

### 3. UMEZU-HE AGREEMENT

#### China's hypocritical policy

It seemed that in North China, relations among Japan, Manzhouguo, and China were becoming less fraught after the Tanggu Truce was signed. Unfortunately, the reality was quite different. Though the Chinese were feigning friendliness toward the Japanese, they were secretly engaging in terrorist activity targeting the Japanese and Manzhouguo. At the center of the anti-Japanese, anti-Manzhouguo movement were Hebei Governor Yu Xuezhong (a former northeastern warlord), GMD Central Headquarters personnel, the Central Army, and the Blue Shirt Society (the GMD's secret special operations agency whose chief function was terrorism). These individuals and organizations had gone underground, capitalizing on the fact that North China had been relatively quiet since the ceasefire agreement. Therefore, they largely escaped the notice of the Guandong Army and the Tianjin Garrison. But in 1935, their activity became more blatant.

The GMD's oversight was partially successful in controlling anti-Japanese activity. However, the results of a Japanese Army study revealed that between January and May of 1935, when Japan-China relations seemed to be improving, there were more than 50 instances of major and minor anti-Japanese and anti-Manzhouguo offenses. The most notable cases were the assassinations of Chinese company presidents who were sympathetic to Japan.

#### 1. Umezu-He Treaty concluded

The Guandong Army and the Tianjin Garrison deeply resented China's hypocritical policy. They were painfully aware that it needed to be rectified, but before they had devised a full-fledged plan, a serious incident arose. At the time there were two Chinese-language newspapers in Tianjin that had historically been pro-Japanese: *National Rights*, and the *Tientsin Morning Post*<sup>1</sup>. Between May 2 and 3, the presidents of both newspaper companies were murdered by assassins armed with pistols. A thorough investigation conducted by the Tianjin Garrison revealed that the Beiping branch of the Military Affairs Commission, the Blue Shirt Society, and the GMD had all been involved in the assassinations. It also came to light that the plot had been orchestrated by Yang Hu, who headed both the Shanghai Defense Commission and the Blue Shirt Society's Central Executive Committee. After the crime was committed, Hu went into hiding in the French Concession in Shanghai.

At that point China Garrison Chief of Staff Sakai Takashi and Maj. Takahashi Tan, military attaché to the Japanese Legation in Beiping, representing both the Guandong Army and the China Garrison, met with He Yingqin, head of the Beiping Branch of the Military Affairs Commission. The Japanese representatives told He that anti-Manzhouguo plots and anti-Japanese acts of terrorism carried out by the North China branch of the Nationalist government's Military Affairs

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<sup>1</sup> Ling Chen-Ping, ed., *China Publishers' Directory* (Shanghai: China Commercial Advertising Agency, 1934), 22.

Commission constituted violations of the Tanggu Truce. They then presented the following demands.

- (1) Chiang Kai-shek must abandon his hypocritical policy.
- (2) The organizations committing acts of terrorism, namely the 3<sup>rd</sup> Regiment of the Military Police, the Military Affairs Commission's Political Indoctrination Department, Nationalist Party bureaus, and the Blue Shirt Society must withdraw from North China.
- (3) The 3<sup>rd</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> divisions, which provide support for the organizations listed in (2), must withdraw from North China.
- (4) Hu Xuezhong, governor of Hebei province, must be dismissed.

Acts of provocation from the Chinese military against the Tianjin Garrison continued, but Japanese Army officials continued to caution their units against using military force against local Chinese troops. Finally, the Nationalist finally telegraphed the following notification to He Yingqin, who communicated its content to Maj. Takahashi on June 10:

- (1) Nationalist Party bureaus shall withdraw from Hebei province.
- (2) Central Army units shall withdraw from Hebei province.
- (3) Order prohibiting anti-Japanese activity throughout China shall be issued.

In addition to (3), the Chinese reported the issuance of the Directive for the Promotion of Amicable Relations (also on June 10), as well as an order forbidding anti-Japanese activity, and promised that perpetrators thereof would be severely punished. The Chinese had acquiesced to all of the Japanese demands. Still, when the Tianjin Garrison pressed He Yingqin for the Chinese response in writing, He suddenly left Hebei for points south. Later both Japanese Army and Foreign Ministry officials again asked the Chinese to submit their answers in the form of a memorandum. Finally, on July 9, a notification addressed to Maj.-Gen. Umezu Yoshijirō, commander of the China Garrison Army and signed by He, was delivered to the Tianjin Garrison. It read, "All requests from Chief of Staff Sakai have been approved; I shall ensure that they are implemented."

That notification became the Umezu-He Agreement. The incident was thereby resolved, and Chinese anti-Japanese organizations and Central Army units withdrew from Hebei province.

### **Doihara-Qin Agreement concluded**

Song Zheyuan, commander of the 29<sup>th</sup> Army, was a former subordinate of Qin Dechun. His base of operations was Zhangjiakou in Chahar province. After the Tanggu Truce was signed, Song became increasingly anti-Japanese. From the last half of 1934 through 1935, Song created problem after problem for the Japanese. Among them were the 1<sup>st</sup> Zhangbei Incident, the 1<sup>st</sup> Western Rehe Incident, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Zhangbei Incident, and the Dongzhaizi Incident (2<sup>nd</sup> Western Rehe Incident). These were all armed provocations against Japan, and in every case Song's forces were involved.

Taking a serious view of the frequent inflammatory acts perpetrated by Song's forces, the Guandong Army wired Maj.-Gen. Doihara Kenji, head of the Fengtian Special Agency, who happened to be in Beiping, requesting that he demand the withdrawal of Song Zheyuan's forces south of the Yellow River. However, central Army authorities disagreed with the Guandong

Army's hard-line position. The Army General Staff Office wired a message to the Guandong Army stating, "we find your uncompromising position unwise. Negotiations should be conducted in as fair a manner as possible." Army authorities viewed North China problems with extreme caution and tried mightily to handle them equitably.

The Guandong Army eventually came to accept central Army authorities' temperate policy. On their part, the Chinese, of their own accord, needing to find a speedy resolution, relieved Song Zheyuan of his positions as governor of Chahar province and commander of the 29<sup>th</sup> Army. They also appointed Qin Dechun, then commissioner of civil affairs, as acting provincial governor. The Guandong Army also softened its requirements for resolution, for instance, by cancelling its demand for the withdrawal of Song's army south of the Yellow River. Maj.-Gen. Doihara presented the revised Japanese demands to Song Zheyuan. On June 27 Qin Dechun responded in writing that the Chinese would accept all of Japan's demands, including removing anti-Japanese organizations and the Song army from Chahar province. That missive served as the basis for the Doihara-Qin Agreement. As a result, Song Zheyuan's 29<sup>th</sup> Army moved out of Chahar, regrouping in the Beiping area. But who could have known that the 29<sup>th</sup> Army had already been infiltrated by a great many anti-Japanese elements, most of them CCP members, and that two years later it would cause the Lugou Bridge Incident?

Chinese violations of the Tanggu Truce led to the conclusion of the Umezu-He Agreement. Similarly, Chinese armed provocations against the Japanese led to the signing of the Doihara-Qin Agreement. It was, indisputably, Chinese actions that made both agreements necessary. Ultimately, a pro-Japanese government was established in North China, but this development was the inevitable consequence of the two agreements.