build a stronger connection with her audience; it also reflected her unique experience of

[1] Historians estimated that Chinese gaining admission into the United States amounted to around 570,000 before 1943, with 258,210 during the pre-exclusion era and 300,955 during the exclusion era. See Erika Lee, "Defying Exclusion: Chinese Immigrants and Their Strategies During the Exclusion Era," in *Chinese American Transnationalism: The Flow of People, Resources, and Ideas Between China and America During the Exclusion Era*, ed. Sucheng Chan (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2006), 2.

crossing cultural boundaries and becoming an influential female politician in the twentieth century.

Madame Chiang was born in a Chinese Christian family deeply influenced by Western culture. Soong Mayling was her maiden name. She started receiving education in English at age five.[2] When she was ten, she went to the United States with her sisters and continued her education until she graduated from Wellesley College in 1914. She returned to China in 1917 and entered China's political realm after marrying Chiang Kai-shek, the president of the Republic of China, in 1927.[3] This marriage provided Soong a new title, Madame Chiang Kai-shek. She not only influenced her husband on critical policies, but also formally represented China on the international stage.

This chapter first delineates Soong's family and educational background to demonstrate how her unique experience provided training for her later rhetorical achievements. Then it discusses how the New Life Movement launched by the Nationalist government offered Soong an opportunity to establish her own power base and rhetorical forum in China and to build connections with Americans who eventually created a transnational channel for her to reach a larger American audience. The last two sections explain how influential transnational discourses in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century shaped the American imagination of China and how Soong adapted to these discourses. By situating her rhetoric within the discourse produced by American missionaries, media magnates, and influential writers, Soong presented herself as the

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[2] *Madame Chiang Kai-Shek: A Legendary Life,* directed by Wen-chen Tseng, written by Yin-ting Lin and Artemis Wang (Princeton: Film for the Humanities and Sciences, 2004), video.

[3] Chiang Kai-shek is a different spelling of Jiang Jieshi. It follows the old spelling system used before 1949.

symbol of a progressive China and established her credibility as the spiritual leader of a transforming nation.

Crossing Cultural Boundaries: American Education and a Christian Family

Soong Mayling arrived in the United States for the first time in 1908, four years after passage of the 1904 Exclusion Act, which stipulated the indefinite exclusion of Chinese immigrants.[4] Two decades of exclusion and intensive administrative reform from 1898 to 1905 caused many fraudulent claims of Chinese immigrants' legal admission, which led to stricter enforcement of exclusion laws on the U.S. borders.[5] As a result, Chinese students, teachers, merchants, missionaries, and diplomats—the exempt class who could enter the United States legally according to the 1882 Exclusion Act—were often harassed and detained upon entry.[6] Soong Ai-ling, Mayling's eldest sister, arrived in the United States in 1904. She was kept in custody for over two weeks until William Burke, her father's friend and old classmate at Vanderbilt University, arrived to post bail for her.[7] Meanwhile, anti-American sentiment in China mounted to a new level after the 1905

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[4] The 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act barred Chinese laborers from entering the United States for ten years. The 1892 Geary Act extended the exclusion of Chinese laborers for another ten years and required them to carry registration cards at all times; in 1904, exclusion was extended indefinitely.

[5] Adam McKeown, "Ritualization of Regulation: The Enforcement of Chinese Exclusion in the United States and China," *American Historical Review* 108, no. 2 (2003): 377-403.

[6] According to the Chinese Exclusion Act passed in 1882, Chinese students, teachers, merchants, missionaries, and diplomats were "exempt classes" and could enter the United States legally.

[7] For a detailed account of Soong Ailing's experience in custody in San Francisco, see Hannah Pakula, *The Last Empress: Madame Chiang Kai-shek and the Birth of Modern China* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2009), 18-22.

boycott.[8] In response to the American exclusion policy and Chinese Americans' calls for ethnic coalition, Chinese merchants on the mainland decided to boycott American goods to support their fellow-countrymen's anti-exclusion movement on the other side of the Pacific. Though the movement died out within a year, it boosted nationalism and enhanced among Chinese the anti-foreign sentiment that stemmed from the loss of the 1840 Opium War to Britain and the subsequent signing of many unequal treaties between China and the Western powers.

Despite the increasing tension between China and the United States, Soong Mayling's father insisted on sending all his children to the United States to receive a Western education. Mayling was only ten years old when she first arrived in America. After studying for a short time at a small private boarding school in Summit, New Jersey, she and her sister Ching-Ling joined their elder sister Ai-ling at Wesleyan College, a Methodist school, in Macon, Georgia, where Mayling enjoyed an idyllic youth. In 1913, she left Wesleyan and continued to live a privileged life at Wellesley College, from which she graduated in 1917 with a degree in English literature and philosophy. When most Chinese children, immigrant or native-born, were encased in the filthy and hostile Chinatown ghettos, Mayling was picking hazelnuts in the woods of Demorest, tasting corn and chicken legs in farmers' homes, and arguing with her American tutor at Wesleyan.[9] In contrast with monolingual and segregated Chinese workers, Mayling's teenage years represented the other side of the Chinese experience in America.

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[8] Delber L. McKee, "The Chinese Boycott of 1905-1906 Reconsidered: The Role of Chinese Americans," *Pacific Historical Review* 55, no. 2 (1986): 165-75.

[9] According to biographer Laura Tyson Li, after arriving in America, Soong Mayling spent her first year at a small private boarding school in Summit, New Jersey. After attending a private summer school in Meredith, New Hampshire, for a short time, she

Chinese students in the United States constituted a cosmopolitan class. Many of them were sponsored by the Chinese government or came from wealthy families.[10] They were well-educated, multilingual, and often could travel freely in the world. Though their lives were inevitably influenced to some degree by the exclusion laws, most of them stayed with Euro-American families, attended privileged colleges, and took part in many of the same social activities as upper-class American students.[11] Some of these Chinese students took part in the anti-exclusion movements and spoke on behalf of working-class Chinese immigrants; yet their disconnection with Chinatown life and immersion in mainstream American society shaped their discourses and often made their arguments less confrontational than those of other Chinese-American rhetors.[12]

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transferred to Wesleyan to join her eldest sister, Ailing. Before entering Wellesley in 1913, Soong spent most of her time at Wesleyan except for the 1909-1910 school year, during which she studied at Piedmont College in Demorest. Laura Tyson Li, *Madame Chiang Kai-shek: China's Eternal First Lady* (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 2006), 27-30. See also May-ling Soong Chiang, Wei Yuan, and Liping Wang, *Song Mei Ling Zi Shu* [Mayling Soong and China: Her Own Words] (Beijing: Tuanjie Press, 2004), 1-5.

[10] The first Chinese student, Yung Wing, graduated from Yale University in 1854. From 1872 to 1881, 120 Chinese students, who were supported by Qing government scholarships, studied in the United States. Although the number of Chinese students entering colleges or universities in the United States remained small throughout the exclusion era, from 1909 onward, however, the number began to increase. There were 239 in 1909, 292 in 1910, and 650 in 1911. The increase was due partly to China's Westernization movement and partly to the Boxer Indemnity Fellowship, which provided scholarships for selected Chinese students to study in America. For details, see Huping Ling, "A History of Chinese Female Students in the United States, 1880s-1990s," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 16, no. 3 (1997): 81-109.

[11] Madeline Y. Hsu, "Befriending the Yellow Peril: Student Migration and the Warming of American Attitudes toward Chinese, 1905-1950," in *Trans-Pacific Interactions, The United States and China, 1880-1950*, eds. Vanessa Kunnemann and Ruth Mayer (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2009), 105-22.

[12] A typical example is Yan Phou Lee's anti-exclusion discourse. Lee came to the United States at the age of twelve as a member of Yung Wing's Chinese Educational Mission

Soong Mayling and her siblings represented the cream of the crop among these Chinese students. Their father, Charlie Soong, was a successful businessman and the first Chinese Methodist missionary, and he built connections with mainstream American society that were not available to other Chinese.[13] He arrived in the United States in 1878. After working at his uncle's shop in Boston for two years, Charlie stowed away on a cutter, where he was found and employed by Captain Eric Gabielson, a pious Methodist. He sponsored Charlie to receive a Christian education in North Carolina and introduced him to Colonel Roger Moore and the Reverend T. Page Ricaud, pastor of a Methodist Church in Wilmington. With their help, Charlie entered Trinity College, the forerunner of Duke University, where he was sponsored by philanthropist General Julian Shakespeare Carr of Durham. Charlie left Trinity and went to Vanderbilt to study for a certificate in theology in 1882. There, he met Bishop Holland N. McTyeire, the chancellor of Vanderbilt and head of the Southern Methodist Mission in China, who in 1886 sent him back to Shanghai to work as a preacher. While working in a small town near Shanghai, Charlie ran into an old friend from Boston and married his sister-in-law, Ni Kwei-tseng, in 1887. The Ni family had the deepest Christian roots among all Chinese families of the gentry class. One of the Ni ancestors was Xu Guangqi, a famous scholar and government

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and completed his education at Yale University. Unlike Wong Chin Foo, who built close connections with local organizations in Chinatown, Lee lived an upper-class life outside Chinatown and took a more moderate stance than did Wong.

[13] Soong Mayling's father's Chinese name was Han Chiao-shun. He named himself Charlie Soong when he fled his uncle's home and worked on Captain Gabrielson's ship, the *Albert Gallatin*; when he was baptized he took the name Charles Jones Soong. Most biographical books, both English and Chinese, use Charlie as his name.

minister of the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) and the first Chinese convert to Christianity.[14] Growing up in a Christian family, Soong Mayling's mother received an education quite different from other girls of her class. She learned classical Chinese, mathematics, English, and how to play the piano. More important, she escaped the destructive practice of footbinding.[15]

The unique background of both parents created an unconventional family culture that deeply affected all the Soong children. Inspired by their father's adventurous youth and determination to pursue excellence, the children regarded attaining knowledge and exploring the world as major life goals. Their mother's self-discipline and devotion to religious and philanthropic activities impressed the Soong siblings and encouraged the girls to pursue their own dreams. Gender equality and free expression were two prominent characteristics of the Soong family education. Daughters were educated in the same way as sons. Charlie encouraged all the children to write and edit articles for a family newspaper*, Children of Shanghai*. His eloquence and remarkable story-telling skills established great models for his children, who were constantly asked to participate in family speech gatherings.[16] Growing up with parents who emphasized cross-cultural connections and unyielding perseverance, the children were required to excel in both Chinese and English. Bilingualism quickly became a family tradition. Mayling, the

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[14] Xu was converted to Catholicism in 1601 by the Italian Jesuit Matteo Ricci. Li, *Madame Chiang Kai-shek*, 21-22.

[15] Pakula, *Last Empress,* 5-12.

[16] Jing Tong, *Song Mei Ling Quan Ben* [Full Biography of Soong Mayling] (Taibei: Fengyun Shidai Press, 2003), 54-57.

youngest daughter, started her English education in Shanghai McTyeire School at the age of five.

Well prepared by her parents, Mayling was eager at an early age to join her sisters and brothers in American schools. With her family background and her father's network, she had few concerns about being denied entry or receiving unfair treatment after she arrived.[17] However, not suffering the exclusion and persecution experienced by most Chinese Americans did not mean that she was unaware of discrimination against Chinese in early twentieth-century America. She was exposed to discriminating discourses that defined Chinese as inferior and backward. People's questions about her racial and national identity also constantly reminded her that she had to outperform her white friends so as to avoid the negative labels attached to Chinese. She impressed her friends and teachers as intelligent and loveable; yet, no matter how hard she tried, she could not alter the deep-rooted perceptions of Chinese as unassimilable and immoral heathens. In her Wellesley years, Mayling had to learn how to take with good humor her professors calling her "my heathen Chinee."[18] Such unpleasant moments made her go through a stage like many second generation Chinese Americans—denying their own cultural identity.[19] She declared herself to be "Southern" and was proud of her Georgia accent.[20]

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[17] Charlie Soong learned a lesson from his eldest daughter's detention at San Francisco and took measures to make sure it did not happen to his other children.

[18] Li, *Madame Chiang Kai-shek*, 37.

[19] For a more detailed discussion of second-generation Chinese-Americans' identity crisis, see Sucheng Chang, "Race, Ethnic Culture, and Gender in the Construction of Identities among Second-Generation Chinese Americans, 1880s to 1930s," in *Claiming America: Constructing Chinese-American Identities during the Exclusion Era*, eds. K. Scott Wong and Sucheng Chan (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1998), 127-64.

[20] Li, *Madame Chiang Kai-shek*, 34.

She told her Wellesley friends that "the only thing Oriental about me is my face."[21] Her American schoolmates and teachers often expressed how they were "quite forgetting any foreignness in her."[22] In fact, her friends at Wellesley deemed their Chinese classmate as "so thoroughly American in dress, manners, and thought that they found it difficult to imagine her returning to her native land."[23]

Perhaps Mayling's strong motivation to achieve thorough Americanization came partially from her family education. The Soong family creed to "do your utmost to stay on top despite praise or blame" was a strong driving force throughout Mayling's life.[24] Inferiority was unbearable to her whether it was caused by racial discrimination, class disparity, or individual incompetence. Besides denying her racial identity, Mayling attempted to identify with her elite schoolmates from upper-class families. While in college, she was selected to join Tau Zeta Epsilon, one of six Wellesley societies open to upperclassmen.[25] Academic accomplishments helped her achieve greater recognition. Anne Kimball Tuell, one of her professors and mentors at Wellesley, remembered Mayling's remarkable English and wrote: "She was easily bright at her work, wrote and spoke a finer English than that of the average student, an English as idiomatic as any of

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[21] Pakula, *Last* Empress, 18.

[22] Li, *Madame Chiang Kai-shek*, 37.

[23] Ibid.

[24] Yinting Lin, *Xun Zhao Shi Ji Song Meiling: Yi Ge Ji Lu Pian Gong Zuo Zhe De Lü Cheng* [In Search of Soong Mayling's Century: The Road of A Documentary Producer] (Taibei: Tianxia Yuanjian Press, 2004), 25.

[25] Li, *Madame Chiang Kai-shek*, 37.

ours."[26] Mayling also received the Duran Scholarship, an award granted only to students of the highest academic achievement.

Her relentless effort to achieve excellence reflected a deep anxiety caused by her otherness and a firm determination to transcend that position. As a young Chinese woman, regardless of her comparatively privileged status, she could not reverse racial, gender, and other social hierarchies of the early twentieth century. The fifteen-year-old girl knew well her "alien" status deep down in her heart, but she did not succumb to the suppression and discrimination that often accompanied this status. Instead, she cultivated in herself insight as to what caused the confinements of a disadvantaged position as well as confidence and strategies to escape those confinements. While taking a required course in Old Testament history, she stated, "Perhaps I, as a foreigner, could see more clearly than my schoolmates how closely the make-up of the country had followed the principles of Christianity."[27] This insight guided her pursuit of knowledge during school years at Wellesley; she showed particular interest in history, English composition, biblical history, and elocution. Later, her "foreign perspective" developed into a rhetorical talent that allowed her to see clearly the undergirding ideologies and psychologies in mainstream American society that were sometimes vague even to her U.S. audiences.

At Wellesley, Mayling not only built the capacity to transcend constraints caused by her racial and national identity, but also developed a feminist view to help her thrive in a patriarchal world in which women's participation in public affairs was still viewed as abnormal. Despite being fully aware of restrictions imposed on women, she viewed her

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[26] Ibid, 36.

[27] Ibid.

gender identity as a particular advantage. Dorothy Ko, a professor of history and women studies, argues that Soong Mayling did not necessarily consider herself a feminist even though she possessed strategies to deal with gender inequality. As stated by Ko, Soong believed "I can be more powerful than a man, more eloquent than a man and more resourceful than a man. But I do not need to overlook my special qualities as a woman. In fact, I can use them to accomplish my work."[28]

Soong Mayling's interpretation of womanhood and gender relations formed a strategic approach that stood in contrast with feminist approaches of her time that sought to confront and reverse gender hierarchies. Her choice reflected a transition that Wellesley College went through at the turn of the century. According to biographer Laura Tyson-Li, the crusading spirit of Wellesley founders had been "diluted by bourgeois aspirations" by the time Mayling arrived at the school.[29] Even Wellesley's motto—*Non Ministrari sed Ministrare*—was jokingly interpreted by many of its students as "not to be ministers, but ministers' wives." The idea of marrying successful men rather than becoming heroines of their own time also corresponded to the conservative aspect of Mayling's family education. While encouraging all her daughters to receive higher education and to explore the world, Mrs. Soong included many domestication activities, such as cooking, sewing, and child-raising. The family believed that a good marriage was quite important for the girls. In fact, the family's connections cast great influence on marriages of all the Soong daughters, which powerfully shaped how they would enter China's public sphere and what political ideals they would pursue. Charlie Soong's

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[28] Tseng, *Madame Chiang Kai*-Shek, video.

[29] Li, *Madame Chiang Kai-shek*, 35.

wholehearted support of China's republican revolution made him a close friend of Dr. Sun Yat-sen, the leader of the 1911 Republican Revolution. Often referred to as China's George Washington, Sun was recognized as the founding father of the Republic of China. His friendship with Charlie Soong resulted in the marriage between Mayling's second elder sister, Ching-ling, and Sun Yat-sen, and influenced the marriage between Mayling and Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek.

Becoming China's First Lady

Soong Mayling returned to China in 1917 and first met Chiang Kai-shek in late 1922. At that time Chiang was a junior military aid to Sun Yat-sen, who had married Mayling's sister in 1915. Chiang embarked upon his courtship of Mayling soon after their first meeting, but his personal life and political prospects did not make him desirable marriage material. Chiang was not a Christian and he had a wife and a concubine in his hometown of Fenghua, in Zhejiang Province. During the first few years of his courtship, the entire Soong family, except for Mayling's eldest sister, Ai-ling, all disregarded Chiang's pursuit and opposed any formal relationship between him and Mayling.

It is hard to know when Mayling started to consider her relationship with Chiang seriously; but her communication with him increased as the rift within the Chinese Nationalist Party grew. After the death of Sun Yat-sen in 1925, Chiang became the leader of the party. Though his staunch anti-Communist line drove away left-leaning Nationalists who were still devoted to Sun's guiding principles, Chiang's authority within

the party was well established due to his political tactics and his control of the army.[30] Fully aware of her sister Ching-Ling's pro-Communist attitude and her strong dislike of Chiang, Mayling was nevertheless attracted to the rising political star of a post-Sun China and decided to marry him regardless of family opposition. American journalist Edgar Snow observed some sibling rivalry between the Soong sisters—both of whom were first ladies of the Republic of China—and maintained that Mayling was inspired by her sister even while competing with her to be the symbol of modern Chinese women.[31]

If Snow is right, Soong Mayling married Chiang out of her belief that he could be the savior of China. However, after becoming Madame Chiang, she remolded her husband so much and represented him to such an extent on domestic and international stages that their marriage may have been based more on Mayling's confidence in herself than in her husband. In order to get Mayling's mother to permit the marriage, Chiang Kai-shek converted to Christianity and studied the Bible every day under Mayling's guidance. He trusted her more than his other advisors and translators and insisted that she stay with him during many political and military meetings. Clarence E. Gauss, an

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[30] Sun Yat-sen proposed "three principles of the people" as the guiding ideology for China's republic revolution: nationalism, democracy and the people's livelihood (Socialism). Sun asked Western nations for military and financial aid throughout his career, but he received very little response. In the 1920s, a decade after the 1911 revolution that overthrew the last imperial dynasty in China, Sun's nationalist government eventually received aid from the Russian Bolsheviks. Although Sun did not believe that Marxism and Communism were solutions to China's problems, he modified his guidelines into "Alliance with Russians and (Chinese) Communists, Assist Farmers and Workers." With Russian material aid and military counseling, the Nationalists formed their own army, established their own military training base, the Whampoa Military Academy, and grew into a powerful and disciplined party. The Nationalist Party's alliance with the Chinese Communists was severely damaged after Chiang launched his anti-communist purge in April 1927.

[31] Li, *Madame Chiang Kai-shek*, 80.

American diplomat and U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of China during the Second World War, noticed how Mayling sat alongside the Generalissimo and told him what to do. "She issues instructions and they are obeyed; she has developed a tremendous influence," Gauss wrote.[32]

Soong Mayling's influence on her husband was so visible that criticism arose expressing mistrust of women in power. According to Li, Mayling was likened to Yang Guifei, a royal concubine of the Tang dynasty and the most renowned beauty of Chinese history, and the Empress Dowager Tau Hsi, mother of emperor Tong Zhi of the Qing dynasty.[33] In China, gendered historical discourses, both intellectual and vernacular, presented these two women as villains who won emperors' hearts yet inappropriately intervened in imperial decision-making. Yang Guifei was notorious for bringing her brother to a powerful position, finally leading to a coup and the ensuing decline of the dynasty. Tau Hsi was infamous for seizing power from men, both her husband and her son, and ignoring the people's suffering but making foolish policies to satisfy her own desire. Given the fact that Mayling's brother T.V. Soong and her brother-in-law H.H. Kung both took high official positions in the Nationalist government, the critique attempted to arouse suspicion of Soong Mayling's involvement in public affairs and to caution against the expanding power of the entire Soong family.

Facing this "woman out of public place" criticism, Mayling responded with more direct and wider participation in public affairs. From 1930 to 1932 she worked as China's

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[32] Ibid, 95.

[33] Li, *Madame Chiang Kai-shek*, 99-100.

Red Cross Director-General and as a member of the Legislative Yuan.[34] From 1936 to 1938 she worked as Secretary-General of the Chinese Aeronautical Affairs Commission. After Japan declared war on China in 1937, she assumed responsibility for war relief, especially taking care of the orphans of Nationalist soldiers and seeking international aid. In 1946 she led other women activists to help pass constitutional amendments to promote women's political rights in China.[35] Among all her public engagements, Soong's involvement in the New Life Movement was particularly significant because it provided her access to substantial political power and channels to larger audiences at home and abroad.

In February 1934, Chiang Kai-shek inaugurated the New Life Movement with an attempt to reform China's ideological foundation and to create a unifying identity for its citizens. Under the banner of moral uplift, Chiang advocated "a secularized, essentialized, and militarized understanding of Confucianism" to promote industrialization and to deal with disorientation caused by conflicts between treasured traditions and the demands of modernity.[36] Emphasizing conformation to ancient Confucian virtues of "propriety, righteousness, frugality, and modesty," Chiang sought to suppress the Communist revolutionists' call for profound social changes and to marginalize radical intellectuals

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[34] The Legislative Yuan is one of the five branches of government stipulated by the Constitution of the Republic of China, which follows Sun Yat-sen's *Three Principles of the People*. It is sometimes referred to as a "parliament," but it does not have the power to amend the constitution or to elect the president.

[35] Yufa Zhang, "Er shi shi shi qian ban qi zhongguo fu nv can zheng quan de yan bian" [Development of women's political participation in the early half of twentieth century], in *Wu Sheng Zhi* Zheng [Voice of the Unheard], eds. Jiurong Luo and Miaofen Lu (Taibei: Zhong Yang Yan Jiu Yuan Jin Dai Shi Yan Jiu Suo, Minguo 2003), 39-71.

[36] Hans J. Van de Ven, *War and Nationalism in China, 1925-1945* (London: Routledge Curzon, 2003), 164-66.

who did not align with the Nationalist government. To gain support from the conservative camp and the reformist wing, Chiang framed the guidelines of the New Life Movement in the moral language of China's traditional society and adopted methods created by American missionary organizations in China.

By the time Chiang inaugurated the New Life Movement, American missionaries in China had increased from around one thousand, representing twenty-eight societies, to more than three thousand, representing sixty societies.[37] Accompanying this expansion of the missionary community was a shift in their primary goals from teaching Chinese people God's gospel to improving China's social conditions. The Young Men's Christian Association helped found the China International Famine Relief Commission after the 1921 famine in north China. An interdenominational Protestant conference organized the National Christian Council in 1922 to promote indigenization of the Chinese Christian church and rural improvement. With support from the Rockefeller Foundation and a new generation of Chinese scholars who had studied in the United States, American missionaries increased their influence in China's rural areas by combining their evangelical project with China's modernization agenda. Their creative programs, such as James Yen's Mass Education Movement, inspired local government authorities searching for methods that could effectively introduce modern concepts to poorly-educated farmers without betraying their gradual reformist line.[38]

Seeing the potential of missionary organizations to engage local residents, Chiang invited American missionaries to set up a model rural reconstruction program in Jiangxi

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[37] John King Fairbank and Edwin O. Reischauer, *China: Tradition and Transformation* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1978), 460.

[38] Ibid, 462.

Province in 1933. However, he could only achieve this cooperation through his wife, who was in close touch with church and Y.M.C.A. leaders. Thus, Soong Mayling played a significant role in the New Life Movement from its earliest stages. She specified movement principles proposed by her husband for the domestic Chinese audience and wrote articles for American publications to extol the movement's aims and achievements abroad.[39]

Soong's explication of New Life principles implicitly digressed from Chiang's original plan of propagating filial duty and unquestioning loyalty to the national leader. Still clinging to traditional Confucian virtues, she largely downplayed notions of obedience to authority and dedication to the state in her interpretation. Her elaboration of Confucian principles actually advocated a Westernized ideology that encouraged protection of individual rights as well as one's duty to fellow citizens. In an article published in *Forum* in June 1935, Soong wrote: "The second principle is *I* (righteousness), roughly translated, meaning duty or service, toward the individual's fellow man and toward himself. The third is *Lien* (Frugality), meaning clear definition of the rights of the individual and of the degree in which those rights may be enforced without infringing upon those of others."[40] The New Life Movement, she stated, could

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[39] Soong was mainly in charge of propaganda targeting Western audiences. But many of her English articles on the New Life Movement were translated back into Chinese and published in China. Thus Chiang Kai-shek, Chinese government officials, and educated Chinese people all had access to Soong's discourse on New Life principles.

[40] Mayling Soong Chiang, "New Life in China," *Forum*, June 1935, 358. The four principles, as stated in the official New Life document were as follows: "Propriety was to be disciplined, filial to one's parents, and respectful to people in authority. Righteousness meant impartiality, patriotism, honesty, dependability, and dedication. Frugality required not indulging in pleasure and luxury, and not misusing private and public funds. Being modest was living a life of integrity, working hard, and dedicating oneself to one's responsibilities." The translation of "The Basics of the New Life

remold Chinese people into qualified citizens who would not only carry forward traditional virtues but also participate in public affairs, not unlike people in modern Western nations. She explained, for example, how the practice of "propriety" could restore "the respect that should be shown to elders, teachers, law and order." She also held that practicing "righteousness" helped to form "what is called in the West public spirit or public consciousness."[41] Besides publishing articles, Soong spoke to domestic and international audiences through radio broadcasts and interviews with correspondents to showcase why embracing Confucian values constituted progress in modern nation-building rather than succumbing to conservative ideology.[42]

In her explications of the New Life Movement, Soong not only likened Confucian virtues with Western ideas but also equated the movement with the missionary project. In the *Forum* article, she borrowed language from missionary discourse to explain the need of the movement to rescue "the people from the cumulative miseries of poverty, ignorance, and superstition."[43] These three evils were frequently used in missionary discourse to justify the missionary program in China. "Ignorance" and "superstition"

Movement" used here is from Hans J. Van de Ven, *War and Nationalism in China*, 164.

[41] Mayling Soong Chiang, "New Life in China," *Forum*, June 1935, 359.

[42] Soong spoke to correspondents and published articles for the domestic press on the second anniversary of the New Life movement in 1936 to further explain how the movement was "not to curtail freedom of the individual, but to promote the freedom of the whole nation." Mayling Soong, "New Life Movement in China," in Mayling Soong Chiang, *Madame Chiang's Messages In War and Peace* (Hankow: The China Information Committee, 1938), 315-321. She also spoke to American audiences via a radio broadcast from Nanjing on February 21, 1937. This talk was meant to celebrate the third anniversary of the New Life Movement and to demonstrate progress in the movement.

[43] Mayling Soong Chiang, "New Life in China," *Forum,* June 1935, 359.

were more often seen in the early missionary writings, and "poverty" was added to the list after the industrial and commercial leap in Western nations.[44] In the second part of the article, Soong explained how the movement was advanced through "co-operation between the Christian workers and the leaders of the New Life Movement."[45] In the conclusion, she quoted letters from American missionaries to demonstrate their view of the movement as being just "like the program of Christ."[46] As the chief propagator of the movement, Soong stated its motto as "salvation from within." This reference cemented the Christian undertone of the movement by advocating the notion of changing the world through individual transformation. [47]

By the time the American Board of Foreign Missions assigned the Reverend George W. Shepherd, a Congregationalist missionary, as chief adviser to the New Life Movement in March 1936, Soong had become the driving force behind the movement. Though it ultimately failed as a mass mobilization campaign and was interrupted by Japan's invasion in 1937, the movement offered an opportunity for Soong to establish her own power base and rhetorical forum in China. In the process, as we shall see next, she

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[44] For more details about missionary discourse justifying the evangelical program in China, see Stuart Creighton Miller, *The Unwelcome Immigrant: The American Image of the Chinese, 1785-1882* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), 57-82. Charles W. Hayford argues that Arthur Smith's 1890 *Chinese Characteristics* was the first missionary book that discussed "hopeless poverty" in the Chinese empire. Charles W. Hayford, "Chinese and American Characteristics: Arthur H. Smith and His China Book" in *Christianity in China, Early Protestant Missionary Writings*, eds. Suzanne Wilson Barnett and John King Fairbank (Cambridge: Published by the Committee on American-East Asian Relations of the Dept. of History in collaboration with the Council on East Asian Studies/Harvard University, 1985), 167.

[45] Mayling Soong Chiang, "New Life in China," *Forum*, June 1935, 360.

[46] Ibid.

[47] Li, *Madame Chiang Kai-shek*, 105.

established connections with influential American missionaries, media magnates, and writers, connections that eventually helped create a transnational channel for her to reach a larger audience on the other side of the Pacific.

The Creation of China in American Transnational Discourses

Three influential transnational discourses created and circulated during the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century shaped Americans' imagination of China. They were missionary writings, Henry Luce's media empire, and Pearl Buck's image of China. Equally influential yet hardly monolithic, these three discourses required Soong to position her rhetoric strategically within their depictions of China. Tracing the evolution of these discourses and Soong's connections with their creators will help us understand the cultural context of Soong's rhetoric, the challenges she faced when attempting to reach American audiences, and the resources she utilized to expand her international influence.

According to historian Stuart Creighton Miller, after the Reverend Robert Morrison arrived in China in 1807, missionary writings gradually became a crucial, if not the most important, channel of direct information about China for Americans.[48] Throughout the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth, religious publications such as the *Missionary Herald* and the *Chinese Repository* (among others) allowed missionaries to

[48] Miller, *The Unwelcome Immigrant*, 57-58.

project their perceptions of China into millions of American minds.[49] A 1941 report by John W. Masland described how the missionaries shaped American opinion about China:

> Their influence is of course intangible and extremely hard to measure, but it is nonetheless real. It is exerted not only through the large volume of personal correspondence between missionaries in China and their friends at home, but also through regularly developed channels which enable a single missionary to reach a wide audience. Many prominent missionaries have built up mailing lists among their supporters, friends, and college classmates. Their letters are sent back at regular intervals and are frequently mimeographed in this country for widespread distribution. In many instances such distribution is undertaken by the mission, educational, or medical board by whom the missionary is employed. Correspondence from the field is a regular feature of the many mission and religious journals and in some instances communications from missionary sources find space in the secular press.[50]

American Protestant missionaries' interest in China grew out of their belief that converting the most populous nation on earth to Christianity was the biggest challenge to their evangelical enterprise. Harold R. Isaacs points out that this missionary belief intertwined inextricably with the perception of China as "a sphere of important American political and economic interests" from the very beginning of Sino-American contact.[51] The image of China portrayed in missionary discourse not only satisfied millions of churchgoing Americans' desires for mysterious and exotic stories, but also served their need to explore the directions and positions of America as a nation in the world. This special function produced a transnational missionary

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[49] The *Missionary Herald* was the official publication of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. It was originally called the *Panoplist* and became the *Missionary Herald* in 1812.

[50] John W. Masland, "Missionary Influence upon American Far Eastern Policy," *Pacific Historical Review,* 10, no. 3 (1941): 278-96. Masland was a professor of international studies at Stanford; he also worked as advisor for the State of Department during World War II.

[51] Harold R. Isaacs, *Scratches on Our Minds: American Images of China and India* (New York: John Day, 1958), 126-27.

discourse filled with disputes about American national objectives as well as conflicting images of China and Chinese.

Samuel Wells Williams' *The Middle Kingdom* and Arthur H. Smith's *Chinese Characteristics* are widely recognized as two of the most influential books about China written in the nineteenth century.[52] One of the first American missionaries to China and the first major American Sinologue, Williams published his classic work in 1848 to provide Americans "a correct knowledge" of the country and its people. In contrast to many racist documents about China during the mid-nineteenth century, Williams maintained that China was a civilized rather than a barbarian nation. But he held that its civilization was opposite to everything European and modern, and that its moral and political aspects "all form a full unchecked torrent of human depravity."[53] Forty-two years later, Smith elaborated on Williams' portrayal of Chinese as "civilized yet morally fallen" in a more systematic and scholarly manner. He also offered a similar solution—Christian civilization—as the only route to China's salvation. Both books reflected an evangelical orientalist view that categorized China as different from European civilizations and as an abnormal place fossilized in the pre-modern age. Their generalizations about Chinese characteristics fueled many exclusionist discourses in public debates about the U.S. immigration

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[52] Charles W. Hayford, "*The Good Earth*, Revolution, and the American Raj in China," in *The Several Worlds of Pearl Buck: Essays Presented at Centennial Symposium, Randolph-Macon Woman's College, March 26-28, 1992,* eds. Elizabeth Johnston Lipscomb, Frances E. Web, and Peter Conn (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1994), 19. Also see Isaacs, *Scratches on Our Minds*, 134-39.

[53] S. Wells Williams, *The Middle Kingdom: A Survey of the Geography, Government, Education, Social Life, Arts, Religion, Etc., of the Chinese Empire and Its Inhabitants* (New York: J. Wiley, 1861) vol. I, 836.

policies during the late nineteenth century. Later generations of missionaries also relied on these two works while portraying the Chinese as a morally depraved people to justify the expense of an evangelical project.[54]

Entering the Progressive Era, missionaries remolded their orientalist view into a progressive argument so as to seek faster accomplishment of the American mission in China. One major cause of this transformation was their involvement in the expansion of imperialist powers in China. Often working alongside American merchants and diplomats, missionaries became a target of China's increasing anti-foreign movement at the turn of the twentieth century. Their writings during this time contained stories about the Boxer Rebellion and the 1905 boycott against American goods.[55] Many missionaries viewed these riots as a call for more

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[54] McClellan discusses how missionaries relied upon Williams' *Middle Kingdom* to construct "a sufficiently depraved subject" for audiences at home. McClellan contends that early missionary works provided sources for later mission workers to describe the moral condition of the Chinese "in the blackest possible terms" so as to justify "the expense in life and money of an evangelism reaching halfway around the world." Robert F. McClellan, "Missionary Influence on American Attitudes toward China at the Turn of This Century," *Church History*, 38 no. 4 (1969): 475-85.

[55] The Boxer Rebellion was a popular movement led by a secret society in the late 1890s. In response to worsening economic and political conditions, members of the society launched a rebellious movement against the Qing government. This movement was exploited by anti-foreign officials in the government and turned into a violent force that burned missionary establishments and slaughtered Chinese Christians. To curb the Boxers, eleven nations sent troops to north China. Unable to fight against an international force, the Qing court fled Beijing and agreed to suppress the Boxers. On September 7, 1901, the Qing government signed the Boxer Protocol and agreed to make formal apologies, to penalize the gentry class supporting Boxers, and to compensate for the losses of foreign nations in the movement. See David Silbey, *The Boxer Rebellion and the Great Game in China* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2012); George Nye Steiger, *China and the Occident: The Origin and Development of the Boxer Movement* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1966); and John R. Haddad, "The Wild West Turns East: Audience, Ritual, and Regeneration in Buffalo Bill's Boxer Uprising," *American Studies* 49, no. 3/4 (2008): 5-38.

intervention. As the Reverend Arthur J. Brown exclaimed, "We believe the tumult will, in the Providence of God, break up the fossilized conservatism of China and result in the mighty enlargement of opportunity for the gospel."[56] In general, missionary writings at this time mingled descriptions of China's anti-America sentiment and heathenish customs with a secular progressivist portrayal of China as "not different in type from the West but only a stage behind" to produce a belief that the United States should not miss the opportunity to save China and should play a more active role in its transformation to a modern nation.[57]

This belief echoed an emerging transition in American political ideology from isolationism to internationalism. Missionaries began to receive more endorsements from presidents with a global vision and more sympathy from government officials who were increasingly world-conscious. W.W. Rockhill had to assure Theodore Roosevelt that he would "do his best to defend missionary interests" when TR appointed him as minister to China in 1897. William Howard Taft invited Bishop Bashford "to write him freely in regard to Consuls and to Minister in China" and expressed his strong interest in the plan of John R. Mott of the Y.M.C.A. "to go to China and organize some religious movements over there." Woodrow Wilson wrote

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[56] *Assembly Herald*, 1895, 3: 709-12, cited in Stuart Creighton Miller, "Ends and Means: Missionary Justification of Force in Nineteenth Century China" in *The Missionary Enterprise in China and America*, ed. John K. Fairbank (Harvard University Press, Cambridge MI, 1974). 269.

[57] A typical example of this Progressive perception of China can be found in Edward Alworth Ross's 1911 book, *The Changing Chinese: The Conflict of Oriental and Western Cultures in China.* Ross was president of the American Sociological Association and a professor at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. See Hayford, "*The Good Earth*, Revolution, and the American Raj in China," for more detailed discussion of Ross's work.

to Charles E. Scott asking information about his missionary work in China and referred to the awakening of China to Christianity as "the most amazing and inspiring vision" in a 1916 address to an assembly of clergymen.[58]

Government support helped produce the missionaries' golden age in China between 1900 and the mid-1920s. Dozens of new mission societies entered China and mission colleges and universities in China increased from six to twenty-seven during this period.[59] The golden age also witnessed a change in missionary writings, a change that produced less criticism of Chinese culture and more appreciation of Chinese customs.[60] This in turn reduced Chinese resistance to foreign influence and elicited expressions of friendship on the Chinese side toward Americans. Though the amiable feeling was exaggerated in missionary accounts of how the Chinese were deeply grateful for and strongly responsive to the support they received from America, repetition of such stories fed into Progressive ideas and helped enhance a paternalistic vision of China among Americans.[61]

Harold R. Isaacs points out that while defining U.S.-China relations, nineteenth-century Americans had to suppress their impulse to pursue an imperialist route due to their historical struggle against tyranny and the moral commitments this

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[58] For a detailed account of the interaction between the missionary program and American diplomacy from1900 to 1920, see Paul A. Varg, *Missionaries, Chinese, and Diplomats: The American Protestant Missionary Movement In China, 1890-1952* (New York: Octagon Books, 1977), 123-46.

[59] *China Year Book*, Shanghai, 1925, cited in Isaacs, *Scratches on Our Minds*, 145.

[60] Patricia Neils, *China Images in the Life and Times of Henry Luce* (Savage: Rowman & Littlefield, 1990), 35.

[61] Isaacs, *Scratches on Our Minds,* 145.

past imposed upon them.[62] This moral constraint led to Americans' assumptions about themselves as "benevolent protectors" preventing China from being invaded by other imperial powers or from remaining in permanent sin. This imagined relationship, intertwined with ethnocentrism and xenophobia, portrayed the Chinese as inferior heathens, threatening foreigners, and underdeveloped wards.[63] According to T. Christopher Jespersen, such constructions of China, as well as similar ones about other Asian nations, cultivated a paternalistic outlook that allowed Americans to "look upon other peoples as childlike" and provided "a convenient rationale for policies that necessitate involvement or interference."[64] Woodrow Wilson's depiction of China best illustrated this vision. He regarded the United States as the friend and exemplar of China and believed America had an obligation to help China attain "the liberty for which they have so long been yearning and preparing themselves."[65] Charged with this paternalist ideology, missionaries in the Progressive Era made little attempt to understand the social structure of Chinese life but produced a voluminous body of paternalistic discourse to explain why the Chinese should escape their immoral past for "an idealized, American, Protestant way of life."[66]

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[62] Ibid, 125.

[63] Isaacs, *Scratches on Our Minds,* 97, 109, 124.

[64] T. Christopher Jespersen, *American Images of China*, *1931-1949* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), xvii.

[65] Quoted in Michael H. Hunt, *The Making of a Special Relationship: The United States and China to 1914* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), 218.

[66] Michael C. Coleman, "Presbyterian Missionary Attitudes Toward China and the Chinese, 1837-1900," *Journal of Presbyterian History* 56 no. 3 (1978): 185-200.

In the secular pulpit, the leading advocate of this paternalistic vision was Henry R. Luce, the creator of *Time, Fortune,* and *Life,* whose media empire made him one of the most powerful people in the United States. Born to missionary parents in China, Luce held a worldview that was greatly shaped by the family's faith in America's God-ordained mission in Asia.[67] Growing up, Luce became an enthusiastic advocate of interventionism and envisioned a Christianized world run by an American-led alliance.[68] Luce used his media empire to project a paternalist vision of China to an audience that exceeded one-fifth of American reading public.[69] He also used his media empire to carry on the work of his father and other missionaries. He created a fund-raising wonder to sustain missionary programs in China, particularly the work of the Associated Boards for the Christian Colleges in China (ABCCC) and United China Relief (UCR). Luce's influence was so strong that according to a U.S. poll of July 15, 1942, when asked to describe their images of the Chinese, Americans who were surveyed chose "honest, hard working, brave, and religious"—four terms that the Luce network used most commonly in its descriptions of Chinese.[70]

Luce not only portrayed China as in desperate need of being liberated from its past through political, economic, technological, and social development, but he also

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[67] Robert Edwin Herzstein, *Henry R. Luce, Time and the American Crusade in Asia* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2005), i.

[68] For discussion of *Time*'s advocacy of interventionism, see Herzstein, *Henry R. Luce*, 30-31.

[69] Statistics suggests that at least one out of five Americans read *Time* weekly in 1940. Ibid, 39.

[70] U.S. public poll, July 15, 1942; cited in Herzstein, *Henry R. Luce*, 41.

told Americans who they should see as the Chinese leaders of this transformation. He believed Chinese Christian leaders were "the instrument at hand" and that only by helping them modernize and Christianize their ancient country would Americans "bring the blessings of liberty" to a postwar world.[71] To Luce, presenting Christian Chinese leaders as the hope of China and gaining American support for them was a key step in achieving his "American Century" project. He became a whole-hearted supporter of Chiang Kai-shek, Soong Mayling, and the Chinese Nationalists.

At Wellesley College, Soong Mayling was a classmate of Henry Luce's sister, Beth Luce Moore. From a very early time, Soong was aware of Luce's influence in America and of the potential help he could provide for the Nationalist government. When Luce visited China in 1932, Mayling's brother T.V. Soong flew to Shanghai to meet with him and convinced him to stimulate American support for Chiang's Nationalist government.[72] Seeing the Nationalists as the best hope to realize his own project of modernizing and Christianizing China, Luce quickly made his commitment to Chiang and became a vocal supporter of Soong Mayling. *Time* named her and her husband as the 1937 Person of the Year. In celebrating the Chiangs' leadership, *Time* stated that "Through 1937 the Chinese have been led—not without glory—by one supreme leader and his remarkable Wife."[73] *Time* highlighted Soong's significance in this leadership by saying, "No woman in the

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[71] See Henry Luce, "The American Century," *Life,* February 17, 1941, 61-65 for his global vision. See Herzstein, *Henry R. Luce,* 26-33, for Luce's perception of U.S.-China relations in the postwar world.

[72] Herzstein, *Henry R. Luce,* 25-26.

[73] "Man and Wife of the Year," *Time* January 3, 1938, 14.

West holds so great a position as Mme. Chiang Kai-shek holds in China."[74] Besides praising Soong's contribution to China's modernization, Luce liked to quote her in his own speeches, especially those advocating his Asia-first globalist agenda.[75] Those speeches resonated well with Soong's post-1937 discourse seeking international support to help China resist the aggression of Japan. Luce's Time Inc. became the most helpful instrument for Soong to reach American audiences.

At much the same time, another missionary offspring was writing the most influential book about China published in America during the twentieth century. Pearl S. Buck's *The Good Earth* portrayed a completely different image of Chinese from that of most previous authors. According to John Day Company, publisher of *The Good Earth*, its reprintings ran to a total of more than two million copies. In 1937 it appeared as a successful film that was seen by some 23 million Americans and by an estimated 42 million people all over the world.[76]

Buck was born in West Virginia, but she was taken to China at three months of age and lived there for nearly forty years, except for returning to the United States to receive a college education. Unlike Luce and many Americans working in China in the early twentieth century, Buck did not live in the cultural enclave of a missionary community. Growing up bilingual, she learned Chinese tales and colloquial Chinese from Amah Wang, her Chinese family servant, and Chinese children she played with. She spent many childhood afternoons "sitting on the hard benches of the local

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[74] Ibid.

[75] Herzstein, *Henry R. Luce,* 37.

[76] Issacc, *Scratches on Our Minds*, 156.

Chinese theater" and took part in debates over Confucianism as she grew up.[77] Her immersion into Chinese life let her cultivate a special connection with the nation and its people. Her education at Randolph-Macon Women's College in Lynchburg, Virginia, not only provided her the literary training to write a Pulitzer-Prize-winning book, but also turned her into an ardent promoter of intercultural understanding and a vocal activist challenging evangelical fundamentalism and paternalistic views.

Buck's narration of a Chinese farmer couple's experience of going through famine and industrialization humanized the Chinese people for American readers. College years particularly added an "embryonic feminist idea" and a strong sense of civic duty to Buck's long-cherished admiration of Chinese culture and affection for the Chinese people.[78] These feelings and thoughts allowed her to create in her novels Chinese men and women characters that bore a range of virtues not often seen in previous missionary writings. Buck produced a large number of speeches and writings in which she explicitly questioned the goals of the evangelical project in China and challenged the notion that following American culture would produce China's salvation.[79] Her rejection of converting Chinese souls and reforming China according to American middle-class virtues presented a different, but nonetheless

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[77] Peter J. Conn, *Pearl S. Buck: A Cultural Biography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), xviii, 25.

[78] For the influence of college education on Buck, see Conn, *Pearl S. Buck*, 45-54.

[79] A typical example of Buck's attack against the evangelical project was the speech she delivered to a gathering organized by the Presbyterian Church in November 1932 after she received the Pulitzer Prize. Titled "Is There a Case for Foreign Missions?" the speech was published in the January 1933 issue of *Harper's Magazine*. Also see Grant Wacker, "Pearl S. Buck and the Waning of the Missionary Impulse," *Church History* 72, no. 4 (2003): 852-74.

highly influential, view of China from the paternalistic views promoted by Luce and other missionary advocates.

Taken together, the missionary writings, Luce's media empire, and Buck's novels produced a large, though sometimes conflicting, body of discourse about China and its people. From orientalism to progressivism, paternalism to feminism, these writings rallied Americans who associated with one of these stances to define a new U.S.-China relationship after the 1930s. Each constituted an important group with potential influence on American foreign policy. Soong Mayling understood well that all of this discourse was an important channel for potentially bridging her and millions of Americans. She knew, however, that she could not adopt one perspective in opposition to the others. She had to unite rather than divide. She had to earn the hearts of all. By portraying a transforming China in her pre-1943 writings, Soong earned the trust and admiration of millions of Americans who viewed her as the symbol of a new China, a status that would prove central to her persuasive efforts in the United States.

Constructing Madame Chiang as the Symbol of Modern China

Beginning in 1934, Soong Mayling published articles in the United States and other English-speaking nations to explain her religious beliefs, her experiences as China's first lady, and the goals of the New Life Movement.[80] Western media coverage of

[80] Examples of Soong's discourse during this period include "What Religion Means to Me," *Forum*, March, 1934; "Travelling in Disturbed China," *Forum*, February, 1935; "Wonders of China's Southwest," *Forum*, April 4, 1935; "New Life in China," *Forum*, June, 1935. *The Forum* was a New York based magazine founded in 1885 by Isaac Leopold Rice; it ceased publication in 1950. At its zenith, it was one of the most

China's first lady increased significantly after she published her memos about the Xi'an incident in the *New York Times* in 1937.[81] Her discourse targeting Western audiences escalated to a higher level after Japan's invasion of China. Taken together, her English addresses, writings, and messages before 1943 established a rhetorical precedent that allowed her to speak to an international community on behalf of China. All the while, however, she had to operate within the sphere of transnational discourses created by American missionaries and other writers so as to help ensure her international influence. Soong adapted her rhetoric to missionary discourse to establish her ethos as China's spiritual leader. She also adopted a modernist ideology to argue that the Chinese were determined and ready to transform from a stagnated people into a modern, democratic, and Christian equivalent of Americans.

The marriage between Chiang Kai-shek and Soong Mayling attracted American missionaries' attention even before they were invited to participate in the New Life Movement. They could not help but express excitement and optimism when they learned about Chiang's conversion to Christianity. Seeing China finally headed by a Christian couple, many missionaries believed that a breakthrough in the long struggle to convert China was finally at hand.[82]

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respected journals in America, alongside *Atlantic Monthly* and *Harper's Magazine*. Most of Soong Mayling's pre-1936 writings were published in this magazine.

[81] For discussion of these memos, see pages 55-56 below.

[82] For description of the missionaries' hope in converting China under the leadership of Chiang Kai-shek, see Steven W. Mosher, *China Misperceived: American Illusions and Chinese Reality* (New York: Harper and Row, 1990), 45. Also see Jespersen, *American Images of China,* 85.

Average Americans, however, did not immediately share the missionaries' optimism. Despite the sense of hope encouraged by missionary reports, Americans needed more evidence of the coming triumph of Christianity in China. Skepticism about Chiang's conversion was voiced in the press. The *New York Herald Tribune* called Chiang a "rice Christian" and suggested his motive was more for material support than spiritual guidance.[83] To convince Westerners about Chiang's faith in Christianity and to earn more support for the Nationalist government, Soong Mayling published articles in English magazines expressing confidence in China's salvation under Chiang's leadership.

The most significant piece in Soong's early public life was a 1934 article in *Forum* titled "What Religion Means to Me."[84] In this confessional-styled essay, Soong traced three phases of her own spiritual growth from "the best of intentions" but with "no staying power" to "spiritual despair, bleakness, desolation," and finally to a stage where "I wanted to do not my will, but God's." In a detailed narration of her experiences and thoughts after returning to China, Soong combined two different types of spiritual development: a growing faith in God and a burgeoning patriotic sentiment. Carefully woven into this narrative was the influence on her husband produced by her "letting him head toward a mirage when I knew of the oasis." By implying that China's modernization could provide a Christianization opportunity, as long as her husband remained the nation's political leader and she remained its spiritual leader, Soong began to portray herself as the symbol of a reborn China.

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[83] **"**The Christian President," *New York Herald Tribune,* October 26, 1930.

[84] Mayling Soong Chiang, "What Religion Means to Me," *Forum*, March, 1943, 131-36.

"What Religion Means to Me" was filled with biblical references and enthusiastic calls for God's help. According to Soong, Chiang "was sticking to his promise" of Bible study, and "prayer is our source of guidance and balance." Such statements allowed Soong to speak to fundamentalist missionaries who believed in individual transformation. Yet in the same article she also incorporated liberal ideas and feminist notions to connect with readers who identified more with people like Sherwood Eddy and Pearl Buck. She did so partly by creating two female messiah characters: her mother and herself. She dismissed her father's influence on her religious beliefs by saying in the beginning that "a religion good enough for my father did not necessarily appeal to me." Then she told stories from her childhood and youth about her mother's profound impact on her beliefs and her husband's conversion. Throughout the article, Soong attributed Chiang's growing faith to her mother's influence and to her own spiritual guidance after the death of her mother.

By highlighting women's spiritual leadership at home, Soong added a moderate feminist touch to the article, one that invoked the notion of republican motherhood while also resonating with attempts to reverse gender hierarchy. These positions reflected Soong's college influence and helped her appeal to a wider audience. After reading the article, Western audiences started to notice Soong's background. American publications asked Soong's Wellesley classmate Emma Mills to write "a bit of personal reminiscence" on the wife of the president of China.[85]

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[85] Emma Mills and Soong Mayling lived in the same dormitory at Wellesley. According to Thomas A. Delong, they developed a close friendship in college and their connections remained after graduation. Mills traveled to Shanghai and stayed in China for three years after graduation. Correspondence between the two continued until Mayling's marriage in 1927. Their communication resumed in 1935 after Emma

This article helped attract the attention of American journalists, including Emily Hahn, who built long-term connections with Soong and introduced her to more Americans through her own writings.[86]

At the end of the article, Soong stated, "I feel that God has given me a work to do for China." This "work" indicated both the evangelical project and rural construction in the already launched New Life Movement. Soong insisted that "rural rehabilitation must follow" because "China's problems in some ways are greater today than ever before." Meanwhile, she claimed freedom from "despondency and despair" because she would "look to Him who is able to do all things, even more than we ask or think." Her call for the church's participation in social reconstruction sent a sincere invitation to liberal missionaries and their supporters. Sherwood Eddy hailed the New Life Movement as the "World's Greatest Evangelistic Opportunity."[87]

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received a Christmas card from Soong. See Thomas A. DeLong, *Madame Chiang Kai-shek and Miss Emma Mills: China's First Lady and Her American Friend* (Jefferson: McFarland & Co., 2007), 84.

[86] Emily Hahn was a feature writer in the early 1930s in New York. According to Stephen R. MacKinnon, through New York connections, Hahn came to China in 1935 and met Soong Mayling in Chongqing. Hahn soon started to write a semi-authorized biography of the three Soong sisters. Publication of this book in 1939 helped bring attention to the Soongs and their wartime causes. See Stephen R. MacKinnon, "Americans in China and the Chiangs," in *Madame Chiang Kai-shek and Her China,* ed. Samuel C. Chu (Norwalk: EastBridge, 2005), 105.

[87] Li, *Madame Chiang Kai-shek*, 103. An enthusiastic Socialist and a veteran of student volunteer work, Eddy was one of the most vocal liberal missionaries in the early twentieth century. During the Student Volunteer Convention of 1924, liberals and fundamentalists debated about reform in missionary programs to accomplish foreign mission movements. Speaking on behalf of the liberals, Eddy insisted that only by Christianizing the social order and eliminating the selfish materialism found in the United States, and Europe, as well as in China, could missionaries build the Kingdom

In 1940 "What Religion Means to Me" was compiled with Soong's other English writings into a collection titled *This Is Our China*, published in the United States by Harper & Brothers. In the other pieces of this volume, Soong elaborated upon the liberal and feminist ideas initiated in her 1934 *Forum* article. In "Christianity in an Awakened China," she held that "The church can no longer stand apart from the development of modern China." In two articles titled "Women of China—Defend Your Country" and "Duty of Chinese Women in the War," she delineated Chinese women's participation in all civil and military works. While adding more liberal thoughts, however, Soong did not abandon appeals to fundamentalist missionaries. One of the illustrations at the beginning of the book is a picture of a Chinese mother bathing her child in a tub at the door. The caption below the picture reads "Young China Gets a Bath," metaphorically indicating the hope of more Chinese being baptized. Such messages helped Soong appeal to conservative as well as to liberal missionaries.

Soong's 1934 article began to establish her credibility as the spiritual guide of her husband and a co-leader of China's nationalist project. In the following years, she continued to publish articles in English-speaking nations to call for support of China's modernization. Increasing media coverage allowed her to project her image as a representative of modern Chinese women. In 1936, when Marshal Zhang Xueliang captured Chiang Kai-shek and urged him to reconstruct the Nationalist Party to form a national anti-Japanese coalition, Soong mediated among Zhang, Chiang, and the Communist Party to resolve the crisis in a peaceful way. This

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of God on Earth. See Varg, *Missionaries, Chinese and Diplomats*, 157-162, for discussion of this debate.

event, known as Xi'an incident, provided her a golden opportunity to enhance that image for Western audiences.

Soong's memos about the Xi'an incident were published in a series of nine articles in the *New York Times* in 1937. These memos were Soong's first-person narratives and portrayed her as a courageous woman taking enormous risks to rescue her beloved husband from rebellious marshals and to save the nation from falling into civil war. Jespersen contends that the image in these reports of Soong as the "intrepid savior" appealed strongly to Western readers.[88] Although some Western media like *The Times* (London) posed questions about the sensational elements in Soong's memos, many Americans accepted her portrayal of herself as a patriotic modern woman.[89] Dale Carnegie's comment on the Xi'an incident best described the essence of Soong's image: "This one frail woman alone braved the enmity of a hundred thousand mutinous soldiers—and won. China was now united by a fervor unknown for centuries. Madame Chiang Kai-shek is the soul of China's unity and probably the most important woman in the world."[90]

Building on the ethos generated by her writings on the Xi'an incident, Soong escalated her discourse targeting Western audiences to a new level after Japan's invasion of China in July 1937. To earn spiritual and material support from the international community, especially the United States, she addressed diversified groups in American society via video clips, radio broadcasts, and publications in the mainstream media. She

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[88] Jespersen, *American Images of China*, 86.

[89] *The Times* (London), October 15, 1937: 11.

[90] Dale Carnegie, *Dale Carnegie's Biographical Roundup: Highlights in the Lives of Forty Famous People* (New York: Greenberg, 1944), 138.

also expanded her target audience from women's groups and Christian associations to include English-speaking countries like Australia and Canada. This expansion was crucial to her self-construction as the symbol of a new China in the West.

As Soong's popularity increased in the United States, she faced a mounting challenge. While adapting to diversified perceptions of China created by previous discourses, she needed to provide an authentic interpretation of China to guarantee large-scale American support. In addition, this interpretation needed to enhance her credibility as a leader of China's progress. To achieve both goals, Soong developed the theme of a transforming China in her post-1937 rhetoric. In 1938, the China Information Bureau published her major English addresses, radio broadcasts, writings, interviews, press dispatches, and selections of wartime correspondence in a book titled *Madame Chiang's Messages in War and Peace*. According to E. Edwards' review of the book in 1939, Soong's language was "direct and strong," and the book attempted to "give readers abroad a clear understanding of China's problems."[91]

Of all the selections in this book, "China's Present, Past and Future" had probably the greatest influence among Americans. Written originally as a letter to a Chinese friend in America on May 14, 1938, the article became one of Soong's signature works. Wang Zhengting, the Chinese ambassador at Washington, wrote a letter to Soong reporting on the enthusiastic reception of this piece among American readers. He told her that newspaper editorials described Soong's article "as the most powerful and persuasive plea

[91] E. Edwards, "Madame Chiang's Messages in War and Peace by Mayling Soong Chiang," *International Affairs* 18 no. 3 (1939), 446.

yet to come to the attention of American readers, and as a masterpiece of polemical English fully measuring up to the historical definition of eloquence."[92]

Soong began the essay with a strong condemnation of Japan's brutish aggression that had left "indelible scars upon our earth, our hearts, and our minds" and had violently interrupted China's efforts at modernization. From here, she questioned the indifference of Western nations to Japan's brutality: "We seem to have been left frigidly alone by every democracy to fight as best as we can, with our inadequate equipment, for our own salvation. What have the governments of the democracies done for us?" The answer, she made clear, was because the West failed to see China as a changing nation capable of joining the West in treading "the democratic path." The bulk of Soong's essay was devoted to asserting why and how China would be transformed into a modern nation.

First, she accepted the portrayal of China found in the writings of nineteenth-century orientalist missionaries. Admitting that "indifference and laziness" were "celestially characteristic," Soong acknowledged the missionaries' criticism of the Chinese people's "lack of public spirit" and expressed her confidence that "the intelligent among our people will hereafter be ashamed not to show good citizenship." This confidence connected well with her belief that China must develop a new spirit that would help it find its soul. By claiming that "there is an obvious need for spiritual solace," Soong not only resonated with missionary writings that blamed China for lacking a spiritual life, but also implied that she functioned as a spiritual leader for the entire nation.

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[92] Zhengting Wang, foreword to *Madame Chiang's Messages in War and Peace*, iv.

In her discussion of how China could find its soul, Soong made a bold statement: "We, in China, need substantial and unashamed humility." This statement led to her call for China to follow the example of foreign nations. China's historical "intolerance of foreign methods," she said, "makes foreign investors, merchants, politicians, and economists suspicious of us." But this condition is not immutable: "If we, in China, are given the perception to promote co-operative effort with foreign experts and capital, there is nothing to stop us growing up into a strong and capable nation: self-respecting, and gaining the respect of all peoples who have so far marched ahead of us in national development." Although Soong presented Western nations as exemplars for China, she emphasized that their policy toward China should aim at cooperation and be based on principles of mutual respect. In essence, she embraced liberal Americans' ideas of new U.S.-China relations without directly refuting paternalistic ideology.

In the last part of her essay, Soong echoed missionary writings by expressing gratitude for foreign nations' guidance and experiences. Her objective of China's reformation—"Justice for all classes within our social framework"—also reflected the ideals of liberal missionaries. Soong also called for realization of China's "great moment in the future" that will not "omit the growing influence of our women," an outlook that fit the vision of China pictured in works by Pearl Buck.

The views articulated in "China's Present, Past, and Future" appeared frequently in Soong's rhetoric thereafter. They helped develop her ethos as an authoritative guide to China's evolution and as a living symbol of a transformed China. The notion of Soong coming to the United States began to appear in the discourse of influential China watchers. Pearl Buck, for example, wrote to Eleanor Roosevelt in 1941 asking the first

lady if Buck could invite Madame Chiang to visit the United States.[93] In May of the same year, Henry Luce announced that he brought messages from China and from Madame Chiang when he advocated the work of United China Relief after returning from his trip to China.[94] In 1942, Frank W. Price, a Presbyterian missionary in China, wrote to Soong: "Some one now must go from China to Washington who can win the attention of policy-makers, compel them to listen to facts and secure a change in war strategy. That person is yourself."[95]

In short, Soong Mayling had become a famous public figure well before she came to the United States. As Nathaniel Peffer put it in a 1940 *New York Times* article, "Mme. Chiang Kai-shek has become something of a legendary figure in America."[96] Numerous Americans, even if they never listened to Henry Luce's speeches about China or read Pearl Buck's novels, had heard stories of Soong Mayling from missionaries, journalists, writers, and diplomats. They read her articles in popular magazines, heard her talk on radio and video clips, and read about her husband's description of her as "co-leader in China" and "worth twenty divisions."[97] Her ethos was such that biographer Emily Hahn

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[93] Karen J. Leong, *The China Mystique: Pearl S. Buck, Anna May Wong, Mayling Soong, and the Transformation of American Orientalism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 131.

[94] Henry R. Luce, "Four Messages from China," in *The Ideas of Henry Luce*, eds. Henry R. Luce and John Knox Jessup, (New York: Atheneum, 1969), 195.

[95] Frank W. Price, letter to Soong Mayling, October 10, 1942, quoted in Jespersen, *American Images of China*, 91.

[96] Nathaniel Peffer, "Madame Chiang Kai-shek Speaks for China," *New York Times*, April 21, 1940.

[97] F. Tillman Durdin, "'Worth Twenty Divisions'—That's What Chiang Kai-shek Says about His Wife," *New York Times,* September 14, 1941.

contends that Soong's character, more than her institutional position as China's first lady, allowed her to gain popularity among Americans and to cast influence on Sino-American relations.[98]

Michael J. Hyde argues that we should understand ethos as a dwelling place for people to know together boundaries and domains of thought and morality; and this dwelling place should let the audience "feel more *at home* with others and our surroundings."[99] In her articles, Soong Mayling created for her American audience a "home" to generate a new view of China and U.S.-China relations. The feeling of sharing a common spiritual home encouraged Americans who had never been to China to believe that the Chinese people not only wanted what Americans wanted but also would strive to gain what Americans had.

Americans might not have had a clear sense of what this commonality meant to them when they first read Soong's articles. But after the attack on Pearl Harbor and the advent of U.S.-China military cooperation, by the time Soong Mayling arrived in the United States, she could credibly tell Americans that she felt as if she were "coming home." This emotional claim aroused unprecedented affection for Chinese and eventually would lead to a new perception and policy concerning China. American foreign missionaries were particularly excited because Soong's statements about a changing China spoke powerfully to them and held promise that a century of missionary activity

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[98] Cited in T. Christopher Jespersen, "Madame Chiang Kai-shek and the Face of Sino-American Relations: Personality and Gender Dynamics in Bilateral Diplomacy," in *Madame Chiang Kai-shek and Her China*, ed. Samuel C. Chu (Norwalk: EastBridge, 2005), 121-147.

[99] Michael J. Hyde, *Ethos of Rhetoric* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2004), 1.

might come to fulfillment. Thus missionaries became the most enthusiastic supporters of a U.S.-China alliance during World War II. Their enthusiasm, however, was not shared by all Americans, and particularly not by some in the White House and the State Department. Therefore, although Soong Mayling constantly received encouragement from missionary groups to visit America, she had to wait for a formal invitation from the government. Because of disputes about China policy in the U.S. government and among the Allied nations, this invitation did not come until September 1942.

Unlike missionaries, who shared a unified goal of converting the Chinese to Christianity, military leaders, diplomats, and FDR's advisors aligned with different political groups in China, split into antagonistic camps, and often sent conflicting opinions to Washington. Despite the sometimes chaotic nature of these opinions, they had immense influence on Sino-American relations and the administration's China policy during the Second World War. The next chapter will explore the diplomatic communication between the United States and China during the Second World War to demonstrate how wartime diplomacy helped pave way for Soong Mayling's 1943 speech tour that held "the breathless interest of the American people, day after day, for six successive weeks."[100]

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[100] Harry J. Thomas, *The First Lady of China: The Historical Visit of Mme. Chiang Kai-shek to the United States* (New York: International Business Machines Corporation, 1943), 1.

Chapter Two

Special Envoy and U.S.-China Relations during WWII

"Then he [President Roosevelt] went on to say he thought it best for Madame Chiang not to come here, as invited by some organization or other. It would be too much like a lecture tour of women's clubs."

—Joseph Stilwell reporting on a conversation with President Roosevelt, February 9, 1942[1]

"I have discussed the matter with my husband and we both feel that a visit with us at the White House would not only enable us to get to know you better and secure a better appreciation of China's problems, but would also, in large measure, serve the ends of publicity."

—— Eleanor Roosevelt to Soong Mayling, September 16, 1942

Soong Mayling had played a role in U.S.-China military cooperation since the very beginning, but she had functioned mainly as Chiang-Kai-shek's personal interpreter and as a cultural liaison before her trip to the United States. Her popularity among the American public remained separate from her work in Sino-American diplomatic communication. She would not have come to exert influence on American policy if she had not attained a public forum in the United States in 1943. Her invitation from the White House created this opportunity. But the formation of this public forum was not an accidental occurrence based on individual dispositions. Instead, emergence of this rhetorical platform was the result of wartime diplomacy.

Sino-American relations went through a drastic change after Japan invaded Manchuria in 1931. After driving Chinese troops out of Manchuria, the Japanese

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[1] Joseph Warren Stilwell and Theodore H. White, *The Stilwell Papers* (New York: Schocken Books, 1972), 36.

Kwantung Army, in September 1931, created the puppet state of Manchukuo.[2] Many Americans regretted Japan's aggression, but the official attitude remained one of non-intervention. Secretary of State Henry L. Stimson claimed that America would not recognize the legal existence of Manchukuo, yet the U.S. would not assist China or impose economic sanctions against Japan.[3] Japan escalated its aggression in July 1937, and full-scale war broke out between Japan and China.

Japan's invasion alarmed American policymakers who viewed its action in Asia as similar to Nazi Germany's in Europe. Though the official policy remained one of non-intervention, FDR made a speech in Chicago on October 5, 1937, to propose an international quarantine against aggressor nations worldwide. American journalists, diplomats, missionaries, and military, witnessing the war in China, were shocked by the Japanese troops' pillage, rape, murder, and bombing of defenseless Chinese civilians. Their descriptions of the war shaped public opinion and aroused great sympathy for the Chinese people. Increasing warnings to Washington about Japan's threat to regional and global security began to alter American attitudes toward the Sino-Japanese war.[4] The idea that China could serve as America's ally in Asia began to take shape. At the same time, the Chinese Nationalist government actively sought international cooperation to

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[2] Manchuria is a name widely used outside of China to denote a large geographical region that includes several provinces of northeast China. Aisin-Gioro Puyi, the abdicated emperor of China's Qing Dynasty, was made the ruler of the puppet state of Manchukuo, but Japan was the real controller of the state.

[3] Michael Schaller, *The United States and China in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 43-44.

[4] Ibid, 51-53. According to Schaller, the Roosevelt administration began to see the significance of preserving an independent and pro-America China during 1938 partially because of growing messages sent to Washington that aroused fear of Japan's aggression as a challenge to Western civilization.

fight against Japan.[5] In the end, the official formation of the Axis Alliance among Germany, Italy, and Japan on September 27, 1940, and the Pearl Harbor attack on December 7, 1941, led to a U.S.-China military alliance.

Although the common enemy often forced the Allies to reconcile their conflicting views, reconciliation between China and the United States was made particularly challenging by language barriers, cultural differences, and power disparities. Both sides endeavored to change the perspective of the other. Between 1941 and 1945, the need to maintain Chinese troops in the Far East theatre and the desire to reform China into a qualified ally led Roosevelt to send a team of personal envoys to Chongqing, the interior city that served as the capital after Japan occupied Nanjing in December 1937. Meanwhile, the resentment of being treated as a secondary ally and the hope of exerting influence on the White House inspired Chiang Kai-shek to follow Roosevelt's example and send his own emissaries to Washington. Development of this diplomatic channel paved the way for Soong Mayling's 1943 speech tour in the United States.

This chapter reviews Sino-American wartime diplomacy from 1937 to 1943. As we shall see, conflicts in the military cooperation within the Grand Alliance generated new diplomatic channels. President Roosevelt initiated a private diplomacy project to build connections with Chinese political leaders. The connections between the Chinese government and American political advisors, military commanders, and diplomats

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[5] China began to seek cooperation with Western nations in the late 1930s. Chiang Kai-shek did not pay special attention to the United States until Moscow and Tokyo signed a neutrality treaty in April 1940. In a conversation between Chiang and U.S. Ambassador Nelson T. Johnson on October 18, 1940, Chiang promised that China would follow American leadership and cooperate closely with the Western powers in future international struggles. Xiaoyuan Liu, *A Partnership for Disorder: China, the United States, and Their Policies for the Postwar Disposition of the Japanese Empire, 1941-1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 16.

formed a vital communication channel between China and the United States. Tensions among different political groups within this channel led both sides to seek more direct communication, which helped pave the way for Soong Mayling's 1943 tour. This chapter also traces Soong's diplomatic and rhetorical activities between her arrival in the United States in November 1942 and her triumphant speeches to Congress in February 1943.

Joining the Allies: Before Pearl Harbor

After outbreak of the Sino-Japanese war in 1937, Soong Mayling quickly became China's voice on the international stage. With the help of Henry Luce, American missionaries, and pro-China organizations in the United States, she reached American audiences through radio broadcasts, video clips, popular magazines, and influential newspapers. She was known as Madame Chiang, "the Wellesley-educated wife of the head of the Central Government" and "the charming indomitable woman who has become a martial inspiration to her beleagued country."[6] Accompanying her increasing popularity in the United States was a growing sympathy toward China. According to the Gallup Poll, pro-China opinion increased from 43 per cent in August 1937 to 74 per cent in May 1939.[7]

These changing attitudes, however, did not mean that the public supported American entrance into war on the other side of the Pacific. The White House explained its stance in April 1938: the United States deplored Japanese aggression but embraced a

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[6] "Madame Chiang Urges Women of China To Fight Japan According to Their Ability," *New York Times*, August 2, 1937; *Life*, June 30, 1941, 12. Soong Mayling appears on the cover of this issue.

[7] Harold R. Isaacs, *Scratches on Our Minds: American Images of China and India* (New York: John Day, 1958), 173.

nonintervention policy.[8] Although Roosevelt and some senior officials—including Secretary of State Cordell Hull and Treasury Secretary Henry Morgenthau—recognized the need to curb Japanese aggression, hardly anyone had the influence to alter the nation's isolationist attitude until after the attack on Pearl Harbor. Facing discontent in Congress and disagreement among his advisors, as well as wide public indifference to world affairs, Roosevelt could only undertake a "cautious crusade" even as he set about planning wartime foreign policy.[9]

Roosevelt knew better than anyone that America was mentally, and perhaps economically, unprepared to enter the war. But he planned to educate Americans and help them comprehend the Axis's growing aggression. After his second term began in 1937, he called for national action to abandon "isolation or neutrality" so as to "actively engage in the search for peace," to meet "the need for the elimination of aggressive armaments" as a nation for "a new order of the ages," and "with all possible speed to manufacture our defense material" so as to turn the nation into "the great arsenal of democracy."[10] By July 1940, 40.6 per cent of the American public was willing to help

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[8] Michael Schaller, "FDR and the 'China Question'," in *FDR's World: War, Peace, and Legacies,* eds. David B. Woolner, Warren F. Kimball, and David Reynolds (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 146-47.

[9] Steven Casey, *Cautious Crusade: Franklin D. Roosevelt, American Public Opinion, and the War Against Nazi Germany* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 26-27.

[10] FDR, Quarantine Speech, October 5, 1937, http://millercenter.org/president/fdroosevelt /speeches/speech-3310; FDR, Armistice Day Address, November 11, 1940, http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=15898; FDR, The Great Arsenal of Democracy, December 29, 1940, Stephen E. Lucas and Martin J. Medhurst, eds. *Words of A Century: The Top 100 American Speeches, 1900-1999* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 256-62.

the Allies but remained opposed to entering the war.[11] The decisive reason for Roosevelt's caution before 1941 was his realization of the potential damage of a hasty decision on national unity.[12] A declining yet still influential isolationist group and the poor morale of new recruits in military training camps sent clear warnings to the president. He could not risk dragging a reluctant and unprepared nation into war. Thus he conceived of a contingent policy: assisting European and Asian countries to deter Berlin and Tokyo while keeping America away from the battlefield. This idea allowed China to emerge as a potential ally of the United States in the Far East.

It was unclear whether Roosevelt counted China as a decent member of the international community when he made his famous "quarantine" speech on October 5, 1937. But his view of China's function in the war emerged more clearly when he approved a $25 million loan to the Nationalist government in December 1938. This decision was debated vehemently within the administration. Cordell Hull, Secretary of State, and Maxwell Hamilton, head of the Division of Far Eastern Affairs, opposed the idea, while Henry Morgenthau, Secretary of the Treasury, and Stanley Hornbeck, Hull's Far Eastern advisor, argued for the loan. Although Chinese troops had gained few victories in the first two years of war, China's vast inner land space successfully kept the

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[11] According to statistics from public opinion polls in *Fortune* magazine, 40.6 percent of Americans chose "help the Allies, but don't enter the war," in comparison with 26.9 percent who chose "enter the war at some stage" and 26 percent who preferred "impartial neutrality—sell goods to both sides on a cash-and-carry basis." Casey, *Cautious Crusade*, 28.

[12] Ibid, 44.

majority of Japan's 1.7 million soldiers occupied in Asia.[13] Speculating on the role China could play in containing Japan during the war and in maintaining regional stability afterward, Roosevelt decided to support the loan.[14]

Although Roosevelt was willing to recognize China as a major power and to provide aid to enhance its military strength, there was much doubt about China's capacity to resist Japan's military might. American officials in the State Department viewed China as "minor asset" in the fight against the Axis.[15] The American ambassador to China and members of the American military mission to China warned the War Department that the Nationalists grossly exaggerated their military success.[16] Comments about China's passivity and military weakness prevailed both in military meetings in Washington and in diplomatic reports to the White House.

To turn China into a more helpful ally, FDR not only added China to the list of recipient nations after Congress passed Lend-Lease in March 1941, but also planned to send advisors to guarantee effective use of the money. For Roosevelt, building direct connection with other Allied leaders not only helped him circumvent the Washington

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[13] The Japanese army had altogether 51 divisions, 28 of which were fighting in east China and 13 in north China. See Norman Polmar and Thomas B. Allen, *Word War II: America At War, 1941-1945* (New York: Random House, 1991), 428-35,

[14] For the debate about whether to grant China economic credits, see Schaller, *The U.S. Crusade in* China, 24-31. Schaller maintains that apart from FDR's own estimation of China's role, other factors also contributed to the president's final decision. These factors included Germany's dismemberment of Czechoslovakia, Japan's declaration of rejecting the Open Door policy in Asia, and information from naval attaché James McHugh about Chiang's considering a peace agreement with Japan.

[15] Liu, *Partnership for Disorder*, 20-22.

[16] Paul A. Varg, *The Closing of the Door, Sino-American Relations, 1936-1946* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1973), 33-34.

bureaucracy but also made it easier to test sensitive issues, such as territorial disputes and the distribution of military aid, with other national leaders. To attain more comprehensive knowledge about China and to seek more influence on China's wartime policy, Roosevelt started sending personal envoys to Chongqing even before the United States entered the war. The first one was his economic advisor Dr. Lauchlin Currie.

Currie arrived in China in February 1941 and stayed in Chongqing for twenty days. During the visit, he listened attentively to Chiang's demands for another $50 million of American aid and suggested to Chiang that he promote liberal economic reforms in China.[17] After returning to the United States, Currie encouraged Roosevelt to grant more aid to China, to dispatch a team of American experts to assist China's reform, and to use the press to champion the Generalissimo. He told Roosevelt that Chiang looked upon the president as "the greatest man in the world," so he should use his power to influence the commander of the most populous nation in the world.[18] Currie believed China should be treated as a major ally and a future great power, and he said the United States should encourage China to reform its political system to prevent civil war or Communist overturn. Roosevelt did not adopt Currie's plan entirely, but he did send a group of financial and transportation advisors to China in mid-1941, plus Owen Lattimore to serve as Chiang's political advisor. He also designated Currie to expedite a new aid program to China. Currie worked closely with T.V. Soong in Washington to guarantee the

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[17] Charles F. Romanus and Riley Sunderland, *Stilwell's Mission to China* (Washington: Office of the Chief of Military History, 1953), 13-15.

[18] Report by Currie to Roosevelt, March 15, 1941, Roosevelt Papers, Box 427, quoted in Schaller, *U.S. Crusade in China,* 49-50.

implementation of Lend-Lease, and he helped deliver Madame Chiang's cables directly to the Treasury Department or to Roosevelt himself.

Notwithstanding Currie's efforts, however, the link between Washington and Chongqing remained fragile until the United States joined the war. Before December 1941, Chiang Kai-shek sent multiple cables to high officials in the U.S. government and the State Department requesting war aid and warning them of the disastrous consequences of not taking action against Japan.[19] These cables confused and angered officials in Washington and stirred more miscommunication between the two governments. Problems and complaints repeatedly occurred in the application of Lend-Lease to China. To help calm the situation, some pro-Chinese individuals and groups in the U.S. invited Soong Mayling to visit America, but she declined them all. In a letter to Emma Mills, her friend and classmate at Wellesley, she wrote: "I have received many letters from people saying that if I could go over there no doubt I could stir up quite a lot of support. I want to go to America, but I do not want to have a visit of mine marked by a belief that I am coming on a begging expedition. The very thought of that causes me to postpone even an attempt to try to visit your country."[20]

Before the attack at Pearl Harbor, it was impossible for China and the United States to establish a real alliance. Washington expected China to resist Japan singlehandedly, yet Chiang Kai-shek believed Russia, rather than America, could best help China defeat Japan. American doubts about China's military capability and criticism of China's

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[19] Schaller, *U.S. Crusade in China,* 60-63.

[20] Mayling Soong Chiang to Emma Mills, January 6, 1938, quoted in Thomas A. DeLong, *Madame Chiang Kai-shek and Miss Emma Mills: China's First Lady and Her American Friend* (Jefferson: McFarland & Co., 2007), 117.

political system only reinforced Chinese resentment. The Chinese, for their part, were deeply disappointed at America's failure to take military action against Japan, notwithstanding that country's atrocities in Nanjing.[21] Things changed drastically after Japan bombed Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. Roosevelt promised T.V. Soong that the Soviet Union would soon declare war on Japan and urged him to ask Chiang to declare war on the Axis Powers. Learning about America's losses at Pearl Harbor, Chiang believed the Western nations would finally join China in the fight against Japan. He declared war on the Axis nations on December 8, 1941, and wrote in his diary the next day that his action would allow China to "gain the position to speak to Russia, Britain and America and offer a final solution to the world structure."[22]

Growing Tensions: December 1941 to June 1942

The general goal of the United States before Pearl Harbor was to postpone, if not avoid completely, being drawn into the war. To keep from provoking Japan, Roosevelt aligned with isolationists in Congress and did not embargo trade with Japan until 1940, despite strong advice to the contrary by the War and State departments and campaigns by missionaries in China. As Germany's rapid expansion in Europe further exposed the

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[21] The Nanjing Massacre, also known as the Rape of Nanjing, was an episode of mass murder committed by Japanese troops in December 1937. After occupying Nanjing, the Japanese imperial army organized a campaign of brutality that killed more than 300,000 Chinese civilians and disarmed combatants. Widespread rape and looting also occurred. For details, see Iris Chang, *The Rape of Nanking: The Forgotten Holocaust of World War II* (New York: BasicBooks, 1997); Joshua A. Fogel, *The Nanjing Massacre In History and Historiography* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000).

[22] Chiang Kai-shek, diary entry of December 9, 1941, quoted in Hsi-sheng Chi, *Jian Ba Nu Zhang de Meng You: Taiping Yang Zhan Zheng Qi Jian de Zhong Mei Jun Shi He Zuo Guan Xi, 1941-1945* [Aggressive Alliances: China-U.S. Military Cooperation during the Pacific War, 1941-1945] (Taibei: Lian Jing Press, 2011), 14.

Allies' weakness and America's reluctance to join the war, Japan took the opportunity to fill the power vacuum left by European colonists in Southeast Asia and blocked all channels connecting China and the West. Britain had to close the Burma Road on July 12, 1940, after the United States rejected the British request for joint action to deter Japan's expansion in Southeast Asia. Although the main reason for America's decision was a lack of military power to conduct war in Asia, it dealt a huge blow to China and reinforced Chiang Kai-shek's belief that only Russia could truly help China resist Japan. However, soon after declaring war on the Axis on December 9, 1941, Chiang learned that Russia would not denounce the Soviet-Japan Neutrality Pact that had been signed in April, but would continue to focus on fighting the Germans. Thus Chiang had no choice but to cooperate with the British and Americans in an effort to reopen the Burma Road.

Believing that Pearl Harbor had taught Britain and America a good lesson and helped them understand the consequences of ignoring his warnings about Japan's aggression, Chiang invited Field Marshal Archibald Percival Wavell, the sturdy, one-eyed British Commander in Chief in India, and George Howard Brett, the U.S. Army Air Force General, to attend a military conference in Chongqing to discuss joint action in Asia among the Allies. Held on December 23, 1941, the conference quickly turned into a fight for war aid. Wavell's demand of transporting all American aid for China through the British army in Burma irritated Chiang so much that John Magruder, a U.S. Army General who was present at the conference, had to remind him that British demands would not be met without China's permission and cooperation.[23] Chiang recorded his resentment in his diary: "The British were pirates and more selfish than the Germans.

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[23] Chi, *Aggressive Alliances*, 17-18.

Their contempt to Chinese was even worse than their discrimination against colored people."[24]

Chiang believed declaring war on the Axis Powers automatically granted China a position in the Grand Alliance, which was originally constituted by Great Britain, the Soviet Union, and the United States to defeat Nazi Germany. The conference in Chongqing, however, was a sobering experience that made starkly clear China's marginalized position among the allies. To participate better in the making of war plans, Chiang sent a military mission to Washington in March 1942 to argue for an Asia-first strategy. But before Chiang's mission arrived in the United States, Britain and America established the Combined Chiefs of Staff and the Munition Assignments Board; China was excluded from participating in meetings of either group. There were two main reasons for this decision. First, knowing that Chiang opposed their Europe-first strategy, Roosevelt and Churchill realized that including Chinese representatives would likely cause protracted disputes that would delay joint action on the battlefield. Second, Churchill and Roosevelt disagreed with one another on the importance of China to the alliance. Churchill saw China as barely useful in defeating Japan. He considered China as not "representing a great world Power [but] a faggot vote on the side of the United States in any attempt to liquidate the British overseas Empire."[25] Roosevelt, on the other hand, insisted on treating China as an important member of the alliance. He understood the importance of China's huge population and geopolitical location, and he believed that abandoning colonialism and halting the practice of treating Asian countries as inferior

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[24] Chiang Kai-shek, diary entry of December 25, 1941, quoted in Chi, *Aggressive Alliances*, 18.

[25] Winston Churchill, *The Hinge of Fate* (London: Cassell, 1951), 562.

was "the best means of preventing a fundamental cleavage between the West and East in the years to come."[26] Also, Chiang's staunch anti-Communism and resentment of imperialism led FDR to see China as "America's natural democratic ally."[27]

Notwithstanding his positive view of China, in contrast to that of Churchill and others, FDR was fully conscious of China's weakness. He once stated to his son that China "was still in the eighteenth century."[28] He also knew that implementing the Europe-first strategy and bolstering the morale of British and Russian troops were as important as building China's faith in the alliance. To soothe Chiang's anger and to compensate for his exclusion from early joint military meetings, Roosevelt persuaded the British to invite Chiang to serve as Supreme Commander of Allied forces in China, Thailand, and Indochina. Roosevelt told Chiang that this position would enable him to influence the formulation of general strategy for the conduct of the war in all theaters. To guarantee the military headquarters established in Chongqing "a recognition and dignity" which had not been afforded thus far to China, FDR dispatched a high-ranking military officer to China to help Chiang build links with other Allied headquarters.[29] This task fell to General Joseph Stilwell.

With the experience gained from three service tours in China and his mastery of spoken and written Chinese, Stilwell was technically qualified for his post. However, his

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[26] Barbara W. Tuchman, *Stilwell and the American Experience in China, 1911-1945* (New York: Macmillan, 1970), 239.

[27] Robert Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy*, *1932-1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), 329.

[28] Ibid, 239.

[29] Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy,* 328.

stubbornness, personality, and unconcealed dislike of Chiang Kai-shek made him perhaps the worst choice for a leading position in the U.S.-China military alliance. As Commanding General of the Chinese Army in India and Burma and Chief of the Chinese Training and Combat Command, Stilwell saw himself as a reformer of the Chinese army and as superior to Chiang in the Allied command. He could not tolerate the corruption in the Chinese army, the culture of hiding bad news from superiors, and the lack of a democratic political system. Nicknamed "vinegar Joe" for his acerbic disposition, Stilwell did not hide his wrath and resentment in his diary, his letters, or his reports to Washington. He compared Chiang Kai-shek to Hitler, called him "a stubborn, ignorant, prejudiced, conceited despot," and typically referred to him pejoratively as "Peanut."[30] Stilwell was determined to use his power as administrator of Lend-Lease to China as a stick to make Chiang "follow his advice" about how to improve the Chinese army.[31]

Chiang, on the other hand, viewed Stilwell as *his* representative to Washington to guarantee the application of Lend-Lease to China.[32] With a personality no less unyielding than Stilwell's, Chiang clashed with the American almost from the outset and was deeply resentful of foreign intrusions on his power. His patience wore out after Stilwell started his own training program for Chinese soldiers and generals, because such a program meant that Chiang would lose direct control of his army. Stilwell's contact with the Chinese Communist Party and his positive comments about them in reports to Washington further infuriated the Generalissimo. Loss of the Burma campaign in May

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[30] Tuchman, *Stilwell and the American Experience in China,* 317-18.

[31] Ibid, 305.

[32] Romanus and Sunderland, *Stilwell's Mission to China*, 159-60.

1942 and Stilwell's abandonment of 100,000 Chinese troops in Burma added insult to injury. But the last straw was Stilwell's reluctance to press Washington for fulfillment of all the war materièl that Chiang believed had been promised to China.[33]

Chiang's resentment grew as his competition with the British for war aid increased. At the end of June 1942, British setbacks in Africa led to an emergency in Egypt. In response, Washington cancelled its original plan of sending more aircraft to China and ordered heavy bombers of the Tenth Air Force, as well as transports and crews of the Air Transport Command, to Egypt. It also diverted to the British a force of B-24 heavy bombers that was on its way to China. These events infuriated Chiang and led him to push harder for Lend-Lease supplies. During a meeting with Stilwell on June 29, Chiang stated his demands and threatened that the China theater would be liquidated if these "minimum requirements" could not be fulfilled. Soong Mayling, who participated in the meeting, summed up Chiang's demands by saying "the Generalissimo wants a yes or no answer whether the Allies consider this theater necessary and will support it."[34]

In his report to Washington, Stilwell interpreted Soong's concluding statement as an ultimatum. But he did not recommend that Washington take Chiang's demands seriously. Believing Chiang's threat of a separate peace with Japanese to be a pure "bluff,"

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[33] Chi, *Aggressive Alliances*, 117-34.

[34] In his account of these events, Stilwell referred to Chiang's "Three Demands," and historians refer to the imbroglio as "Three Demands crisis." Chiang's demands were, first, three American divisions to arrive in India between August and September to restore communication with China through Burma; second, 500 combat airplanes to operate from China beginning in August and to be maintained continuously at that strength; and third, delivery of 5,000 tons of war materièl a month to be maintained by the Air Transport Command beginning in August. See Tuchman, *Stiwell and the American Experience in China,* 312; Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy,* 356.

he urged Washington to ignore Chiang's demands. After learning of Stilwell's report, Chiang erupted in fury and telegraphed T.V. Soong, demanding that he request Stilwell's recall. Chiang wrote of Stilwell: "I believe his arrogant and condescending manner to a [Chinese] leader, which is purely based on his personal attitude, is not the original intention of the American government."[35] Replying to Chiang four days later, T.V. Soong called Stilwell "insane" and told Chiang that he would indeed request that Stilwell be replaced.[36]

To press Washington, Chiang sent cables directly to Roosevelt asking that Stilwell be made subordinate to Chiang in all matters and that Chiang be given clear control over Lend-Lease in China. George Marshall drafted a reply on behalf of Roosevelt that bluntly refused Chiang's request. With more disappointment and resentment, Chiang warned Washington of China's low morale and potential collapse. His warnings aroused Roosevelt's concern, and the president asked Marshall to consider moving Stilwell out of China. When Marshall insisted on keeping Stilwell, Roosevelt sent additional personal emissaries to China in hopes of soothing Chiang's anger.

Making New Efforts: July 1942 to November 1942

The first personal envoy Roosevelt sent to China after the loss of Burma was Lauchlin Currie, whom he had sent on a private mission in January 1941. Between July 21 and

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[35] Chiang Kai-shek, telegram to T.V. Soong, July 2, 1942, *Zhonghua Min Guo Zhong Yao Shi Liao Chu Bian: Dui Ri Kang Zhan Shi Qi: Xu Bian* [Archives of the Republic of China: War against Japan: Sequel] (Taibei: The Chinese Nationalist Party Central Committee Party History Committee), 610. Hereafter referred to as *Archives of the Republic of China*.

[36] T.V. Soong, telegram to Chiang Kai-shek, July 6, 1942, ibid, 611.

August 7, Currie talked in depth with Chiang about Lend-Lease implementation, China-Soviet relations, and Britain's policy in India, as well as about Stilwell's authority in China.[37] The scope of the topics not only reflected Roosevelt's concern about the military relationship, but also his sensitivity to potential disagreements between China and America on postwar issues.

Although the White House had started postwar planning in January 1942, the defeat of the Japanese navy in the Battle of Midway less than a month before Currie's trip to China pushed questions of postwar territorial settlement closer to the forefront. Of all the opinions Currie conveyed on behalf of Roosevelt, Chiang found two ideas particularly hard to accept: making Manchuria a buffer state between Japan and Russia after the war and improving relationships with the Soviet Union and Great Britain rather than viewing them as imperialist powers that threatened China's territorial security.[38] By the end of his meetings with Currie, Chiang was willing to compromise on some issues—though not on Manchuria—in an effort to make progress on negotiating with Currie about Stilwell and about the plans of Colonel Claire Chennault for fighting Japan in the China theatre.

Chennault was head of the American Volunteer Group (AVG), the China Air Task Force (CATF), and the U.S. Fourteenth Air Force in China during the war. He came to China after resigning from the military in April 1937 and became Chiang's most loyal American friend. This loyalty came partially from his admiration of Soong Mayling, whom he first met on June 3, 1937. He wrote in his diary afterward, "Granted interview by Her Excellency, Madame Chiang Kai-shek, who will hereafter be 'The Princess' to

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[37] For details of Currie's second China mission, see Schaller, *U.S. Crusade in China,* 111-12; Chi, *Aggressive Alliances*, 217-25.

[38] Liu, *Partnership for Disorder*, 107-08.

me." He later recalled the start of his friendship with Madame Chiang: "It was the Generalissimo's wife, looking twenty years younger than I had expected and speaking English in a rich Southern drawl. This was an encounter from which I never recovered. To this day I remain completely captivated."[39] Working as Chiang's air adviser, Chennault proposed an alternative plan for defeating Japan—American planes manned by American pilots who would fly in the service of China. The idea took shape in October 1940 and soon became the focus of Chiang's major war aid requests to Washington.[40] It ran into opposition for various reasons, not least of which was that it had to compete with the State Department's plan for a Chinese army led by Stilwell to fight against Japan in concert with other Allied armies.

Different ideas about war strategy in China created multiple opposing camps. Harry Hopkins, FDR's chief advisor, supported Chennault. George Marshall, Chief of Staff, and Ernest Joseph King, Commander in Chief of the United States Fleet and Chief of Naval Operations, were on the side of Stilwell, as was Churchill. Roosevelt remained neutral until the loss of Burma in June 1942, followed by the worsening Stilwell-Chiang conflict and the resulting deterioration of U.S.-China relations. The president expressed his dissatisfaction with Stilwell and asked Marshall to create an independent command from Stilwell in China.[41] When Chiang told Currie he wanted Washington to recall Stilwell and to dispatch 500 planes to China, he was actually suggesting replacement of Stilwell

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[39] Jack Samson, *Chennault* (New York: Doubleday, 1987), 13.

[40] Tuchman, *Stilwell and the American Experience in China*, 215.

[41] Robert E. Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins: An Intimate History* (New York: Harper, 1950), 739.

with Chennault. With this request, Chiang sought to increase his influence in Washington and to combat the power of the State Department in making policies concerning China.

Chiang's position was also influenced by the fact that Chennault, unlike Stilwell, did not seek to reform the Chinese army or favor taking Chinese soldiers outside China to fight for other Allies, as Stilwell had done in Burma. In the first Burma campaign, China lost most of its 29th Division in combat with Japan along the Burma Road and a large portion of the 22nd, 28th, and 96th Divisions in the retreat.[42] These disasters were partially caused by Britain's unwillingness to commit their forces to the joint battle; but with an American commander in chief, China had to pay a high price to save the British Armored Brigade and the 17th Indian Division.[43]

Another key reason for Chiang's preference for Chennault is that he was perhaps the only American who did not convey attitudes of racial discrimination and cultural superiority. Chiang Kai-shek was a conservative nationalist. Although he constantly sought foreign aid during the war, his ethnocentric disposition led him to despise all foreign theories ranging from Anglo-American liberalism to Soviet Communism. He believed they were all "opposed to the spirit of China's own civilization" and that China should only "study and apply foreign theories for the benefit of China."[44] As the leader of the Nationalist government and army, he taught his officials and commanders that "the main objective of the Nationalist revolution was to escape from the bondage of the

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[42] Tuchman, *Stilwell and the American Experience in China,* 299.

[43] According to Tuchman, British General Childe Harold Alexander's reluctance to commit his forces to the Burma war was under orders from London. Ibid, 285.

[44] Chiang Kai-shek, *China's Destiny* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1976), 100. The book was originally published in 1943.

unequal treaties" imposed on China by the Western powers.[45] Unlike his wife and in-laws, Chiang lacked international experience and strategies for dealing with his American advisors' orientalist and paternalistic attitudes. In addition to persistent insults from Stilwell, Marshall, and others, Chiang sensed contempt and arrogance even in communications with Currie, who expended so much effort trying to gain war aid for China that Treasury Secretary Morgenthau remarked at one point that it was not clear whether Currie was "working for the President or T.V. Soong."[46]

What annoyed Chiang most during Currie's second China mission was the American's penchant use of the father-son metaphor. Upon his arrival at Chongqing on July 22, Currie opened negotiations with Chiang by saying that average Americans viewed China as a child and America as a father; it was unrealistic to expect America to abandon its paternalistic intention to protect and direct China before China proved that it had grown up.[47] At the end of his visit, Currie used the analogy again to urge Chiang to carry out domestic reform. He said pursuing China's equal status within the alliance relied on demonstration of the child's capacity to the father; this was the only way to prove that the child deserved equal treatment.[48] Currie's words exacerbated Chiang's resentment of the Western allies. He wrote in his diary: "Recent talks with Currie [made me] see more clearly Westerners' contempt on the Chinese and their intention to insult

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[45] Ibid, 68.

[46] Schaller, *U.S. Crusade in China,* 55.

[47] Chi, *Aggressive Alliances*, 250.

[48] Record of conversations between Chiang and Currie, August 6, 1942, cited in Chi, *Aggressive Alliances*, 250.

[us]."[49] According to historian Chi His-sheng, Currie offended Chiang so much that the latter started to believe Americans were just like the British, and he referred to both as "imperialists" in his diary.[50]

Currie did not intend to insult the Generalissimo, but his policy positions were in keeping with FDR's desire to persuade Chiang to make political and military reforms that would allow China to play a more significant role in building the postwar world order. To achieve the goal of his postwar planning, Roosevelt was willing to treat China as an equal power. The other Allies, however, challenged the president's global vision and his China policy, as did many in his own administration. Increasing crises caused by setbacks in Burma, disputes within the alliance, and discord between the American and Chinese governments all pressed on Roosevelt. Therefore, while sending a team of emissaries to encourage Chiang to undertake domestic reforms, he attempted to persuade Britain and the Soviets to accept China as one of the four major world powers.

Robert Dallek contends that Roosevelt's expectation that China could help the United States preserve peace in the Pacific after the war led to his insistence on including China as one of the great powers in the Grand Alliance despite doubt and opposition from Britain and the Soviet Union.[51] On January 1, 1942, the Soviet and Chinese ambassadors in Washington joined Roosevelt and Churchill to sign the Declaration by the United Nations, a document to which representatives of twenty-two other nations added their signatures the following day. The order in which the declaration was signed symbolized

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[49] Chiang Kai-shek, diary entry of July 25, 1942, quoted in Chi, *Aggressive Alliances*, 247.

[50] Chi, *Aggressive Alliances*, 247.

[51] Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy,* 389.

recognition of China as one of the four major powers in America's postwar planning.[52] After the signing, Roosevelt started to use in private the term "Four Policemen" to indicate his vision of the United States, Great Britain, China and the Soviet Union cooperating in the pursuit of world peace.[53] In the 1943 Moscow meeting of foreign ministers, Hull told Soviet Foreign Minister Vyacheslav Molotov that "the President and I believed" China should be included in the four major powers because "her population was larger than those of the other three put together, she had vast potentialities if her people could be united, she had been fighting against the major Pacific enemy for more than six years, and after the defeat of Japan she would be the principal strictly Asian Power."[54]

Despite his private exasperation with slights from the other Allies, Chiang usually maintained a collegial position publicly—indeed, he had little choice from a practical standpoint. Currie's report to the president of August 24, 1942, communicated Chiang's gratitude for FDR's support and expressed a willingness to continue working with Stilwell. More specifically, Chiang said he would accept Stilwell's ground-war strategy as long as the U.S. dispatched 5,000 tons of supplies per month, 500 planes, and a combat division to China.[55] Attributing disputes among Chiang, Chennault, and Stilwell to personality conflicts, Currie recommended that Stilwell be replaced to keep from losing

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[52] Townsend Hoopes and Douglas Brinkley, *FDR and the Creation of the U.N.* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 45-46.

[53] Donald E. Davis and Eugene P Trani, *Distorted Mirrors: Americans and Their Relations with Russia and China In the Twentieth Century* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2009), 269.

[54] Cordell Hull, *The Memoirs of Cordell Hull* (New York: Macmillan, 1948), 1255.

[55] Schaller, *U.S. Crusade in China,* 112.

"a unique opportunity to exert a profound influence on the development of China and hence Asia."[56] Roosevelt agreed with all of these recommendations, but the recall of Stilwell did not occur because of unyielding resistance from Marshall and Stimson.[57]

Though Currie did not solve the disputes between Chiang and Stilwell, he brought back to Washington valuable information that helped FDR understand better the situation in China and enhanced his belief that personal diplomacy could be more effective than official communication with the Chinese government via the War Department. To maintain contact with Chiang, Eleanor Roosevelt sent a formal invitation to Soong Mayling on September 16, 1942, asking her to visit the United States. Before December 1941, FDR had been reluctant to issue an official invitation to Soong despite suggestions from pro-China Americans such as Pearl Buck and Henry Luce. After the United States entered the war, some of FDR's advisors began to suggest that inviting Soong to visit the United States would educate Americans about the Sino-American military alliance, counteract Japan's war propaganda, and raise the public's awareness about international affairs.[58] Currie's trip further convinced Roosevelt that direct contact with Soong Mayling could help him learn more about Chiang's intentions and plans.

Before Chiang and Soong responded to the first lady's invitation, FDR sent Wendell Willkie, an internationalist who had been the Republican presidential candidate in 1940, as his second personal envoy to China. Before Willkie arrived in Chongqing in

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[56] Report by Currie to Roosevelt, August 24, 1942, quoted in Schaller, *U.S. Crusade in China,* 113.

[57] Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins,* 739.

[58] Karen J. Leong, *The China Mystique: Pearl S. Buck, Anna May Wong, Mayling Soong, and the Transformation of American Orientalism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 131.

October 1942, T.V. Soong reminded Chiang that Willkie might still become president, which led Chiang to take Willkie very seriously.[59] He installed Willkie in a luxurious government villa, surrounded him with English-speaking Chinese officials, and isolated him from both Stilwell and ambassador Clarence Gauss. For his part, Willkie took sides with Chiang and Chennault, sharing the Generalissimo's criticism of the imperialistic British and promising to carry Chennault's argument to the White House.[60] Stilwell recorded in his diary how "Gauss and Willkie hate[d] each other's guts."[61] Stilwell's aide, John Paton Davies, believed "it was Madame Chiang herself who aroused the susceptible Willkie's passion for China's cause."[62] According to Davies, Willkie was "visibly moved" by Madame Chiang's charm and "on the evening of his departure, in the presence of her enigmatic husband, pressed her to fly with him the next day to Washington and he would get her all the airplanes she wanted."[63]

Willkie did not submit a formal report to Roosevelt about his mission, but his book *One World*, published after his trip to China, contributed to growing favorable sentiment toward Chiang's Nationalist government among the American public.[64] Before leaving China, Willkie suggested that Soong take a goodwill tour of the United States. He predicted that with her "brains, persuasiveness, moral force, and charm," she would be

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[59] Liu, *Partnership for Disorder*, 108.

[60] Schaller, *U.S. Crusade in China,* 119; Liu, *Partnership for Disorder*, 108.

[61] Quoted in Schaller, *U.S. Crusade in China,* 118.

[62] John Paton Davies, *China Hand, an Autobiography* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), 96.

[63] Ibid.

[64] Liu, *Partnership for Disorder*, 110; Schaller, *U.S. Crusade in China,* 119.

"the perfect ambassador" to help Americans understand Asia.[65] After Willkie's visit, Chiang seriously considered Eleanor Roosevelt's invitation to Soong Mayling, and on November 2, 1942, T.V. Soong cabled Hopkins asking if an airplane could be placed at the disposal of Madame Chiang to go to the United States for medical treatment. Hopkins immediately replied, "the President was greatly disturbed to hear of Madame's illness and that steps were being taken to make an airplane immediately available for her transportation to New York."[66] On November 26, 1942, she arrived at Mitchell Air Force Base on Long Island, New York. She would stay in the United States for more than seven months.

Wartime Diplomacy and Plans for the Speech Tour

Before a formal invitation was extended to Soong Mayling, FDR mentioned in his cable to Chiang Kai-shek on August 22 that he was looking forward to Madame Chiang's visiting.[67] A formal invitation came in September from Eleanor Roosevelt, who wrote: "I have discussed the matter with my husband and we both feel that a visit with us at the White House would not only enable us to get to know you better and secure a better appreciation of China's problems, but would also, in large measure, serve the ends of publicity."[68] The invitation indicated that FDR expected Soong to enhance direct contact

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[65] Tuchman, *Stilwell and the American Experience in China*, 334-35.

[66] Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins*, 644.

[67] FDR, telegram to Chiang Kai-shek, August 22, 1942, *Archives of the Republic of China*, 749.

[68] Eleanor Roosevelt to Soong Mayling, September 16, 1942, quoted in Leong, *China Mystique*, 132.

between Washington and Chongqing and to help publicize the president's war policies and postwar plans. With regard to the latter, the administration wanted Soong to counteract Japanese war propaganda and to advocate FDR's internationalist agenda and China policy.

In an effort to break the Allies' unity, Japanese propaganda repeatedly attacked racial problems in the United States. They stressed Americans' historical discrimination against non-whites in general and their mistreatment of African Americans in particular. One week after Pearl Harbor, a Japanese broadcast denounced racism in American society by identifying discriminating aspects of the U.S. legal system and said of FDR: "He says the United States is fighting for racial equality in America where racial equality does not exist. Japan is fighting before God for more just racial equality. Let's not tolerate Roosevelt's hypocrisy any longer."[69] The goal of such propaganda was to justify Japan's occupation of other Asian countries as a way to unify non-white races against white supremacy and colonialism. The wide dissemination of Japan's charges produced concerns in Washington. Archibald MacLeish, director of the Office of Facts and Figures, wrote to Roosevelt reminding him of the potential impact of Japanese race propaganda on Chinese, Filipinos, Malaysians, Indians, and "our own Negroes."[70] MacLeish suggested inviting Soong Mayling to visit the United States, where she could help counteract Japan's propaganda.[71]

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[69] Saul K. Padover, "Japanese Race Propaganda," *Public Opinion Quarterly,* 7 no. 2 (Summer, 1943), 197.

[70] Archibald MacLeish to Franklin D. Roosevelt, February 19, 1942, quoted in Leong, *China Mystique*, 132.

[71] Leong, *China Mystique*, 133.

Meanwhile, doubts about Roosevelt's China policy grew in Congress and among the public. A demand for evidence supporting Roosevelt's global vision and proving its feasibility became more visible after the Republicans gained seventy-seven seats in the House of Representative and several governorships during the 1942 state and congressional elections.[72] Mary E. Stuckey points out that in order to persuade Americans to support his global vision, Roosevelt "had to find support for that vision at home and abroad; and he had to do so in such a way that the American people would accept the position of global leader and that the rest of the world would at least acquiesce to that leadership."[73] By the latter half of 1942, it was obvious to Roosevelt that a visit by Soong Mayling might contribute to gaining support for his wartime foreign policy and postwar global vision. Having a non-American, non-white allied leader speak to the American Congress and public would provide testimony that the world was ready for a new order under American leadership.

On the Chinese side, Soong's trip to the United States provided a great opportunity "to influence the president, congressional leaders and influential private citizens."[74] To combat the appeasement of Japan by world powers, the Chinese Ministry of Information had mounted a campaign of publicity since 1937 to shape international opinion and to arouse sympathy for China. Hollington K. Tong, the Vice Minister of Information, believed a "truth-telling publicity" campaign targeting the general public in England and

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[72] Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy,* 361.

[73] Mary E. Stuckey, *The Good Neighbor: Franklin D. Roosevelt and the Rhetoric of American Power* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2013), 169.

[74] Ronald Heiferman, *The Cairo Conference of 1943: Roosevelt, Churchill, Chiang Kai-shek and Madame Chiang* (Jefferson: McParland, 2011), 22.

America would generate sentiment "extremely favorable toward China."[75] He established the Chinese International Broadcasting Station in 1938 to enlarge the scope of China's radio connections with America and Britain. He also helped arrange Soong Mayling's radio address to the annual *New York Herald Tribune* Forum in 1939, cooperated with the United States Office of War Information to establish a radio-photo service in 1942, and built connections with American journalists of prominent outlets such as *Life*, the *New York World Telegram*, and the *New York Times*.[76] Upon Chiang Kai-shek's request, Tong accompanied Soong throughout her American trip so as to coordinate and help plan her speaking tour. Thus, although the publicly stated reason for Soong's trip was initially to receive medical treatment, there is no doubt that the Chinese officials who organized her tour treated it as a diplomatic campaign to publicize China's contributions during the war and to promote equal international relations afterward.

After Soong's arrival in the United States, she stayed in the hospital for three months. Although her physical ailments were doubtless real, while receiving medical treatment she began to prepare for her first public appearance, in February 1943.[77] These preparations included a series of meetings with Eleanor Roosevelt, Harry Hopkins, Pearl Buck, and Wendell Willkie. According to Soong's cables to Chiang after meeting with Eleanor Roosevelt on November 28 and December 4, the first lady had expressed her ideas about how to "change Americans' attitude and let them understand China's

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[75] Hollington K. Tong, *Dateline China—The Beginning of China's Press Relations with the World* (New York: Rockport Press, 1950), 95.

[76] Ibid, 99, 138-139, 166-172.

[77] According to the doctors who treated Soong, she suffered from urticaria and intense abdominal pain. See Laura Tyson Li, *Madame Chiang Kai-shek: China's Eternal First Lady* (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 2006), 194.

contribution."[78] It is not clear whether Roosevelt discussed inviting Soong to speak to Congress during those meetings, but Owen Lattimore wired Chiang on December 28, stating that FDR was glad to see friendship developing between the two first ladies and was looking forward to Madame Chiang's visit to the White House.[79] According to biographer Laura Tyson-Li, Soong was working, during her hospital stay, on "a major speech she planned to give to the U.S. Congress when she visited Washington."[80] Tong recorded in his memoirs how Soong worked on speeches during her stay in the hospital. According to Tong, Soong prepared rough drafts of all her major addresses before starting on the trip; she worked so hard on them that sometimes he "would receive as many as seven and eight revised drafts."[81]

The opportunity for Soong to address Congress was also likely a result of the Chinese diplomatic team's negotiations with the White House. Although Soong came to the United States as an informal diplomat, she and her entourage demanded diplomatic protocol "befitting rulers and royalty."[82] Leong contends that this demand was not the product of feminine unpredictability—as held by many previous commentators—but a reflection of Soong's anxiety over the inequalities faced by China during the war. Winston Churchill had visited the United States in 1941 and addressed a joint session of

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[78] Soong Mayling, telegram to Chiang Kai-shek, November 28, 1942, *Archives of the Republic of China*, 783.

[79] Owen Lattimore, telegram to Chiang Kai-shek, *Archives of the Republic of China*, 747-48.

[80] Li, *Madame Chiang Kai-shek*, 197.

[81] Tong, *Dateline China*,189-90.

[82] Leong, *China Mystique*, 146.

Congress on December 26. It was understandable if Soong Mayling viewed America's attitudes toward Churchill and herself as symbolic representations of the relations among the U.S., China, and Great Britain. If Churchill could meet with the president, address a joint session of Congress, and speak to the American public, Soong needed to attain the same rhetorical forums to guarantee America's equal treatment of China. Even though the rhetorical forum in Congress had never been opened to a non-white, non-American woman, FDR supported Soong's request to speak because he perceived her as representing China during her trip.

Comparing America's official news of Soong Mayling's visit with her cables to Chiang during her stay in the hospital, we can see that arrangements for her tour were finalized in early February. Upon Soong's arrival in the U.S. on November 24, 1942, the White House issued only a press release about Madame Chiang entering Columbia's health center to receive treatment for an unspecified medical ailment.[83] Soong did not attend any public activities during her hospital stay and only a few journalists were allowed to visit her there.[84] The U.S. government did not lift the news embargo on Soong's visit until mid-January 1943, after which numerous Americans clamored to visit her and mail quickly swelled to a thousand letters a day.[85] A February 7 article in the *New York Herald Tribune* reviewed Soong's previous speeches and writings and stated that "a study of a collection of her utterances during the eventful year of 1942, which the Chinese News Service is preparing," would throw illuminating light on the storied

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[83] Ibid, 133.

[84] Li, *Madame Chiang Kai-shek*, 195.

[85] Ibid, 195-96.

woman who, "unlike Cleopatra, uses her beauty to influence men and events for the good of her own people and of mankind." The *Herald Tribune* also compared Soong with Churchill and praised Soong by saying:" No leader in the world today, with the possible exception of Churchill, has the same command of the classically simple, the eloquent phrase."[86] Two days after the *Tribune* article, Soong cabled Chiang with a plan for her entire speech tour, including speaking to Congress and speeches in major American cities.[87] On February 13, the *New York Times* wrote that "tentative plans were laid at a meeting of friends of China for a series of nation wide appearances by Mme. Chiang." The article released Soong's plans to address Congress on February 18, to speak in Madison Square Garden on March 2, and to present subsequent addresses in Chicago, Los Angeles, and San Francisco (though without dates). It further stated that "All the public appearances of China's First Lady except that before Congress will be sponsored by local citizens committees."[88]

By February 17, then, the entire nation had been informed about Soong's upcoming speech tour and her plans to address Congress the next day. It was hard for readers to ignore the pictures in major newspapers with bold headlines stating "President Welcomes Madame Chiang to Washington" or "President Roosevelt Greets Madame Chiang at

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[86] Corothy Dunbar Bromley, "Mme. Chiang's Talent for World Leadership Shown in Review of Her 1942 Speeches," *New York Herald Tribune*, February 7, 1943.

[87] Soong Mayling, telegram to Chiang Kai-shek, *Archives of the Republic of China*, 789-90. In this cable, Soong only mentioned the cities she was going to visit without specifying the organizers of her tour. Later news report indicated that a non-official committee had been established in each city to arrange her speaking events and other activities.

[88] "Mme. Chiang Plans Nation-Wide Tour," *New York Times*, February 13, 1943.

Union Station in Washington."[89] Some readers must have paid attention to the descriptions of Soong's outfit:" a slim black Chinese brocade gown with its side slit skirt lined in scarlet, mink coat and sequin-spangled black head scarf."[90] Others might have observed how delicate and tired Soong looked—despite the charming smile on her face—and noticed the explanation that her fatigue stemmed from "injuries incurred five years ago in an automobile accident while touring Chinese battle fronts."[91] But only the most oblivious would have missed the announcement that "Tomorrow China's First Lady will speak before the Senate and the House. The Latter speech will be broadcast at 12:30 p.m. (E.W.T.), 9:30 a.m. (P.W.T.)."[92] Demand for tickets to the galleries was overwhelming, and people thronged into the Senate and House chambers.[93] They knew this would be a historical moment, but very few could have foreseen the drama and scale of the event. With her charm and eloquence, plus the credibility built up through the help of American missionaries and media advocates, Soong brought to America a Chinese swirl that would help change public perceptions of China, influence U.S. war policy, hasten repeal of the Chinese Exclusion laws, and shape America's China policy for at least three decades.

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[89] W. H. Lawrence, "Madame Chiang, Guest of the President," *New York Times*, February 18, 1943; Ann Cottrell, "Madame Chiang Is Met in Capital by Roosevelts," *New York Herald Tribune*, February 18, 1943.

[90] "President Greets Madame Chiang: First Lady, Wearing Native Brocade, Meets Executive at Station," *Los Angeles Times*, February 18, 1943.

[91] Ibid.

[92] Ibid.

[93] Harry J. Thomas, *The First Lady of China: The Historical Visit of Mme. Chiang Kai-shek to the United States* (New York: International Business Machines Corporation, 1943), 5.

Chapter Three

Traditional Friendship and A Better World—Speaking to Congress

> *We in China, like you, want a better world, not for ourselves alone, but for all mankind, and we must have it.*
>
> —— Soong Mayling, speech to the United States Congress

A *Life* article of February 22, 1943, noted that Soong Mayling's appearance before the United States Congress was "a distinction reserved usually for heads-of-state and only once before for a woman, the Netherlands' Queen Wilhelmina."[1] In speaking to the Senate and the House of Representatives, Soong achieved a rhetorical status never before experienced by a Chinese, a female diplomat, or a representative of a people prohibited from legally entering the United States and becoming American citizens. Yet while her position was unprecedented, she faced cultural, political, and diplomatic constraints that decidedly limited her rhetorical options. Axis wartime propaganda and American domestic disputes about the conduct of the war required that Soong present her ideas without overtly criticizing America or negatively influencing its unity. She needed to advocate an Asia-first policy while responding to an extremely intricate network of constraints.

As Chiang Kai-shek's special envoy, Soong came to the United States to negotiate with President Roosevelt about war priorities, allocation of military materials, and postwar territorial disputes. Before Soong made her first public appearance, she had a

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[1] "The Missimo, Madame Chiang Kai-shek of China Returns to the American People," *Life*, February 22, 1943, 35.

series of meetings with Eleanor Roosevelt and pro-China activists such as Pearl Buck. She also had private conversations with President Roosevelt, his advisors, and other American officials. From the latter meetings, she learned that the primary rhetorical exigence she faced was neither a stubborn commitment to a Europe-first policy nor an unfulfilled promise of military aid, but the perception of China as a secondary ally. This perception helped produce unequal treatment of China in military cooperation and its exclusion from Allied conferences on postwar issues. Only by changing this perception and getting Americans to view China as an indispensible member of the international community and an important ally in the Far East could Soong proceed to advocate an Asia-first policy.

Hidden from the public for three months after her arrival in the United States, Soong aroused tremendous curiosity about the purpose of her trip. Since 1934, Americans had heard and read a great deal about this remarkable Chinese woman, her faith, her education in the United States, her herculean efforts in China's war, and her "profound understanding of the western democracies."[2] Stories of her courage and intelligence catered to Americans' penchant for hero worship. The mystery surrounding her first three months in the country further "whetted the American appetite."[3] Soong's biographer notes that reports of her health problems added sympathy to public curiosity and pushed the national expectation to "a fever pitch."[4] According to a *New York Times* article of

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[2] Harry J. Thomas, *The First Lady of China: The Historical Visit of Mme. Chiang Kai-shek to the United States* (New York: International Business Machines Corporation, 1943), 3.

[3] Helen Hull, *Mayling Soong Chiang* (New York: Coward-McCann, 1943), 27.

[4] Laura Tyson-Li, *Madame Chiang Kai-shek: China's Eternal First Lady* (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 2006), 199.

February 11, "The House voted today to take a recess 'sometime next week' to receive Madame Chiang Kai-shek."[5] The vote in the House, combined with the buildup of publicity all over the nation, created a powerful public thirst to see and hear China's first lady. Could her speeches satisfy the expectations produced by months of silence? Could she create a common ground to change her audience's perception of China? Could she present a compelling argument to influence war priorities?

This chapter explores Soong's February 18, 1943, speeches to Congress, the most important of her entire tour, to understand how she wove epideictic and deliberative elements to identify shared values, to shape perceptions of U.S.-China relations, and to propose an alternative war policy. I start by tracing Soong's activities and telegraph exchanges with Chiang Kai-shek prior to her congressional addresses so as to clarify the rhetorical situation she faced at the beginning of her tour. The second part of the chapter analyzes Soong's Senate speech to demonstrate how she strove to build common ground between China and the United States in such a way as to invite new perceptions of China. The third part focuses on Soong's speech to the House of Representatives and explores how she evoked dominant American myths to achieve identification with congressmen, to encourage alteration of the Allies' military strategy, and to seek inclusion of China in the postwar order. Part four explores Soong's rhetorical performance to understand how she enacted the metaphor of "a corporate body" to reconfigure the American imagination of China.

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[5] "Congress Makes Plans to Hear Madame Chiang," *New York Times*, February 11, 1943.

Diplomatic Situation

The primary goal of Soong Mayling's trip was to negotiate with the American government about war strategy and China's postwar status. On her way from the airport to Harkness Pavilion hospital after landing, she told Harry Hopkins her concern that China would be sold down the river as a compromise. According to Hopkins, Soong "expressed more forcibly than I had heard anyone express before" that the way to win wars against both Germany and Japan was "to put all our strength into defeating Japan."[6] Hopkins replied immediately that "such a strategy was unfeasible."[7]

Before discussing an Asia-first strategy with FDR on February 17, 1943, Soong had more meetings with Hopkins as well as with Eleanor Roosevelt. She wired Chiang Kai-shek, informing him of all the conversations. The cables reflected her disappointment. After meeting with Hopkins on December 24, 1942, she wrote in a cable: "Based on Hopkins' words, I am afraid Britain, America, and Russia will be obsessed with their own postwar interests and ignore China again."[8] It is not clear whether her use of "again" referred to the abandonment of Chinese troops in the 1942 Burma campaign or to the 1919 Paris Peace Conference following the end of World War I, at which Germany's concessions in China were transferred to Japan, but Soong's concerns about China being excluded from Allied deliberations increased when she learned that Roosevelt and

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[6] Robert E. Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins: An Intimate History* (New York: Harper, 1950), 660.

[7] Ibid, 661.

[8] Soong Mayling, cable to Chiang Kai-shek, December 24, 1942, *Zhonghua Min Guo Zhong Yao Shi Liao Chu Bian: Dui Ri Kang Zhan Shi Qi: Xu Bian* [Archives of the Republic of China: War against Japan: Sequel] (Taibei: The Chinese Nationalist Party Central Committee Party History Committee), 785. Hereafter referred to as *Archives of the Republic of China*.

Churchill had met in January in North Africa to discuss military plans for 1943. In a January cable, she said of the Casablanca Conference: "Roosevelt arrived in Africa; Stalin was also invited to talk; I don't know if we have representatives in the meeting."[9]

As a realist, Soong knew China's national power was substantially less than that of other allies. In one of her cables to Chiang, she averred that only powerful nations could have an influential voice in international meetings. She urged Chiang to develop industries in China and to avoid further conflicts with Chinese Communists in case "foreigners think China is not united and can be bullied at their will."[10] At the same time, however, Soong believed China's contributions and sacrifices were being overlooked by America and Britain. In one of her secret wires to Chiang, she noted that China had fought courageously throughout the war not just for its own well-being but for that of the whole world. "Since my arrival in the United States," she declared, "I made up my mind that, despite our poverty, we cannot bend our body and beg for help."[11] In an earlier cable, sent after a meeting with Eleanor Roosevelt, Soong had told Chiang that she was very happy to learn that Mrs. Roosevelt agreed with her that China was making sacrifices for all of humanity.[12]

Soong's words reflected China's resentment of what it saw as America's indifference to Japanese aggression in China. Before the attack on Pearl Harbor, it was not difficult to find expression of such resentment in influential Chinese newspapers and

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[9] Soong Mayling, cable to Chiang Kai-shek, January, 1943, ibid, 787.

[10] Ibid.

[11] Ibid.

[12] Soong Mayling, cable to Chiang Kai-shek, November 28, 1942, ibid, 783.

official statements. For example, a 1933 editorial in the *Ta Kung Bao*, China's leading independent newspaper, criticized American Far Eastern policy as "full of promise for the Chinese " but in fact "of no value" because Americans would "not support with force the ideals which they themselves assert are just and desirable."[13] Speaking on behalf of China in an international radio broadcast after Japan's invasion in 1937, Soong criticized "the silence of Western nations" and announced China's determination to fight until its last drop of blood even if "the whole of the Occidental world is indifferent."[14] After China joined the alliance in 1941, Soong publicly claimed that the United States was China's best friend, but she maintained bitter feelings in private. She confided to Owen Lattimore that she felt America's attitude was "racist and condescending" and that she "resented it deeply."[15]

Soong's personal resentment of American racism, according to biographers, came partially from family stories of her father being treated as "a servant rather than colleague" by white missionaries, and partially from her personal experience in the United States as a child.[16] The arrogance she sensed from American officers and diplomats made her realize that perceptions of China as unimportant and secondary were so prevalent that they were shared to some extent even by pro-China Americans such as Lauchlin Currie.

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[13] *Ta Kung Pao*, January 7, 1933, quoted in Warren I. Cohen, *America's Response to China: A History of Sino-American Relations* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), 122.

[14] Mayling Soong Chiang, Broadcast to the People of America, September 12, 1937, at Nanjing. The address was broadcast over the United States network.

[15] Li, *Madame Chiang Kai-shek*, 197.

[16] For stories of white missionaries' discrimination against Charlie Soong, see Li, *Madame Chiang Kai-shek*, 197; Hannah Pakula, *The Last Empress: Madame Chiang Kai-shek and the Birth of Modern China* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2009), 15.

Warren Cohen notes that Americans viewed the contest in Asia as "a relatively unimportant war being fought by relatively unimportant people" and remained more or less indifferent to it until Pearl Harbor.[17] Terrill Lautz states that although American perceptions of China improved during wartime, the old stereotypes did not disappear but mingled with new positive images to engender a paternalistic attitude toward China.[18] Soong needed to create a more positive view of China so as to help change U.S. policies, but war and diplomatic constraints dictated that she not adopt a confrontational stance.

It was imperative, for example, that she avoid echoing Axis war rhetoric about the United States. Jim Crow and the internment of Japanese Americans had already provided German and Japanese propagandists ammunition to attack the hypocrisy of American democracy; having a Chinese woman talk about American racial discrimination would only exacerbate the situation and provoke a backlash within the United States.[19] Soong also needed to avoid confrontational rhetoric due to the fact that U.S.-China relations in the nineteenth and early twentieth century had been filled with racism and xenophobia. Deep in American public memory were stories of attacks on American missionaries and residents in China during the Boxer Rebellion. On the other side were the murders and expulsions of Chinese Americans during the exclusion era. Confrontational rhetoric

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[17] Cohen, *America's Response to China*, 135.

[18] Terrill E. Lautz, "Hopes and Fears of 60 Years: American Images of China, 1911-1972," in *China in the American Political Imagination*, ed. Carola McGiffert (Washington: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2003), 31.

[19] For German and Japanese propaganda attacks on U.S. domestic racism, see Justin Hart, *Empire of Ideas: The Origins of Public Diplomacy and the Transformation of U.S. Foreign Policy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 91.

would undermine Soong's objectives by evoking such unhappy events and generating more hostility than affection between America and China.

Moreover, the nature of Soong's immediate audience demanded a diplomatic rhetoric of friendship and inclusion. That audience was the Seventy-eighth Congress, elected in November 1942. The election gave Republicans 208 seats in the House and 38 in the Senate and reduced the size of the Democratic majority in both chambers. In the Senate, the Democratic majority was 57 to 38, in contrast with 66 to 28 in the Seventy-seventh Congress. In the House, the large Democratic majority of 262 to 169 in 1939 dropped to a smaller margin of 222 to 208.[20] This indicated not only a growing oppositional voice in Congress against the administration, but also a deepening divide on war policies along party lines. According to Richard Darilek, the 1942 election results, especially the return of prominent isolationists to Congress, demonstrated both the Republicans' recovery from their pre-war isolationism and the public's support for a cautious approach to America's future participation in any international organization.[21] By attacking the administration's war operation and releasing vague statements to avoid making commitments to internationalist policies, some Republicans brought the debate between isolationism and internationalism back to Congress by advocating a moderate brand of isolationism.[22]

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[20] Fred W. Riggs, *Pressures on Congress: A Study of the Repeal of Chinese Exclusion* (New York: King's Crown Press, 1950), 170.

[21] Richard E. Darilek, *A Loyal Opposition in Time of War: The Republican Party and the Politics of Foreign Policy from Pearl Harbor to Yalta* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1976), 54-57.

[22] Ibid, 30, 45-46, 53. According to Darilek, Republican isolationists released public documents that seemed to support a global vision, but the vagueness of their statements reflected their strategic resistance to a fully internationalist policy.

Racism also prevailed in the Seventy-eighth Congress. During the war, Congress repeatedly dismissed protests against Jim Crow, which it viewed as a "domestic issue" irrelevant to prosecution of the war.[23] Moreover, only a few Senators and Representatives responded positively to the Office of War Information's proposal of November 1942 to repeal the Chinese Exclusion Acts.[24] Representative Allen Joseph Ellender from Louisiana, for example, argued that repeal "implied racial equality and thereby threatened existing social arrangements in the South."[25] Not all members of Congress endorsed Ellender's position, but they were nonetheless skeptical of interposing domestic racial relations into matters of foreign policy. As of 1943, OWI officials were the only U.S. policymakers forthrightly concerned about "the corrosive effect of domestic racism" on America's foreign policy and international influence.[26]

To obtain support for new U.S.-China relations and a change of war policy, Soong could not afford to alienate congressmen of any stance. Thus she acted and spoke cautiously during her first few months in the United States. When Eleanor Roosevelt conveyed to her the intention of Walter White, head of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, to make common cause in the international struggle for racial equality, Soong did not respond to his repeated overtures.[27] In the meantime, she attended to the preparation of her speeches to Congress. Ignoring her doctor's advice to

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[23] Hart, *Empire of Ideas*, 94.

[24] Ibid.

[25] Riggs, *Pressures on Congress*, 171.

[26] Hart, *Empire of Ideas*, 95.

[27] Li, *Madame Chiang Kai-shek*, 196.

rest, she insisted on doing her work to "fulfill official obligations."[28] She communicated with Chiang Kai-shek through secret wires about the content, manner, and goals of her congressional addresses. Of all the suggestions Chiang sent her in three long cables, Soong selected a few and fashioned a plan to "preserve our nation's dignity, announce the contributions of our nation to the whole world, and emphasize China's traditional friendship with America."[29] She wrote to Chiang that she would use his other guidelines in private meetings but avoid discussing them in her public speeches. Mainly detailed explanations about China's significance in the Asia-Pacific arena, Chiang's suggestions would be more useful for diplomatic negotiation than public persuasion. In a wire of February 16, Soong told her husband that in public speeches, she "would avoid details and focus on principles, creating a global vision to prove the necessity of cooperation."[30]

Soong knew that American sympathy toward China had grown since Pearl Harbor. But that sympathy was not enough in and of itself to create a solid ground for sustaining equal cooperation between the two nations. To elevate China's status, Soong had to find a way to transform Americans' perceptions of China as backward and inferior without being antagonistic or arousing racial tension. She had to heal historical wounds and assuage present hostility in Sino-American relations. She also had to build a sense of close connection between the two nations so as to justify a modification in war policy and

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[28] Eleanor Roosevelt wrote about her meetings with Soong Mayling when the latter was confined to the hospital. She recalled that Soong was highly nervous and still felt "she had work to do, that she must see important people in our government and in the armed services who could be helpful to China, and that she must fulfill official obligations." Quoted in Pakula, *Last Empress*, 416.

[29] Soong Mayling, cable to Chiang Kai-shek, February 16, 1943, *Archives of the Republic of China*, 793.

[30] Ibid.

an increase of military aid. She needed, in short, to move her audience in Congress from discrimination and isolation to connection and affection.

Her speech tour officially started on February 17. After leaving the hospital and staying at the Roosevelt home in Hyde Park, New York, for six days, she arrived in Washington and "went to the White House as the guest of President and Mrs. Roosevelt."[31] Crowds of Americans and Chinese Americans joined the first couple to welcome Soong at Union Station. The next day, thousands of admirers waited outside the Capitol for over an hour to catch a glimpse of her. Also swarming the Capitol were a thousand policemen, detectives, and Secret Service men, preventing anyone without a ticket from entering.[32] It is hard to know exactly how many people across the country tuned their radios to listen to Soong's speeches; but the air in the Capitol was "electric with anticipation" because the demand to see her was so high that, unlike other foreign dignitaries, who usually addressed a joint session of Congress, Soong addressed the Senate and the House separately.[33] The latter speech was broadcast over all the national radio networks.[34]

Speaking to the Senate

On February 18, 1943, Soong made a ten-minute speech to the Senate at 12:10 p.m. Although she characterized the speech as extemporaneous and stated that she was

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[31] "A Guest of the Nation," *New York Herald Tribune*, February 18, 1943.

[32] Li, *Madame Chiang Kai-shek*, 200.

[33] Ibid.

[34] "Japan Is Enemy No. One, Madame Chiang Kai-shek's Talk Stresses to Congress," *Nevada State Journal*, February 19, 1943.

addressing the Senate only because Vice President Harry Wallace had asked her to "say a few words," it seems unlikely that she was speaking off-the-cuff. The said-to-be extemporaneous speech emphasized U.S.-China friendship and deftly broke the ice of her speech tour through narratives and emotional appeals. Its content reflected what Soong and Chiang had discussed in their cables while she was planning her speeches. The skillfully plotted structure, rhetorical strategies, and flawless delivery also suggest that the Senate speech was thought through in advance.

Shortly after twelve noon, Eleanor Roosevelt accompanied Soong into the Senate. Many reporters were ready to capture every detail of the event for their eager readers, who learned the next day that Soong was wearing a slim black Chinese dress with an alluring high collar, a dainty sequined turban, a tiny splash of jade decoration, and a Chinese air force pin with bejeweled wings.[35] The Senators "watched in curious silence as Madame Chiang walked down the aisle of the Senate Chamber."[36] She stepped to the rostrum, listened as Vice President Wallace introduced her, and shot a "dazzling smile" at the "completely boggle-eyed" Senators before starting her ten-minute address.[37]

She began with gratitude and greetings, telling her audience that she was "overwhelmed by the warmth and spontaneity of the welcome of the American people," of whom senators were the representatives. She said she did not know what to say except "How do you do" and "to bring the greetings of my people to the people of America."

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[35] Almost all newspaper reports described Soong Mayling's appearance in detail. My description is a synthesis of *Time*, *Life*, the *New York Times*, and the *Chicago Daily Tribune*.

[36] "Madame," *Time*, March 1943, 25.

[37] Li, *Madame Chiang Kai-shek,* 200.

Then she apologized for lacking preparation because she was "not a very good extemporaneous speaker" and did not expect to speak to the Senate until the vice president asked her to say a few words "just before coming here."[38] She professed to be "no speaker at all," but she said she was not "so very much discouraged" because she had seen six drafts of FDR's speeches while staying at Hyde Park and learned from the president that sometimes he, "such a well-known and acknowledged fine speaker," wrote up to twelve drafts of a speech. "So," said Soong, "my remarks here today, being extemporaneous, I am sure you will make allowances for me."

Soong's characterization of her speech as extemporaneous, and of herself, as not a practiced extemporaneous speaker, were in keeping with the time-honored approach in which an orator downplays her or his abilities so as to reduce audience expectations. The method can be traced back to classical antiquity and has been used in such famous speeches as Frederick Douglass' "What, to the Slave, Is the Fourth of July?"[39] Adhering to such a convention allowed Soong to break the ice in a culturally appropriate manner without increasing her audience's already high expectations. Equally important, her

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[38] I use the *Congressional Record* text of this speech for my analysis. Mme. Chiang Kai-shek, *Congressional Record,* 78th Cong., 1st sess., (1943), 1080-1081, 1108-1109.

[39] Frederick Douglass, "What, to the Slave, Is the Fourth of July?" in *Lift Every Voice: African American Oratory, 1786-1900*, eds. Philip S. Foner and Robert James Branham (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1998), 246-68. In his introduction, Douglass, a highly accomplished speaker two decades into an oratorical career of the highest order, professed to be overwhelmed by the occasion and told his audience not to be surprised if "in what I have to say I evince no elaborate preparation, nor grace my speech with any high-sounding exordium. With little experience and with less learning, I have been able to throw my thoughts hastily and imperfectly together; and trusting to your patient and generous indulgence, I will proceed to lay them before you."

opening led smoothly to a highly emotional message that aimed at creating cultural common ground and redefining history.

After her opening, Soong articulated a crucial premise that reframed previous understandings of Sino-American history: "The traditional friendship between your country and mine has a history of 160 years." This statement traced the start of communication between China and the United States to the voyage of the *Empress of China*, the first American ship to sail from the newly independent United States to China's Canton province in 1784. By presenting the history between the two nations as a long-lasting friendship, rather than one of brutal exclusion and diplomatic conflict, Soong sought to establish a tone conducive to a new imagination of China. She not only provided this audacious statement as the premise for everything she was going to say, but she also presented it as an historical fact to suggest that it was natural for China and America to cooperate. Speaking slowly but affectionately, she then claimed that "there are a great many similarities between your people and mine, and that these similarities are the basis of our friendship." This claim revealed a crucial goal of Soong's speech—to persuade Americans to see China as a friendly ally sharing common inspirations and goals.

Soong presented two stories to illustrate what she called the "traditional friendship" and "many similarities" between the Chinese and American people. The first was about an American pilot who bailed out on Chinese soil during his return to base after bombing Tokyo in the Doolittle Raid of April 18, 1942. She described how the American soldier spoke the only Chinese word he knew, a word that meant "America," and how, upon hearing that word, the Chinese people "laughed and almost hugged him, and greeted him

like a long lost brother." According to Soong, the soldier later told her that "he thought that he had come home when he saw our people," even though that was the first time he had set foot in China.

The second story was Soong's personal narrative of a little Chinese girl growing up in America, speaking "not only the language of your hearts, but also your tongue." She said: "I know your people. I have lived with them. . . . So coming here today I feel that I am also coming home." The personal quality of this story and "the rich, warm tones of her voice" gave it a powerful emotional appeal that encouraged Senators to imagine a bond between China and the United States[40] The bonds of affection cited by Soong made it easy for her audience to avoid wondering whether her experience represented that of most Chinese who had come to the United States during the previous century.[41]

Both of Soong's homecoming stories produced rounds of warm applause. They appealed to the sympathy of her audience; the familial metaphor of "home" escalated their emotion from sympathetic friendliness to a tighter connection among family members. But emotional appeal was only a partial goal of these stories. They also served to emphasize that the existence of language barriers could not block the natural bonds between the United States and China. "If the Chinese people could speak to you in your own tongue, or if you could understand our tongue," Soong asserted, "they would tell you that basically and fundamentally we are fighting for the same cause; that we have identity of ideas; that the 'four freedoms,' which your President proclaimed to the world, resound

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[40] Thomas, *First Lady of China*, 9.

[41] According to records of the U.S. Immigration Commission, Chinese first arrived in the United States in 1820. Jack Chen, *The Chinese of America* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1980), 3.

throughout our vast land as the gong of freedom, the gong of freedom of the United Nations, and the death knell of the aggressors."[42] By speaking in this manner on behalf of 400 million Chinese, Soong presented herself as a national leader and invited her audience to see a profound identity of values and wartime objectives between China and the United States.

Her emphasis on "the same cause" and "identity of ideas" reflected the function of the two stories in her speech. Calling narrative a "paradigm," Walter Fisher conceptualizes stories as representations "designed to formalize the structure of a component of experience and to direct understanding and inquiry into the nature and functions of that experience."[43] William Lewis argues that the meaning of anecdotes "is established in reference to some larger frame of understanding that is either specified within a discourse or assumed in an audience."[44] The audience for Soong's speech was in the midst of a world war. The stories of an American soldier finding support from Chinese farmers he had never met before and of a Chinese woman growing up in

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[42] The United Nations as an international organization was founded on June 25, 1945. Leaders of the Alliance, however, started to use the name United Nations in January 1942, when the United States, Great Britain, the Soviet Union, China and twenty-two other nations at war against the Axis signed a Declaration of the United Nations in Washington. Signatories accepted the principles of the Atlantic Charter, which was issued in August 1941. See Robert A. Divine, *Second Chance: The Triumph of Internationalism in America During World War II* (New York: Atheneum, 1967), 48; Andrew Johnstone, *Dilemmas of Internationalism: The American Association for the United Nations and US Foreign Policy, 1941-1948* (Farnham: Ashgate Publish, 2009), 14.

[43] Walter R. Fisher, "Narration as a Human Communication Paradigm: The Case of Public Moral Argument," *Communication Monographs* 51, no. 1 (1984): 1-22.

[44] William F. Lewis, "Telling America's Story: Narrative from and the Reagan Presidency," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 73, no. 3 (1987): 280-302.

America and returning to ask for cooperation justified fraternal connection between the two nations.

Soong's stories were particularly attractive to two groups. First, they spoke to Americans who could accept a romantic form of internationalism. Her depictions of individuals crossing geographical distances to fight for world peace and to improve mutual understanding transcended national boundaries. According to Stephen R. MacKinnon, Soong advocated a modern cosmopolitan vision of China that resonated with a romantic form of internationalism that emphasized "striving for world peace, social harmony, and shared prosperity throughout the world."[45] This vision justified pro-China Americans' support of China's struggle for modernization and independence and invited listeners to view America's activity in Asia as an effort to achieve world peace and global prosperity. By representing China through this vision, Soong encouraged the perception of Chinese as members of a global community guided by common ideals and avoided exacerbating disputes between internationalists and isolationists on concrete policies and their possible outcomes.

At the same time, Soong's words spoke to a national audience united by President Roosevelt's rhetoric. Encapsulating the ideals of FDR's Four Freedoms evoked a national consensus that had emerged since his articulation of the doctrine two years earlier. Mary Stuckey contends that Roosevelt successfully used shared values to unite the nation. His invocation of "four freedoms" maintained the transcendental power of shared values, gave the term sufficient cultural inclusiveness, and generated a strongly committed

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[45] Stephen R. MacKinnon, "Americans in China and the Chiangs," in *Madame Chiang Kai-shek and her China*, ed. Samuel C. Chu (Norwalk: East Bridge, 2005), 110.

national audience.[46] All these characteristics allowed Soong to evoke FDR's Four Freedoms address and to expand the community constituted by it to include Chinese people as sharers of the same values. To Americans, the phrase "four freedoms" suggested a progressive narrative about the world—an upward trajectory in which "human rights and individual freedom were increasingly realized."[47] While Roosevelt wielded this narrative to achieve national unity, Soong utilized it to justify U.S.-China cooperation. Claiming shared values through a teleological narrative helped alter American perceptions of China from a distant ally of minor importance into a spiritual and military ally in a common quest for global freedom.

"I assure you," Soong declared, "that our people are willing and eager to cooperate with you in the realization of these ideals, because we want to see to it that they do not echo as empty phrases, but become realities for ourselves, for our children, for our children's children, and for all mankind." Read closely, Soong's use of "our" was ambiguous. The first "our" and "ourselves" clearly referred to China. As Soong moved from present to the future, however, the last two "ours" could be read as more inclusive, so as to suggest a lasting connection between America and China into the future. By moving from spatial anecdotes of individuals crossing physical distance into a temporal narrative of two peoples fighting together to bring the world into a new order, Soong established a common ground for her audience to view China as an inseparable member of an international community fighting for the liberation of humanity.

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[46] Mary E. Stuckey, *The Good Neighbor: Franklin D. Roosevelt and the Rhetoric of American Power* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2013), 53-54.

[47] Ibid, 39-40.

At the end of her speech, Soong turned to yet another story, this time to illustrate her point that it was imperative to turn words into actions. The story was about an ancient Chinese monk murmuring Buddhist prayers without making real effort to achieve self-improvement. Soong described how the Father Prior of the temple warned the young monk that "it is impossible for you to acquire grace by doing nothing except murmur 'Amita-Buddha' all day long, day in and day out." Observers commented that Soong "allowed a hint of reproach to show itself" by telling this parable at the end of her Senate speech because it brought out the point that words without deeds were meaningless.[48] In closing, Soong called on "gentlemen of the Senate" and "ladies and gentlemen in the galleries" to "take to heart" the lesson of the Chinese monk and not only proclaim that "we have ideals" but "act to implement" the common ideals shared by China and America. When she ended, the entire chamber rose to its feet in applause.

Soong's poignant remarks and carefully chosen stories created such a sensation that newspaper editors tumbled over themselves in expressing their admiration. A February 19 *New York Herald Tribune* editorial offered the kind of praise that could be found in "every important newspaper in the country" during the next few days: "The gallantry of her long journey in war time, her wisdom, her dignity, her loveliness have won admiration throughout America. The hundred and sixty years of friendship between our two great peoples mean much to Americans. They represent not simply a diplomatic calm;

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[48] Herbert Feis, *The China Tangle: The American Effort in China from Pearl Harbor to the Marshall Mission* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1953), 58.

they speak of generations of mutual understanding, of a spiritual kinship that has transcended every obstacle of cultural diversity and language."[49]

Senators were equally effusive in celebrating Soong's address. Although "the U.S. Senate is not in the habit of rising to its feet to applaud," *Time* magazine noted, "for Madame Chiang it rose and thundered."[50] Majority Leader Alben W. Barkeley said it was one of the finest talks ever made by a guest of the nation, and he referred to Soong as "one of the most sincere, charming and beautiful women I have ever seen."[51] Senator C. Wayland Brooks of Illinois praised Soong's House speech, saying she "thrilled this body as I have never seen it thrilled."[52] Another Illinois Senator, Scott W. Lucas, stated that he was "in favor of giving everything we can to get aid to China."[53] Wisconsin's Robert M. LaFollette told reporters that he believed Madame Chiang's statements ought to "spur the efforts of the people of this country to give to the Chinese people tangible evidences of our sincere sympathy in the form of planes, tanks, guns and ammunition."[54] Even former

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[49] Thomas, *First Lady of China*, 22; "160 Years of Friendship," *New York Herald Tribune*, February 19, 1943.

[50] "Madame," *Time*, March 1943, 25.

[51] "Madame Chiang in Eloquent Appeal for Action Against Japanese Menace," *Long Beach Independent*, February 19, 1943.

[52] Quoted in Roland Young, *Congressional Politics in the Second World War* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1972), 166.

[53] "Chinese First Lady Conquers Capital with Eloquent Plea," *Racine Journal Times,* February 19, 1943.

[54] "Mme. Kai-shek Makes Dramatic Appeal for Aid," *Centralia Evening Sentinel,* February 19, 1943.

isolationist Arthur Vandenberg confessed that he was moved to tears and called Soong's address "the best speech I have heard in 17 years in Congress."[55]

Before the Senators could recover from Soong's mesmerizing performance, she moved to the House of Representatives for her second speech, one she had been preparing for weeks. It was the most important single address of her tour and, through radio, reached a national audience. As *Time* stated, Soong Mayling had made many speeches in her life, but "never one quite so important" as this one.[56]

Speaking to the House

Fifteen minutes after Soong's Senate speech, Speaker Sam Rayburn appointed a committee to escort her into the House of Representatives.[57] As she proceeded to the speaker's rostrum, the lower chamber broke into prolonged applause. Not unlike in the Senate, every seat in the gallery was filled with distinguished guests and there was "the same atmosphere of tense expectancy."[58] Yet the tone of Soong's House speech formed a sharp contrast with her address to the Senate. A reporter from the *Chicago Daily Tribune* noted how Soong spoke in the Senate "with warm smiles and praise" while her House address was filled with "majestic pride" and "cold, whispered fury."[59] That fury

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[55] Ibid.

[56] "Madame," *Time*, March 1943, 25.

[57] Members of this committee included Charles A. Eaton (New Jersey), Sol Bloom (New York), Joseph William Martin, Jr. (Massachusetts), and John W. McCormack (Massachusetts).

[58] Thomas, *First Lady of China*, 13.

[59] William Moore, "Japan First Foe of Allies! Mme. Chiang Warns U.S.," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, February 19, 1943.

was not directed at her audience but at the Japanese, whom she regarded as the primary enemy of the Allied nations. Although Soong, as a Chinese emissary, was not in a position to debate war policy in the halls of Congress, she was going to question the widespread belief that the defeat of Hitler's Germany was the most important war priority. She would also call upon Congress and the American people to help establish a new world order after crushing Japan, and, more important, to include China as an equal ally in that post-war order. These objectives were extremely challenging. Perception of China as a secondary ally, plus Soong's status as the wife of China's commander in chief, dictated that she refrain from speaking as an Allied leader. Off-stage diplomatic negotiations and FDR's uncompromising stance on the Europe-first policy also hung over her like a silent shroud.

Despite all these constraints, Soong managed to convey a deliberative speech to Congress, one that skillfully integrated epideictic elements to create a masterpiece of diplomatic rhetoric. With a profound understanding of American culture and a prudent balance between gracious reproach and earnest request, she navigated a difficult and narrow course as she integrated promotion of an Asia-first war policy with advocacy of internationalism so as to publicize FDR's vision of an internationalist post-war order and to secure China's position in it.

Soong began with what *Time* called "a little deft flattery."[60] She called the House "an august body" and said it was a privilege to address Congress because by speaking to them she was "literally speaking to the American people." Reminding her listeners that they had "so much to do in shaping the destiny of the world," she stated that Congress'

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[60] "Madame," *Time*, March 1943, 26.

most important tasks were to "win the war and to create and uphold a lasting peace which will justify the sacrifices and sufferings of the victims of aggression." Soong's introduction distinguished her House speech from her Senate address by presenting the voice of a determined fighter and a farsighted leader. The *New York Herald Tribune* stated that Soong spoke to the House in a "forceful but dignified way."[61] Reflecting her feelings as an audience member, Eleanor Roosevelt said that Soong's words made people view her not "as a woman, " but "as an individual valiantly fighting in the forefront of the world's battle."[62]

Vogue described Soong's House speech as having "a disciplined cleanness. . . . Her mind sees the target, figures the attack and dives."[63] This compliment was only half true, however, because Soong combined straightforward statement with diplomatic cautiousness. When she referred to defeating "the aggressors," she meant Japan, and her first objective was to urge Americans to fight Japan as the primary enemy. Though this was the first policy she planned to advocate, she did not pursue it immediately. Instead, she said that "before enlarging on this subject," she would try to convey the impressions she had gained during her "long and vividly interesting trip to your country" from China, which had "bled and borne unflinchingly the burden of war for more than five-and-a half years."

This was an important move. First, it emphasized China's contributions to the war effort and reminded Americans that China's sacrifices during the preceding five years

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[61] "Pleas for Visits by Mrs. Chiang Deluge Capital," *New York Herald Tribune*, February 21, 1943.

[62] Quoted in Pakula, *Last Empress*, 419.

[63] Allen Talmay, "Mayling Soong Chiang," *Vogue*, April 15, 1943, 35.

had fulfilled the allied objective of tying down huge numbers of Japanese troops that could otherwise have been sent to other battlefields. Second, it sought to dispel any notion that Soong advocated an alternative war priority only for the sake of China. Her emphasis on "our united effort" implicitly urged members of the House, especially the isolationists, to adopt a global vision while debating war policy. By framing China's contribution as part of "our united effort," she implied a criticism of Western nations' indifference to Japan's aggression, yet avoided a complaining tone that might arouse opposition to Lend-Lease. As the *New York Herald Tribune* commented the next day, "It will be noted that with characteristic dignity Mrs. Chiang complained of nothing and asked for nothing—except a better world and a safer future for all of us."[64]

Soong's emphasis on the "united effort" of the Sino-American alliance demonstrated both her deftness in walking a diplomatic tightrope and her rhetorical skills in general. She knew that to persuade her audience to accept the policies she advocated, she had to frame her deliberative goals within an epideictic structure that emphasized traditional American values and achievements. Stressing "our united effort to free mankind from brutality and violence," she used her "impressions" section to establish an identity between American political ideals and the goals of U.S.-China military cooperation. She would later use this identity as a premise in support of her call for an Asia-first war priority and for China's inclusion with Great Britain, the Soviet Union, and the United States as leaders in the postwar world.

Soong began the "impressions" section by praising the American people and American ideals. First, she explained why Americans should "be proud of their fighting

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[64] "160 Years of Friendship," *New York Herald Tribune*, February 19, 1943.

men in so many parts of the world." But instead of describing a victorious scene of American soldiers subduing enemies on the battlefield, she portrayed a picture of soldiers far from "the excitement of battle," "stationed in isolated spots," and stoically enduring "homesickness, the glaring dryness, and scorching heat of the tropics" in order to "perform routine duties" in the war. Soong called these soldiers "your boys" and praised them as "the unsung heroes of this war."

Second, she said she was struck by the manner in which crews at American air bases were composed of immigrants of different national origins. Despite their strong accents, she said, they were "all Americans, all devoted to the same ideals, all working for the same cause and united by the same high purpose" and "no suspicion or rivalry existed between them." Such "devotion to common principles," she declared, "eliminates differences in race." According to Soong, what she saw at the air bases strengthened her belief that America was "not only the cauldron of Democracy, but the incubator of democratic principles." In this way, she touched implicitly upon the issue of domestic racial discrimination yet carefully avoided any in-depth discussion. Racial discrimination, she implied, could be solved by embracing a common goal of democratic ideals, a position that resonated with the melting-pot metaphor that masked racial tensions in the United States. In essence, Soong articulated a long-term goal that all Americans could embrace: devoting the nation to democratic principles and aiming at elimination of racial differences in principle, if not in fact.

The choice and wording of these impressions were the result of careful calculation. Through vivid descriptions of young soldiers faithfully performing their routine duties in "dreary drabness," Soong praised their patriotism and contributions without painting a

picture of American men dying in foreign lands. This was important for her project because many Americans who had supported isolationism claimed "they would not allow their sons and daughters to fight and die abroad."[65] Soong's depiction of American soldiers also served as what Representative Clare Boothe Luce called "a brilliant parable." Luce told a *New York Herald Tribune* reporter that by speaking of American soldiers' long waits on isolated islands, "Mrs. Chiang was telling us of China's long wait and fight alone."[66] In addition, by telling congressmen how young American soldiers were waiting "day after colorless day" in remote corners of the globe, Soong sent a message that the Seventy-eighth Congress should fulfill its "sacred duty" and help these heroic young men return home. By describing how the American people came from different origins to form a multiracial community working for the same goals, Soong also encouraged Congress to act according to democratic principles because "all Americans are devoted to the same ideals."

After declaring that "identity of ideals is the strongest possible solvent of racial dissimilarities," Soong drew upon America's mythical history to praise how the congressmen's forebears had overcome "unbelievable hardships to open up a new continent," and she explained why current members of Congress should strengthen and confirm "a true pattern of the nation conceived by your forebears." As presented by Soong, taming the frontier and advancing the world toward freedom defined shared goals for all Americans. Moving from this mythic past to the tasks of the present, she told her

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[65] Walter Lafeber, "FDR's Worldviews, 1941-1945," in *FDR's World: War, Peace, and Legacies,* eds. David B. Woolner, Warren F. Kimball, and David Reynolds (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 215.

[66] Ann Cottrell, "Mrs. Luce Has Praise for Talk by Mrs. Chiang," *New York Herald Tribune*, February 19, 1943.

audience: "You, as representatives of the American people, have today before you the immeasurably greater opportunity" to carry on "the pioneer work of your ancestors, beyond the frontiers of physical and geographical limitation," and to help "bring about the liberation of man's spirit in every part of the world."

By praising American ancestors for their vision, achievements, and heroism, Soong created a glorious past as the foundation for a call to action that could continue this glory into the future. *Life* magazine commented after her speech: "One can hope that the founding fathers of the Republic were present last week in some ghostly fashion, when Madame Chiang Kai-shek stepped onto the rostrum of the House of Representatives and began her extraordinary speech. The Fathers, who were always very conscious of America's role in the making of human liberty, would have been gratified to hear this citizen of Asia describe that role so fearlessly. Thomas Jefferson could hardly have excelled the clarity of that expression."[67]

The "impressions" section of Soong's speech was also crucial because it helped her achieve identification with her audience. More than a dozen Alliance leaders addressed Congress during the war, including President Manuel Prado of Peru, President Manuel L. Quezon of the Philippines, King George II of Greece, King Peter II of Yugoslavia, Queen Wilhelmina of the Netherlands, and President Carlos Alberto Arroyo del Rio of Equator.[68] The two most eloquent speakers, however, were Winston Churchill and Soong Mayling, whose triumphs were due, in no small measure, to their skillful audience

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[67] "Speech to Congress, Madame Chiang Kai-shek Calls Upon the U.S. to Join China—in War and in Peace," *Life*, March 1, 1943, 26.

[68] For the full list of foreign leaders who spoke to Congress, see Young, *Congressional Politics in the Second World War*, 166-67.

identification. On December 26, 1941, in his first address to Congress, Churchill "spoke as a parliamentarian with whom congressmen could identify themselves."[69] Before explaining his vision of Allied war policy, he famously related to his audience by saying he might not have needed an invitation to come to America if his father had been American and his mother British, instead of the other way around.[70] Churchill's speech was so well received that Chiang Kai-shek cabled Soong before she set off to Washington and recommended that she study the British leader's remarks.[71] Soong wisely did not try to mimic Churchill's "bubbling humor," but she could not have missed his artful creation of identification with American legislators before discussing concrete policies with them.[72]

After the "impressions" section of her speech, Soong moved to the next section, in which she explained why the Allies should prioritize vanquishing Japan over immediately defeating Germany. Her position on this issue was in blunt opposition to the decisions made by Allied leaders only a month earlier at the Casablanca Conference.[73]

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[69] Ibid, 166. In the beginning of his speech, Churchill said he did not feel "quite like a fish out of water in a legislative assembly where English is spoken." He also told American congressmen that he was "a child of the House of Commons," for he was brought up in his father's house to believe in democracy.

[70] Winston Churchill, Address to Joint Session of U.S. Congress, December 26, 1941. https://www.nationalchurchillmuseum.org/churchill-address-to-congress.html

[71] Chiang Kai-shek, cable to Soong Mayling, February 13, 1943, *Archives of the Republic of China*, 792.

[72] Frank L. Kluckhohn, "Congress Thrilled: Prime Minister Warns of Dark Days but Holds Victory Is Certain," *New York Times*, December 27, 1941.

[73] China was excluded from the Casablanca Conference. After the conference, General Henry H. Arnold was sent to Chongqing to explain to Chiang Kai-shek the decisions made at Casablanca. Arnold told Chiang that the United States was willing to increase aid and to dispatch more airplanes to China, but he was reluctant to give specific

Fully aware of the potential reaction to her Asia-first proposal, Soong avoided showing her speech scripts to the president and Mrs. Roosevelt despite "their wish to go over them before delivery."[74] No matter how irritated she may have been by China's marginalized position in the Alliance, Soong was clear about the constraints of a diplomatic situation. Even without her husband's suggestions about the tone of her speech, Soong knew she could not explicitly criticize U.S. war policy.[75] And yet she had to make her position clear to ensure that it would not get obscured in a fog of diplomatic niceties.

She did so by starting her Asia-first section with two Chinese maxims. She first quoted Sun-tse, the famous military strategist, who said: "In order to win, know thyself and thy enemy." Then she presented another Chinese aphorism: "It takes little effort to watch the other fellow carry the load." These two statements subtly criticized Allied policy for misreading the threat posed by Japan and for not adequately supporting China in its long battle against Japanese aggression. According to *Time*, there was a brief embarrassed silence when Soong said, "it takes little effort to watch the other fellow

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numbers. China's exclusion from the conference, the vagueness of Arnold's promises, and Stilwell's unconcealed disrespect toward Chiang irritated him so much that he left the meeting and spilled his resentment in both his diary and his cables to Soong Mayling. See Hsi-sheng Chi, *Jian Ba Nu Zhang de Meng You: Taiping Yang Zhan Zheng Qi Jian de Zhong Mei Jun Shi He Zuo Guan Xi, 1941-1945* [Aggressive Alliances: China-U.S. Military Cooperation during the Pacific War, 1941-1945] (Taibei: Lian Jing Press, 2011), 286-87; Charles F. Romanus and Riley Sunderland, *Stilwell's Mission to China* (Washington: Office of the Chief of Military History, Dept. of the Army, 1953), 271-75.

[74] V. K. Wellington Koo, *Gu Weijun Hui Yi Lu* [Wellington Koo's Memoirs] (Beijing: Zhonghua Shu Ju, 1983), 263; Karen J. Leong, *The China Mystique: Pearl S. Buck, Anna May Wong, Mayling Soong, and the Transformation of American Orientalism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 136.

[75] In his February 13 cable to Soong, Chiang reminded her that while speaking to Congress, she could not let her audience feel that she was reproaching or begging them, *Archives of the Republic of China*, 792.

carry the load."[76] The point may have come across more strongly than she expected, but she immediately offered a face-saver by emphasizing that these old teachings were "shared by every nation."

In advocating an Asia-first policy, Soong described three groups who had repeatedly made incorrect judgments of Japan: (1) "military experts of every nation" who did not believe China had "a ghost of chance" to resist Japan in 1937 and later declared that "they had over-estimated Japan's military might" when it "failed to bring China cringing to her knees"; (2) people who doubted whether Japan could be defeated after "the perfidious attack on Pearl Harbor, Malaya and lands in and around the China Sea"; and (3) those who shared the perception that the Japanese were "Nietzchean supermen, superior in intellect and physical prowess." Soong did not relate these three groups to any specific Allied commanders or American officials, but her descriptions made clear her belief that the Allies had repeatedly misjudged Japan's military power and capabilities

She then turned quickly from the past to the present, stating that "the prevailing opinion that Hitler is our first concern" was "not borne out by actual facts, nor is it to the interests of the United Nations as a whole." She reminded her audience that Japan was "a waiting sword of Damocles, ready to descend at a moment's notice." Soong may have hoped this metaphor could invoke memories of the surprise attack at Pearl Harbor that had killed and wounded thousands of Americans and destroyed the bulk of the U.S. battle fleet.[77] But knowing that a single metaphor would not be enough to drive home her point,

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[76] "Madame," *Time*, March 1943, 26.

[77] The Pearl Harbor attack killed 2,403 Americans and wounded an additional 1178 men. It destroyed seven battleships and most of the Navy and Army aircraft on the island of Oahu. See Robert Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy, 1932-1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), 311.

she amplified the current Japanese threat with a series of parallel statements that subtly echoed the language and cadence of FDR's War Message, delivered to Congress the day after the attack on Pearl Harbor:

> Let us not forget that Japan in her occupied areas today has greater resources at her command than Germany.
> Let us not forget that the longer Japan is left in undisputed possession of these resources, the stronger she must become. Each passing day takes more toll in lives of both Americans and Chinese.
> Let us not forget that the Japanese are an intransigent people.
> Let us not forget that during the first 5½ years of total aggression China has borne Japan's sadistic fury unaided and alone.

The parallel structure drove home Soong's message, while the repetition of "let us not forget" warned her audience that tolerating Japanese aggression was a dangerous game. According to *Time*, this passage elicited "the high decibel mark of applause" in the House, and many newspapers quoted it in their reports of Soong's speech.[78] Several months later, Soong's words continued to have life, as John McCormack, Majority Leader in the House, declared during the debate over repeal of the Chinese exclusion laws: "Let us not forget our 'loss of face' in the Far East. Let us remember that Mme. Chaing Kaishek has said: 'We in China, like you, want a better world.' Let us not underestimate the Nipponese in their propagandizing of the natives in captive countries."[79]

Of course, Soong did not want to leave the impression that Japan was invincible. Immediately after the "let us not forget" series, she praised the U.S. Navy's victories at Midway and the Coral Sea, calling them "steps in the right direction." Not unlike Churchill and FDR, she combined warnings of a formidable enemy with optimism in

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[78] "Madame," *Time*, March 1943, 25.

[79] John William McCormack, *Congressional Record*, 78th Cong., 1st sess., (1943), 8580.

ultimate victory. While "the peril of the Japanese Juggernaut remains," she declared, "the defeat of the forces of evil, though long and arduous, will finally come to pass." Yet to make sure that listeners did not lose sight of the enemy and its danger, she ended the Asia-first section of her speech with a stern admonition that "Japanese military might must be decimated as a fighting force before its threat to civilization is removed."

In the next section, Soong turned from the responsibility of Congress to win the war to its obligation to help construct a postwar world "in which all peoples may henceforth live in harmony and peace." Here, she supplemented her request for a shift of war priorities with advocacy of internationalism—the "publicity" that the White House expected her to achieve. She urged Congress to "devote itself to the creation of the postwar world" and "to dedicate itself to the preparation for the brighter future," a future that would feature increasing "international interdependence" and would be "universal in scope and humanitarian in action."

Soong's depiction of a better world in her internationalism section achieved three goals. First, by leaving the impression that defeating Japan and building a better world were inseparable objectives, she turned her critique of current war policy into advocacy of internationalism. In this way, she could satisfy the expectations of the Roosevelt administration and reduce some of its unhappiness with her call for an Asia-first war policy. Second, her advocacy of internationalism avoided any detailed discussion of postwar organizations. This was crucial because there had been growing tension in the public debate over postwar plans throughout 1942.[80] Facing the increasing need to educate the public about the need to abandon isolationism, the administration only sought

[80] Townsend Hoopes and Douglas Brinkley, *FDR and the Creation of the U.N*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 55-57.

to rally the nation under the banner of internationalist ideals rather than advancing specific proposals that might fuel disputes about how best to put these ideals into practice. Soong's position in her speech fit perfectly with the administration's strategy. Third, her emphasis on international interdependence provided a principle upon which she could argue for China's status in the postwar world. "We of this generation who are privileged to help make a better world for ourselves and for posterity should remember" she said, "that while we must not be visionary, we must have vision so that peace should not be punitive in spirit and should not be provincial or nationalistic or even continental in concept, but universal in scope and humanitarian in action."

After constituting an inclusive "we" through elaborating the teleology of world progress and calling for sacrifice, Soong made clear that this "we" should include heroic Americans and brave Chinese alike because China had proved itself willing to make the greatest sacrifice "to lay a true and lasting foundation for a sane and progressive world society." To enhance Sino-American cooperation, she echoed her Senate speech and stated that "the traditional friendship between China and America" had never been "marred by misunderstandings" and was "unsurpassed in the annals of the world." To justify China's inclusion in the postwar order, she emphasized that China had not "computed the cost of her manpower in her fight against aggression" and had been "soberly conscious of her responsibilities."

As Soong had claimed earlier in the speech, she would not "dwell upon" China's contributions to the war. She knew casualty statistics would not touch the hearts of congressmen, especially since the Soviet Union and the United States, as well as China, had suffered huge losses on the battlefield. Rather, to arouse sympathy and to build

connection, she offered the enthusiastic pledge that "We in China, like you, want a better world, not for ourselves alone, but for all mankind, and we must have it." To encourage united action, she told her audience that "we should throw all we cherish into our effort to fulfill these ideals even at the risk of failure" and that China knew, from its five-and-a-half years of war with Japan, that "it is the better part of wisdom not to accept failure ignominiously, but to risk it gloriously." Surely, she said, "at the writing of peace, America and our other gallant Allies will not be obtunded by the mirage of contingent reasons of expediency." After that, with "slow, deliberate tones, not unlike the aristocratic cadences of Franklin Roosevelt and Winston Churchill,"[81] she ended with another maxim: "Man's mettle is tested both in adversity and in success. Twice is this true of the soul of a nation."

According to Soong's biographer Laura Tyson-Li, the House burst into frequent applause during her address.[82] Sentence after sentence, she conquered her audience with a speech that, according to Under Secretary of State Sumner Welles, was "almost impossible to use words to describe."[83] Speaker Sam Rayburn called it "a wonderful experiment," and Majority Leader McCormack said it rivaled all past speeches in the House chamber.[84] Republican Representative Edith Nourse Rogers said of Soong: "I thought her appreciation of our men who fought with China was very touching. Her

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[81] Pakula, *Last Empress,* 419.

[82] Li, *Madame Chiang Kai-shek*, 202.

[83] Welles' words were "It is almost impossible to use words to describe the effectiveness of her speech." "Chinese First Lady Conquers Capital with Eloquent Plea," *Racine Journal Times*, February 19, 1943.

[84] "Madame Chiang in Eloquent Appeal for Action Against Japanese Menace," *Long Beach Independent*, February 19, 1943.

reminder that our country and hers have an unbroken history of friendship prompts us to be worthy of that friendship and to do our utmost to furnish China with the means of driving out the cruel aggressor which has ravished her land."[85] New Jersey's Charles A. Eaton said that "Mme. Chiang was sent by Almighty God to summon America to her duty. . . . In my judgment, it was the profoundest and most important speech made by any foreign representative in the 18 years I have been a member of Congress. We must save China if we want to save ourselves."[86] Like Senators who were conquered by Soong less than an hour earlier, members of the House also fell hard for the first lady of China. What fascinated both groups, however, was not just Soong's intelligence and eloquence, but also her special charm. As Wendell Willkie had predicted, Soong appealed to her audience in a way "no one else could."[87] That appeal derived not only from what she said but also from her rhetorical performance of cultural hybridity.

Rhetorical Performance of Cultural Hybridity

Toward the end of her House speech, Soong echoed the introduction of her remarks to the Senate address by emphasizing again "the one hundred and sixty years of traditional friendship between our two great peoples." To help her audience envision a new U.S.-China relationship, she used bodily metaphors to indicate a connection even closer than the one she had suggested in the familial metaphors of her Senate address. She told

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[85] Nancy MacLennan, "China's First Lady Charms Congress," *New York Times*, February 19, 1943.

[86] "Chinese First Lady Conquers Capital with Eloquent Plea," *Racine Journal Times*, February 19, 1943.

[87] Ibid.

her audience that "hands and feet" was a metaphorical expression in Chinese to signify the relationship between brothers. Then she developed this metaphor into "one corporate body" and suggested that the metaphor symbolized a correct perception of international relations because interdependence between nations was now "universally recognized." Like her familial metaphors, these bodily metaphors generated a kind of emotional appeal that aimed to shape perceptions of U.S.-China relations. Unlike her Senate speech, however, in which Soong helped her audience internalize the familial metaphors through anecdotes, the way she elaborated "one corporate body" was through rhetorical performance.

Performance scholars define performance as an act that "provides a way to constitute meaning and to affirm individual and cultural values."[88] Dwight Conquergood holds that performances "transgress boundaries, break structures, and remake social and political rules."[89] Based on this conceptualization, we can understand rhetorical performance as discursive or non-discursive intervention of conventional cultural beliefs or cultural stereotypes within a rhetorical space. This intervention should be both "traditional and transformative" because, as Bell points out, "performance always makes reference to former ways of doing, acting, seeing, and believing," and that reference simultaneously contains "the potential for changing the status quo."[90] Since rhetorical performance can shape understanding of cultural values and intercultural relations, it

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[88] Carol Simpson Stern and Bruce Henderson, *Performance: Texts and Contexts* (New York: Longman, 1993), 3.

[89] Dwight Conquergood, "Of Caravans and Carnivals: Performance Studies in Motion," *TDR: The Drama Review* 39, no. 4 (1995): 137-41.

[90] Elizabeth Bell, *Theories of Performance* (Los Angeles: Sage, 2008), 17.

creates a discourse through which an audience comprehends the speaker's argument. By attending to how rhetorical performance prepares a cultural context to facilitate reception of arguments in a speech, we can see how it works in concert with verbal elements to help achieve a rhetor's goals.

The primary goals of Soong's diplomatic trip were to urge the United States to change its war policy and its post-war stance with regard to China. These changes, were they to occur, would require a different cultural understanding of U.S.-China relations. Soong's audience would not accept China as an equal partner if their perception of China was shaped solely by the kinds of discourses that had historically portrayed China as different, backward, passive, and unimportant. No matter how skillfully Soong justified inclusion of China in the struggle for a modern and better world, without a strong enough rhetorical performance to alter her audience's imagination of China, they would be less likely either to embrace the new perception or to endorse a new policy. Her rhetorical performance integrated Western and Eastern cultures so as to alter traditional stereotypes of Chinese as unassimilable to American society and as incompatible with the modern world.

This integration functioned as a source of cultural experience through which the American audience could attempt a new understanding of U.S.-China relations. Soong's rhetorical performance facilitated such an understanding in three ways. First, the performance of a Chinese woman discussing war policy with American congressmen in perfectly structured and idiomatic English was incalculably important. Soong's erasure of language barriers provided evidence for her claim that "traditional friendship between our two great people has never been marred by misunderstanding." It also stimulated

imagination of "a better world" in which friendly nations would truly understand Americans and join them in their pursuit of world progress.

Second, Soong enacted "a corporate body" metaphor by presenting a cultural hybrid in which Western and Eastern elements were integrated coherently and harmoniously. A *New York Times* article demonstrated how Soong's audience experienced this integration: "As Mme. Chiang rose to speak she seemed Oriental, with her shiny black hair brushed back to a knot on her neck, green jade earrings, a velvet gown high on the neck, golden embroidery gleaming in front. But when she began to speak, it was in the language that is the common denominator of the cultured English-speaking world. She sounded so completely Western."[91] This cultural integration looked simultaneously familiar and exotic to Soong's audience and provided a living example of an ideal American ally whose own cultural background produced attraction rather than anxiety about cultural integration.

Third, Soong's rhetorical performance reconfigured cultural stereotypes of China without explicitly challenging dominant gender norms about women in American society. This helped her win the hearts of many Americans who were willing to imagine a transformed China through American cultural norms. An article published in the *News Palladium* two days after Soong's congressional speeches reflected this phenomenon: "Mme. Chiang Kai-Shek symbolizes the modern woman. She is completely feminine yet so wholly twentieth century, a gentlewoman who was educated in America. She has merged the East and the West in a magical alchemy of intellectual poise that by its own

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[91] "Mme. Chiang Voices China's Resolution to Continue Fight," *New York Times*, March 3, 1943.

perfection shines through the murk of world sadism like a beam of sunshine shining through a broken cloud."[92]

Helen R. Hull, novelist and professor at Columbia University, wrote a book about Soong's journey in the United States.[93] She noted how foreigners usually did not seem "entirely real to us"; even an Englishman who was nearer to Americans "racially than the Chinese" had difficulty persuading "an audience in the Middle West" to "accept him as a brother." Soong's appearance and manner, Hull stated, were "feminine in every detail, and not American." "She is Chinese. How can we fully understand her? An American woman would never baffle us."[94] Nevertheless, Hull stated, Soong convinced "those who listen" that she was "forthright and real."[95]

Hull's comments reflect how the perception of an Americanized Chinese woman combined with a clear sense of non-Americanness in Soong's rhetorical performance in such a way as to challenge racial stereotypes of Chinese in American minds. Soong's command of English and the sophistication of her speech reflected her knowledge of American history, language, and culture. Her perfectly modulated speaking voice conveyed a sense of authority and authenticity that led listeners to accept her faith in the principles she uttered. Her performance cultivated the belief that Chinese, like Americans, could understand democratic principles and fight for the freedom of all humanity. Reflecting this belief, applause in the House "reached a crescendo" when Soong, "clad in

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[92] "A Great Woman Talks to America," *The News Palladium*, February 20, 1943.

[93] Helen R. Hull was a renowned American author and educator. She published twenty novels, two collections of short stories, and two novelettes.

[94] Ibid, 28.

[95] Helen Hull, *Mayling Soong Chiang* (New York: Coward-McCann, 1943), 22-23.

a flowing black Chinese dress, raised a clenched fist to emphasize that the four freedoms proclaimed by President Roosevelt are a gong of freedom to the United Nations."[96] The House also "applauded thunderously," with "every member rising to his feet," when Soong's voice "rose to a high pitch and her red-painted finger nails dug into her fist" as she declared that Japan was a "waiting sword of Damocles, ready to descend at a moment's notice."[97] When she concluded, reported *Time* magazine, "tough guys melted" and one "grizzled congressman said, 'Goddam it, I never saw anything like it. Mme. Chiang had me on the verge of bursting into tears.'"[98]

Although Soong would adjust her rhetorical strategies in later speeches to meet new exigencies and different audiences, her rhetorical performance remained consistent throughout her trip. By performing a cosmopolitan, modern woman integrating Eastern and Western cultures while retaining a touch of exoticness, Soong projected a unique charm that won the hearts and minds of many Americans. Embracing this new perception, her audiences were "touched," "no longer treated Chinese as yellow peril," and accepted China as "a new power in the international community."[99]

When Roosevelt sent Harry Hopkins as his representative to extend greetings to Soong Mayling at Mitchel Field airport upon her arrival in the United States, he gave his most intimate adviser not a tip on diplomatic courtesy but a warning against Madame

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[96] "Madame Chiang Kai-shek Talks Before Congress," *Wisconsin Rapids Daily Tribune*, February 18, 1943

[97] "More Help, Plea of Madame Chiang," *Sheboygan Press*, February 18, 1943.

[98] "Madame," *Time*, March 1943, 25.

[99] *Madame Chiang Kai-Shek: A Legendary Life,* directed by Wen-chen Tseng, written by Yin-ting Lin and Artemis Wang (Princeton: Film for the Humanities and Sciences, 2004), video.

Chiang's legendary charm.[100] Half joking, half serious, Roosevelt told Hopkins to watch his step: "You know how she charmed Wendell Willkie and Lauch Currie. We might even provide you with a bodyguard if you'd like one."[101] The bodyguard Roosevelt used himself to resist Soong Mayling's charm was a card table. During their first meeting in the Oval Office, the president placed the table between them rather than having his guest sit next to him as usual. Later, he explained to his daughter, Anna, that he didn't want Madame Chiang "too close."[102] Following Soong's congressional speeches, neither the president, the House, nor the Senate were able to resist her entreaties. According to an article in the *New York Times* two days after Soong's presentations, "President Roosevelt gave pledges that the United States would rush 'as fast as the Lord will let us' . . . to transform China into a base for offensive operations against the Japanese."[103] In Congress, Republicans demanded an increase in supplies to China and proposed elevation of China's status in prosecution of the Lend-Lease bill.[104]

All told, Soong's congressional speeches more than met expectations. After major newspapers released plans for her post-Washington speeches, more and more Americans were eager to see her and listen to her. Increasing publicity demands put her in more frequent contact with the American press. She had to win their hearts, too, so as to

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[100] Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins*, 660.

[101] Li, *Madame Chiang Kai-shek*, 194.

[102] Pakula, *Last Empress*, 417

[103] W. H. Lawrence, "President Tells Mme. Chiang More Arms Will Be Rushed," *New York Times*, February 20, 1943.

[104] Darilek, *Loyal Opposition*, 66.

enhance her favorable image among average Americans. Meanwhile, the shift of immediate audience from Congress to ordinary citizens required a shift in rhetorical strategy. Yet Soong had to adapt to these changes without contradicting her previous statements. She had to enhance the new image of China advanced in her congressional speeches and to continue to emphasize the connections between the two nations.

As Soong stepped down from the House rostrum, new tests were waiting for her. How would the Roosevelt administration respond to her suggestions about war policy? How would African-American newspapers react to her portrayal of America as a land free of racial problems? How would the Chinese-American community view her speeches? How would other Allies look at an Asia-first policy? Soong had eighteen days to prepare for all these tests, since she would give her next major speech in New York on March 2. But before that, she had to pass a test for which she had only twenty-four hours to prepare. She would attend a joint press conference with President and Mrs. Roosevelt in the White House the next day. Sitting beside FDR, the master of press conferences, Soong had to put on another compelling performance. Having no counselor accompanying her, she prepared alone in her room in the White House. She probably had little sleep that night because she knew the meeting with 170 newspapermen and women the next day was vitally important. As stated by Helen Hull, compared to members of Congress, journalists were "harder to please and impossible to fool."[105]

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[105] Hull, *Mayling Soong Chiang,* 24.

Chapter Four

Beyond Congress—New York, Boston and Chicago

All nations, great and small, must have equal opportunity of development.
—— Soong Mayling, speech at Madison Square Garden

We women, too, have had a share in building the ever-ascending pyramid of civilization.
—— Soong Mayling, speech at Wellesley College

One must think not only in terms of the good of one's own country, but in terms of the good of other peoples.
—— Soong Mayling, speech at Chicago Stadium

After major newspapers released the itinerary of Soong's speech tour following her address to Congress, more Americans were eager to see her and listen to her. The shift of audience from policy makers to average citizens meant Soong would be more constrained by negative stereotypes of China and Chinese people descended from the exclusion era. While her congressional addresses won the support of mainstream journalists, some minority newspapers blamed her for not discussing racial discrimination. The Roosevelt administration also implicitly expressed dissatisfaction with Soong's proposal of an Asia-first policy that was at odds with FDR's Europe-first plan. Consequently, responding to different audience groups and altering the entrenched negative images of China in American minds became more crucial for Soong as she moved beyond Washington, D.C.

To adapt to this new situation, Soong shifted her primary focus from deliberation of war policy to discussion of the postwar order and a new global community. As her

national tour proceeded, she demonstrated her statesmanship and diplomatic skills on every rhetorical platform. Before leaving Washington, she participated in two press conferences in which she won rave reviews from journalists by presenting herself as a female leader who transcended conventional gender norms. In New York, Boston, and Chicago, she responded to reception ceremonies and appealed to the national audience's sympathy for China. In major speeches in these three cities, she employed a traditional Chinese rhetorical strategy to utter subtle criticism of racism and isolationism. She also deftly rebuked Winston Churchill's efforts to marginalize China in the international community and adroitly helped FDR publicize his internationalist policies.

Soong appealed as well to religious groups and liberal feminists, especially in her Madison Square Garden and Wellesley speeches. By defining the foundational values of a new modern world based on Christian values, she enhanced the image of China she had presented in her congressional speeches. By reflecting women's contributions to world civilization and detailing Chinese women's rising status, she altered the stereotype of Chinese women as debased victims and implicitly refuted cultural discourses that defined China as a fossilized pre-modern nation. While her speeches did not challenge the narrative of increasing international modernity, they deftly relocated China's position in that narrative.

After delivering a speech with a clear deliberative nature to Congress, Soong backed off a bit on the East Coast leg of her tour and took a more epideictic tone. To facilitate reception of her advocacy of an Asia-first policy, she focused more on changing the image of China in American minds and on reinforcing the pro-China public opinion in the post-Congress leg of her tour. While working in earnest on these objectives in her

New York, Boston, and Chicago speeches, she also responded to special exigencies and constraints in each city. This chapter starts with a discussion of the complex constitution of Soong's audience in the new rhetorical situation. It then analyzes Soong's rhetorical strategies targeting each audience group to demonstrate how she responded to the evolving exigences created by that situation. Finally, it discusses how Soong sought to construct a new image of China that would help to recreate public views of Sino-American relations.

Audiences and Exigences

In his pioneering essay on the rhetoric of diplomacy, Robert T. Oliver noted that the primary characteristic of any diplomatic speech is that "it must be directed simultaneously at diverse audiences and seek different reactions from each."[1] In his study of diplomatic speeches on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Martin Carcasson also emphasizes the challenges posed by multiple audiences and argues that rhetorical critics should treat these audiences as the primary exigence in diplomatic situations.[2] After her congressional addresses, Soong's primary audience shifted from the legislature to the American public. This audience was not homogeneous. Despite the American people's sympathetic attitude toward China after Soong's congressional presentations, there remained a wide range of opinions on America's domestic and foreign policies. Americans held different views about Jim Crow, Chinese exclusion laws, and America's

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[1] Robert T. Oliver, "The Speech of Diplomacy as a Field for Research," *Central States Speech Journal* 1, no. 2 (1950): 24-28.

[2] Martin Carcasson, "Unveiling the Oslo Narrative: The Rhetorical Transformation of Israeli-Palestinian Diplomacy," *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 3, no. 2 (2000): 211-45.

role in postwar international organizations. They also held diversified opinions on women's proper place in the public sphere and were influenced, to different degrees, by negative stereotypes of China. At the same time, Congress, the government, FDR, and other Allied leaders constituted important sub-audiences. How to address all these groups appropriately and strategically became a primary challenge as Soong moved from Washington, D.C., to the next leg of her tour.

She knew that the perceptions of most Americans about China would be strongly influenced by her role as the primary spokesperson of America's distant and mysterious ally. This frame of reference offered opportunities and posed challenges at the same time. With a successful construction of herself as the symbol of modern China, Soong would be able to "penetrate all defenses of ignorance and prejudice" against the Chinese and to consolidate a new understanding of China as the foundation for future policy.[3] In the meantime, however, she would immediately be scrutinized by the American public, many of whom retained negative views of China and conservative assumptions about ideal femininity. This meant she had to construct a persona in her speeches that would elicit a favorable perception of her nation, her race, and her gender. In addition, she had to earn the support of journalists, whose reports would reach a wider audience than Soong's immediate listeners. During her time in the United States, media coverage functioned as a significant extension of her rhetoric. As a master of publicity, she knew that even if she could build a positive image in her speeches, journalists' words had the power to enhance or destroy that image. Therefore, starting from Washington, D.C., each of Soong's press

[3] R. Smith Simpson, "Speech and Diplomacy," *Today's Speech* 5, no. 2 (1957): 13-17.

conferences presented a crucial rhetorical platform, and American journalists became a crucial component of her national tour.

Soong also knew that FDR and other Allied leaders were not thrilled with her advocacy of an Asia-first policy. After her congressional speeches, the administration expressed concerns about Soong's influence on war priorities. What Roosevelt expected least in the spring of 1943 were developments that might unhinge his Europe-first policy. Since the Casablanca Conference in January 1943, Churchill had vigorously opposed any extended operations in the Pacific that might shift the Allies' focus from Germany to Japan. Stalin also pressured Roosevelt to speed up Allied operations in North Africa and complained about the delay in opening a second front in Europe.[4] By proposing another view of war priorities in her speech to Congress, Soong increased the complex mixture of tensions among the Allies.

In addition, her Asia-first strategy had the potential to increase domestic criticism of the administration's war measures. Since the beginning of 1943, Republicans had sought to weaken FDR's powers over Lend-Lease and to secure greater congressional control over the war in general.[5] Pro-China representatives such as John M. Vorys (Ohio) and Walter H. Judd (Minnesota) could employ Soong's pleas to rally other Republicans, who opposed one aspect or another of FDR's leadership.[6] After Soong's heart-melting speech

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[4] For detailed discussion of negotiations concerning war strategy in late 1942 and early 1943, see Robert Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy, 1932-1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), 372, 380-381.

[5] George C. Herring, *Aid to Russia 1941-1946: Strategy, Diplomacy, the Origins of the Cold War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1973), 91.

[6] Robert A. Divine, *Second Chance: The Triumph of Internationalism in America During World War II* (New York: Atheneum, 1967), 88-89. Vorys worked as a teacher in the College of Yale in Changsha, China, in 1919 -1920. Judd was a medical missionary in

to Congress, the Combined Chiefs of Staff started to worry that her "extraordinary charm and intellectual vigor" might bring about a radical change in war priorities.[7] While finding Soong "a most attractive and beguiling little lady," Secretary of State Stimson warned his Assistant Secretary to "watch out sharply for what she said."[8]

FDR himself had a conflicted reaction to Soong' s congressional addresses. On the one hand, he was concerned that Soong's influence on public opinion and Congress might encourage Chiang Kai-shek to pressure Washington for greater aid to General Claire Chennault and his Flying Tigers. The dispute over authority in the India-Burma theater between Chennault and Joseph Stilwell had already caused rifts within the administration.[9] Soon after Soong's appearance in Congress, Roosevelt confided to Henry Morgenthau, Secretary of the Treasury, that he was "just crazy to get her out of the country."[10]

China from 1925 to1931. He returned to China in 1934 as a missionary physician and worked until returning to Minnesota in 1938. Like Vorys, he was a leading pro-China voice in the 78th Congress.

[7] Robert E. Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins: An Intimate History* (New York: Harper, 1950), 706.

[8] Barbara W. Tuchman, *Stilwell and the American Experience in China, 1911-1945* (New York: Macmillan, 1970), 352.

[9] This split would prompt the recall of both Chennault and Stilwell to Washington for a three-day debate about war strategy in May 1943. On Stilwell's side were Secretary of State George Marshall; Earnest King, Commander in Chief of United States Fleet and Chief of Naval Operations; and Henry Harley Arnold, General of the Army and General of the Air Force. Chennault was supported by Admiral William D. Leahy, Chief of Staff to the President, and chief diplomatic advisor Harry Hopkins. See Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy,* 392.

[10] Ibid, 388.

On the other hand, though concerned about Soong's proposal of an alternative war strategy and unhappy about her refusal to disclose the content of her speech before addressing Congress, FDR still needed her to help promote his internationalist policy and to sell public war bonds.[11] As a result, in public he echoed Soong's words about Sino-American relations and avoided any direct disagreements about war policy. Talking to journalists, he stated that "the people of China have been, in thought and in objective, closer to us Americans than almost any other peoples in the world" because "we have the same great ideals."[12] Yet he held fast to his Europe-first principles and committed himself only to studying "the problem of getting more munitions delivered to China."[13]

Criticism from minority newspapers produced another exigence as Soong began the post-Congress leg of her tour. While mainstream media lauded her as "one of the world's great women" and an eloquent speaker that "Thomas Jefferson could hardly have excelled,"[14] leading African-American newspapers questioned her for not addressing racial problems in the United States. The *Pittsburg Courier*, for instance, expressed disappointment that while Soong's speeches to Congress earned "enthusiastic applause,"

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[11] According to Wellington Koo, while Soong Mayling was in Washington, FDR asked her to help him raise a war bond of $13,000,000,000. Soong rejected this request and said she did not want to leave the impression that she was working for the U.S. government. V. K. Wellington Koo, *Gu Weijun Hui Yi Lu* [Wellington Koo's Memoirs] (Beijing: Zhonghua Shu Ju, 1983), 274. Hereafter referred to as *Wellington Koo's Memoirs*.

[12] "Informal Talks on China," *New York Times,* February 20, 1943.

[13] W. H. Lawrence, "President's Press Conference: Says China Will Get More Aid Reasonably Fast," *Wall Street Journal,* February 20, 1943.

[14] "A Great Woman Talks to America," *News Palladium*, February 20, 1943; "Speech to Congress, Madame Chiang Kai-shek Calls Upon the U.S. to Join China—in War and in Peace," *Life*, March 1, 1943, 26.

they failed to urge lawmakers to "translate these noble principles into action for their own country."[15] P. L. Prattis, editor of the *Chicago Defender*, chided Soong for not addressing racist laws or arguing for racial equality. "She couldn't win American support for greater aid to China by reminding Americans of the Oriental exclusion laws," Prattis wrote: "China will receive more aid, not because Americans, white Americans, consider Chinese as equals, but because she came, she flattered and conquered."[16]

Such comments placed Soong in a difficult position for two reasons. First, she could not explicitly criticize racist policies in America without echoing Axis war propaganda. As a Chinese special envoy seeking closer military cooperation with the United States, she had raised eyebrows in the administration by questioning FDR's Europe-first policy. Criticizing America's domestic racial policies would only intensify tensions in U.S.-China relations. Second, by referencing the exclusion laws, African-American writers implicitly urged Soong to openly oppose institutional discrimination against Chinese Americans. She could not ignore such urgings inasmuch as Chinese Americans constituted a crucial constituency for her national speech tour and, in particular, because her next stop was New York City.

Since the 1930s, Chinese New Yorkers had become increasingly vocal in challenging the long-existing rejection of their American status.[17] They formed political organizations, such as the New York Chinese American Voting League and the Chinese

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[15] Marjorie McKenzie, "Pursuit of Democracy," *Pittsburgh Courier*, February 27, 1943.

[16] P. L. Prattis, "The Horizon: Madame Chiang Speaks to Hypocrites in Congress; Wins Their Applause," *Pittsburgh Courier*, February 27, 1943.

[17] Jingyi Song, "Fighting for Chinese American Identity," *New York History*, 83 no. 4 (2002): 385-403.

American Citizens Alliance, to participate in the 1933 mayoral campaign as well as the 1932 and 1936 presidential campaigns. After outbreak of the Second World War, the New York Chinese community formed the Chinese Anti-Imperialist Alliance and the Chinese War Relief Association of America to campaign for military cooperation with China. They organized mass rallies in New York, including a major demonstration at Madison Square Garden on October 1, 1937. Such activities had made New York the center of anti-exclusion efforts in the United States. Those efforts gained new momentum during Soong's U.S. tour. On February 16, 1943, on behalf of the Chinese Women's Association of New York, Theodora Chan Wang wrote to Eleanor Roosevelt asking for a revision of the Chinese immigration laws. This request launched a petition campaign for repeal of the exclusion laws within New York's Chinese community.[18]

Despite her personal resentment of racism, however, Soong could not focus on American domestic policy in her ensuing speeches. The goals of her trip demanded that she place priority on gaining support from policy makers and sympathy from the public to increase war support for China. Her congressional speeches helped her secure support from Congress at the cost of possible dissatisfaction in the White House. Therefore, as she embarked on the East Coast leg of her tour, her goals were to maintain congressional support, to expand her influence on the wider public, and to assuage the administration's anxiety. At the same time, she could not remain totally silent on racial discrimination and had to avoid generating further criticism from minority groups. Although Chinese Americans did not openly assail Soong for ignoring the exclusion laws in her congressional speeches, continuing silence on the issue was likely to invoke

[18] Fred W. Riggs, *Pressures on Congress: A Study of the Repeal of Chinese Exclusion* (New York: King's Crown Press, 1950), 111-12.

dissatisfaction. Soong had to find a way to address the issue without provoking a backlash.

Last, but not least, she had to speak directly to religious groups and women's groups. Religious groups exerted enormous influence on U.S. Far Eastern policy during the war. After Japan's invasion of China in 1937, missionary groups became both the leading organizers of China war relief and prominent lobbyists for a pro-China policy in America. American missionaries who were forced to leave China due to Japan's aggression played a decisive role in shaping American public opinion and fashioning a sympathetic attitude toward China.[19] They also exerted influence through direct contact with government officials. The two most influential groups were the American Committee for Non-Participation in Japanese Aggression, founded by Harry and Frank Price, and the China Information Service, founded by Helen M. Loomis. The former, created in June 1938, with headquarters in New York, conducted a campaign to embargo the sale of American war materièl to Japan through stimulation of public opinion and direct consultation with the State Department.[20] Loomis, after leaving Ginling College in Nanjing in 1937, built up a mailing list of religious, academic, and professional groups to increase aid to China and to press for a quarantine of Japan.[21]

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[19] John W. Masland, "Missionary Influence upon American Far Eastern Policy," *Pacific Historical Review*, 10 no. 3 (1941): 279-296.

[20] Warren I. Cohen, *The Chinese Connection* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1978), 214.

[21] For information on Loomis, see Archives of the United Board for Christian Higher Education in Asia, College Files RG 11, Ginling Academic Related to Faculty and Staff, Helen Loomis. http://divinity-adhoc.library.yale.edu/UnitedBoard/Ginling_College/RG011-133-2688.pdf.

Soong had to speak to women's groups not only because of her connections with such groups, but also because of Chinese-American women's contributions to China's resistance to Japan. Before Soong came to the United States, many women's organizations had invited her to visit America and helped her reach a wider audience.[22] After Japan's invasion of Manchuria in 1931, Chinese-American women formed the Chinese Women's Patriotic Association, launched fund-raising campaigns for Chinese soldiers and civilians, and built cross-racial coalitions to protest Japanese militarism and to solicit support from the American public.[23] Soong needed all these connections to maintain her influence on both average Americans and the Chinese community. In addition, speaking to religious and women's groups would allow her to challenge the entrenched image of China as a heathen and backward nation.

Bearing all her audiences and exigences in mind, Soong turned every event in the second stage of her speech tour into a rhetorical platform. Besides major speeches in New York, Boston and Chicago, she attended press conferences, talked briefly at welcome receptions, met with local dignitaries, and sat in church services. Facing specific audience groups and exigencies in each of these activities, Soong responded with different strategies. Her remarkable combination of diversified rhetorical strategies added drama to

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[22] Many of Soong's pre-1943 writings targeted American women or women's organization. See, for example, "Message to Women of America," *New York Herald Tribune*, March 21, 1938, and her speech of April 28, 1938, broadcast to the 15th National Convention of the Young Women's Christian Association, in Columbus, Ohio. Mayling Soong Chiang, *Madame Chiang's Messages in War and Peace* (Hankow: China Information Committee, 1938), 18-21, 35-39.

[23] Hua Liang, "Fighting for a New Life: Social and Patriotic Activism of Chinese American Women in New York City, 1900 to 1945," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 17, no. 2 (1998): 22-38.

this leg of her tour, expanded the stage of her rhetorical performance, and contributed to the accomplishment of her diplomatic goals.

Diversified Rhetorical Strategies

Because it was impossible for Soong to address all her diverse audiences within one speech, she employed carefully chosen strategies on different occasions to cast as wide a net as possible. Here we will focus on the strategies she used to reach journalists, the general public, minority opinion leaders, and allied leaders and isolationists, respectively, during her appearances in New York, Boston, and Chicago.

Responding to Journalists

On February 19, Soong attended a joint press conference with FDR in the White House with 172 journalists.[24] Five days later, she attended Eleanor Roosevelt's weekly conference with women reporters. As had been the case with congressmen, journalists were captivated by Soong's eloquence and left feeling that "no woman in the world had a firmer grasp of international problems."[25] She knew well that media accounts shaped Americans' beliefs, emotions, and opinions about China. By utilizing media discourse to reinforce the message of her major speeches, she increased her odds of influencing both American thinking about China and public opinion with regard to U.S.-China relations,

Before coming to the United States, Soong's English publications and speeches enhanced the idea that Christianized and Westernized Chinese would play a crucial role

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[24] "Among Friends," *Time*, March 1943, 11.

[25] Thomas, *First Lady of China*, 24.

in transforming China into a modern democratic nation. The image of her as a China savior told a simplified story of China and helped arouse Americans' sympathy for the Chinese people. During Soong's speech tour, at least two challenges forced her to adjust her strategy. First, she was no longer able to produce media discourse herself. She had to rely on journalists to portray a positive image of Chinese for the American national audience. Second, when Western journalists interviewed Soong in China, she decided what could be published. Facing the press in the United States, she lost that control. She had to win the journalists' hearts so they would help her paint a favorable image of China. Winning the hearts of journalists was no less difficult than speaking to Congress because journalists held different views on policies and embraced divergent values.

To win the backing of as many as possible, in her press conference, Soong strategically constructed the persona of a female leader entering the public sphere and demonstrating an equal position with men. At the beginning of her joint press conference with FDR on February 19, Soong acted like a traditional woman and let the president play the leading role. She sat by him when he introduced her to the press and stated that "Madame Chiang" would be willing to answer "a few questions of the 'non-catch' type."[26] When journalists turned to Soong, she told them she was never frightened by Japanese swords, but she did not know whether she felt fear when she saw the journalists' pencils racing across the pages. Then she said she was not afraid because she saw "flashes of smiles" coming from reporters' faces and felt "amongst friends" so that she had "nothing to fear from the press."[27] Reporters swallowed Soong's flattering words

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[26] "Informal Talks on China," *New York Times*, February 20, 1943.

[27] "Mrs. Chiang Meets the Press," *New York Times*, February 20, 1943.

and responded with more friendly smiles. Hardly anyone could resist her attraction when Soong expressed her understanding of potential "catch questions" and gracefully said: "I don't think you are going to heckle me with them. I am sure you won't."[28] Soong's opening words made her look like a woman conforming to conventional gender roles, not unlike Eleanor Roosevelt, who sat beside Soong and remained silent the whole time.[29] But after the graceful compliment, Soong began to transcend gender norms as she increasingly adopted the voice of a national leader while responding to questions.

When questioned whether China had used its manpower to the fullest extent, for example, Soong refuted criticism of China's passivity by asserting that "we can't go there and fight with our bare hands, although we have fought with nothing but swords in hand-to-hand combat."[30] After stressing China's need for munitions, she threw the ball back to FDR and said that the president "had solved so many problems and come through so many crises with flying colors that she was certain she could safely leave to him the problem of working out ways and means to increase the flow of aid" from the United States to China.[31] After FDR promised that the U.S. would send aid to China "as soon as the Lord will let us," Soong added that "the Lord helps those who help themselves."[32]

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[28] Franklin D. Roosevelt, *Complete Presidential Press Conferences of Franklin D. Roosevelt* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1972), 160.

[29] Some reporters noticed the contrast between Soong and Mrs. Roosevelt and mentioned it in their reports.

[30] Franklin D. Roosevelt, *Complete Presidential Press Conferences of Franklin D. Roosevelt* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1972), 163.

[31] W. H. Lawrence, "President Tells Mme. Chiang More Arms Will Be Rushed," *New York Times*, February 20, 1943.

[32] "Madame Chiang 'Steals' Parley from Roosevelt," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, February 20, 1943.

Reporters all laughed at this pointed remark and some regarded it as "the high point of the conference," for it demonstrated "the matching of the President's charm and persuasiveness against that of Mme. Chiang."[33] One journalist recorded FDR's redden face and described him as looking "like the man who forgot to duck."[34] Reporters certainly wanted more drama; one even asked whether Roosevelt had asked Madame Chiang "to remain in Washington as a liaison officer with Congress."[35] Soong deftly maneuvered the situation and "replied smilingly that she did not think the President needed her or any one else."[36]

Reporters did not hide their admiration of Soong in their descriptions of the press conference. "It was high state drama," wrote columnist Raymond Clapper, "played by the real character. Some day they may put Helen Hayes in the part but she'll never do it any better than Madame Chiang acted it in real life. It was the delicate, feminine, shrewd, quick, witty and powerful first lady of the East against the great master himself [FDR]."[37] Soong's rhetoric in the conference was that of an intelligent and articulate female political leader—"a symbol of women's ability to hold a position of power and

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[33] W. H. Lawrence, "President Tells Mme. Chiang More Arms Will be Rushed," *New York Times*, February 20, 1943.

[34] Edward T. Folliard, "President Sees Blow at Japs Based in China," *Washington Post*, February 20, 1943. Historian Barbara Tuchman wrote that "Roosevelt's face was seen to redden but whether from embarrassment or anger is moot." Tuchman, *Stilwell and the American Experience in China*, 352.

[35] W. H. Lawrence, "President Tells Mme. Chiang More Arms Will Be Rushed," *New York Times*, February 20, 1943.

[36] Ibid.

[37] Raymond Clapper, "Arms-for-China Problem Tossed in Roosevelt's Lap," *Syracuse Herald Journal*, February 20, 1943.

authority."[38] Many reporters compared Soong's witty answers with Eleanor Roosevelt, who did not speak during the press conference. By juxtaposing the American first lady, who remained silent, and the first lady of China, who "discussed frankly" war policies with "the American Commander in Chief," journalists reinforced Soong's standing both personally and diplomatically.

Soong's goal was not to advocate a feminist agenda, but to further notions of a progressive China. As pointed out by Karen Leong, the American image of China was highly gendered during World War II.[39] The presence of a powerful yet charming Chinese female leader elicited a romanticized vision of a modernized and non-threatening China. At the same time, Soong's presence as a female leader spoke to Americans who held liberal views with regard to gender norms. According to Lisa Keränen, rhetorically constructed characters function as personae that embody fundamental cultural beliefs shared by communal groups.[40] With more women stepping out of the home and entering the workplace during the war, Americans were reconsidering the right place for women in society. At a press conference on February 24, which she attended as Mrs. Roosevelt's guest, Soong stated that she believed men should give women equal privileges and did not know "brains to have any sex."[41] She was always careful, however, not to make her

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[38] T. Christopher Jespersen, *American Images of China, 1931-1949* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), 97.

[39] Karen J. Leong, *The China Mystique: Pearl S. Buck, Anna May Wong, Mayling Soong, and the Transformation of American Orientalism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 1.

[40] Lisa Keränen, *Scientific Characters: Rhetoric, Politics, and Trust in Breast Cancer Research* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2010), 29.

[41] Thomas, *First Lady of China*, 26.

persona radical or threatening. She proved to be adept at constructing a persona that embraced liberal feminist views without overly challenging social restrictions on women.

Jespersen points out that media coverage of Soong's diplomatic trip accurately reflected her rhetorical versatility—a combination of feminine charm and supposedly masculine traits such as directness and vitality.[42] Her early press conference captivated many journalists and turned them into admirers. This experience set up a rhetorical model for the rest of her tour. From Washington to Los Angeles, she held press conferences after each of her major speeches and used them as platforms to respond to criticism, to reach a wider audience, and to keep enhancing her credibility as a world leader. She always gave journalists enough words to portray a positive character, but not so many as to criticize opposing views through her words. Helen Hull, for example, noted that "The Press has seen her frequently and repeatedly. They like Madame Chiang. They have discovered her sincerity, her adroitness in parrying questions."[43] Soong's diplomatic skills so impressed American journalists that one New York reporter exclaimed: "How does she do it? She never makes a mistake; she always says the right thing."[44] By turning journalists into admirers and supporters, Soong conquered, not the largest, but certainly one of her most important audiences.

Relating to the General Public

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[42] Jespersen, *American Images of China*, 92.

[43] Ibid, 18.

[44] Helen Hull, *Mayling Soong Chiang* (New York: Coward-McCann, Inc, 1943), 19.

From the beginning of her tour, Soong knew that everything she said would be heard by a national audience. After leaving Washington, she was fully aware that the general public became a more important target audience. In each city, she spoke briefly at a welcome reception and gave a major speech to a large audience. But notwithstanding the size or composition of her immediate audience, she was always cognizant of the American public in general. To increase sympathy for China and to enhance the image of the United States and China as inseparable friends and allies, she expressed heartfelt appreciation for Americans' material support to China and elaborated upon the symbolic meaning of the welcome receptions. Both strategies served as emotional appeals to alter the American people's understanding of their relations with Chinese people from geographically and culturally disconnected allies to spiritually bonded co-fighters for a better world.

Soong arrived in New York City on March 1. She was greeted at the train by Mayor LaGuardia and was cheered by a large crowd outside the station. After a brief rest at the Waldorf-Astoria Towers, she headed to City Hall Park, where she gave a short speech and accepted honorary citizenship from the mayor. On March 10, she spoke briefly at Symphony Hall in Boston. During the ceremony, she was made an honorary citizen of Boston and expressed her appreciation for the American people's generous donations and enthusiastic support. The same pattern was repeated in Chicago, where she arrived on March 22. A large number of dignitaries and thousands of Chicago residents welcomed her at Union Station. During the evening ceremonies, Mayor Edward Kelly presented her a huge silver key symbolizing "freedom-loving Chicago."[45]

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[45] Marie McGowan, "Chicago Gives Madame Chiang Warm Welcome," *New York Herald Tribune*, March 20, 1943.

Soong understood how the greetings she received symbolized friendship for China and admiration for her, both of which provided a psychological foundation for her efforts to shape American opinion in favor of a pro-China policy. In her speeches responding to the greetings, she typically portrayed the Chinese people as Americans' co-fighters and talked about Chinese Americans as U.S. citizens. After receiving honorary citizenship in New York, for example, she referred to her audience as "fellow citizens" and called New York "our city."[46] She told her "fellow citizens" that China could endure all the hardship and carry on fighting because the Chinese people believed the American people were with them.[47] "If we thought that we were fighting alone," she said, "China would have been a conquered China."[48] After receiving honorary citizenship in Boston from Mayor Maurice J. Tobin, she said she was so touched that she feared words would fail her.[49] She expressed special appreciation for one local newspaper which wrote that the Chinese in America were "fellow citizens."[50] Upon receiving the key to the city from Mayor Kelly in Chicago, she said: "It is a great key and I feel certain that it opens a great heart."[51]

In all these speeches, Soong did not criticize exclusion laws or isolationist views but fulsomely praised Americans who treated Chinese as fellow citizens and supported

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[46] Thomas, *First Lady of China*, 41.

[47] Ibid, 42.

[48] Ibid, 41.

[49] Marie McGowan, "Madame Chiang Talks to 3,000 in Boston Hall," *New York Herald Tribune*, March 9, 1943.

[50] Thomas, *First Lady of China*, 93-94.

[51] Ibid, 99.

China's fight for freedom. Her aim was to build bridges of sympathy that would link the American people with China and Chinese Americans in the common cause of achieving freedom for humanity. In her New York reception speech, for example, she claimed that suffering with others and working together to "strive for a common cause" represented a "high-mindedness" that "constituted the common meeting ground" for the American and Chinese peoples. She urged Americans to live up to that high-mindedness and concluded her speech by claiming that Lady Liberty's torch would "ever illuminate all those who want to tread in the path of achievement and of human progress." Journalists praised Soong's "characteristic diplomatic deftness" and noticed how she employed it not only in ceremonial speeches but also in press conferences. When, on one occasion, Governor J. Howard McGrath of Rhode Island asked Soong to tell governors what they could do to help China, she replied that what Americans did was not just for China alone but "for humanity and for liberty loving people" around the globe.[52]

Soong's emotional appeal was strong and sincere. She often asked her audience "Am I right?" when she asserted that Americans and Chinese were co-fighters in the pursuit of world freedom. She also adapted her rhetorical style to enhance her pathos. Although she occasionally used uncommon words in her major speeches, she spoke with the vocabulary of daily life in her reception remarks. She knew she was speaking to average Americans and should not adopt the same style as when speaking to Congress. In addition, she used rhetorical devices such as repetition, antithesis, and polysyndeton to add a poetic rhythm and to intensify her emotional appeals.

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[52] Marguerite Higgins, "Nine Governors Pay Brief Call on Mrs. Chiang," *New York Herald Tribune*, March 3, 1943.

Soong employed similar emotional appeals in her major speeches to enhance the bonding of America and China. Her Madison Square Garden speech in New York offered a typical example of this strategy. She opened by expressing her "heartfelt appreciation" to many of her listeners, who had sent her letters or invited her to speak in other cities. She told her audience that she really wanted to visit all their "states, cities, colleges, churches, and other organizations," but her doctors told her that she had to conserve strength so as to continue her work in China. Hearing these words from a slim-figured woman with a pale and fatigued face, listeners, especially those who had read that Mme. Chiang "almost fainted" at City Hall the day before, were more inclined to sympathize with this delicate yet determined lady and the nation she represented.[53]

As the speech progressed, Soong expressed deep gratitude to Americans "in large cities and in small country towns, business men, farmers, factory workers, professors, ministers, college and high school students, hard-working mothers and even little children." Her words of appreciation were well received not just by her listeners in Madison Square Garden, but by Americans in general because they stood in contrast to Russia's response to U.S. military support. Since 1942, vigorous debates on Lend-Lease implementation had aroused public doubts about whether people of the Allied nations knew the extent of America's contributions to the war. To guarantee the extension of Lend-Lease, the State Department asked William H. Standley, American ambassador to Russia, to secure statements from Russian officials acknowledging America's

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[53] Lucy Greenbaum, "Cheers of Crowds Pay Tribute To Charm of China's First Lady, Program of Welcome Is Cut an Hour Short Because of Her Evident Fatigue Following Recent Illness," *New York Times*, March 2, 1943.

contribution to Russian campaigns.[54] Stalin's Red Army Day order of February 23, 1943, however, omitted any mention of America's Lend-Lease supplies and complained that the USSR was "bearing the whole brunt of the war" due to the Allies' failure to open a second front.[55] This statement aroused considerable criticism in the American press, and Standley chastised the Soviet government for misleading the Russian people. After Soong's Madison Square Garden address, a New York newspaper article highlighted the contrast between Soong and Stalin with regard to their attitudes toward aid from "the Arsenal of Democracy." "Madame Chiang has been very nice about it," the editor wrote, "Stalin has seemed a little impatient, not to say contemptuous and that doesn't do anyone any good."[56]

By praising Americans' generosity, Soong avoided leaving the impression that China was begging for American support yet managed to shape public opinion in favor of increasing aid to China. "Some people sent money orders of one or two dollars and even less," she said at Madison Square Garden, but "in the eyes of our people they were multiplied a thousand-fold and illuminated by the beauty of the spirit of the donors." By praising the generosity and compassion demonstrated by the small donations from average Americans, Soong implicitly sent a message to policy makers. As a result, both Democrats and Republicans demanded more aid for China during the House debate on extension of the Lend-Lease program. In fact, one journalist covering the debate noted

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[54] George C. Herring, *Aid to Russia, 1941-1946: Strategy, Diplomacy, the Origins of the Cold War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1973), 91.

[55] Ibid.

[56] Westbrook Pegler, "Fair Enough," *Troy Times Record*, March 3, 1943.

that Madam Chiang's effect was "clearly traceable" when one representative after another emphasized "the important role of China in the war."[57]

Speaking to Minority Opinion Leaders

Even as she sought to expand her influence by winning the hearts of journalists and average Americans, Soong had to respond to criticism of her congressional addresses from the minority press. While some writers urged her to denounce imperialism and racial discrimination, the rhetorical situation, as we have seen, was such that she could not go beyond subtle criticism at best. She responded by employing a traditional Chinese rhetorical strategy of citing a combination of historical cases that functioned allegorically to imply an appropriate policy choice.

In her major city speeches, Soong adopted one of the commonly used strategies in traditional Chinese rhetoric—reasoning through historical cases. In ancient China, the audience for political persuasion was not the people, but the hereditary rulers of the city-states who possessed enormous power. The speakers were advisors who provided policy suggestions for their rulers and who pledged to respect their rulers' authority and to obey their orders. According to Mary M. Garrett, this single-audience paradigm made it virtually impossible for speakers to openly plead or argue with their powerful listeners because such an act implied that the rulers no longer merited obedience and the speakers were determined to resign or rebel.[58] In response, ancient Chinese literati developed a

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[57] John Elliott, "House Debate on Lend-Lease Stresses China," *New York Herald Tribune*, March 9, 1943.

[58] Mary M. Garrett, "Pathos Reconsidered from the Perspective of Classical Chinese Rhetorical Theories," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 79 no. 1 (February 1993): 19-39.

rhetorical strategy similar to the historical hermeneutics created by Confucius in the fifth century B.C.E. In his *Spring and Autumn Annals*, Confucius invented a genre of historical writing in the form of narratives that invited readers to identify with hidden moral, ideological, or political lessons through a seemingly impartial and objective record of historical events.[59] Through the story of historical events and characters, rhetors could rationalize political choices and rebuke rulers' personal conduct. This genre allowed its writers to adopt an authentic and factual voice and to organize historical materials into an intricate system to serve the purpose of ideological motivation or moral education.[60] The Chinese rhetorical strategy developed according to this genre is called *jiegufengjin* (借古讽今), using ancient cases to criticize a current situation, and Soong used it frequently throughout her speech tour.

In her Madison Square Garden address, for example, she told historical stories to help her audience "avoid the pitfalls into which former civilizations, dynasties and systems have fallen." She contended that the Roman Empire adopted a system in which "there was no racial discrimination as we have it today," and it accepted "the Armenians and other tribes of the so-called barbarian world of that day" as "Allies of Rome." Although Soong did not refer to the United States in this section of her speech, she made her point clear by stating that "all the peoples in the Roman Empire could become citizens."

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[59] Sheldon Hsiao-peng Lu, *From Historicity to Fictionality: The Chinese Poetics of Narrative* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994), 5.

[60] Ibid, 6.

With this strategy, Soong responded to minority press criticism without attacking the American government. During an interview with Water White, head of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Soong asked if he had listened to her Madison Square Garden speech and understood its implications. White responded affirmatively and praised Soong for her remarks. In his report of the interview, White acknowledged Soong's purpose in pointing out "there was no racial discrimination as we have it today" in the Roman Empire and noted that "it would be neither polite nor fair" to ask "what restraints had been urged upon her" regarding U.S. race problems.[61] Llewellyn Ransom, correspondent of the *Pittsburgh Courier*, praised both Soong's Madison Square Garden address and her remarks in the press conference afterward. Ransom encouraged people of color to honor China's first lady for her anti-discrimination stance.[62] Liu Liang-Mo, columnist for the *Courier*, also praised Soong and urged Americans to remember that "the Chinese people represented by Madame Chiang were still not being treated as equals in this country."[63] Nor were such positive comments limited to members of the American-African press. According to Helen Hull, average New Yorkers' also liked Soong's "historical references" because they showed that "we'll get through the mess we're in now, the way we always have in the past."[64]

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[61] Walter White, "People and Places: We Meet Mme. Chiang Kai-shek," *Chicago Defender*, March 20, 1943.

[62] Llewellyn Ransom, "Race Active in Honoring China's First Lady: Madame Chiang Abhors All Bias," *Pittsburgh Courier*, March 20, 1943.

[63] Liang-Mo Liu, "China Speaks: China Is Fighting as an Ally, but She is not being Treated as One," *Pittsburgh Courier*, March 27, 1943.

[64] Helen Hull, *Mayling Soong Chiang*, 7.

Addressing Allied Leaders and Isolationists

Soong employed the same traditional Chinese rhetorical strategy in her Chicago Stadium speech to rebuke Churchill's imperialist arguments and to criticize isolationist views. On March 21, the day before Soong's Chicago appearance, Churchill talked about war policy and postwar plans in a speech broadcast worldwide by the BBC. Germany, he held, must be defeated before turning the Allies' attention to Asia. Only after "beating Hitler to death," Churchill said, could "the necessary additional forces and apparatus" be transported to the other side of the world to "rescue China from her long torment." In addition to depicting China as a weak nation waiting to be rescued by the West, Churchill denied that China merited a position in the United Nations, which should be "headed by the three great victorious powers, the British Commonwealth of Nations, the United States and Soviet Russia."[65] According to Wellington Koo, Chinese ambassador to Great Britain, Churchill's speech severely irritated Chinese diplomats. T.V. Soong immediately alerted Soong Mayling and Chiang Kai-shek and advised Soong to postpone her plans to visit Great Britain.[66] Facing this diplomatic crisis, Soong decided to answer Churchill's argument that China would need to be "rescued" by the other Allied nations after they defeated Hitler.

Before Soong made her speech in Chicago on March 22, a spokesman for her entourage announced that the Chinese people were disappointed by Churchill's omission of China in his discussion of postwar plans and that Madame Chiang felt "it was

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[65] "Mr. Churchill on Postwar Policy," *Times* (London, England), Mar 22, 1943, 5.

[66] *Wellington Koo's Memoirs*, 256-57.

necessary to accent China's global viewpoint on postwar planning."[67] The spokesman also disclosed that Soong had revised her speech after a series of meetings with her staff.[68] Notwithstanding the strong tone of this announcement, however, Soong refrained from explicitly refuting Churchill in her address. Rather, she turned again to the Chinese rhetorical strategy of *jiegufengjin* and told stories from American and world history to demonstrate how cooperation led to prosperity and disunity resulted in destruction. She noted the intense differences between Alexander Hamilton and Thomas Jefferson in the late 1700s and argued that eventual reconciliation of their seemingly irreconcilable differences helped produce a thriving American society. She also referred to the failure of earlier international alignments, including the Confederacy of Delos, the Congress of Vienna, and the League of Nations, and attributed those failures to nations that "played an old game—the game of jealousy, self-seeking and petty distrust." A correspondent for the *New York Herald Tribune* noted that while Soong "made no direct reference to Mr. Churchill's address," she proffered a subtle rebuke by concluding that "to prevent future destruction and carnage, one must think not only in terms of the good of one's own country, but in terms of the good of other peoples."[69]

In this way, Soong sent a clear message to the British without destroying the unity of the Alliance. Anthony Eden, the British Foreign Secretary, was in the United States at the time of Soong's speech. He immediately responded to her comments in an effort to allay

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[67] "Mme. Chiang Eyes British Global Plans," *Salt Lake Tribune*, March 23, 1943.

[68] "Madame Chiang Hits Churchill Omission," *Phoenix Arizona Republic*, March 23, 1943.

[69] Marie McGown, "Madame Chiang Gives Churchill Subtle Rebuke," *New York Herald Tribune*, March 23, 1943.

the distress caused by Churchill's speech. While addressing the Maryland State Assembly in Annapolis on March 27, Eden declared that "we, no less than you, and our partner China, have a score to settle with the Japanese."[70] Soong's secretary issued a brief statement after Eden's speech acknowledging his recognition of China's contribution. Seeing Soong's responses to Churchill and Eden, commentators praised her for proving herself "a consummate diplomatist as well as the most eloquent and effective proponent of her nation's cause."[71]

In the New York and Chicago speeches, Soong also used historical cases to criticize isolationism. While speaking to New Yorkers, she argued that although the concept of equality guaranteed the Roman Empire's existence for over a thousand years, the empire finally fell because it retreated from its responsibilities, "wallowed in sensualism," and "hired others to do their fighting." In Chicago, Soong claimed that China realized that "building a 'great wall' to isolate herself from the rest of the world in the 19th century was a mistake." She called on the American public to "support the Four Freedoms" and "the men who fathered the Atlantic Charter" so as to build a world based on principles of "international co-existence and cooperation."

By admitting China's mistake in adopting an isolationist policy and emphasizing the responsibility of "stronger and more advanced nations" in constructing a new world order, Soong criticized isolationists in an obvious yet implicit manner. This was one of the things FDR had hoped she would achieve during her trip. Although the attack on Pearl Harbor had convinced Americans that their nation could not stay away from global

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[70] Marie McGowan, "Madame Chiang Praises Eden's Stand on China," *New York Herald Tribune*, March 28, 1943.

[71] Ibid.

conflicts, FDR remained cautious in advocating America's participation in international organizations. Notwithstanding his belief, stated in his Four Freedoms speech of January 1941 that the new world order should be "the cooperation of free countries working together in a friendly civilized society,"[72] he was determined to avoid the fate that had befallen Woodrow Wilson's plan for U.S. participation in the League of Nations after World War I. Faced with arguments that the United States did not have the power "to determine events in other nations and to reshape the world to its own liking,"[73] FDR refrained from detailed proposals for American involvement in postwar international organizations.

Soong's implicit criticism of isolationism promoted internationalist policies without stirring up strong reactions from isolationists. As a March 9 editorial in the *Herald Tribune* pointed out, "even Representative Hamilton Fish, Republican of New York and prominent pre-Pearl Harbor isolationist," supported Lend-Lease in the House debate after Soong's New York address.[74] Noticing Americans' enthusiastic responses to Soong's speeches, Eden reported to Churchill that it was through the feelings of the American public toward Soong Mayling that "the President is seeking to lead his people to accept international responsibilities."[75] An editorial in the *Wisconsin State Journal* pointed out

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[72] FDR, The Four Freedoms, January 6, 1941, in *Words of A Century: The Top 100 American Speeches, 1900-1999,* eds. Stephen Lucas and Martin J. Medhurst (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 268.

[73] Peter G. Boyle, "The Roots of Isolationism: A Case Study," *Journal of American Studies* 6 no. 1 (1972): 41-50.

[74] John Elliott, "House Debate on Lend-Lease Stresses China," *New York Herald Tribune*, March 9, 1943.

[75] Dallek, *FDR and American Foreign Policy*, 391.

that according to the Gallup Poll, "the overwhelming majority of Americans favor a world organization for securing a lasting peace" and "Mme. Chiang can confidently continue urging the yet unconvinced 23 percent of Americans" to endorse an internationalist policy.[76]

All Soong's speeches and press conferences in New York, Boston, and Chicago constituted a significant part of her diplomatic rhetoric. She successfully responded to minority opinion leaders' criticism emerging after her congressional address, assuaged the administration's anxiety about her Asia-first stance, and defended China in response to Churchill. But to shape public opinion in favor of a consistent pro-China policy, she still had to alter the kinds of negative images of China that had long been rampant in the United States.

Constructing A New Image of China

Starting in California in the latter half of the nineteenth century, anti-Chinese discourses in the United States created an extremely negative image of China and Chinese immigrants to justify passage of the Chinese exclusion laws. Such discourses portrayed Chinese immigrants as an immoral community unable to meet moral standards based on Christian values and demonized the Chinese people as a barbarous and inferior race unable to embrace democracy or other civilized ideas of a modern age. According to Stuart Creighton Miller, diplomatic and merchant discourses further spread the view of

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[76] Ada Roetter, "We All Must Share Task of Building Lasting Peace," *Wisconsin State Journal*, March 29, 1943.

China as a backward nation unable to catch up with global development.[77] When perceptions of relative progress in science and technology established the standards for asserting Western superiority, stories about how China rejected change and progress produced an image of an anti-modern and retrograde nation.[78] For example, nineteenth-century European accounts reiterated the story that clothing never changed in China and related the lack of social change to its despotic government and corrupt officials.[79] Such stories spread quickly in English-speaking societies, shaped the perception of China as a fossilized civilization, and represented Chinese immigrants as incapable of assimilation with modern nations and peoples.

Meanwhile, missionary discourses promulgated an "immoral heathen" argument by criticizing Confucianism and the barbaric treatment of women in China.[80] These discourses decried Chinese culture as replete with "vicious practices and evil tendencies" due to its non-Christian beliefs. This negative image of China prevailed in American society during the nineteenth century and the early decades of the twentieth. During the 1943 House Committee hearings on immigration and naturalization, pro-exclusion

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[77] Stuart Creighton Miller, *The Unwelcome Immigrant: The American Image of the Chinese,1785-1882* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), 148-49.

[78] Gregory Blue, "Gobineau on China: Race Theory, the 'Yellow Peril,' and the Critique of Modernity," *Journal of World History* 10, no. 1 (1999), 95-96.

[79] Dorothy Ko, "Bondage in Time: Foot-Binding and Fashion Theory" in *Modern Chinese Literary and Cultural studies in the Age of Theory: Reimagining a Field*, ed. Rey Chow (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000), 198-225.

[80] Miller, *The Unwelcome Immigrant*, 57-80.

speakers still called Chinese "the greatest danger in this country" and "morally the most debased people on the face of the earth."[81]

Since the 1870s, anti-Chinese arguments in the United States had particularly targeted Chinese women.[82] In order to pass the Page Act of 1875 that prohibited legal entrance of Chinese women, exclusionists argued that Chinese women were "brought to the United States "for shameful purposes to the great demoralization" of American youth.[83] Peggy Pascoe contends that the rescue work of the Presbyterian Chinese Mission Home in San Francisco between 1874 and 1934 further reinforced the negative image of Chinese women by portraying them as "symbols of female powerlessness."[84] As pointed out by Jinhua Teng, the emphasis on Chinese women's victimization and weakness in missionary discourse and other Western writings served to "validate Western ideas about China's perceived cultural backwardness" because of the equation of modernity with the reform of women's status and the belief that women's status could be used as a measure of society's level of development.[85]

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[81] The statements are from a Mrs. Waters and John B. Trevor, quoted in Riggs, *Pressures on Congress*, 89-90.

[82] Kerry Abrams, "Polygamy, Prostitution, and the Federalization of Immigration Law," *Columbia Law Review* 105 no.3 (2005): 716.

[83] ibid, 691.

[84] Peggy Pascoe, *Relations of Rescue: The Search for Female Moral Authority in the American West, 1874-1939* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 55-56.

[85] Jinhua Emma Teng, "The Construction of the 'Traditional Chinese Woman' in the Western Academy: A Critical Review," *Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 22 no. 1 (1996): 124. Also see Janet M. Cramer, "White Womanhood and Religion: Colonial Discourse in the U.S. Women's Missionary Press, 1869-1904," *Howard Journal of Communications* 14, no. 4 (2003): 209-24. Cramer argues that the negative images of women in India and China were reinforced by many nineteenth-century women's foreign missionary publications that typically portrayed American women as

To change American perceptions, Soong Mayling had to challenge prevailing stereotypes of China, Chinese people, and Chinese women. She did so mainly through elaboration of a new world order based on Christian values in her Madison Square Garden speech and through exposition of women's contributions to the advancement of human civilization in her Wellesley speech.

Building A New World on Christian Values

Throughout Soong Mayling's public career, her religious beliefs helped her appeal to mainstream American society. As her tour proceeded, she knew well that articulating her Christian convictions would contribute to a warm reception of her pleas in the United States. Before leaving Washington D. C., she attended services and "listened attentively to a sermon by the Reverend Frederick Brown Harris, pastor of the church and chaplain of the Senate," at the Foundry Methodist Church.[86] No better remark concluded Soong's activities in Washington than the Reverend Harris' sermon. He declared: "Let us put weapons in her [China's] hand so she may hurt the invader in her land and there build a city of God. Generalissimo and Mme. Chiang Kai-shek. God sent these Christian leaders into this global struggle to aid in making a new China and a new world."[87] By calling Soong a Christian leader, the Reverend's words sent a message to all Americans that China was no longer ruled by heathen despots and "deserved her rightful place" in the

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morally and spiritually superior so the missionaries could help other women rise from a debased position through education and Christianization.

[86] "Mme. Chiang Worships: Attends Methodist Church with Mr. and Mrs. Wallace," *New York Times*, March 1, 1943.

[87] Ibid.

"kingdom of God." That message helped lay the groundwork for Soong's depiction of a new China in her ensuing speeches.

One of Soong's key themes at Madison Square Garden revolved around building a postwar world based on Christian values. She used biblical references to demonstrate "pitfalls" in human history that led to the destruction of civilizations. She identified three such pitfalls. The "deepest and most omnivorous," she stated, was "pride," which "swallowed many whose arrogance led them to think that they could safely and permanently defy mankind's deep-rooted sense of justice and right dealing." The second pitfall was cruelty. Soong argued that tyranny and dictatorships usually proved to "be short-lived," and she used the ancient Persian emperor as an example of the fact that "cruelty and arrogance contributed to the fall of the dictatorships." The third pitfall was lack of commitment to freedom, justice, and equality.

After repudiating these pitfalls of the past, Soong claimed that only "the teachings of the Christ" radiated ideas that could build a new world for all humanity. She called on her audience to "forgive those who injured us" and to build a world with "no bitterness," no exploitation, and no hatred. Combining Christian values and egalitarian ideals, she declared that "All nations, great and small, must have equal opportunity of development. Those who are stronger and more advanced should consider their strength as a trust to be used to help the weaker nations to fit themselves for full self-government and not to exploit them." Stating that World War Two "may indeed be the war to end all wars in all ages," she expressed hope that the war would "shape the future so that this whole world must be thought of as one great State common to Gods and men." In the final part of her Garden speech, Soong further elaborated these ideas by declaring that the new

international community should be based on four pillars: justice, co-existence, cooperation, and mutual respect. It may be necessary in war, she said, to "hate the evil in men," but one should not hate the men themselves." Her appeal to Christian tradition and democratic principles, wrote one editor, allowed many Americans to discover "spiritual kinship with the Chinese."[88]

Soong's speech made many missionaries "crazy about her words" and turned more church leaders into advocates of pro-China policies.[89] The Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, for example, praised Soong for "her recent repudiation of post-war hatred" and called for more support to China.[90] Dr. Leonard Odiorne paid a similarly high tribute to Soong in vesper services at First Presbyterian church and expressed hope that she should be seated at the peace table when victory came.[91] A letter to the editor of *Time* praised Soong's "compelling influence on millions of readers" and her "contribution to the elements of Christianity and civilization."[92]

Praise from church leaders and priests encouraged more Americans to join in appreciating Soong's depiction of a postwar world established on Christian values. An *Alton Evening Telegraph* article called Soong "a modern Chinese St. Paul" and praised her for bringing "the real peace-making prescription—patience, brotherly love kindness,

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[88] "There Must Be No Bitterness," *New York Herald Tribune*, March 4, 1943.

[89] "Church Council Bids Allies Bar Hatred for Foe," *New York Herald Tribune*, March 22, 1943.

[90] Ibid.

[91] Henrietta S. Hill, "Program of Beautiful Music Given at Vesper Service Sunday," *Freeport Journal Standard*, March 8, 1943.

[92] "Letters," *Time*, March 22, 1943, 4.

humility, forbearance"—a message that rivaled the one by St. Paul when "he wrote that beautiful chapter to the Corinth Church."[93] The appeal of Soong's words was captured by a Wisconsinite named Sam Bryan in a poem he titled "Mme. Chiang":

> Strength flows from weakness through her to the world
> The saving power of sacrifice and love
> Like Him who on the cross, forgiving, prayed
> She, who herself has suffered, counsels so
> And leads her shattered people unafraid
> She pleads forgiveness, and her words, aglow
> With radiant vision of a world to be
> Have kindled new our faith for Victory.[94]

By depicting a new world constructed on the basis of Christian values, Soong bolstered her ethos in American eyes and helped modify perceptions of China. As one reader wrote to the editor of the *Salt Lake Tribune*: "We have long thought of China as a heathen nation. Who would deny the right of China to take her place among a Christian postwar world, after listening to the splendid address given by their first lady at Madison Square Garden the other evening?"[95]

Women's Contributions to World Civilization and the Progress of Chinese Women

Soong's visit to Wellesley College was one of the most dramatic events of her entire tour. An air of excitement pervaded Wellesley as the faculty and students waited to see their most famous alumna. She addressed an audience of 2,200 people in Alumnae Hall on March 7. The national audience could listen to her speech on radio and could read in magazine and newspaper detailed reports about her recollection of college days at her old

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[93] "A Modern Chinese St. Paul," *Alton Evening Telegraph*, March 5, 1943.

[94] Sam Bryan, "Mme. Chiang," *Wisconsin State Journal*, March 5, 1943.

[95] "The Public Forum," *Salt Lake Tribune*, March 9, 1943.

dorm building, about her reunion tea party with school friends, and about her jokes over not smoking in front of undergrads. They also learned from reporters that Soong was overwhelmed by her own emotions and almost fainted when she started her speech. Despite all the drama, however, this speech sent an important message to the national audience about a modern world progressing toward gender equality and a transformed China marching alongside other nations in this progress. Through her discussion of women's contributions to world civilization, Soong seized the opportunity to refute perceptions of China as a fossilized culture with entrenched gender inequality.

The speech consisted of two parts. In the first part, after briefly expressing deep feelings for her alma mater, Soong gave a long exposition of women's contributions throughout the world. This exposition focused on American feminist movements, British women's fight for equality, European women's influence on Catholicism, and Chinese women's contributions to social progress. Most of her listeners were not familiar with the Chinese names, and perhaps not with many of the European ones, but few could fail to recognize Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, or Carrie Chapman Catt. After an extended account of the suffrage movement, Soong praised Stanton, Anthony, and Catt as "pioneer women leaders endowed with courage and vision." She then talked about how British women fought for equality in domestic life, education, and political participation. After elaborating upon European women's work in the institutional development of Catholicism, she presented two stories illustrating Chinese women's historical achievements. One was about Pan Zhao (45-117 A.D.), a renowned female historian of the Han Dynasty, who completed the heritage of her brother, a court historian, after his death. According to Soong, Pan "made lasting contributions to the epistemological

advancement" of China's civilization. The other story was about Chiu-Chin (1875-1907), a Chinese woman revolutionist who sacrificed her life to inspire her countrymen and women to overthrow China's last imperial dynasty and to fight for a democratic system. Soong praised Chiu-Chin for advocating the rights and responsibilities of women and for encouraging them to step into a new world, where they could pursue freedom.

Soong's combining of great Chinese women with Western female activists and reformers refuted the orientalist ideology in most Western writings that portrayed traditional Chinese women as victims unable to transcend restrictions in a patriarchal society. Women in all cultures, she said, "have had a share in building the ever-ascending pyramid of civilization" despite the differential development of women on every continent. By including Chinese figures in her account, Soong suggested that China had been progressing just like the rest of the world because its people, particularly women, were making efforts to advance its culture and to improve its political system.

The second part of Soong's speech at Wellesley presented a detailed account of the development of gender equality in China during the preceding three decades. Here, she reflected on the woman's suffrage movement in China since 1912, explained how the constitution of the Republic of China guaranteed gender equality in education and civic participation, and discussed the role of Chinese women in China's fight against Japanese aggression. "The Chinese woman of today," she declared, "stands on her own feet and is acknowledged for what she is."

By emphasizing the attainment of a legally guaranteed status by Chinese women and by praising their achievements in nation building, Soong sought to refute dominant notions about the weakness, passivity, and immorality of Chinese women, as well as the

belief that their only hope was waiting for Western women to rescue them. In this speech, she constructed a new image of Chinese women and employed "women's status" as a trope to indicate China's progress in pursuit of modernization.

Soong's refutation of stereotypes of China was not radical, but it was very important and it touched off discussion in the mainstream media of China's progress toward modernization. One editor noted that women's freedom had been fully realized in the Western world and expressed confidence that "Madame Chiang" would bring this "modern learning to China."[96] Columnist Dorothy Bromley maintained that "the type of exquisitely cultivated, porcelain-fragile, helpless and useless Chinese lady is disappearing rapidly" under the impress of Soong Mayling's efforts. According to Bromley, the emergence of a new generation of Chinese, as represented by Madame Chiang, symbolized "the conversion of the old China into the new."[97] Another editor maintained that the Chinese "can and have been modernized" and that Americans found in Soong Mayling "the exemplification of the virtues of the modernized Chinese." The editor wrote that "America now more than ever admires the Chinese people" and is "heart and soul committed to aiding them as soon as is practicable."[98]

Even American fashion designers were swept up in the excitement generated by China's first lady. One article in the *New York Times* wrote that "New York fashion

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[96] This editor contended that Tennyson's long narrative poem "The Princess" (1847) "forecast a time when women would be free to live their own lives and learn everything Chinese women hitherto reserved for men." Surely, the editor insisted "Madame Chiang must be well acquainted with that prophetic poem." "Men and Women," *Bradford Era*, March 13, 1943.

[97] Dorothy Dunbar Bromley, "China's Advancing Generation Symbolized by Madame Chiang," *New York Herald Tribune*, March 7, 1943.

[98] "Relief for China," *Thomasville Times Enterprise*, March 22, 1943.

creators supply evidence of the fact that they were as vulnerable to the charms of Mme. Chiang Kai-shek as were the gentlemen of Congress."[99] The article included three pictures of models wearing new designs with a Chinese touch. Although the article was not entirely political, it reinforced Soong's core message by illustrating that a transformed Chinese/oriental culture provided valuable elements that could be absorbed into Western culture to produce a modern product.

In the first three stops of Soong's tour after Washington D.C., she employed various strategies to win the hearts of different audience groups. Her reception speeches in New York, Boson, and Chicago helped add many Americans to the number of her admirers. In New York, listeners burst into enthusiastic cheers after she finished her last sentence.[100] In Boston, over 1,000 people could not enter the hall and "stood patiently outside, waiting to catch a second glimpse of her as she departed."[101] In Chicago, a large and enthusiastic crowd gathered at the station and gave Soong "a typically gusty Midwestern" cheer after she accepted the key to the city.[102]

Soong's speeches in these cities contributed greatly to her growing influence. More people wrote to her and expressed their admiration with such flowery salutations as "dear

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[99] "Fashion Takes Cue from Mme. Chiang: A Whole Crop of Spring and Summer Styles Pay Homage to China's First Lady," *New York Times*, March 22, 1943.

[100] Lucy Greenbaum, "A Camera Report of Mme. Chiang Kai-shek's First Official Visit to New York," *New York Times*, March 2, 1943.

[101] Marie McGowan, "Madame Chiang Talks to 3,000 In Boston Hall," *New York Herald Tribune*, March 9, 1943.

[102] Marie McGowan, "Chicago Gives Madam Chiang Warm Welcome," *New York Herald Tribune*, March 20, 1943.

great lady of China" and "most honored lady."[103] According to the *New York Herald Tribune*, letters came from "a cross-section of America" that included a "hard-bitten United States Army sergeant" and "partners in Wall Street brokerage firms, as well as college students and members of missionary societies."[104] A New York taxi-driver said after Soong's Madison Square Garden address, "That was some speech! You could tell she meant what she said."[105] A senior at Emma Willard School in Troy, New York, claimed that Soong's words "had the effect of making everyone feel the relative nearness of China and convinced all that more material must be immediately sent to the Chinese."[106]

State governments expressed their admiration for Soong by inviting her to speak to them. For example, the Pennsylvania Senate and House approved a resolution of invitation for Soong to address the legislature, and Pennsylvania Governor Edward Martin extended this invitation to Soong when he met her in New York.[107] After Soong's speech at Madison Square Garden, the Wisconsin assembly passed a joint resolution "to direct the governor, the mayor of Madison, and the president of the University of

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[103] "20,000 Letters Are Received by Madam Chiang," *New York Herald Tribune*, March 14, 1943.

[104] Ibid.

[105] Helen Hull, *Mayling Soong Chiang*, 7.

[106] "Students Hear Account of Mass Meeting," *Troy Times Record*, March 5, 1943.

[107] "Invite Mme. Chiang," *Somerset Daily American*, February 24, 1943; "Invite Mme. Chiang to Address Assembly," *Huntingdon Daily News*, February 26, 1943.

Wisconsin" to telegraph Soong and to invite her to visit the state and address the legislature.[108]

Inspired by Soong's speeches, legislators, governors, and generals also expressed their growing affection for China and pledged to contribute to its fight against Japan. Representative John Conover Nickols of Oklahoma called for assisting China "in throwing off the bonds of her enemy" so that no one would "doubt that great emphasis will be given to the spread of Christianity in Asia."[109] "What China needs," Governor Edward Martin of Pennsylvania said, "Pennsylvania can and will produce."[110] Governor Robert O. Blood pledged on behalf of New Hampshire "That we stand side by side with the great Republic of China to pour urgently and without stint of our blood and treasure into the common cause of our two great republics and of free men everywhere."[111] Lieutenant General H. H Arnold, Chief of the United States Army Air Force, proclaimed: "More aid for China means work for everybody. Mere words won't kill Japs."[112]

As Soong's tour proceeded, more and more Americans regarded her as a new idol and admired her as a world leader committed to Christian values and democratic principles. Dr. William Moulton Marston, author of *Wonder Woman*, the most popular American comic book featuring a female superhero, decided to "switch from Joan d'Arc

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[108] "Assembly Invites Mme. Chiang Kai-shek," *Wisconsin State Journal*, March 4, 1943.

[109] "News from Washington," *Eufaula Indian Journal*, March 4, 1943.

[110] "Mme. Chiang Voices China's Resolution to Continue Fight," *New York Times*, March 3, 1943.

[111] Ibid.

[112] "Arnold's Address at Garden," *New York Herald Tribune*, March 3, 1943.

to Madame Chiang" so as to promote his "Wonder Women of History" series.[113] Representative Charles A. Eaton of New Jersey called Soong a "wonder woman of the world" during the House debate on Lend-Lease following her speeches to Congress.[114] Americans' enchantment with Soong was also reflected in the donations she received in support of her cause. In Chicago, Soong accepted two large donations—$100,000 from Ms. Anita McCormick Blaine and $52,797 from the Chinese-American community.[115] By March 17, she had received $310,000 for war relief work in China.[116] All of these responses to Soong reflected an altered perception of China from a nation waiting for America to rescue it to a nation that would stand alongside the United States and other Allies to "fight for freedom."[117]

This new perception prepared Soong for the West Coast leg of her tour, where the large Chinese communities in San Francisco and Los Angeles eagerly awaited her visit in hopes that it would add momentum to their anti-exclusion efforts, in addition to strengthening the war effort. Indeed, the whole nation, including congressmen and the president, was eager to know what she would say out West. By the end of March, nobody

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[113] Jill Lepore, *The Secret History of Wonder Woman* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2014), 222-23.

[114] John Elliott, "House Debate on Lend-Lease Stresses China," *New York Herald Tribune*, March 9, 1943.

[115] "McCormick Heiress Gives $100,000 to Mme. Chiang," *Los Angeles Times*, March 21, 1943; "Chicago's Chinese Give Again for 'Our Lady'," *Los Angeles Times*, March 22, 1943.

[116] "Mme. Chiang Receives $310,000 in Gifts for Chinese War Relief," *New York Times*, March 17, 1943.

[117] "Mme. Chiang's Mission," *Danville Bee*, March 6, 1943.

had any doubt about her eloquence. They wondered only what she would say next and what influence it might have on American foreign and domestic policies.

Chapter Five

Unity and Drama—San Francisco and Los Angeles

> *The bluffs of the Yangtze gorges, towering in somber majesty, find their parallel in the austerity of your Rockies, and the Sacramento and San Joaquin Valleys have their counterpart in the rolling hills of Hangchow and Fenghua. Today we both are threatened by the lowering clouds of evil forces, which would deprive us not only of our beloved lands, but would uproot from our hearts the traditions we treasure, and erase from our minds the principles we cherish.*
>
> —— Soong Mayling, speech at San Francisco Civic Auditorium

> *We take pride in the fact that we are preparing for a just and permanent peace and for the strenuous world-building that lies before us. You, too, are taking similar steps and, like us, you are as determined to contribute your share in the organization of a new and happier social order as you are in prosecuting the war.*
>
> —— Soong Mayling, speech at the Hollywood Bowl

On March 24, Soong Mayling left Chicago and headed to the West Coast on a special train. As the train sped westward, Soong was approaching the end of her tour. The last two cities she would visit were San Francisco and Los Angeles. The train passed Utah and Nevada and pulled to a stop at Cheyenne, capital of Wyoming. American soldiers at the station cheered to express their admiration of China's first lady. Soong did not leave the train to receive their greetings. She remained in her compartment most of the time throughout the transcontinental journey, trying to rest and to recover from nervous exhaustion after completing two-thirds of her speech tour. An equally important reason for her staying on board was that she had to work on her speeches. According to a United Press reporter, Soong was working hard on the speech she would make at San Francisco.[1]

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[1] Joan Younger, "Wyoming Sees Madame Chiang," *Ogden Standard Examiner*, March 24, 1943.

A Chinese spokesman told reporters that Soong "worries a lot over her speeches" and that her secretarial staff kept receiving "changes or additions which must be made."[2]

After her electrifying addresses in Washington, New York, Boston, and Chicago, Soong no longer worried about lacking public attention or adulation. Her appearance in each city had been met with unparalleled hospitality from average Americans and commentators. "Of all those who have come here from foreign lands," wrote columnist David Lawrence, "none has left so indelible an impression of sincerity as Madame Chiang Kai-shek."[3] Editors of the *Dunkirk Evening Observer* not only endorsed Soong's assertion that the United States could not win a war by sitting on its hands but also urged their readers to support inclusion of China in all international councils. They maintained that China must be treated as an equal because there was "something of unconscious and unjustified arrogance in the assumption that a British-American bloc can dominate the present world or the world of the immediate future."[4] What concerned Soong as she headed west was how to expand her influence and direct public support into a driving force for policy change.

She knew her speeches had aroused national sympathy to influence legislators and the White House. Congressmen introduced bills to repeal the Chinese exclusion laws; and before her arrival in San Francisco, news was released that a full-fledged U.S. air force command in China had been created, indicating "a sizable expansion of American air

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[2] Dorothy Porter, "Chinese First Lady Works on Talks Planned in California," *Ogden Standard Examiner*, March 24, 1943.

[3] David Lawrence, "Madame Chiang's Words Should Serve as Guide for Statesmen of U.S.," *Arizona Republic*, March 24, 1943.

[4] "Mme. Chiang's Fable," *Dunkirk Evening Observer*, March 24, 1943; "Aren't We a Little Arrogant?" *Dunkirk Evening Observer*, March 24, 1943.

power in the China Theater and a new phase in the war against Japan."[5] But these developments were not enough. Soong sought to elevate China's role in the alliance and to consolidate a position for it in the postwar world.

To achieve these aims, she had to respond to new challenges that reflected diplomatic tensions and American domestic policies. Winston Churchill's speech on March 21 had enhanced the orientalist mentality and suggested the desirability of a postwar order that marginalized or even excluded China. Although Soong had responded to Churchill in her Chicago address, it was not unreasonable to expect that a British prime minister's words might have more influence on the American audience than those of a Chinese first lady. Moreover, the West Coast had the most intransigent anti-Chinese politicians and exclusionist labor leaders. California had initiated the national anti-Chinese movement in the nineteenth century, a movement that produced passage of the Chinese exclusion laws. Despite growing national sympathy for China during the war, long-existing Sinophobic attitudes remained strong in California, and investigations conducted in 1942 revealed deep opposition in the Bay Area to repeal of the exclusion laws.[6]

In response to these challenges, Soong sought to expand her influence by presenting a discourse of unity on the West Coast. This chapter analyzes her speeches and activities in San Francisco and Los Angeles to understand how she called for U.S.-China military cooperation during the war and sustained unity after it. The first part of the chapter explores Soong's rhetorical strategies in San Francisco to reveal how she sought to

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[5] "China Air Force: Victory for Mme. Chiang," *Ruthven Free Press*, March 24, 1943.

[6] Fred W. Riggs, *Pressures on Congress: A Study of the Repeal of Chinese Exclusion* (New York: King's Crown Press, 1950), 51.

elevate China's status within the Alliance through a discourse of unity. The second part analyses her most dramatic speech of the tour—delivered at the Hollywood Bowl—to understand how she utilized the staging provided by a Hollywood director to present China as a courageous and reliable ally for the United States.

San Francisco: Rhetoric of Unity

Soong Mayling reached San Francisco on March 25. By the time she arrived, her visit to each city had already formed a pattern—official welcome ceremony, press conference, major address, visit to Chinatown, and meeting with local dignitaries. San Francisco followed this pattern with one notable exception: Soong postponed the municipal official welcome and made Chinatown her first stop. Instead of going immediately to City Hall for a formal reception ceremony, she headed to Chinatown and rode through the decorated main street. According to a *Los Angeles Times* report, virtually all of San Francisco's Chinese population of 17,500 people "turned out to see her," and an additional 8,000 "came from 11 Western States to pay her homage."[7] The sidewalks were packed with Chinese men, women, and children, while others filled the windows and balconies.[8] A parade organized by the city's Chinese residents marched along the main street following Soong's car. In the afternoon, the parades joined U.S. military units in a city parade to cheer Soong in front of City Hall.

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[7] "Chinese Greet Mme. Chiang With Huge Parade in Bay City," *Los Angeles Times*, March 26, 1943.

[8] Harry J. Thomas, *The First Lady of China: the Historical Visit of Mme. Chiang Kai-shek to the United States* (New York: International Business Machines Corporation, 1943), 115.

Starting out in Chinatown attracted public attention to the Chinese community. In this way, Soong increased their visibility and reminded mainstream American society of the contributions made by Chinese immigrants to the United States. When she attended the official welcome ceremony after her visit to Chinatown, San Francisco mayor Angelo J. Rossi praised her for "the truth and justice of the great cause she represents" and for "the part that Chinese Americans had played in the building of California."[9]

Soong understood that the geographical location of San Francisco made perceptions of Chinese Americans inseparable from perceptions of Chinese people in general. She hoped that Chinese immigrants would be viewed as representatives of China in America and that emphasizing their contributions to the United States would win respect both for them and for Chinese people in the Far East. She not only wanted Americans to view Chinese and Chinese Americans as important factors in the war, but she also hoped Americans would see an identity between the two peoples. Only by cementing this perception could she build momentum for policy changes to secure a stronger Sino-American alliance. Consequently, unity became the primary theme in her San Francisco discourse.

Prior to San Francisco, Soong had emphasized U.S.-China unity primarily to influence Lend-Lease policy and military strategy in the India-Burma-China theatre. But after Churchill's "rescue China" speech of March 21, she realized that Sino-American unity was imperative if China were to achieve a prominent position in the postwar world. Therefore, she needed to expand her unity discourse so as to bring China loyalty and

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[9] Ibid, 117.

commitment as well as understanding and sympathy. Her efforts in this regard can be seen in all her rhetorical activities in San Francisco.

On March 25, she attended the official reception at City Hall after visiting Chinatown. Upon receiving the keys to the city from Mayor Rossi, she gave a brief talk in which she stated that the Golden Gate Bridge "looked from west to east and spanned from north to south" and symbolized "eternal friendship and understanding between our two peoples."[10] By bridging geographical distance between China and America, Soong offered a discourse of connection between two nations to enhance the idea of U.S.-China unity as the foundation for a new world order.

The next day, she attended a press conference. In her concluding remarks, she echoed Mayor Rossi's speech and expressed her hope that Chinese would be accepted as "loyal citizens wherever they went and into whatever land they were adopted."[11] By stressing the patriotism of Chinese Americans and their obligation to their adopted country, she blurred national boundaries and enhanced her general theme of mutually reinforcing Sino-American duties and interests. The most important piece of her unity discourse, however, was her major address at San Francisco's Civic Auditorium on March 27. Before turning to the speech, we need to examine the diplomatic tensions within the Alliance to understand what Soong attempted to achieve in her address.

Commentators noted that Soong's Civic Auditorium speech made a "poignant appeal for true unity among the free peoples of the world and a sharp challenge to the forces that

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[10] "Chinese Greet Mme. Chiang With Huge Parade in Bay City," *Los Angeles Times*, March 26, 1943.

[11] Thomas, *First Lady of China*, 125.

would try to disrupt that unity."[12] But who, in Soong's mind, were "the free peoples" who were to constitute that "true unity," and who were "the forces that would try to disrupt that unity"? Throughout the speech, she mentioned only connections between the United States and China. The exclusion of other alliance members revealed Soong's perception of certain allied nations as causes of disunity; who she had in mind was evident when she used historical anecdotes to warn against those who "flew at each other's throats" after "they had defeated the enemy." This criticism targeted Great Britain, though not by name. In the grand scheme of things, there is little doubt that Soong hoped to alter the power structure in the alliance by replacing Anglo-American unity with Sino-American fraternity.

During much of Soong's time in the United States, the Chinese diplomatic group was planning a tour of Great Britain for Soong after her American trip. The plan reached an impasse after Churchill stated on March 21 that China was not included in his postwar vision. Soong angrily denounced Churchill's "old, paternal patronizing attitude" to Wellington Koo, the Chinese Ambassador to Great Britain, when he flew to San Francisco in an effort to persuade Soong to visit Britain. Koo's effort was in vain because neither Chiang Kai-shek nor T.V. Soong supported Soong Mayling's visit to Great Britain at that moment. In a cable of March 26, Chiang suggested that Soong not visit Britain because Churchill's speech clearly indicated his contempt toward China and his ignorance of China's importance in the postwar order. "If you visit Britain now," Chiang wrote, it will seem "like begging them. They will only give us contempt or deceit."[13] T.

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[12] Ibid, 129.

[13] Chiang Kai-shek, cable to Soong Mayling, March 26, 1943, *Zhonghua Min Guo Zhong Yao Shi Liao Chu Bian: Dui Ri Kang Zhan Shi Qi: Xu Bian* [Archives of the Republic

V. Soong also regarded a visit to England after Churchill's speech as "too much like condescension in the face of a slap at China."[14]

Soong Mayling did not have to be persuaded on this point by her husband and brother. Like them, she could not forgive the British for past discrimination, and she believed that many of China's problems "led back to the colonialism and political domination by powers like Britain."[15] After responding to Churchill's statement in her Chicago address, she continued to warn Americans against the British perception of China as unimportant. Not only did she resent Britain's long-term treatment of China, she also regarded America as a more important ally and sought throughout her visit to improve relations with the United States. She saw an opportunity in this regard after she learned about the White House's reaction to Churchill's speech.

On March 22, Secretary of State Cordell Hull told British Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden that he thought "Churchill had made a serious mistake in his speech yesterday by not mentioning China among the great powers."[16] President Roosevelt expressed the same attitude and informed Eden that he regarded China as "a very useful power in the Far East" and wanted to "strengthen China in every possible way."[17] Two

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of China: War Against Japan: Sequel] (Taibei: The Chinese Nationalist Party Central Committee Party History Committee), 817-18. Hereafter referred to as *Archives of the Republic of China*.

[14] Stephen G. Graft, *V.K. Wellington Koo and the Emergence of Modern China* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2004), 161.

[15] Ibid, 162.

[16] Robert E. Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins: An Intimate History* (New York: Harper, 1950), 716.

[17] Ibid.

days later, Soong cabled Chiang Kai-shek, saying that "According to Hull, Roosevelt is making effort to encourage public statement in opposition to British opinion."[18] FDR's actions enhanced Soong's confidence that China should and could build a closer connection with the United States. During her conversation with Koo on March 25, she expressed this idea and asserted that "compared to America's generous aid, the help from Britain can be neglected."[19] On March 26, she wired Chiang again and informed him how she managed to persuade American congressmen to side with China and to make speeches criticizing Churchill's words.[20] She opined that comments by American congressmen such as House Majority Leader John W. McCormack and Senator Walter Franklin George would help shape public opinion in favor of China. Soong not only quoted McCormack's criticism of Churchill in her cable to Chiang but also asserted that China's diplomatic discourse should be less polite and more confrontational so that no country would hold China in contempt.[21]

On March 27, an article reporting on a speech by McCormack was published in the *Los Angeles Times*. According to the article, McCormack blamed Churchill for adhering to "regionalism in contrary to the concept of the global character of the present struggle." The article also highlighted McCormack's claim that "any idea in the minds of any persons that China will occupy the position of a 'rescued child' had better be

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[18] *Archives of the Republic of China*, 841.

[19] V. K. Wellington Koo, *Gu Weijun Hui Yi Lu* [Wellington Koo's Memoirs] (Beijing: Zhonghua Shu Ju, 1983), 262. Hereafter cited as *Wellington Koo's Memoirs*.

[20] *Archives of the Republic of China*, 842.

[21] Ibid.

dissipated."[22] Such comments provided a situational context in favor of Soong's unity rhetoric. They also served as an advertisement for her major speech in San Francisco. On the evening of March 27, 1,500 seats had to be added to the Civic Auditorium, which already contained 8,500 seats. Several thousand people without tickets still came to the venue "in hope of gaining entrance."[23] According to news reports the next day, the total size of the audience amounted to "a crowd of 12,000 at the Civic Auditorium" and the speech was broadcast nationally by N.B.C.[24]

Around nine o'clock in the evening, California Governor Earl Warren escorted Soong Mayling onto the stage in the auditorium, where "dignitaries of the Nation, State and city, as well as the chiefs of military commands in the San Francisco area" were seated.[25] After mayor Rossi presented her a scroll that made her "an honorary citizen of San Francisco," the audience applauded for "a full five minutes" before Soong started speaking.[26] In her speech, she employed spatial rhetoric to alter perceptions of China as the remote other, appealed to universal humanity to denounce any form of narrow nationalism, and called for international loyalty in the pursuit of human advancement.

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[22] John W. McCormack, "China's Rights and Our Duty," *Los Angeles Times*, March 27, 1943.

[23] Thomas, *First Lady of China*, 129.

[24] "Madame Chiang Urges Peace among Allies," *Madison Wisconsin State Journal,* March 28, 1943; "Protest Planned by Radio Station Balked on Speech," *Los Angeles Times,* March 29, 1943.

[25] *Jiang Fu Ren You Mei Ji Nian Ce* [Album Commemorating Madame Chiang's Trip to America] (San Francisco: Chinese National Daily Press, 1943), 94.

[26] Thomas, *First Lady of China*, 129.

She began by defining the space between America and China. The two nations, she said, were "only separated by an expanse of water," so she felt "close to homeland" while speaking in San Francisco. Her words encouraged a global view that regarded the United States as a member of the Asia-Pacific family and facilitated the imagination of a trans-Pacific unity between China and the United States that transcended cultural differences. After shortening the physical distance between the two nations, Soong further collapsed the separation between them by saying that she was touched by her audience because "amongst you there live so many of my compatriots." She compared topographical and meteorological characteristics of the United States and China, painting pictures of two lands with "fertile plains," "great lakes," "stretching rivers," "rolling hills," and "rich resources." By paralleling American valleys, hills, lakes, and rivers with their Chinese counterparts, Soong helped her audience "see" similar landscapes, both of which featured "spacious skies and spacious earth" and both of which were threatened by Japan, the common enemy who "would deprive us not only of our beloved lands, but would uproot from our hearts the traditions we treasure, and erase from our minds the principles we cherish."

Combining distance-shortening claims and topographical parallels, Soong gave her audience a lecture on transnational geography that accentuated similarity and connection between the United States and China. Geography, as Edward Said famously pointed out, is a discursive construction and a political practice of world-making.[27] The result of this discursive formation is what he called "imaginative geography"— the creation of geographical entities that mark physical distance and sustain claims of intercultural and

[27] Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Random House, 1978), 71.

international relations.[28] Soong's spatial rhetoric at the beginning of her speech reversed the geography embedded in orientalist discourse. It redefined the meaning of space between China and the United States, replacing the perception of China as a remote, strange land with a new mental picture of familiar scenes. Through Soong's words, Americans learned that China had meandering rivers not unlike the Mississippi and great mountains similar to the Rockies. Her discourse was calculated to dispel the sense of mystery about China and to alter its image as the oriental "other." By reducing the sense of spatial distance between the two countries, she also implied that they might find other similarities as well.

In the second part of her speech, after a call for unified action to protect common principles, Soong criticized four ideas that blinded people to "the peril confronting the world today." First, she stated, "genius and creative thought are not delimited by race or creed." Second, "universal attitude" rather than "narrow" nationalism should be "the only attitude taken for man's progress and advancement." Third, if people place their emphasis "solely on the material and neglect the development of the mind and the heart," decadence inevitably "corrodes their being." Fourth, the challenge was not just "the winning of the war, but the winning of the peace after this war."

Soong did not use words such as colonialism, racism, imperialism, or ethnocentrism, but she asserted that "international understanding and goodwill" must replace "financial and territorial conquistadores," "all forms of narrow nationalism," and the belief that genius is limited by race. She urged the audience to "dispel confusion of thought" and to

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[28] Ibid, 54-55. Although Said does not provide a specific definition of "imaginative geography," he discusses the construction of "us" and "them" in the chapter titled "Imaginative Geography and Its Representations" and how this construction justified the imagination of a "barbarian land" in the Western mind.

make judgments based on "intensive and analytical thinking" and upon reflection of their "inner beliefs." Such judgments, Soong hoped, would encourage the search for "valuable truths" and unity during and after the war. She called for unity under the banner of common ideas and preached ideologies of universality and equality to help her audience transcend racial and cultural boundaries. As Soong said in a cable to Chiang before the speech, Churchill always claimed that Great Britain and the United States were brothers with the same blood.[29] She was going to challenge that perception and encourage Americans to feel as close to people on the other side of the Pacific as to those on the other side of the Atlantic.

In the last part of her speech, Soong warned the audience against internal conflict through a historical example of "factional differences" developed among allied members that finally led to self-destruction. She briefly explained the story of how, in a fifteenth-century religious war in Europe, the Clixtines and Taborites, two Hussite factions, united to defeat their common enemy, yet "flew at each other's throat" after the victory. By again employing the traditional Chinese rhetorical strategy of *jiegufengjin* (using ancient cases to criticize a current situation), Soong called for unity among members of the Great Alliance without violating diplomatic constraints.[30]

Some of Soong's listeners were not familiar with the story of the Hussites of Bohemia fighting against the German Emperor in the fifteenth century, but news reports the next day clarified it and helped explain how "Mme. Chiang Kai-shek cites examples

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[29] *Archives of the Republic of China*, 842.

[30] See Chapter 4 for a detailed discussion of Soong's usage of this rhetorical strategy in her East Coast speeches.

of Hussites" to warn allies against "fighting each other after achieving military victory."[31] Other reports focused on her spatial rhetoric and diplomatic artistry. An *Oakland Tribune* article praised Soong for outlining "the similarity between the United States and China" and for reiterating the conviction that all members of the United Nations share "identically the same aims."[32] In a column widely reprinted throughout the nation, Charles Stewart applauded Soong for her "ideal diplomacy." He noted that she knew how to express "what she wants for China" in a fashion "to arouse no frictions" and was able to "convince Occidental leadership that agreement will be as beneficial to their homelands as it will be to her own democracy's."[33]

Besides helping Soong reach a wider public, newspaper articles demonstrated how her speech was well received in general. Ten California women's groups published a tribute to Soong, praising her message that "humanity may learn to act as one family and to work at common tasks" and applauding her conviction that "fundamental and basic unity" would destroy "gigantic evils."[34] Influential opinion leader Walter Lippman

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[31] Edith Gaylord, "Warns Allies of Need For Saving Peace after War," *Waterloo Sunday Courier*, March 28, 1943. Many news reports used titles that clarified the implied meaning of Soong's speech—calling for unity during the war and warning the Allies against disunity after the war. A few examples are "China's First Lady Pleads for Unity in Peace," *Lincoln Nebraska State Journal*, March 28, 1943; "Mme. Chiang Seeks to Avert Discord," *Helena Independent*, March 28, 1943; "Mme. Chiang Fears Allies May Split Up," *Ada Evening News*, March 28, 1943.

[32] "Mme. Chiang Tells Aims of Four Allies," *Oakland Tribune*, March 28, 1943.

[33] Charles Steweart, "Madame Chiang Queen of Roving Ambassador," *Hammond Times*, March 28, 1943.

[34] "California Women Honor Madame Chiang Kai-shek," *San Mateo Times*, March 29, 1943. According to this article, Dr. Anrelia Henry Rainhardt, president of Mills College, wrote the tribute and ten statewide women's organizations, on behalf of women of California, presented it to Soong Mayling after her San Francisco Auditorium address.

published an article on March 29 stating that "We have a right to ask Britain officialdom to realize that we regard China as our indispensable ally." According to Lippman, Americans "look upon the friendship of China as the only possible guaranty that the Asiatic war will not degenerate into an endless conflict between the Western and Eastern peoples." He suggested that Churchill should have said "the United Nations, headed by the four great victorious powers, which would have included China," if "we are discussing the problem of world peace realistically, candidly and in earnest."[35] Columnist Bernice Harrell Chipman praised Soong as an "ambassador of good will from China" and the "epitomé of modern civilization." She stated that Soong came to the West "not as a beggar, not in the guise of a suppliant, but as a proud and rich ally, politely explaining the mutual advantages of mutual assistance" and seeking to promote "a better understanding of China's role in the world conflict."[36]

Besides garnering verbal endorsements, Soong's unity discourse generated financial donations. During her San Francisco visit, she received $43,502 for China War Relief, a large portion of which came from the Chinese community.[37] She wanted American society to see this support as contributing to the common goal of the United Nations rather than as Chinese immigrants' contributing to their home country. To achieve that, she extended her unity discourse while speaking to the San Francisco Chinese community

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[35] Walter Lippmann, "Today and Tomorrow—Mr. Churchill on China and Europe," *Los Angeles Times*, March 29, 1943.

[36] Bernice Harrell Chipman, "What Do You Think," *Bakersfield Californian*, March 29, 1943.

[37] "Mme. Chiang Sees F. R. Kin," *San Mateo Times*, March 29, 1943.

and emphasized that their effort to win the war was a contribution to both nations because of the inseparable links between China and the United States.

On March 28, she delivered a speech in Mandarin, the official language of China, to "10,000 Chinese from 11 Western states" at the City Auditorium.[38] Her speech reiterated China's contribution to the international community and called for Chinese Americans to donate to the fight against the Axis. "We, in China, have fought aggression, not alone for China, but, too, for the United Sates, for the world, for justice," she declared. Emphasizing common goals shared by the United States and China, she stated that China "shall not ever give up that fight" and Chinese soldiers would "continue to pay with their flesh and blood for liberty and equality."[39]

Soong had spoken to Chinese Americans in Mandarin when she visited Chinatowns in other cities, but media coverage of those speeches provided little information about their content. This time, however, some excerpts were translated into English and published in newspapers, which made her Mandarin speech another important element of her unity discourse in San Francisco. Journalists interpreted the speech as a proud pledge and an earnest plea. She told the audience that "China has now become one of the four

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[38] "Mme. Chiang Says China to Go on Fighting," *Hammond Times*, March 29, 1943.

[39] Many newspapers reported on this speech. A few examples are "Madame Chiang Sells War Bonds," *Ames Daily Tribune*, March 29, 1943; "Mme. Chiang Says China to Go on Fighting," *Hammond Times*, March 29, 1943; "Mme. Chiang Urges Purchase of War Bonds," *Taylor Daily Press*, March 29, 1943. The full Mandarin text of Soong's speech can be found in the album published by Chinese Nationalist Daily, *Jiang Fu Ren You Mei Ji Nian Ce* [Album Commemorating Madame Chiang's Trip to America], 95-96. No newspaper provided a complete translation of the speech, but the *Oakland Tribune* and the *Ogden Standard Examiner* provided fairly detailed accounts of its content and situation. See "Few Visitors Received by Mme. Chiang," *Oakland Tribune*, March 29, 1943; Joan Younger, "Madame Chiang Sees Victory," *Ogden Standard Examiner*, March 29, 1943.

great nations of the world" and "despite the six years of war, our people at home are as firm as before in their determination to win."[40] She also urged them to buy war bonds, stating that "in buying war bonds, you are helping China win the war" because "America has been helping China's fight with war materials."[41] Chinese Americans, as Soong presented them in this speech, were not unassimilable foreigners but devoted patriots—an image that San Francisco Chinese Americans believed "would bolster sympathy not only for China's resistance war but also for the repeal movement" in opposition to the exclusion laws.[42]

The last component of Soong's unity discourse in San Francisco was her address to West Coast labor leaders and workers. On March 29, she spoke to members of the Congress of Industrial Organizations (C.I.O.), the American Federation of Labor (A.F.L.), and the Railroad Brotherhoods at the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union meeting.[43] The meeting was held at the C.I.O. regional headquarters, 150 Golden Gate Avenue, and about 2,000 union members jammed the hall.[44] The venue was in sharp contrast to the Palace Hotel, where a farewell reception organized by the Chinese

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[40] Joan Younger, "Madame Chiang Sees Victory," *Ogden Standard Examiner*, March 29, 1943.

[41] "Few Visitors Received by Mme. Chiang," *Oakland Tribune*, March 29, 1943.

[42] Yong Chen, *Chinese San Francisco, 1850-1943: A Trans-Pacific Community* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), 257.

[43] Marie McGowan, "Madam Chiang Heard by Coast Labor Leaders," *New York Herald Tribune*, March 30, 1943.

[44] Ibid; "Mme. Chiang Bids for Labor Unity," *East Liverpool Review*, March 30, 1943.

Consul General had been held earlier in the day—so, too, was Soong's style.[45] Unlike the Palace Hotel speech, which was "scholarly in tone and philosophic in nature," Soong spoke extemporaneously and passionately to the labor representatives.[46] She called her audience "fellow workers" and urged them to increase production to win the war.[47] She claimed an identity of interest between the Chinese people and American workers by saying, "Just now the three gentlemen who proceeded me said that 'China's cause is our cause.' I desire to add that your cause is China's cause."[48]

Editorialists praised Soong for speaking "simply and clearly what we columnists and commentators say so clumsily."[49] Many listeners at the meeting were members of the first American union to support China's boycott of Japanese goods in 1932.[50] News reports depicted how Soong transformed the meaning of their boycott from an anti-war protest into a pledge for winning the war. When she asked them, "Do you want to lose this war," the crowd yelled "No." When she asked them, "Do you want to increase production," her audience cried "Yes! Yes! Yes!"[51] This interaction functioned as a

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[45] Soong's address to 900 guests at a farewell reception at the Palace Hotel followed formal and strict protocol. Immediately afterward, she rushed to the labor meeting. See "Mme. Chiang Pleads for U.S. Production," *Oakland Tribune*, March 30, 1943.

[46] "Mme. Chiang Tells Aims of Four Allies," *Oakland Tribune*, March 28, 1943.

[47] "Mme. Chiang Pleads for U.S. Production," *Oakland Tribune*, March 30, 1943.

[48] John Robert Badger, "World View: Madame Chiang's Message," *Chicago Defender*, April 24, 1943.

[49] Ibid.

[50] Karen J. Leong, *The China Mystique: Pearl S. Buck, Anna May Wong, Mayling Soong, and the Transformation of American Orientalism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 48.

[51] "Mme. Chiang Calls for Higher Output," *Los Angeles Examiner*, March 30, 1943.

collective pledge of common identity and a display of determination to beat a common enemy.

Then Soong expanded this shared identity to include all American laborers by stating: "I called you fellow workers because I know that I am speaking to a cross section of all labor in America, both men and women. What I am going to say to you is meant for every one of the laborers in America."[52] Many reporters quoted this sentence, thereby helping Soong send her message to workers beyond San Francisco and California. By allaying tension between Chinese immigrants and labor unions, which had long been the leading political force behind exclusion policy, Soong reinforced her emphasis on Chinese-American unity and helped mitigate a major barrier to ending the exclusion laws.

Soong concluded her labor union speech by stating: "We must let no dissension, no difference of opinion come between us because if we do we will be defeated."[53] Here, as in her other words in San Francisco, Soong emphasized inseparable connections and common goals between China and the United States in an effort to forge a new understanding of relations between two nations. As a *Los Angeles Times* editorial stated, Soong was "the architect and builder of a bridge ultimately to span the age-long gap between the East and West, a human demonstration that the ideologies of Orient and Occident are not irreconcilable nor even very widely separated."[54]

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[52] "Mme. Chiang Calls for Labor Accord," *Abilene Reporter News*, March 30, 1943

[53] "Mme. Chiang Pleads for U.S. Production," *Oakland Tribune*, March 30, 1943

[54] "A Welcome to Mme. Chiang," *Los Angeles Times*, March 31, 1943.

In addition to the intrinsic importance of Soong's speeches in San Francisco, they were important because they paved way for her dramatic appearance at the Hollywood Bowl in Los Angeles. Earning American support to help China win the war was the primary goal of her diplomatic trip. But before her appearance in Los Angeles, she had focused primarily on bridging cultural differences between the two nations and had not had an opportunity to dramatize for audiences what had been taking place on battlefields in China. Los Angeles, however, would provide that opportunity. Her speech at the Hollywood Bowl, in combination with the spectacle surrounding it, allowed her to present powerful images of China as an unyielding nation fighting with all its heart for the same objectives as Americans.

Drama at the Hollywood Bowl

Los Angeles had been preparing for Soong Mayling's visit for close to a month. Upon receiving official confirmation of her trip from the Chinese Consul on March 3, a welcome committee was formed to plan a number of events in her honor.[55] Knowing that this would be the last stop of Soong's tour, the committee encouraged the entire city to provide a welcome ceremony grander than any of her previous ones. With the help of motion picture moguls, events in "the Land of Sun and Flowers" became a spectacle truly worthy of Hollywood.

Soong arrived at Union Station on March 31. She was greeted by local officials headed by Mayor Fletcher Bowron, the welcome committee headed by Robert L. Smith

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[55] "Mme. Chiang Will Visit Los Angeles," *Los Angeles Times*, March 3, 1943.

and David O. Selznick, a Chinese delegation, and thousands of enthusiastic Angelinos.[56] Police officers and a guard of honor constituted from the armed services escorted her to City Hall to accept the keys to the city. This escort consisted of four lines of armed men, twelve abreast, and included a full military band playing the national anthems of the United States and China.[57] According to Chief of Police C. B. Horrall, only President Roosevelt got the same level of protection on his visit to Los Angeles.[58]

During the welcome ceremony, Mayor Bowron praised Soong and the Chinese people and made her an honorary citizen of Los Angeles. Then he proclaimed the day as "Mme. Chiang Kai-shek Day" and presented her a scroll inscribed with this proclamation. The ceremony was followed by a military parade that, according to some commentators, rivaled the "San Francisco spectacle."[59] Thousands of citizens lined the procession route to applaud Soong when she reviewed the parade and rode with it through the city's central section.[60] When Soong passed Macy Street in the heart of old Chinatown, 4,000 Chinese burst into enthusiastic cheers and shoved into the street, almost blocking the parade.[61]

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[56] Thomas, *First Lady of China*,149.

[57] "Armed Services to Join in Guarding Mme. Chiang," *Los Angeles Times*, March 27, 1943.

[58] "Police Will Guard Mme. Chiang Here," *Los Angeles Times*, March 24, 1943.

[59] Thomas, *First Lady of China,*156.

[60] Harold Mendelsohn, "Thousands Line Procession Route," *Los Angeles Times*, April 1, 1943.

[61] Gene Sherman, "Mme. Chiang 'Captures' City," *Los Angele Times*, April 1, 1943.

The drama had just started. On the second day of her stay in Los Angeles, Soong received more than 200 Hollywood film stars, leading cinema executives, and producers at the Ambassador Hotel. The banquet that evening was as dazzling as any Hollywood party, though this time the stars were "less in brilliance" and "not the one[s] to be gazed at."[62] The female stars wore "new creations by famous designers" and took turns meeting Soong.[63] She did not give a speech at this event, but she conversed with several luminaries, including Joan Bennett, Gary Cooper, Shirley Temple, and Walt Disney.[64] The banquet provided Hollywood elites an opportunity to meet Soong in person so they could better play their parts in the gala at the Hollywood Bowl three days later.

That event, on April 4, was the climax of Soong's visit to Los Angeles and of her entire tour. The great outdoor amphitheater was transformed into a spectacular stage under the serene California skies.[65] The Los Angeles Symphony Orchestra played in the shell at the base of the bowl. Two enormous scarlet pylons stood "in sharp contrast against the green hillside."[66] The seals of the United States and the Republic of China were inscribed separately on each pylon. A giant board, on which a Chinese character meaning "victory" was printed, was erected in the center of the stage next to the speaking

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[62] "Madame Chiang and the Film Folk Get Acquainted," *Joplin News Herald*, April 2, 1943.

[63] "Madame Chiang Urges Plans," *Bakersfield Californian*, April 2, 1943.

[64] Thomas, *First Lady of China*, 169-170; "Mme. Chiang Spends Busy Day in Suite—China's First Lady Leaves Rooms Only for Film Reception," *Los Angeles Times*, April 2, 1943.

[65] The grandeur of Soong's Hollywood Bowl address can be seen in the pictures in *Life*, April 19, 1943.

[66] Thomas, *First Lady of China,* 172.

lectern. The stage was decorated with a red carpet, colorful flowers, and the national flags of both nations. An audience of 30,000 people was in attendance.[67] Before Soong rose to speak, a pageant titled "China: A Symphonic Narrative" was performed as the preliminary program.[68]

The pageant was a spectacular performance designed to present China's modern history through music, acting, and narration. The narrative was written by Harry Kronman and read by Walter Huston. Herbert Stothart wrote, arranged, and conducted the music, and William Dieterle directed the entire show.[69] Five hundred Chinese Americans acted out how millions of Chinese had moved westward during the war to the inner provinces to escape Japanese aggression and to build a new China under the leadership of Generalissimo and Madame Chiang Kai-shek.[70] Actor Edward G. Robinson played the voice of Chiang and exclaimed "Go West! Go to the West."[71] With David O. Selznick as the producer, this twenty-minute production "contextualized for the American audience" China's role in the war and Madame Chiang's historical significance.[72]

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[67] Gene Sherman, "Mme. Chiang Stirs 30,000 at Bowl," *Los Angeles Times*, April 5, 1943.

[68] Jane Park, "'The China Film': Madame Chiang Kai-shek in Hollywood," *Screening the Past* 30 (2011) http://www.screeningthepast.com/2011/04/the-china-film/

[69] David Thomson, *Showman, the Life of David O. Selznick* (New York: Knopf, 1992), 389.

[70] K. Scott Wong, *Americans First: Chinese Americans and the Second World War* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005), 107.

[71] Thomson, *Showman*, 389.

[72] Leong, *China Mystique*, 142.

As Karen J. Leong observes, the pageant emphasized the symbolic unity between the United States and China by suggesting that the westward movement in China would replace the old China with a new China, "one more educated, industrialized, democratic and Americanized."[73] In his words during the pre-speech production, Spencer Tracy declared the role of Soong Mayling in this transformation:

> China gives us, for this precious hour, a great and gallant guest. A woman, slim and fragile as a woman is, with all of woman's immemorial strength. These two small hands, a woman's hands, have swept the cobwebs from a nation's past. These hands have lit dark corners in its homes, have built its schools, cared for its young and nursed its war-made wounds. These hands, a woman's hands, have helped to shape a nation's destiny. This heart, a woman's heart, whispers a simple woman's hope and all the world must pause and hear. And yet, one does not speak of Madame Chiang Kai-shek unless one speaks of China too, of China's yesterday which was her heritage, China's tomorrow which is her life.[74]

By highlighting China's transformation, the pageant reinforced the notion that China was an emerging modern nation ready to shoulder its responsibility in the international community. News reports characterized Soong's heroic character in the pageant as a combination of "the international Cinderella" and "the Joan of Arc of the United Nations."[75]

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[73] Ibid.

[74] Prologue to "China: A Symphonic Narrative," quoted in Park, "The China Film."

[75] Newspaper reports used many adjectives to describe Soong Mayling throughout her tour. But most of them only referred to her simply as "China's first lady." "Joan of Arc" was used early in the our, but "international Cinderella" and "the Joan of Arc of the United Nations" did not appear until Soong arrived in Los Angeles. Among the newspaper reports that used these new titles were Norreys Jephson O'Connor, "Presenting Your Allies," *Los Angeles Times*, March 31, 1943; Gene Sherman, "Mme. Chiang 'Captures' City," *Los Angeles Times*, April 1, 1943; "Gifts From All Walks Pour in to Mme. Chiang," *Los Angeles Times*, April 2, 1943.

Besides providing a dramatic stage for the finale of Soong's speech tour, Selznick designed the event to facilitate fundraising for United China Relief. He had been asked to do so by Henry Luce, who actively participated in Soong's tour from its beginning. He co-chaired the welcome committee in New York and helped arrange for nine governors to speak at Soong's Madison Square Garden event. He had his editors publish articles in *Life* to endorse each of Soong's speeches, and his aide Wesley Bailey wrote some of the toasts to Soong at the banquets in her honor.[76] To promote the work of United China Relief, Luce maintained close constant contact with Hollywood producers. He persuaded Selznick to chair the Hollywood branch of UCR, and he enlisted 200 other producers and motion picture executives to help him raise money for China.[77] Having already won two Academy Awards for his blockbuster films, Selznick was looking for a project that would "combine his penchant for melodramatic spectacle with the patriotism that he was unable to prove on the battlefield."[78] After accepting Luce's invitation, he worked day and night on the show's details.[79] Seeing how Selznick worked on the music, the décor, and even floor plans for the Hollywood Bowl event, Luce was confident he would create "a show which will send 40,000,000 Americans to bed weeping for China and emptying their pocketbooks."[80]

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[76] Robert Edwin Herzstein, *Henry R. Luce,* Time *and the American Crusade in Asia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 289.

[77] Thomson, *Showman,* 387; Herzstein, *Henry R. Luce*, 288.

[78] Park, "The China Film."

[79] Thomson, *Showman, 387.*

[80] Herzstein, *Henry R. Luce*, 288.

While Selznick planned his pageant, Soong prepared her speech. Journalists noted that she spent much time in her hotel, working "with her stenographers and secretaries" while a last-minute rehearsal of the Bowl event proceeded with "everyone there except the crowd and the star."[81] Though she did not participate in the rehearsal, Soong knew well that the stage for her last speech was unique. She made full use of that stage and provided a sensational melodrama of the war in China. Through vivid language, religious connotations, and interpretation of China's war strategy, she combined sensation with inspiration. By situating the American audience in China's war-ruined land, she provided them a global perspective that transcended national boundaries. In the process, she refuted criticism of China's war strategy and reduced suspicion of China's devotion to the allied war operation. The speech also served as a pledge of China's determination to work with the United States in building a new world.

After the last section of the pageant died away, Soong rose to the lectern and gave a forty-five minute speech, the longest of her tour.[82] Though filled with detailed and affecting descriptions of China's sufferings in the war caused by lack of weapons and war materials, the speech did not include a word about increasing war aid to China. A *Los Angeles Times* article noted that very seldom in Soong's public discourse had she "asked for aid for China"; what she asked for was "the future of civilization."[83] Instead of asking explicitly for war materièl, Soong presented a pledge of China's unyielding

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[81] "Mme. Chiang Spends Busy Day in Suite," *Los Angeles Times*, April 2, 1943; "Hollywood Rehearses Event in True Style," *Los Angeles Times*, April 4, 1943.

[82] Thomson, *Showman*, 389.

[83] "A Welcome to Mme. Chiang," *Los Angeles Times*, March 31, 1943.

resolution to fight for “a just and permanent peace” and offered an enthymematic argument to encourage American support for China’s fight.

She began by telling her audience that she could only “sketch a few incidents” of the war to help the American people “gain an insight into the lives and motives” of the Chinese people. This opening suggested that Soong’s representation of the war would be faithful, albeit incomplete, because her purpose was to seek understanding rather than to beg for sympathy. By stating that her aim was not to “explore the suffering” of Chinese people, she prevented the audience from dismissing the sensational images in her speech as purely emotional appeals. Her aim, she said, was for Americans to understand the forces that sustained China to live through “all these years of suffering.”

The bulk of her speech was devoted to a dramatic three-part account of how China had fought fearlessly against cruel invaders despite formidable adversity. The first part dealt with air combat. Soong told her audience that, regardless of the disparity in military power, China initially “outfought the enemy” by “shooting down a considerable number” of its planes. Gradually, however, the air combat had turned to the advantage of the Japanese due to the “lack of replacements for our lost planes” and the “paucity of spare parts.” Still, the Chinese people did not yield to their adversities, and tried everything they could to keep fighting. Soong provided images of heroic pilots, brave civilians, poor equipment, a powerful enemy, and the destroyed capital of Nanjing. At the end of her section on the air war, she asked “What else could we do?” This question implied criticism of allied nations for not providing sufficient war materièl and served as a refutation to reports of China’s poor war performance and suspicion that it had not used its manpower to the utmost.

Soong turned next to the cruelty of the war. She described "heart-breaking" commanders who "sent the boys up to skies" and knew that "each time many failed to come back"; poorly equipped soldiers who fought with such fury that their commanders could hardly restrain them; trains crammed with dying soldiers who had been "full of vitality and vigor a few hours before"; and "clammy, sticky blood" that "clung like glue" at the rail stations. The most touching image was Soong's recollection of a severely wounded soldier who tugged at her coat, asking for water, yet she had to refuse because a medical officer demanded that no water be given to soldiers with stomach wounds. "I shall never forget the look on the young lad's face," she mourned. According to the *Los Angeles Times*, Soong spoke "steadily and directly," yet she showed "noticeable emotions" and "her voice became a shadow" as she told her audience about the soldier's fate.[84]

Soong's touching presentation left her audience listening "in grave silence" with "tears springing" to their eyes, but she was seeking more than tears and sympathy.[85] After sharing her painful battlefield memories with the audience, she asked, "Why should the Almighty select those so young, so innocent, so untried, to be offered as sacrament on the communion table of national honor?" The invocation of God invited Americans to understand the Chinese soldier's sacrifice through a Biblical frame, in which suffering was allowed by God so as to demonstrate the evil of Satan—and not by accident. Soong also referred to Japanese atrocities as actions of "diabolic Lucifers." Framing the two sides of war in China through Biblical references, Soong presented it as a conflict

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[84] Gene Sherman, "Mme. Chiang Stirs 30,000 at Bowl," *Los Angeles Times*, April 5, 1943.

[85] "Madame Chiang in Hollywood," *Life,* April 19, 1943, 34.

between Christian justice and Satanic evil. By inviting Americans to view the Chinese as a people living up to Christian values and willing to sacrifice their all in pursuit of justice and righteousness, she sought to reinforce the sense of identity between the two nations that she had discussed throughout her tour.

Third, Soong interpreted the westward evacuation of the Chinese army and civilians as a movement toward victory rather than withdrawal after defeat. Echoing the theme of the pageant before her speech, she explained how this strategic evacuation boosted the Chinese people's determination to "make the enemy pay for each land they wrested," proved the efficacy of China's "magnetic strategy," and created opportunities for rapid development of women's volunteer organizations.[86] By giving each dark cloud a silver lining, Soong provided a positive image of China's resistance to Japan. Unlike the previous section of her speech, her narration in this section contained no direct expressions of her own emotion. It focused on the actions of Chinese people and how they used all available resources to maintain an ordinary life despite the depredations of Japanese troops. Interwoven into Soong's narration was a description of what life was like in peacetime, of how war had destroyed the peaceful homeland, and of China's "inflexible determination to win the war." Her comparisons between peace and war did not create merely a nostalgic feeling but encouraged her audience to look forward to victory and to a lasting peace afterward.

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[86] To reduce the Chinese army's casualties caused by poor equipment and training, Chiang Kai-shek designed the "magnetic strategy" in China's initial stage of resistance. It included: (1) extending as widely as possible the theatre of military operations; (2) making Japan's progress as costly as possible; (3) withholding from Japan the fruits of victory; and (4) seeking foreign help for counteroffensives. American journalists introduced Chiang's "magnetic strategy" in newspaper reports to the American public and referred to it as the "space for time" strategy. See, for example, Dewily MacKenzie, "Vast Space Is China's Asset," *Hutchinson News Herald*, March 7, 1943.

Reporters summarized Soong's Hollywood Bowl address as "tinged with sorrow, yet redolent with hope."[87] Like any director of melodrama, Soong did not leave her audience in a negative state. Rather, she satisfied them by providing a positive vision after leading them through a series of depressing war scenarios. This positive image prepared listeners for the climactic conclusion of her Hollywood Bowl speech, in which she pledged that China would play its part in the war and invited America to fight alongside China for the advancement of humanity.

In her conclusion, Soong first expressed faith in Sino-American unity by exalting American values. China, she said, had faith that "America and the other democratic powers would realize" that the Chinese people were not fighting for themselves but for "a just and permanent peace and for the strenuous world-building that lies before us." In particular, she extolled FDR's leadership by stating that "neither we nor posterity can deprive unerring tribute to the foresight and statesmanship of President Roosevelt," and that his "unswerving convictions and his moral courage" to make America the "arsenal of the democracies" would be praised by "history and posterity." In the end, Soong pledged that China took pride in fulfilling its obligations and, despite all the years of suffering, would not "abrade the sharp, stony path we must travel before our common victory is won."

With her tribute to FDR and the pledge of China's devotion to universal values, Soong completed the enthymematic argument embedded in the speech: all members of the United Nations shared a common goal of pursuing justice and lasting piece; China, as a responsible member of the U.N., was determined to fulfill its duty at any cost; therefore,

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[87] Gene Sherman, "Mme. Chiang Stirs 30,000 at Bowl," *Los Angeles Times*, April 5, 1943.

as "the arsenal of the democracies," America should, "like China," take similar steps and be determined to contribute its "share in the organization of a new and happier social order." Combined with Soong's detailed descriptions of China's sacrifices due to lack of war materials, her speech invited Americans to view increasing aid to China as a just and necessary policy. "In a voice ringing," as the *New York Times* stated, "with the courage" that "marked her gallant fight for China," Soong ended the speech by reiterating the common goal of the United Nations as "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness for all peoples," leaving her audience cheering and applauding on the slope of the hill at the Hollywood Bowl.[88]

Due to severe exhaustion, Soong almost collapsed at the end of her speech. She "swayed, stumbled, and grasped at the arm of the secretary general of her tour, L. K. Kung," to avoid falling.[89] Afterward, she was sent to the hospital and doctors ordered that she take complete rest until her condition improved. There was much speculation in the press about Soong's health and whether she would "postpone indefinitely her departure from Los Angeles."[90] As inquiries mounted about her condition, her spokesman informed the press that she "has been fighting and carrying on with her iron will in the face of ill health during all her transcontinental trip" and she was "utterly exhausted" after finally reaching "the climax at Hollywood Bowl."[91]

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[88] "Mme. Chiang Gives Freedoms Pledge," *New York Times,* April 5, 1943.

[89] "Mme. Chiang is Ill Again—Almost Collapses after Speech at Hollywood Sunday," *Racine Journal Times*, April 5, 1943.

[90] "Mme. Chiang Exhausted by Trip, Remains in Hotel," *Bakersfield Californian*, April 5, 1943.

[91] "Mme. Chiang Has Collapse; Washington Trip Canceled," *Los Angeles Times*, April 7, 1943.

There can be no doubt about the impact of Soong's speech. Reporters marveled at how she "drew cheers and applause from the horde of Hollywood celebrities, local Chinese, and military and naval personnel" despite her obvious exhaustion.[92] The *New York Herald Tribune* called her Hollywood Bowl address "the most cogent and effective address she has made during her tour of the United States."[93] The *Los Angeles Times* praised it as "unsurpassed," stating that "although her words have been spoken and soon she will leave the Southland, the echo of those words will live on long after the China for whom she spoke has won victory."[94] The speech was broadcast nationally by radio, and the full text was published in many newspapers.[95] Congress was reported as being "besieged with 'help China now' appeals from people who have been stirred by Madame Chiang Kai-shek."[96]

While preparing her speech, Soong had hesitated about whether she should extol President Roosevelt. Afterward, she told a Chinese diplomat that she did not like the

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[92] A few examples of such reports include "China's First Lady en Route East to Rest," *Hammond Times*, April 5, 1943; "Mme. Chiang Near Collapse, Must Rest," *Sandusky Register Star News*, April 5, 1943; Joan Younger, "Madame Chiang Must Rest Up," *Ogden Standard Examiner*, April 6, 1943.

[93] Marie McGowan, "Madame Chiang's Story of China at War Stirs Hollywood Throng," *New York Herald Tribune*, April 5, 1943.

[94] Gene Sherman, "Mme. Chiang Stirs 30,000 at Bowl," *Los Angeles Times*, April 5, 1943.

[95] "Mme. Chiang Bowl Fete Set: Speech of Visitor Today Expected to Have World Bearing," Los Angeles Times, April 4, 1943; "Text of Address by Mme. Chiang," Los Angeles Times, April 5, 1943.

[96] Helen Lombard, "Madame Chiang Kai-shek Is Disappointed Over Results," *Valley Morning Star*, April 6, 1943. Notwithstanding the title of this article, it reported how the American public responded enthusiastically to Soong's rhetoric and pressed legislators to increase assistance to China.

tribute she paid to FDR, but "she had to say those things."[97] Yet her enthusiastic praise of FDR turned out to be the most frequently quoted section of the speech in news reports.[98] The *New York Times* interpreted Soong's tribute to the president as a pledge "that China would do its part toward attaining the four freedoms for the world."[99] The *New York Herald Tribune* referred to Soong's endorsement of the four freedoms as her "definition of the war and post-war aims of China and the other United Nations."[100] By highlighting Soong's tribute to America's president, such reports enhanced the notion that China and the United States shared common ideals and would fight for common goals. The administration also responded positively to Soong's speech. Harry Hopkins, one of FDR's closest advisers, expressed satisfaction with it when he talked to her entourage by phone from the White House.[101]

Favorable reactions such as these were crucial to Soong because, before going back to China, she needed to have a few more rounds of negotiation with the White House about military aid and China's status in the postwar world. Her pledge at the Hollywood Bowl helped encourage the public to believe that China could serve as America's reliable ally in East Asia. It also helped Americans remember her as the voice of a friendly and

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[97] Koo, *Wellington Koo's Memoirs*, 276.

[98] Virtually all newspaper articles mentioned Soong's praise of FDR. See, for example, "Mme. Chiang Pledges China Will Do Her Part," *Montana Standard*, April 5, 1943; "Throng Stirred by Mme. Chiang," *East Liverpool Review*, April, 6, 1943; "Madame Chiang Must Rest Up, Chinese Uphold Pledges, Principles, She Says in Address," *Ogden Standard-Examiner*, April 6, 1943.

[99] "Mme. Chiang Gives Freedoms Pledge," *New York Times*, April 5, 1943.

[100] Marie McGowan, "Madame Chiang's Story of China at War Stirs Hollywood Throng," *New York Herald Tribune,* April 5, 1943.

[101] Koo, *Wellington Koo's Memoirs*, 274.

trustworthy China, which would bestow upon her the ethos of a genuine international leader.

In fact, news reports about Soong Mayling's deeds and words after the speech tour demonstrated her increasing influence. Media coverage of awards she received from various groups and of her comments on international affairs helped Soong maintain a high public profile. Average Americans learned that she became the second woman in the world to receive the British "honorary fellowship of the Royal College of Surgeons," the first Chinese woman to be awarded "the gold medal of the New York Southern Society," and the winner of "the fifth annual Churchman Award for the promotion of goodwill and better understanding among all peoples."[102] They also read quotations from her when the postwar order and gender equality were discussed in the press. Unlike press coverage earlier in her tour, however, journalists now quoted her at length and avoided comments about her personal charm or femininity.[103] The altered tone of these reports reflected how perceptions of Soong gradually changed from that of a charming first lady to a serious international leader.

The ethnic minority press also expressed support for Soong after her West Coast speeches. As we saw in Chapter Four, Soong was constrained by Axis war propaganda

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[102] "British Honor Mme. Chiang," *New York Times*, April 15, 1943; "Gold Medal Voted for Mme. Chiang—Southern Society Unanimous in Decision to Honor the First Lady of China," *New York Times,* April 16, 1943; "Mme. Chiang Wins Award," *New York Times*, April 29, 1943.

[103] Two typical examples can be found in *New York Times*' reports about Soong's comments on postwar order and her condemnation of Japan's execution of American fliers. See "Mme. Chiang Urges 4-Nation Mandates—She Advocates Release of Nehru as Means of Getting India's Help in War," *New York Times*, April 15, 1943; "Mme. Chiang Shocked, Calls for Speedy Retribution for Execution of Fliers," *New York Times*, April 22, 1943.

and criticized racism only implicitly and indirectly. During her time in San Francisco and Los Angeles, however, she took opportunities in press conferences and unofficial meetings to articulate her support for racial equality. At a March 26 press conference, for example, an African-American reporter asked if she had a message for "the Negro people of America." "Yes, I have a message for Negroes," she said, "It is that I need give no message to Negroes because I consider them part and parcel of the nation. When I speak to America, I feel that the Negroes are a vital segment of the country, not to be differentiated from any other Americans."[104] On April 2, before attending the banquet with movie stars in Los Angeles, Soong met with about forty Hollywood producers and directors. According to Wellington Koo, who was also present, Soong criticized the derogatory terms used by the movie industry to represent China and Chinese immigrants. She requested that producers stop using the term "Chinaman." This caused an awkward silence in the meeting and representatives of the movie industry did not make any comments.[105] As presented in *Life* magazine, this episode was described so as to take the edge off of Soong's words: "They discussed the motion picture as visual education in post-war China" and "Madame Chiang urged that U.S. movies portray more accurately the real China."[106]

Aware of the constraints Soong faced, the minority press celebrated her as a representative of non-white people who could speak on behalf of them and exert a measure of influence on American racial policies. An April 3 editorial in the *Chicago*

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[104] Deton J. Brooks, "Mme. Chiang Sees Race Vital in U.S. Democracy," *Chicago Defender*, March 27, 1943.

[105] Koo, *Wellington Koo's Memoirs*, 269.

[106] "Madame Chiang in Hollywood," *Life*, April 19, 1943, 35.

Defender stated: "Beyond the observance of certain diplomatic proprieties which Soong has been careful enough not to transgress, she has been bold in calling upon democratic America to live up to the basic tenets and fundamental assumptions of constitutional democracy."[107] On the following day, the *Atlanta Daily World*, another influential black newspaper, published an article expressing appreciation for Soong's tour as "dispersing much of the racial misunderstanding about the Chinese in this country who have long been discriminated against."[108] Many Chinese-American newspapers also expressed their excitement about Soong's trip. The New York-based *China Daily News* praised the tour and implored Soong to use her "prestige and diplomatic skills to help put an end to the exclusion acts."[109] The San Francisco based *Chinese-Western Daily* appreciated the historical significance of Soong's trip and expected her to "help to eliminate all [anti-Chinese] bias."[110] By the end of Soong's tour, people had little doubt that the national sympathy she had aroused for China might help reduce discrimination against Chinese Americans.

Soong's visit to the West Coast increased the visibility of Chinese communities in the United States and generated occasions for them to interact with mainstream society in tour-related activities. Her rhetoric of international unity and cooperation elevated the position of Chinese from a marginalized ethnic minority in the United States to

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[107] "Mme. Chiang Kai-shek," *Chicago Defender*, April 3, 1943.

[108] Mabry Kountze, "A Racial Round Table Advocated," *Atlanta Daily World*, April 4, 1943.

[109] *China Daily News,* March 5, 1943, quoted in Chen, *Chinese San Francisco,* 253.

[110] *Chinese-Western Daily*, March 25, 1943, quoted in Chen, *Chinese San Francisco,* 253. Also known as *Chung Sai Yat Po*, this newspaper was the most important Chinese-American outlet during the first half of the twentieth century.

representatives of a vital American ally. Although she did not argue for repeal in public, her speeches created a rhetorical space for Chinese Americans to demonstrate their value and to define their identity as American. Soong's visit to San Francisco, in particular, not only gave Chinese Americans the opportunity for a self-empowering joint parade, but also created many chances—including receptions, banquets, and mass meetings—to further improve racial interaction, which contributed to the momentum of a movement to repeal the Chinese exclusion laws. Indeed, as we shall see next, in addition to its impact on Sino-American diplomacy, her discourse would play a consequential role in repeal of exclusion laws.

Conclusion: Soong Mayling and the Repeal of Chinese Exclusion Laws

After her cross-country trip, Soong Mayling returned to New York and stayed with her sister in the Riverdale section of the Bronx.[1] While trying to recover from the rigors of her tour, Soong was preparing for meetings with Roosevelt and a visit to Canada. She and the president met once in May after the Trident Conference to discuss strategy in the Far East and allocation of planes for the Chinese air force. In mid-June, she visited Ottawa and addressed the Canadian parliament, which received her speeches as favorably as the U.S. Congress had back in February. After returning to the United States, she went to Georgia to receive an honorary degree from her old school, Wesleyan College. In late June, she met FDR again to discuss war procedures and postwar territorial arrangements.

On July 4, 1943, Soong left the United States for China, officially ending her diplomatic trip. Even though Europe remained the top priority in Alliance military plans, Soong did solidify America's support for China. FDR promised to increase Lend-Lease supplies to China to 10,000 tons per month, and despite Churchill's vehement opposition, he insisted on including China in the Cairo Conference. There, for four days in November 1943, Churchill, Roosevelt, Chiang Kai-shek, and Soong Mayling met to discuss war strategy in the China-Burma-India theater and to make plans for the ultimate defeat of Japan. This was the first time that Chinese leaders were included in an alliance military conference. As the only "feminine presence among all the uniforms," Soong's "extremely

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[1] Laura Tyson-Li, *Madame Chiang Kai-shek: China's Eternal First Lady* (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 2006), 227.

chic costumes" attracted great attention from the correspondents.[2] But she did not go to Egypt simply to add color to the proceedings. She "joined nearly all important discussions" and continued to work as China's special diplomat in the alliance.[3] In the Cairo meetings, Soong's ability "impressed Churchill" and helped Chiang attain Roosevelt's promise "of a considerable amphibious operation across the Bay of Bengal within the next few months."[4]

Besides her participation in important military and diplomatic talks, Soong's presence in Cairo had special significance at one particular moment. While the allied leaders were convening in Egypt to discuss war operations, American senators concluded their debate over repeal of the Chinese exclusion laws. After the Senate passed a bill repealing the exclusion laws on November 26, the bill was rushed "to Cairo, where Roosevelt signed it as Madame Chiang looked on."[5] As a diplomat and a stateswoman, Soong deserved no small measure of credit for that moment. Her speeches during her tour strengthened Chinese Americans' resistance to racial discrimination within the United States and added crucial momentum to the repeal campaign.

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[2] Robert E. Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins: An Intimate History* (New York: Harper, 1950), 711; Barbara W. Tuchman, *Stilwell and the American Experience in China, 1911-1945* (New York: Macmillan, 1970), 403.

[3] Li, Madame Chiang Kai-shek, 243.

[4] Peter Lowe, "The War against Japan and Allied Relations" in *The Rise and Fall of the Grand Alliance*, 1941-1945, ed. Ann Lane and Howard Temperley (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995), 198; United States Department of State, Historical Office, *Conferences at Cairo and Tehran, 1943* (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1961), 350.

[5] Li, Madame Chiang Kai-shek, 244.

From 1882 to 1943, Chinese exclusion laws had imposed highly restrictive regulations on Chinese, and later on other Asian immigrants.[6] During this period, exclusionist discourse not only "transformed the ways in which Americans viewed and thought about race, immigration, and the United States' identity as a nation of immigration,"[7] but also produced racist arguments denying that the Chinese "possessed any of the physical and spiritual features recognizable as human and admissible as American."[8] Diplomatic restraints prevented Soong from overtly attacking this discriminatory immigration policy, but the national sympathy she aroused, her influence on Congress, and her public discourse in general contributed greatly to the campaign for ending exclusion.

In fact, the exclusion laws had been in her mind even when she was planning her trip and preparing her speeches. As early as May 1942, Donald Dunham, who in 1943 became a leader of the Citizens Committee to Repeal Chinese Exclusion, wrote to the Chinese ambassador suggesting that "it would be well for the repeal issue to be put to Congress as something which American opinion demanded rather than as a concession which the Chinese were seeking."[9] Notwithstanding Soong's detestation of the exclusion

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[6] Roger Daniels, *Guarding the Golden Door: American Immigration Policy and Immigrants since 1882* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2005), 3.

[7] Erika Lee, "The Chinese Exclusion Example: Race, Immigration, and American Gatekeeping, 1882-1924," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 21, no. 3 (2002): 36.

[8] Philip S. Foner and Daniel Rosenberg, eds. *Racism, Dissent, and Asian Americans from 1850 to the Present: A Documentary History* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1993), 3.

[9] Dunham files, May 7, 1942, quoted in Fred W. Riggs, *Pressures on Congress: A Study of the Repeal of Chinese Exclusion* (New York: King's Crown Press, 1950), 117. In Riggs' book, there is no clear record of how this information reached Soong Mayling before she came to the United States. However, Dr. Hu Shi, China's ambassador to the United States at that time, had frequent correspondence with Chang Kai-shek and

laws, she did not mention them during her speech tour so as to avoid framing the repeal campaign as "foreign intervention" in American domestic policy. She focused on generating pro-China public opinion rather than on pleading overtly for repeal.

Such opinion was crucial to the end of exclusion because it created opportunities for American lobbying groups to accelerate their efforts on behalf of repeal. After establishment of the Sino-American alliance in January 1942, pro-China Americans started to call for an end to the exclusion laws. Advocates began to discuss the agenda of a repeal campaign via correspondence in February 1942, after publication of Charles Nelson Spinks' influential article "Repeal Chinese Exclusion."[10] They believed repeal was necessary in order to improve relations between the United States and China, but they also thought public action should be delayed due to potential opposition from anti-Chinese groups and legislators. Monroe Sweetland, of the Congress of Industrial Organization (C.I.O.), and Julean Arnold, of the China Council of Berkeley, conducted separate investigations about potential opposition to repeal. Both drew the same conclusion: popular and political support was prerequisite for the success of a repeal campaign—both because it could help push the Roosevelt administration to support repeal and because it could influence the position of a few key politicians who constituted

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Soong Mayling, helping them prepare for Lauchlin Currie's second trip to China. It is likely that Hu Shi would have passed Dunham's message to Soong among his detailed reports of Washington's attitudes toward China during the tumultuous summer of 1942.

[10] Spinks, the famous "China hand" in the U.S. Foreign Service, published his article in the February 1942 issue of *Asia and the Americas*. According to Riggs, *Pressures on Congress*, 48-49, this article drew the attention of active pro-China notables such as Pearl S. Buck, Monroe Sweetland of the CIO, and Congressman Walter H. Judd and marked the beginning of a formal repeal campaign.

the heart of opposition on the West Coast.[11] By late February 1943, Sweetland believed it was time to move from private discussions to a public campaign. Four days after Soong's triumphant address to Congress, he wrote to other repeal proponents saying the time was ripe for action and suggesting specific steps based on his appraisal of the situation in Washington.[12]

On February 17, the day before Soong addressed Congress, Martin J. Kennedy, a New York Representative, wrote to her expressing his respect and stating that he had just introduced a repeal bill in the House.[13] Soong was fully aware of the significance of Kennedy's action. Like the multilateral treaty signed by China, the United States, and Great Britain on January 11, 1943, abrogating British and American extraterritoriality in China, repeal of the exclusion laws would signal a large step in terms of gaining equal treatment for China on the global stage. In her reply to Kennedy's letter, Soong thanked him for introducing the bill and praised him for his "farsightedness" that would "solidify the traditional friendship between our two great countries."[14] On April 15, ten days after Soong's speech at the Hollywood Bowl, she held a meeting with Wei Tao-ming, China's

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[11] Ibid, 50-52.

[12] Files of the Citizens Committee, February 22, 1943, cited in Riggs, *Pressures on Congress*, 52.

[13] March J. Kennedy, letter to Soong Mayling, February 17, 1943, *Zhonghua Min Guo Zhong Yao Shi Liao Chu Bian: Dui Ri Kang Zhan Shi Qi: Xu Bian* [Archives of the Republic of China: War against Japan: Sequel] (Taibei: The Chinese Nationalist Party Central Committee Party History Committee), 793-94.

[14] The date of Soong's reply letter was February 25, 1943; Kennedy read the full letter in Congress on October 20, 1943. See *Congressional Record*, 78th Cong., 1st sess., (1943), 8577.

ambassador to the United States, and urged him to do his utmost to assist passage of the repeal bill.[15]

Yet initial progress was slow, prompting Soong to change strategies. On May 15, she invited a number of key congressmen to dinner and discussed with them the possibilities of repealing the exclusion laws. Her guests included Representative Ed Gossett of Texas, an influential member of the House Immigration Committee; Representative Warren Magnuson of Washington, who introduced a new repeal bill in the House on March 26; and Representative Noah M. Mason of Illinois, who would play a crucial role in the congressional debate on repeal. Soong earned their active support during the dinner. Her effort in this regard, according to Walter Judd, Representative from Minnesota and the leading pro-China voice in Congress, "proved of incalculable value for the repeal effort."[16]

Even though Soong returned to China four months before the exclusion laws came to an end, the influence of her speech tour was evident throughout the congressional debate over repeal. First, through her speech tour, she earned admiration from congressmen and the general public, who formed the most important group pressing for repeal. Representative Adolph J. Sabath of Illinois summarized well Soong's influence in his speech during the repeal debate: "I do not see how anyone who was present and heard the urgent pleas of that great woman, Mme. Chiang Kai-shek, in this House, can possibly oppose this meritorious, just legislation."[17] In addition, Sabath read into the House

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[15] V. K. Wellington Koo, *Gu Weijun Hui Yi Lu* [Wellington Koo's Memoirs] (Beijing: Zhonghua shu ju, 1983), 276.

[16] Riggs, *Pressures on Congress*, 116.

[17] *Congressional Record,* 78th Cong., 1st sess., (1943), 8573

record letters from organizations and individuals who were equally touched by Soong's speeches and urged Congress to pass the repeal bill.[18] Another Illinois Representative, Charles S. Dewey, stated that "on February 18 this House collectively lost its heart to Mme. Chiang Kai-shek." After quoting Soong's congressional address to remind his fellow congressmen of what she had said, Dewey urged passage of repeal as a way to express admiration for China and its great leader.[19]

Second, Soong constructed a new image of China to refute one of the major arguments undergirding exclusion policy. In the 1870 congressional debate on whether to grant Chinese immigrants citizenship via naturalization, California Representative Aaron A. Sargent had portrayed Chinese immigrants as a threat to "American institutions and American ideas." He cried: "Here are swarming millions of men, alien not alone to our blood and our language, but to our faith. They are idol worshipers. So far as they have any political principles they are imperialist."[20] Emphases on their cultural unassimilability, political incompetence, and non-Christian identity formed a triad that was used to justify policies depriving Chinese immigrants of their naturalization rights and excluding them from legally entering the United States. Soong's portrayal of China as a democratic and modern nation sharing common faith and goals with Americans provided a powerful rhetorical resource for congressmen seeking to refute this negative image. During the debate, House Majority Leader John W. McCormack quoted Soong's

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[18] Sabath stated that these organizations "among others included the Illinois League of Women Voters, the Congregational and Christian Conference of Illinois, the National League of Women Voters." Ibid.

[19] *Congressional Record,* 78th Cong., 1st sess., (1943), 8627.

[20] *Congressional Globe*, 41st Cong., 2nd sess., (1870), 4276.

Madison Square Garden speech to support his argument that China was more a friend to America than an ally because "China is essentially a democratic people."[21] Echoing Soong's congressional address, Warren Magnuson of Washington called the Chinese people "a proud and a tolerant race." He claimed that Americans were "fighting side by side with Chinese as brothers"; thus the Congress of the United States "have been derelict in our duty" to put China "on an equal basis with all the other allies."[22] New York's Hamilton Fish also argued that repealing the exclusion law would demonstrate America's gesture of friendship to "a very gallant and heroic nation that has been fighting for the last 6 years" and would "cement further the traditional friendship between China and America."[23]

Third, throughout the debate, congressmen explicitly commented on the need for repeal of exclusion as a way to honor Soong Mayling. Their praise enhanced Soong's ethos as a respected international leader and a symbol of virtuous Chinese. This ethos helped legislators make their arguments in support of repeal. Harry Sauthoff, Progressive Representative from Wisconsin, praised Soong as "not only a credit to her own country, but one of the world's outstanding personalities, honored by people all over the world."[24] George A. Dondero of Michigan endorsed Sauthoff's comment and asserted that removing an affront to a friendly nation and a peace-loving people with such a great

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[21] *Congressional Record*, 78th Cong., 1st sess., (1943), 8580.

[22] *Congressional Record*, 78th Cong., 1st sess., (1943), 8585; 8586.

[23] *Congressional Record*, 78th Cong., 1st sess., (1943), 8574.

[24] *Congressional Record*, 78th Cong., 1st sess., (1943), 8631.

leader would not have bad consequences on the American people.[25] Minnesota's Walter Judd argued that Americans had "come to see, in the person of Mme. Chiang Kai-shek, a truly great people and come to admire the Chinese for his industry, his intelligence, his patriotism, and his good faith."[26] He also attacked the logic of Chinese exclusion and pointed out that "under our present laws Hitler is admissible to our country and eligible for citizenship while Mme. Chiang Kai-shek is not."[27]

Fourth, even congressmen who opposed repeal expressed their admiration for Soong and recognized China's contributions to the war effort. Their admiration demonstrated how Soong's rhetoric influenced the debate by pre-empting questions about the qualification of Chinese immigrants for American citizenship. Representative John Carl Hinshaw of California, for example, asserted that he had no doubt that "every member of this House admires Mme. Chiang Kai-shek and shares her view of Sino-American friendship."[28] Similarly, Florida's Robert A. Green maintained that he had "a high regard for the Chinese as a great people and as a people who are most nobly, valorously, and courageously performing with America and America's other allies in this war crisis."[29] Admitting their respect for the Chinese people and their leader, both congressmen emphasized that they only wanted to discuss exclusion as an economic problem. Representative John E. Rankin of Mississippi praised Soong as "undoubtedly

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[25] *Congressional Record*, 78th Cong., 1st sess., (1943), 8630-8631.

[26] *Congressional Record,* 78th Cong., 1st sess., (1943), Appendix 2926.

[27] *Congressional Record,* 78th Cong., 1st sess., (1943), 8589.

[28] *Congressional Record,* 78th Cong., 1st sess., (1943), 5685.

[29] *Congressional Record,* 78th Cong., 1st sess., (1943), 5743.

the greatest Christian leader that China has seen in 1,900 years," but contended that he did not hear her asking America to change its immigration laws.[30] Georgia's Representative Robert Ramspeck immediately refuted Rankin and asserted that Soong "did ask for the repeal of the Chinese exclusion act" by urging the United States to "put China on the same basis as the other peoples of the world."[31] North Carolina's Cameron Morrison confirmed Ramspeck's view by asking "why should we keep upon the books an insulting and irritating discrimination" when General and Madame Chiang Kai-shek, President Roosevelt, and Secretary of State Cordell Hull all agreed that it should be repealed.[32]

After a few rounds of debate in Congress, the exclusion laws, which had been in existence for 61 years, were repealed overwhelmingly by voice vote in the House on October 21 and in the Senate on November 26.[33] Though such an outcome was not the primary goal of Soong's U.S. tour, it was an achievement of the first order. She was certainly not the sole factor leading to repeal, but her speeches shaped American public opinion to such an extent that, without her, repeal would not have happened when it did or how it did.

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[30] *Congressional Record,* 78th Cong., 1st sess., (1943), 8631.

[31] *Congressional Record,* 78th Cong., 1st sess., (1943), 8631.

[32] *Congressional Record,* 78th Cong., 1st sess., (1943), 8598.

[33] "Bill to Repeal Ban on Chinese Wins Support," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, October 21, 1943; "Senate Passes Repeal of Chinese Exclusion Act: Reynolds Shouts 'No' in Voice Vote," *New York Herald Tribune*, November 27, 1943.

Even without its impact on repeal of the exclusion laws, Soong Mayling's 1943 tour was, along with Richard Nixon's visit to China in 1972, one of the two most consequential episodes of public diplomacy in Sino-American history. From February 18 to April 4, Soong visited the United States and traveled from the East Coast to the West, addressing both houses of Congress and the general public in five American cities. Her congressional addresses and major speeches in New York, Boston, Chicago, San Francisco, and Los Angeles were all broadcast nationwide. Millions of Americans heard her call for a stronger U.S.-China alliance. Journalists competed with filmmakers to chronicle her tour. Average Americans cheered her at railway stations, in front of city halls, and during parades. As the first Chinese leader, and to this day the only Chinese woman, to make a speech tour in the United States, Soong captivated Congress, charmed the press, and earned the support of the public. To many, she was seen not just as an eloquent diplomat bringing a message of goodwill from China, but as the leader of an American spiritual ally in the Far East. Even sixty years later, her smash tour of 1943 was described as "an encounter from which many have never recovered."[34]

When speaking to Congress, Soong defined Sino-American history as "160 years of traditional friendship" and urged legislators to shift the American war effort from Europe-first to Asia-first. At Madison Square Garden, in New York, she told 20,000 listeners that a war-torn China would follow the teachings of Christ to "hate the evil in men, but not men themselves," and that China, like America, wanted a world based on "justice, co-existence, cooperation and mutual respect." At Wellesley College, her alma mater, she praised women's contributions to world civilization and lauded the

[34] Mark Steyn, "Madame Chiang Kai-shek, Half Dragon Lady, Half Georgia Peach," *Atlantic Monthly*, January 2004, 44.

advancement of Chinese women in achieving gender equality. At Chicago Stadium, she criticized isolationism and responded to Winston Churchill's attempt to exclude China from a leading position in the postwar world order. At San Francisco's Civic Auditorium, she sought to reverse America's perception of China as a remote other and to drive home the dangers that disunity within the Alliance would have on a postwar world. At the Hollywood Bowl, she discursively portrayed the brutal battlefield in China and helped Americans see the necessity of living up to president Roosevelt's promise that America should be the arsenal of democracy. These seven speeches constituted the core of Soong's diplomatic rhetoric on her U.S. tour and encouraged a new construction of Sino-American relations based on friendship in the past, identical values in the present, and common goals in the future.

During her tour, Soong also spoke at reception ceremonies, press conferences, banquets with local dignitaries, mass meetings with Chinese Americans, and, in San Francisco, with organized labor. As a significant component of her diplomatic discourse, her talks on these occasions were as well received as her seven major speeches, all of which helped her reinforce key ideas of her major speeches and reconstruct China's image in the American mind. On all such occasions, she successfully addressed different audience groups, demonstrated diplomatic finesse, and expanded her influence. By strategically transcending gender norms and employing a variety of rhetorical strategies, she earned support from mainstream media, the ethnic minority press, religious and women's organizations, and millions of average Americans.

The new image Soong constructed challenged the negative stereotypes of China that had long dominated American thinking. In Soong's speeches, a modern China that

shared with the United States similar political, ideological, and religious beliefs replaced a heathenish, backward, despotic, and mysterious old China. By creating a rhetorical space for Americans to see connections and commonalities with China, Soong's tour exerted significant influence on American foreign and domestic policies in relation to China.

Soong's discourse also portrayed the Chinese people as brave men and women fighting relentlessly against evil invaders and willing to sacrifice all they held dear for human advancement. As portrayed by Soong, the Chinese people not only endorsed the democratic principles celebrated by Americans but had endured six years of war atrocities in the pursuit of lasting peace and a new world order. Neither language barriers nor geographical distance, Soong said, would prevent the Chinese people and American people from understanding each other or from fighting like brothers to pursue common goals. This new image of China not only encouraged substantial monetary donations to Chinese war relief but also helped sustain sympathy for China's struggle throughout the war.

Another significant outcome of Soong's tour was the evolution of her ethos from an ideal woman to a charismatic international leader. Before coming to the United States, her English writings and speeches had already helped her reach many Americans. Her reputation had attracted the attention of American mainstream media, which helped her influence important philanthropic groups and women's clubs in the United States. As Harrison Forman wrote in a 1942 article in the *New York Times Magazine*, Soong

symbolized "the awakening of Chinese womanhood" for many Americans.[35] After her tour, however, Soong embodied not only an ideal modern woman, but also a political administrator with an admirable international perspective. Throughout her tour, newspaper reports repeatedly praised her charm and calmness in all her public appearances. Gradually, admiration of her statesmanship and diplomacy grew to the point that it outweighed fascination with her oriental femininity. She came to be viewed less as an enchanting modern woman than as a respected international leader. This evolution of Soong's ethos became a significant factor in her public influence, making her, in the words of T. Christopher Jespersen, "one of the most important individuals who had an impact on Sino-American relations" in the twentieth century.[36]

Given the galvanizing impact of Soong's speeches on her audiences and the status of many of her listeners—congressmen, politicians, diplomats, and high-ranking officials—it is not unreasonable to regard her speech tour as one of the factors leading to a series of events that helped define the postwar world. These events included, but were not limited to, the Cairo Conference of November 1943, China's attaining one of the five permanent seats on the UN Security Council in 1945, America's siding with the Chinese Nationalist government during China's civil war (1945-1949), and Washington's refusal to recognize Communist China from 1949 to 1972. In this sense, Mark Steyn's 2004

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[35] Harrison Forman, "In Chungking with China's Leader—Chiang Kai-shek Lives in Spartan Simplicity and Leans Heavily on His Wife for Counsel," *New York Times Magazine*, March 15, 1942.

[36] T. Christopher Jespersen, "Madame Chiang Kai-shek and the Face of Sino-American Relations: Personality and Gender Dynamics in Bilateral Diplomacy," cited in *Madame Chiang Kai-shek and Her China*, ed. Samuel C. Chu (Norwalk: EastBridge, 2005), 123.

comment on Soong Mayling should not be regarded as exaggerated when he wrote that "geopolitically speaking, we live in a world shaped in part by her."[37]

In March 1943, when Soong visited San Francisco, Owen Lattimore, the director of Pacific Operations for the Office of War Information (OWI), gave her a copy of her recorded speeches during the trip up to that time and informed her that the OWI was translating them into languages that were spoken "from Korea to Australia and from Honolulu to Burma." In a personal assessment accompanying this gift, Lattimore stated that Soong's speeches would not only have great impact "on the way Americans think about China" but would also be "steadily at work spreading the consciousness throughout Asia and the Pacific that China is setting the moral standard and the standard of political thought in Asia and at the same time is modifying the thought of the Western nations."[38]

Lattimore's statement suggests yet another legacy of Soong's 1943 tour: her words helped change the way Western nations thought about China. Since the fifteenth century, contact between China and Western civilizations had produced numerous documents and travelers' books that presented China as an exotic, oriental terra. For more than five hundred years, portrayals of China in the transnational discourses produced by European scholars, Western diplomats, and American missionaries shaped and perpetuated a negative understanding of China on a global scale. Soong Mayling was not the first to challenge that portrayal, but up to the mid-twentieth century she was the most important Chinese voice to do so. In the process, she helped redefine China for the world. By responding to a complex web of wartime constraints and building common ground

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[37] Steyn, "Madame Chiang Kai-shek," *Atlantic Monthly*, January 2004.

[38] Jespersen, "Madame Chiang Kai-shek and the Face of Sino-American Relations," 138.

between China and the United States, her voice was not only an exemplar of diplomatic rhetoric but also a precursor of a discourse of friendship that may, one day, truly secure relations between the two superpowers across the Pacific.

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