

# The China Mission: George Marshall's Unfinished War (1945-1947)

As we delve into the pages of history, there are stories that often go unnoticed, those that shape the course of nations and impact the lives of millions. One such story is that of George Marshall's mission in China between 1945 and 1947. It was a crucial time in history, and Marshall's efforts to broker peace and stabilize the country left an indelible mark. This article sheds light on this often forgotten but incredibly important chapter.

## The Background

The end of World War II brought about a complex and delicate situation in China. The country was embroiled in a civil war between the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) led by Mao Zedong and the ruling Kuomintang (KMT) led by Chiang Kai-shek. The United States, determined to prevent the spread of communism, had a vested interest in the outcome of this conflict, and thus, George Marshall was dispatched to mediate.

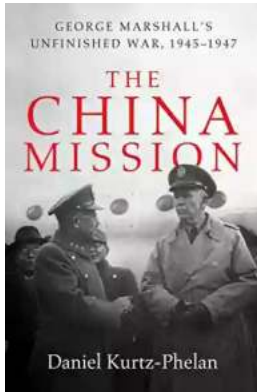
## George Marshall: The Man Behind the Mission

General George Marshall was a legendary figure in American history. As the Chief of Staff of the United States Army during World War II, he played a pivotal role in leading the Allies to victory. Recognized for his strategic brilliance and diplomatic finesse, he was the natural choice for the critical task of mediating the Chinese civil war.

**The China Mission: George Marshall's Unfinished War, 1945-1947** by Daniel Kurtz-Phelan (Kindle Edition)

★★★★☆ 4.6 out of 5

Language : English



File size	: 18438 KB
Text-to-Speech	: Enabled
Screen Reader	: Supported
Enhanced typesetting	: Enabled
Word Wise	: Enabled
Print length	: 477 pages



## The Unfinished War

Marshall's mission in China was fraught with challenges. The civil war had caused deep divisions within the Chinese society and both sides were reluctant to compromise. Marshall's objective was to establish a coalition government that would include representatives from both the CCP and the KMT, but his efforts were met with resistance and suspicion.

The KMT, supported by the United States, was skeptical of the CCP's intentions and feared that sharing power would only strengthen the communists. On the other hand, the CCP saw Marshall's mission as an attempt to prop up the corrupt KMT regime. These suspicions and deep-rooted animosities made Marshall's task incredibly difficult.

## The Long Road to Peace

Marshall's tireless efforts to find a peaceful resolution to the Chinese conflict were met with limited success. The negotiations were marked by ceasefires, broken agreements, and the failure to establish a durable coalition government. Despite his best intentions, Marshall was unable to bring about a lasting peace in China.

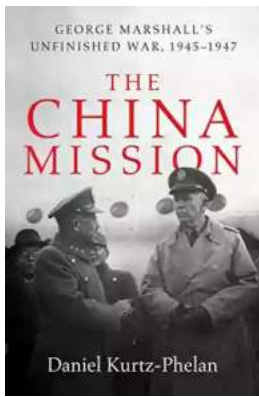
One of the key factors that contributed to the failure of Marshall's mission was the deteriorating relationship between the United States and the Soviet Union. The onset of the Cold War meant that the United States started viewing China through the lens of its anti-communist stance. This shift in perspective further complicated Marshall's efforts.

## **Legacy and Lessons Learned**

Although the China Mission did not achieve its primary objective of creating a coalition government, George Marshall's initiative left a lasting impact. His work laid the groundwork for future diplomatic efforts and influenced subsequent U.S. foreign policies in Asia. The failures and lessons learned during this mission helped shape the United States' approach to conflicts and interventions in the decades that followed.

Furthermore, the China Mission highlighted the intertwined nature of domestic and international affairs. It showcased the complexities involved in mediating a civil war while considering global power dynamics. The legacy of Marshall's mission serves as a reminder of the challenges faced by those who endeavor to bring stability and peace to conflict-ridden regions.

The China Mission embarked upon by George Marshall between 1945 and 1947 was an arduous battle to broker peace in a war-torn nation. Despite the many obstacles encountered during his mission, Marshall's efforts and determination played a vital role in shaping the future of China and influencing U.S. foreign policies in Asia. Although the mission did not achieve its ultimate objectives, it serves as a crucial chapter in the annals of history, teaching us important lessons about diplomacy, conflict resolution, and the complexities of international relations.



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An Economist Best Book of 2018

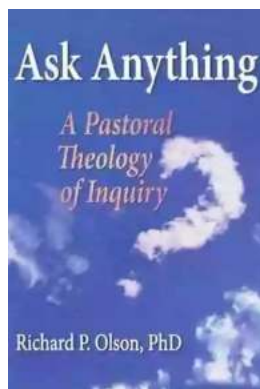
New York Times Book Review Editor's Pick

“Gripping [and] splendid.... An enormous contribution to our understanding of Marshall.”—Washington Post

At the end of World War II, General George Marshall took on what he thought was a final mission—this time not to win a war, but to stop one. In China, conflict between Communists and Nationalists threatened to suck in the United States and escalate into revolution. Marshall’s charge was to cross the Pacific, broker a peace, and prevent a Communist takeover, all while staving off World War III. At first, the results seemed miraculous. But as they started to come apart, Marshall was faced with a wrenching choice—one that would alter the course of the Cold War, define the US-China relationship, and spark one of the darkest-ever turns in American political life.

The China Mission offers a gripping, close-up view of the central figures of the time—from Marshall, Mao, and Chiang Kai-shek to Eisenhower, Truman, and

MacArthur—as they stood face-to-face and struggled to make history, with consequences and lessons that echo today.



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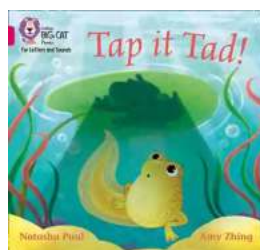
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