

## Revisiting the Outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War

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### Introduction

This paper undertakes a detailed examination of the local negotiations that took place in and around Peiping (now Beijing) between the Marco Polo Bridge (Lugouqiao) Incident on July 7, 1937 and the large-scale aggression of North China by the Imperial Japanese Army, which began on July 28, 1937. A great deal of research has been devoted to the Marco Polo Bridge Incident and the subsequent escalations, and the facts of the situation are now fairly well understood.<sup>1</sup> However, except for first-hand recollections by parties to the conflict, this literature has mostly examined the situation of local negotiations based on historical documents from the Japanese side, due to the fact that there are almost no historical records of the Hebei-Chahar Political Council and the 29<sup>th</sup> Army, which served as the negotiating parties on the Chinese side. As a result, there is much that remains unclear about developments on the Chinese side. On the Japanese side, too, apart from the *Peiping rikugun kikan gyōmu nisshi* [Administrative Log of Imperial Japanese Army Special Agency in Peiping], many of the records on the movements of the local Peiping-Tianjin side are only partial, and the thinking behind the negotiations within the Tianjin Garrison Army (Japanese China Garrison Army) and communications with the embassy and other actors have not been fully clarified. For example, what ideas informed the dealings of Song Zheyuan, the local commander on the Chinese side, with the central government in Nanjing and with the Japanese? And how did the ever-changing relationship between Song Zheyuan and Nanjing affect negotiations with the Japanese? What were the internal circumstances of the 29<sup>th</sup> Army, the main Chinese actor, and what were the reactions of the Japanese actors, including the Tianjin Garrison Army? These questions are essential to understanding the processes that frustrated Japan's policy of non-expansion and settling the affair locally and led to the failure of its policy toward China at the time. In this paper, I have attempted to fill these gaps by relying primarily on telegrams relating to the 29<sup>th</sup> Army intercepted by Yan Xishan and telegrams from the Japanese Foreign Ministry intercepted by Chiang Kai-shek, in addition to more conventional historical sources. In addition, where the claims of Japan and China differ, I have endeavored to arrive at a more likely understanding by relying on historical sources from third-party national actors such as Great Britain and the United States.

At that time, on the Japanese side, the Japanese China Garrison Army was headquartered in Tianjin (and thus typically referred to as the Tianjin Garrison Army), while the headquarters of the infantry brigade was located in Peiping. In addition, the 1st China Garrison Infantry Regiment was stationed in Peiping, Tianjin, Fengtai, and Tongzhou, and the 2<sup>nd</sup> 1st China Garrison Infantry Regiment was stationed in Tianjin, Tanggu, Tangshan, Luan County, Changli, Qinhuangdao, and Shanhaiguan. The unit involved in the Marco Polo Bridge Incident was the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion of the 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Regiment (commanded by Major Ichiki Kiyonao). Also located in Peiping were the army's Special Agency (*tokumu kikan*), which was in charge of liaison and negotiation with the 29<sup>th</sup> Army and the Hebei–Chahar Political Council, as well as the Japanese's embassy's assistant military attaché (Major Imai Takeo).<sup>2</sup>

Meanwhile, on the Chinese side, the Hebei-Chahar Political Council (HCPC), which had administrative jurisdiction over Hebei and Chahar Provinces, and the Hebei-Chahar Pacification Command, which was in charge of maintaining public order, were established in Peiping. Both were headed by cadres of the 29<sup>th</sup> Army. The 29<sup>th</sup> Army was originally a regional army that had been part of the Guominjun (Northwestern Army), and although it was ostensibly subordinate to the central government in Nanjing, it was not under the government's complete control. The 29<sup>th</sup> Army was under the military command of Song Zheyuan, who also served as the chairman of the HCPC and the chief of the Hebei-Chahar Pacification Command, and who was visiting his hometown of Laoling in Shandong Province at the time of the incident. Headquartered in Nanyuan, the 29<sup>th</sup> Army consisted of the 37<sup>th</sup> Division, stationed in Xiyuan under the command of Feng Zhi'an, the 38<sup>th</sup> Division in Nanyuan under Zhang Zizhong, the 132<sup>nd</sup> Division in Hejian under Zhao Dengyu, and the 143<sup>rd</sup> Division in Zhangjiakou under Liu Rumeng, as well as the Independent 39<sup>th</sup> Brigade in Tongzhou Beiyuan under Ruan Xuanwu, and the 9<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Division in Nanyuan under Zheng Dazhang. In addition, the Jibei Peace Preservation Corps (*Paoantui*) was stationed in Xiyuan and Qinghe under Shi Yousan, and the Hebei Security Brigade in Baoding under Dai Shouyi. The unit involved in the Marco Polo Bridge Incident was the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion of the 219<sup>th</sup> Regiment of the 110<sup>th</sup> Brigade of the 37<sup>th</sup> Division, which was assigned to defend the Marco Polo Bridge and Wanping Fortress.<sup>3</sup>

Since this paper is primarily concerned with local negotiations, discussion of higher-level political developments in both China and Japan will be limited to what is necessary to investigate communications in the field.

## 1) The July 7 Shooting Incident

Since June 26, Peiping had been under a military curfew in response to a notice received by the HCPC from Nanjing that there were rumors indicating the likelihood of increased maneuvers by “the collaborators” (*hanjian*).<sup>4</sup> At that time, the Japanese forces were scheduled to undergo a second-term review from July 9 to 16, and maneuvers were being conducted in preparation.<sup>5</sup>

In the midst of these maneuvers, at about 10:40 p.m. on July 7, an unidentified party fired two shots at the Japanese forces (specifically, the 8<sup>th</sup> Company of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion of the 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Regiment of the China Garrison Army) during field maneuvers in a wilderness area along the Yongding River. The Japanese forces stopped the exercise and conducted a roll call, after which a private was reported missing. Upon receiving the report, the regimental commander in Peiping, Colonel Mutaguchi Renya, ordered the battalion's commander Major Ichiki, who was on the spot, to dispatch the Fengtai garrison to the area and, "after making his forces ready for battle, to call the commander of the [Marco Polo Bridge] battalion to negotiate," and then to conduct a search for the missing soldier at Wanping (Lugouqiao) Fortress.<sup>6, 7</sup> The missing soldier, who had merely lost his way, was found shortly thereafter, and the Chinese authorities were notified at around 2:00 a.m. the following morning.<sup>8</sup> Although the purpose of the search was initially to find the missing soldier, it soon turned into a search for the perpetrator. The disappearance turned out to be a factor that made a simple shooting incident more serious and complicated, as the justification for entering Wanping Fortress, which was originally to search for the missing soldier, had somehow turned into a hunt for the perpetrators of the shooting.

After midnight, at 12:10 a.m. on July 8, the Army's Special Agency in Peiping received a telephone call from a brigade adjutant named Onoguchi, who reported that at around 11:00 p.m. on July 7, the 8<sup>th</sup> Company of the Fengtai garrison had suddenly been fired upon 18 times by the Chinese while conducting night-time maneuvers in Lungwangmiao near the Marco Polo Bridge. He further reported that when the company had mustered and was preparing to return fire, they discovered one soldier missing, and that the two sides were now in a standoff.<sup>9</sup>

In response, Colonel Matsui Takurō of the Army Special Service Agency phoned Lin Gengyu, a technical adviser to the Hebei-Chahar Diplomatic Committee to discuss how to resolve the situation. Later, around 1:00 a.m., Lin Gengyu reported that Qin Dechun, the mayor of Peiping (and the deputy commander of the 29<sup>th</sup> Army) had ordered local forces to avoid escalating the situation. Colonel Matsui urged that representatives from both the Japanese and Chinese sides should be sent to the area to prevent the incident from escalating.<sup>10</sup>

At 2:00 a.m., accompanied by his interpreter, Major Sakurai Tokutarō (a Japanese adviser to the 29<sup>th</sup> Army), visited Qin Dechun and Feng Zhi'an (commander of the 37<sup>th</sup> Division). Major Sakurai met with Qin at 3:00 a.m., and the two agreed on the following points: 1) not to deploy any more units, 2) not to deploy the Marco Polo Bridge unit (the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion of the 29<sup>th</sup> Army) outside the bridge area, and 3) to do everything possible to prevent the incident from escalating.<sup>11</sup> Qin also stated that "Feng (Zhi'an)'s men were by no means deployed outside the Marco Polo Bridge." If someone was camped outside the Marco Polo Bridge, he said, it was most likely bandits. "If someone is deployed outside the fortress, you may attack them at will, as they are probably not under Feng's command. Even if they are Feng's men, if they are outside the fortress, you may attack decisively." This reply later became the basis for

the Japanese forces' firing outside of Wanping Fortress.<sup>12</sup>

Meanwhile, the soldier initially reported missing was found safe, and it was confirmed that that the Japanese side had suffered no casualties. When the troops resolved to demand an apology from the commander of the Chinese division for the illegal shooting and to request the immediate withdrawal of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, which they believed to have fired the shots, Colonel Matsui, as the director of the Army Special Service Agency, replied that he had no objection to the first, but that he would have to consult with the (garrison) troops before deciding on the second.<sup>13</sup>

When the brigade asked for instructions from the garrison headquarters in Tianjin, the staff officer, Lieutenant-Commander Ōki, gave the following firm instructions: "We must demand a firm apology from China for the illegal shooting, and when we go to negotiate, we must take a company with us and be ready to use force, if necessary."<sup>14</sup>

At 3:00 a.m., Major Sakurai, who had by then returned, accompanied by Captain Teradaira, his aide-de-camp, Major Shakudō, who led a squad of military police (*kenpeitai*), Lt. Colonel Morita, a regimental attaché, and one other detachment, went to the site to try to mediate the situation, joined on the Chinese side by the Wanping County Mayor, Wang Lengzhai, Deputy Chief Zhou Yongye, and the technical adviser Lin Gengyu.<sup>15</sup>

When gunshots rang out in the Marco Polo Bridge area once again around 3:00 a.m., Major Ichiki received permission from Colonel Mutaguchi, the regimental commander, for his battalion to return fire. At 5:00 a.m., he ordered the battalion to advance to the Yongding River, where they would be able to fire on Lungwangmiao and a bunker to the south.<sup>16</sup> While Major Ichiki's unit was advancing toward the Yongding River, a joint Sino-Japanese fact-finding party arrived, so the unit halted its advance and prepared breakfast. At around the same time, the fact-finding party was negotiating inside the fortress, but then Chinese troops began firing at the advancing Japanese Army near Lungwangmiao, which was the closest in an attempt to stop their advance. It was now 5:30 a.m. on July 8.<sup>17</sup> The skirmish was temporarily suspended at 6:00 a.m., partly due to the actions of the fact-finding team to prevent the situation from escalating. However, although the Chinese headquarters inside the fortress had raised a white flag, at least one unit on the battlements continued to fire occasionally. The Japanese battalion command withdrew to the footings of a railroad bridge below the Marco Polo Bridge, leaving a detachment on an island in the Yongding River. About 30 Chinese troops were positioned on the southern part of the island, ready to fire at any Japanese movement.<sup>18</sup>

At this point, the embassy felt that a clash between the two armies could be avoided for the time being by dispatching a fact-finding team.<sup>19</sup> According to a communication from Major Sakurai and Captain Teradaira, the Chinese finally stopped the attack. Although they could finally stop the attack of the Chinese with an extreme crackdown, they could not easily enforce the order to cease fire on the Japanese. Even when Major Sakurai made rounds of the Japanese units, waving a white flag, to urge them to cease fire, the order was not always obeyed. As a

result, he requested the regimental commander to issue a ceasefire order.<sup>20</sup> It should also be noted that although the Chinese Army on the Wanping side had ceased fighting, the Chinese forces on the Changxindian side were continuing to fire.<sup>21</sup> Therefore, the exchange of fire was taking place mainly between the Japanese forces and the Chinese forces in Changxindian.

Local negotiations were set to continue between Wang Lengzhai, the county mayor, and Colonel Mutaguchi, the regimental commander, for a mutual withdrawal by a deadline tentatively set for 11:00 a.m.<sup>22</sup> However, since the Chinese side was unwilling to accede to the Japanese demand that the troops at the Marco Polo Bridge and Lungwangmiao withdraw to the west bank of the Yongding River, the Army Special Service Agency requested that the deadline for withdrawal be extended by one hour. The Japanese were determined to disarm the Chinese by force if their demands were not met, but at about noon, negotiations between Lt. Colonel Morita and Wang Qiyuan, a staff officer of the 37<sup>th</sup> Division, resulted in an agreement that the Japanese forces on the west side of the central islet in the Yongding River and the Chinese forces on the south side of the island would both be ordered to withdraw. If the Chinese side agreed, they were to do so within two hours of the signal. If they did not, then the Japanese would use force. Around this time, the Chinese troops in Changxindian were also reinforced. On the Japanese side, too, troops stationed in Tongzhou set out for the area at 11:40 a.m.<sup>23</sup>

In the local detachment of the 37<sup>th</sup> Division, He Jifeng, the commander of the 110<sup>th</sup> Brigade (and had secret contact with the CCP),<sup>24</sup> had requested that the 219<sup>th</sup> Regiment closely monitor the movements of the Japanese Army and ordered all officers and men to counterattack decisively and without fail if provoked by the Japanese troops.<sup>25</sup> After the fighting had temporarily ceased, the 219<sup>th</sup> Regiment (commanded by Ji Xingwen), which had been positioned near the Marco Polo Bridge, conducted a night attack on the 8<sup>th</sup>, but this was carried out at the discretion of the 37<sup>th</sup> Division rather than at the level of the 29<sup>th</sup> Army.<sup>26</sup> As of the 8<sup>th</sup>, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion of the 219<sup>th</sup> Regiment was deployed in and around Wanping Fortress, the regimental headquarters, the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalions were in Changxindian, and the 110<sup>th</sup> Brigade and 220<sup>th</sup> Regiment (commanded by Xie Shiguan) were being deployed along the line from Lungwangmiao to Zhangdao Village.<sup>27</sup>

## **2) Negotiations in Peiping**

Thereafter, given that none of the Hebei-Chahar political executives (all 29<sup>th</sup> Army cadres) with authority to make decisions was present in the area, negotiations over the best course of action were moved to Peiping, but even there Hebei-Chahar officials avoided contact with the Japanese side, who attempted to contact their Chinese counterparts through four different channels.

The first was the Army Special Service Agency. After returning to Peiping, Captain Teradaira went to the private residence of Feng Zhi'an, commander of the 37<sup>th</sup> Division, at 4:00 p.m. At that moment, however, Feng was on his way back from Xi'an, where he had been away

on business. Teradaira then tried to pay a visit to the city's mayor, Qin Dechun. However, Qin not only avoided meeting with him directly, claiming that he had to be at the Xiyuan barracks for a military meeting at 2:00 p.m., but also made various excuses for not meeting with him after 5:30 p.m., when he was scheduled to return. Captain Teradaira reluctantly attempted to conduct the talks over the phone, but Qin would not listen to any of Japan's requests, and the talks were on the verge of breaking down, with signs that the situation would deteriorate even further.<sup>28</sup>

The Japanese Army, still hoping for peaceful talks, decided in view of the situation on the ground to withdraw voluntarily to the east side of the Yongding River at 6:30 p.m., and notified Qin Dechun of this intention through the director of the Army Special Service Agency. However, Major-General Kawabe's intention in making this withdrawal was to wait for the arrival of his troops from Tianjin so that they would be ready to attack the Marco Polo Bridge if the negotiations failed. After that, Captain Teradaira's attempts at negotiation yielded little result.<sup>29</sup>

A second line of approach was through diplomatic channels. At 7:00 p.m., Qin Dechun phoned Secretary Katō at the Japanese Embassy to inform him that the Chinese were making every effort to prevent the situation from escalating. By this time, the Japanese reinforcements from the Tianjin Garrison Army had arrived, while the Chinese side was being bolstered by reinforcements from Changxindian, with reports indicating that the number of soldiers in the area had reached 1,500, and that a detachment from Feng Zhi'an's unit in Xiyuan was also on its way to the area. In addition, the Tianjin Garrison Army anticipated that if Zhang Zizhong's unit in Nanyuan (the 38<sup>th</sup> Division) joined the fray, then it was likely that the Kwantung Army would also be mobilized. The ongoing situation was not one that allowed for optimism.<sup>30</sup>

In view of this, after consulting with the Tianjin Garrison Army, Secretary Katō visited Qin Dechun's residence that evening at 10:30 p.m., where he expressed his "earnest wish that, from the broader perspective of relations between Japan and China, [Qin] would make the utmost effort to endure the difficulties of the situation." Qin replied as follows.

I fully agree with your view, and since this morning I have been making every effort to prevent the situation from escalating and to bring it under control quickly.... The Japanese argue that the two armies should withdraw from the area bounded by the Yongding River. Although we have no objection to this in principle, a complete withdrawal of the Marco Polo Bridge unit would be premised on all troops (both units) maintaining a calm attitude throughout, and not returning fire even if fired upon. Given that the investigators have witnessed the situation firsthand, and the fact that there have been a number of casualties, conditions are excessively severe, but we will endure them to a certain extent. In order that both sides can save face, we would like to come to a compromise on a "line" whereby we would retain only a partial unit in the area, while the rest would withdraw to the west bank.

The arguments on both sides were very close, with only minor differences. Nevertheless, they were unable to reach a mutual understanding.<sup>31</sup>

A third avenue of approach, in addition to the efforts being made by the Army Special Service Agency and Foreign Ministry, was an attempt made by the Tianjin Garrison Army Headquarters and Major Takeo Imai, the military attaché, to negotiate with the Hebei-Chahar authorities. After arriving by plane from Tianjin, Lt. Colonel Wachi and Captain Suzuki joined Major Imai and three others, attempted to make contact with officials in the Hebei-Chahar government. At 7:00 p.m., they finally succeeded in meeting with Qin Dechun, as well as with Zhao Dengyu and Zhang Yunrong (general councilor of the 29<sup>th</sup> Army), who were also present.

At the meeting, the Japanese demanded that the Chinese Army withdraw from the Marco Polo Bridge. The Chinese responded that they would do their best to avoid the escalation of the incident, but insisted that both sides should withdraw at the same time, and that they would like to keep some troops in place to maintain security. Other than a commitment to non-escalation, no agreement was reached.<sup>32</sup>

A fourth route was the proposal delivered by General Hashimoto through Zhang Zizhong, the 38<sup>th</sup> Division commander and mayor of Tianjin, that the situation could be resolved amicably with the withdrawal of the Japanese Army forces to Lungwangmiao and the Chinese Army forces into Wanping Fortress. Although Feng Zhi'an was also receptive to this proposal, he was extremely opposed to the idea of a mass withdrawal across the Yongding River, with the result that no compromise was found.<sup>33</sup>

Two lines of negotiations continued throughout the night, between the Army Special Service Agency and Qin Dechun and Zhang Yunrong in Peiping and between the China Garrison Army Command and Zhang Zizhong in Tianjin. In Peiping, Zhang Yunrong suggested that the answer was to withdraw troops in halves according to the first plan, with the first half to be withdrawn by 6:00 a.m., and the remaining half by the evening of the 9<sup>th</sup>.<sup>34</sup>

Later, at 1:30 a.m., word came from the China Garrison Command negotiating in Tianjin that Zhang Zizhong had agreed to withdraw the Chinese forces at 4:00 a.m. In addition, at 2:10 a.m. Zhang Zizhong once again persuaded Feng Zhi'an to agree 1) that the troop withdrawal would take place at 5:00 a.m., and 2) that the units of the 37<sup>th</sup> Division near Lungwangmiao would be transferred to Yamenkou, and that Zhang Zizhong would be in charge of implementation. Zhang Yunrong also gave his assent, and a general agreement on the withdrawal was reached in Peiping, as well.<sup>35</sup>

For its part, the Tianjin Garrison Army's plan was 1) to withdraw all armed troops from the Marco Polo Bridge, 2) to voluntarily withdraw the Japanese forces to the east bank of the river (already accomplished), and 3) to declare that they had no intention of occupying the Marco Polo Bridge indefinitely.<sup>36</sup> At 3:00 a.m., a brigade order was issued to assemble and monitor the troops for a simultaneous withdrawal.<sup>37</sup>

In addition, after receiving information that an agreement had been reached on the withdrawal, the Tianjin Garrison Army communicated with Lt. Colonel Wachi, a staff officer in the Army Special Service Agency, about its plan for corrective measures after the withdrawal, namely 1) to obtain an apology from the divisional commanders involved on the Chinese side, 2) to punish the personnel responsible, 3) to crack down on anti-Japanese elements, 4) to change the garrison of the 9<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Division, and 5) to allow the Japanese Army troops to cross the Marco Polo Bridge.<sup>38</sup>

With this, it appeared that the withdrawal would proceed in an orderly sequence and that the situation was under control. However, when the agreed hour of 5:00 a.m. arrived, the Chinese troops did not start to withdraw, but instead began actively firing on the Japanese troops, who were mustering in the vicinity of Lugouqiao Station as per the agreement. This was because when the Japanese authorities tried to get confirmation from the Chinese side, they could not get through because the Japanese Army had cut the telephone lines, and because a messenger dispatched by Fengtai to the Marco Polo Bridge had also been prevented from reaching his destination. After discussions between the two sides, it was decided that the Chinese would send a party consisting of the deputy chief of the 110<sup>th</sup> Brigade, General Staff Officer Zhou of the 29<sup>th</sup> Army, Lt. Colonel Nakajima, an adviser to the 29<sup>th</sup> Army, and Lin Gengyu, and that the Japanese would send a messenger of their own to the area and continue to monitor the withdrawal.<sup>39</sup>

At about 6:40 a.m., Lt. Colonel Nakajima and the Chinese officials arrived at the scene. At 7:10 a.m., they entered Wanping Fortress and delivered the 29<sup>th</sup> Army's orders, whereupon the confrontation ended.<sup>40</sup> The Japanese authorities monitored the withdrawal, which continued until about noon, and then ordered the Japanese troops to withdraw to Fengtai, leaving two companies as observers.<sup>41</sup> The Chinese, however, took issue with the two companies left behind and became suspicious of the withdrawal of the Japanese Army.<sup>42</sup>

On the other hand, after the withdrawal, China dispatched its Peace Preservation Corps, to the area to maintain security. However, a messenger sent to report the arrival of the Peace Preservation Corps was blocked by the Japanese. Thus, because it was raining and they were wearing the same style of greatcoat as the 29<sup>th</sup> Army, the Peace Preservation Corps were mistaken by the Japanese Army as reinforcements, which led to a clash near Wulidian that resulted in several casualties.<sup>43</sup> The Peace Preservation Corps were supposed to have been dispatched from the Jibei Peace Preservation Corps unit commanded by Shi Yousan.<sup>44</sup> In fact, however, Feng Zhi'an, under orders from Song Zheyuan, had sent troops under his direct command – the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion of the 1<sup>st</sup> Regiment of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade – in disguise to take over the defense of Wanping Fortress, and it was this unit that had clashed with the Japanese.<sup>45</sup>

At 0:20 p.m., the Chinese dispatched a spokesperson to meet with Major-General Kawabe. An agreement was reached whereby: 1) the Chinese would be allowed to leave a detachment in the fortress and withdraw the rest of their forces to the right (east) side of the Yongding



River, and 2) the Peace Preservation Corps would be allowed to station a force of 50 men with 50 rounds of ammunition per rifle.<sup>46</sup> The Chinese troops withdrew, leaving behind a single platoon to make the handover to the Peace Preservation Corps. Once this was taken care of, they also withdrew to the west side of the Yongding River, so that the entire operation was completed by 4:00 p.m.<sup>47</sup> The Peace Preservation Corps who were to take over the security of the fortress had initially had a complement of 200 men and 18 machine guns, as a result of the clash, however, after negotiations with the Japanese side, this complement was reduced to 150 men and no machine guns, and this was the strength they had when they took over the guarding of the fortress.<sup>48</sup> These 150 men were under the command of Ji Xingwen, with one platoon leader and 30 squad members defending the Marco Polo Bridge, and the remaining 120 men defending the walls and western gates of Wanping Fortress.<sup>49</sup> From the outbreak of the incident until both sides withdrew, casualties on the Japanese side amounted to 10 killed and 22 received minor and seriously injured.<sup>50</sup>

### **3) Views on the Incident by the 29<sup>th</sup> Army**

The 29<sup>th</sup> Army, elements of which had clashed with the Japanese, did not begin to mobilize as a whole until an order was given by Song Zheyuan on July 9, at which point he provided his officers and soldiers with the following summary of the incident.

It is the policy of our army to maintain friendly relations with all parties at home and abroad. I do not wish to get involved in a meaningless conflict that will only benefit an opportunistic third-party. In other words, if the Japanese make unreasonable provocations or find some pretext to start a war and the peace breaks down, then we will hold them fully responsible based on the actual situation. Our army will show the people the path of law and reason, and I vow with unyielding determination that we will never show contempt for the other side unless they show contempt for us. If the Japanese change their minds, it is still not too late to reconcile and renounce war for the sake of peace. But if Japan has no such intention and continues its wanton aggression, if our territory, our people, and our sovereignty are at stake, then we must marshal all our forces to fight Japan to the bitter end; on moral grounds, we cannot back down....<sup>51</sup>

From the telegrams sent to the army's various units, it seems that Song Zheyuan initially believed that the incident was a plot hatched by a third party other than Japan or Hebei-Chahar Political Council. Although it is not clear from the text whether he suspected an "opportunistic third-party" to be the central government in Nanjing or the East Hebei Autonomous Government, which was rumored to be about to be dissolved and absorbed by the central government, it seems likely based on the course of previous events and recent developments that he had the latter relationship in mind. Of course, since there was every possibility that

Japanese influence lay behind East Hebei, for Hebei-Chahar the East Hebei issue was also an issue with Japan.

On the same day, Song also issued the following orders to the units under his command.<sup>52</sup>

1. The Japanese Army will be sure to escalate this incident. I'd like to avoid this, but it will be difficult. You should issue the following instructions to your units to prepare for the operation: 1) establish positions such as by digging trenches in defensive areas, 2) replenish ammunition, 3) relocate troops.
2. Using field operations and surprise raids, act quickly to resolve any situations. Small units should wait for reinforcements to resolve any situations.
3. We must not overstate the situation. Just steadily carry out the operation.
4. If the Japanese Army passes through Langfang, we must attack them, and we must do so with soldiers in civilian clothing.

Further, on the same day, in the 132<sup>nd</sup> Division based in of Hejian County south of Peiping, division commander Zhao ordered the companies under his command to prepare to march with a five-day supply of food.<sup>53</sup> Commander Zhao also ordered The 1<sup>st</sup> brigade stationed in Daming County, The 2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade stationed in Hejian, and County and Independent 27<sup>th</sup> Brigade stationed in Guan County to prepare for immediate action.<sup>54</sup> The 9<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Division headquartered in Nanyuan ordered the 1<sup>st</sup> brigade headquartered in Zhuo County and the 2<sup>nd</sup> brigade headquartered in Nanyuan to be on alert, in addition, the 13<sup>th</sup> cavalry brigade headquartered in Xuanhua County were also ordered to prepare for action.<sup>55</sup>

From these details, it can be seen that while the 29<sup>th</sup> Army as a whole was prepared to take up arms against the Japanese reinforcements if they passed Langfang, it still took the relatively passive approach of readying itself first for battle, being careful not to serve the interests of potential third-party schemes, and taking efforts to defend itself. The 37<sup>th</sup> Division, however, was more proactive than the army as a whole, and on that day, at the stroke of midnight, Ji Xingwen's troops set out from Changxindian.<sup>56</sup>

#### **4) Negotiating a Settlement**

On the 10<sup>th</sup>, the two sides continued to investigate the details of a ceasefire agreement to be concluded after the withdrawal. During these negotiations, it was decided that Zhang Zizhong would be the primary spokesman for the Chinese side, as he had been in charge of the withdrawal negotiations up to that point, and that he would be joined by Zhang Yunrong given their close friendship. Negotiations with Zhang Yunrong began at 4:00 p.m. in the Army Special Service Agency.<sup>57</sup>

At around the same time, a telegram from the General Staff of the Imperial Japanese Army arrived for the Japanese China Garrison Army commander in Tianjin, instructing him not to

expand the hostile situation, the draft being prepared by the chief of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Section (War Leadership). “In order to resolve the Marco Polo Bridge Incident,” the message read, “you will avoid touching on any political issues at this time” and then went on to communicate the following four conditions: 1) that no more troops be stationed on the left (west) side of the Marco Polo Bridge, 2) that necessary assurances be given for the future, 3) that the responsible parties be punished, and 4) that an apology be made in the near future.<sup>58</sup> While in Peiping, the Japanese Chief of Staff of the Chinese Garrison Army, General Hashimoto, reviewed the demands and, in general accordance with instructions from the central government, summarized the four demands as the basis for negotiations.<sup>59</sup>

At 4:00 p.m., the negotiators reached an agreement on the immediate actions of the two armies for the night of the 10<sup>th</sup>, according to which the Japanese Army would muster near Xiwulidian and would not deploy forward (although they would not be prevented from having communications in the rear), while the Chinese Army would absolutely not cross the Yongding River (although they would not be prevented from switching out forces west of the Yongding River). Nevertheless, negotiations over the treatment of those responsible and the withdrawal of the Chinese army proved to be difficult.<sup>60</sup>

While the negotiations continued in Peiping, new disputes were arising at the site of the Marco Polo Bridge. At around 4:00 p.m., Japanese scouts monitoring the situation near Lungwangmiao were fired upon by mortar rounds from the direction of Babaoshan, and intelligence was received that the Chinese Army could be seen to be increasing its presence on the west bank of the Yongding River and to the north.<sup>61</sup>

At 5:00 p.m., General Hashimoto telephoned the brigade directly to inform them that, in view of the assurances obtained in earlier negotiations that the Chinese Army would “absolutely not cross the Yongding River and the troops in Xiyuan would not move south of the line between Babaoshan and Yamenkou,” the brigade was to refrain from sending troops to the Yongding River area due to the potential “risk of causing problems for subsequent negotiations.” Given the likelihood that a continued troop presence at Lungwangmiao would lead to an unnecessary continuation of skirmishes, Major-General Kawabe, the brigade’s commander, was determined to pull them out that night. To this end, Kawabe ordered the brigade’s main force to assemble near Xiwulidian at 6:20 p.m. and also issued an order that “the scouts occupying Lungwangmiao and the area near the railroad bridge should withdraw by nightfall.” The same order was issued by the regiment at 6:55 p.m.<sup>62</sup>

At about 5:10 p.m., however, approximately 100 Chinese soldiers appeared from Yamenkou, and began firing mortar shells as they advanced toward Lungwangmiao. Around 6:00 p.m., more Chinese soldiers appeared in the direction of Lungwangmiao and Dongxinzhuang to the northeast. After opening fire, they succeeded in taking Lungwangmiao.<sup>63</sup> At 7:00 p.m., a platoon that had been on a reconnaissance mission suffered casualties while trying to recapture the position. It was reported from the front line that the situation was such that “although they

had received the brigade's orders, it would be difficult to carry them out" because the enemy numbers were still increasing.<sup>64</sup> After witnessing these events from Mt. Yiwenzi (Ichimonji), Colonel Mutaguchi, the regimental commander, decided on his own initiative to wipe out the enemy. At 7:00 p.m., he ordered the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, under his direct command, to attack with the aim of punishing the enemy's breach of trust.<sup>65</sup> Moreover, at 7:25 p.m., a volley of mortar fire was launched from the Chinese forces on the right bank of the Yongding River. Enraged, Major-General Kawabe decided to deal firmly with any enemy action south of the agreed line.<sup>66</sup> Resolving not to give the enemy the benefit of the doubt as to their sincerity, the brigade rushed to the scene.<sup>67</sup>

The brigade commander arrived at Regimental Command at 8:20 p.m., and after assessing the situation, gave his silent assent to the regimental commander's unilateral actions.<sup>68</sup> At 9:15, the Japanese forces occupied Lungwangmiao, recovered the dead and wounded soldiers, and by 2:00 a.m. had regrouped at Xiwulidian, restoring the status quo ante.<sup>69</sup>

After Major-General Kawabe returned to Fengtai, he sent the following telegram to the Chief of Staff of the China Garrison Army.

In view of the conduct of the Chinese on this occasion, the attitude of the 29<sup>th</sup> Army, especially the 37<sup>th</sup> Division, toward us is such that there is no longer any possibility of treating them as a friendly force, and I am led to believe that this will only increase in the future. Our attempts to provide guidance in accordance with the existing policy will only lead to the repetition of such outrages, and the current enemy situation and the movements of the Xiyuan Corps since yesterday's cease-fire agreement have only made me more keenly aware of this fact.

In light of the new facts as described above, and as you know from the summary of our recent telephone conversation, there must be room for a reconsideration of your policy on the handling of this matter, and the Central Department's policy of immediate decision-making, which is the basis for this policy, must also be subjected to fundamental scrutiny. In short, although the situation may expand somewhat, I cannot help but be painfully aware that we need to take steps closer to a fundamental solution.<sup>70</sup>

The cause of the attack was initially attributed by some on the Japanese side to be in line with the Chinese explanation that even though the two sides had come to an agreement and sent orders to the front lines, "it took three or four hours for the Chinese side to receive the orders, which caused miscommunication."<sup>71</sup> However, after repeated attacks by the Chinese, Major-General Kawabe, who had initially sought an early resolution of the situation by finding a local solution, grew increasingly distrustful of the Chinese and came to feel that the situation would not be so easily resolved.

In the Chinese attack on the 10<sup>th</sup>, the belligerents were not the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion of the 219<sup>th</sup>

Regiment, which had initially clashed with the Japanese, but the 220<sup>th</sup> Regiment and Special Forces under He Jifeng, commander of the 110<sup>th</sup> Brigade.<sup>72</sup> This is corroborated by a report intercepted and transmitted by a naval officer at the U.S. Embassy in Peiping, who wrote that “According to credible sources, the men of the 29th Army (Song Zheyuan), not being satisfied with the local agreement, are expected to launch an attack against the Japanese at 7:00(?) tonight.”<sup>73</sup> Presumably, this order was issued by Feng Zhi’an, the commander of the 37<sup>th</sup> Division, but although Song Zheyuan received and ratified the order, he does not appear to have issued the order to Feng Zhi’an himself.<sup>74</sup> Therefore, it seems reasonable to assume that the clashes around the Marco Polo Bridge up to this point had primarily been conducted at the sole discretion of Feng Zhi’an, the commander of the 37<sup>th</sup> Division. In addition, after receiving a report from Ji Xingwen that the Japanese had been spotted crossing the Yongding River and were preparing a major offensive on the Marco Polo Bridge and Changxindian,<sup>75</sup> Feng Zhi’an issued an order at 6:00 p.m. on the same day for the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion of the 675<sup>th</sup> Regiment of Feng’s Independent 25<sup>th</sup> Brigade (the battalion commanded by Huang Shengzhou) to escort one company of mountain artillery, one company of field artillery, and four heavy mortars from Xiyuan to Changxindian on the opposite side of the river to reinforce troops under the command of Ji Xingwen, mostly artillery.<sup>76</sup> Meanwhile, in Peiping, Qin Dechun, Feng Zhi’an, and other cadres of the 29<sup>th</sup> Army, probably on Song’s orders, advised northward troops to wait on the north shore of the Yellow River until they could assess the situation with regard to the northward advance of the Central Army and remind Nanjing Central not to provoke the Japanese side or allow the Central Army to advance into their own territory.<sup>77</sup>

## **5) Negotiations Continue in Peiping**

In Peiping, Lt. Colonel Tsukada had been dispatched by the Army Special Service Agency to the residences of various Chinese officials to confirm the Chinese side’s attitude toward cooperation with Japan. Depending on his report, however, just as with that of the brigade’s commander, it was felt that a resolution to punish the Chinese may be necessary. This was because, even in the Army Special Service Agency, the prevailing view was that “although they, just like Feng Zhi’an, are claiming that they haven’t commanded their troops to attack, the subordinate commanders have been given secret orders to take hostile action against the Japanese Army (and we have obtained these secret orders). Thus, as far as we are concerned, any and all assertions by the Chinese are totally meaningless; if anything, this gives us license to crush them utterly (preparations to this end are already complete).”<sup>78</sup>

Still unable to find a suitable solution even after meeting with Zhang Yunrong, Lt. Colonel Tsukada returned at 11:00 p.m. with an agreement to meet with Zhang Zizhong at midnight. On the 11<sup>th</sup>, Colonel Matsui, Lt. Colonel Wachi, Lt. Colonel Tsukada, and Major Imai attended a midnight meeting at Zhang Zizhong’s private residence. Present on the Chinese side, in addition to Zhang Zizhong, who was ill in bed, were Zhang Yunrong and his interpreter Lu

Nansheng. The talks lasted for about two hours, but ended without reaching an agreement over the refusal on the part of the Chinese to allow the punishment of those responsible and their insistence that the Peace Preservation Corps maintain security until the withdrawal was complete, and that the 38<sup>th</sup> Division would be responsible for security thereafter. After returning to the Army Special Service Agency, the Japanese party held a discussion led by the Chief of Staff of the China Garrison Army. Major Imai stated that the Japanese side would never accept the agreement unless China accepted the four conditions and proposed that, in the unlikely event that the talks failed, Japan should withdraw voluntarily to Peiping and Fengtai where, with reinforcements from the Tianjin Garrison Army and the Kwantung Army, they would monitor the Chinese attitude and prepare for both negotiations and a military operation. Lt. Colonel Tsukada opposed this proposal as being too hard-line, but after careful consideration by the Chief of Staff of the China Garrison Army, Major Imai's plan was finally adopted at 3:30 a.m.

Of the four conditions, Major Imai incorporated the punishment of the responsible parties into the first condition, and hand-delivered the document to Lu Nansheng now as a list of three articles. Lu said, however, that it would not be possible for the Chinese to accept these, so Imai sent another invitation to Zhang Yunrong. In the end, Zhang did not appear, so a draft was given to Lu to deliver to Zhang at his private residence, where he was at that moment meeting with Qin Dechun, Feng Zhi'an, and Zhang Zizhong, among others. It seems that this group gave further discussion to Imai's plan, and at about 5:00 a.m., Colonel Matsui received a telephone reply from Qin Dechun, informing him that while the Chinese side would accept the punishment of those responsible, the withdrawal of troops was absolutely unacceptable. When Lt. Colonel Tsukada received the same reply after another meeting with Zhang Yunrong, the negotiations finally ground to a halt.

Major Imai, who had been given full authority, then held a series of meetings with Hebei-Chahar officials. At 11:30 a.m. he went to Zhang Yunrong's residence to meet with Zhang and others, including Zhai Xieyuan (a member of the Hebei-Chahar Political Council) and Sun Junyu (a member of the Hebei-Chahar government's Foreign Relations Committee). At the meeting, Major Imai proposed that China withdraw its troops at the same time as the Japanese voluntarily withdrew theirs, which had been one of the sticking points in the negotiations. At this, the Chinese authorities, relieved by the Japanese withdrawal, finally accepted the withdrawal of the Chinese troops from the Marco Polo Bridge, concluding the negotiations. At 2:00 p.m., Major Imai obtained the approval of the Chief of Staff, who was on his way back to Tianjin, and then returned to the Army Special Service Agency.<sup>79</sup>

Around the time that Major Imai was engaged in these negotiations, more forceful measures were being discussed in Tokyo. Before 11:00 a.m., an urgent telegram arrived from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs requesting that "all necessary measures be adopted to settle the situation as soon as possible." At 2:30 p.m., word came from Army Central that the Kwantung

Army and the Japanese Korean Army as well as three divisions from mainland Japan were to be mobilized.<sup>80</sup>

In addition, in view of the unsatisfactory conclusion of the morning's negotiations and the situation at the Marco Polo Bridge on the 10<sup>th</sup>, the military command in Tianjin had decided to temporarily break of the conventional peace negotiations and press for the thorough implementation of the He-Umezu Agreement. It was also decided to gradually mass the Japanese forces to strike a thorough blow against the Chinese forces in Hebei Province and to sweep them away when the opportunity arose.<sup>81</sup> Because of this, not everyone on the Japanese side was pleased with the conclusion of the negotiations, and Imai fielded phone calls and other communiques urging him to back away from the agreement or to add more conditions to it. However, with the agreement of Colonel Matsui and Lt. Col. Wachi, Major Imai made only slight emendations to the text, and at 6:00 p.m., he arrived at Zhang Yunrong's residence together with Matsui and Wachi, and by 8:00 p.m. they had finished signing and sealing the agreement with Zhang Yunrong and Zhang Zizhong.<sup>82</sup>

The final agreement consisted of the following three articles:

- 1) The representatives of the 29<sup>th</sup> Army shall express their regrets to the Japanese Army, shall punish the parties responsible, and shall affirm responsibility for preventing any similar incident from occurring again in the future.
- 2) As the overly close proximity of Chinese soldiers to Japanese soldiers stationed in Fengtai has increased the likelihood of such incidents, no Chinese soldiers shall be stationed in the Marco Polo Bridge Fortress or Lungwangmiao, and security in these areas shall be maintained by the Peace Preservation Corps.
- 3) In view of the fact that this incident was in many ways inspired by the example of various anti-Japanese organizations such as the Communist Party and the so-called Blue Shirts Society, in the future China shall take preventative countermeasures and crack down thoroughly against these elements.

The provisions of the preceding paragraphs are hereby accepted in their entirety.

Signed and sealed on July 11, 1937

Zhang Yunrong, Zhang Zizhong<sup>83</sup>

Although the Japanese military headquarters softened its earlier hard-line policy in view of the Chinese acceptance of all of its demands, it "maintained its policy of strict surveillance in view of the repeated breaches of trust and the continuing northward advance of the Central Army," and proceeded with operational preparations as planned while continuing to monitor the situation as a precaution.<sup>84</sup>

On the other hand, the Chinese side was concerned that the attack on the 10<sup>th</sup> had also

provoked the Japanese to such an extent that they were now much more likely to resort to more forceful measures. On the 11<sup>th</sup>, the 37<sup>th</sup> Division was ordered to concentrate on reinforcing its units and organizing its command structure, and to avoid provoking the Japanese further. First, at 4:00 a.m., the 109<sup>th</sup> Brigade arrived in Changxindian from Xiyuan as reinforcements,<sup>85</sup> followed by the 53<sup>rd</sup> Army's 4<sup>th</sup> Armored Company.<sup>86</sup> Next, a company from the Independent 25<sup>th</sup> Brigade was dispatched to Changxindian via Tiancun, beyond Babaoshan. Dai Shouyi, the commander of the 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade of the Peace Preservation Corps, was also sent to Changxindian to assume the command and control of the companies belonging to Wang Weixian, Hu Wenyu, and Ji Xingwen, as well as the 53<sup>rd</sup> Army's armored vehicle unit.<sup>87</sup> In addition, even He Jifeng, who up to this point had been considered a hardliner, notified Ji Xingwen of Feng Zhi'an's order not to fire on the Japanese Army as it withdrew, likely at the direction of the 29<sup>th</sup> Army's leadership in response to the hardening of the Japanese Army's attitude after the fighting on the 10<sup>th</sup>.<sup>88</sup>

With the conclusion of the agreement on the 11<sup>th</sup>, the Chinese and Japanese forces began to withdraw to their positions, and tensions at Wanping Fortress and the Marco Polo Bridge began to ease. Even so, the possibility of a large-scale conflict in the surrounding area was also growing as both Japan and China continued to dispatch successive reinforcements.

## **6) The Central Japanese Response**

Four days after the initial incident, a temporary cease-fire agreement was reached at the local level, but how did Japan's central authorities respond to the incident? The first report of the incident came was cabled by Major Imai in Peiping at 3:25 a.m. on July 8.<sup>89</sup>

At the Army Ministry, the incident was reported in section chief's bulletin that morning, but at first, the Army's Central Command was in a state of considerable confusion, with some fearing that Nanjing was planning a full-scale war.<sup>90</sup> Reactions within the Army were roughly divided into two camps: a "non-expansionist" view that insisted on preventing the escalation of the situation in order to strengthen Japan's readiness for war with the Soviet Union, and an opposing view that saw the situation as an opportunity to strike a blow and try to resolve longstanding issues with China at a single stroke.<sup>91</sup>

Although the former view was in the minority in terms of absolute numbers, it had influential supporters in the high command, including Major General Ishiwara Kanji, the director of the 1<sup>st</sup> Division (Operations) of the Army General Staff Office and Colonel Kawabe Torashirō, the chief of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Section (War Leadership). At that time, Ishiwara felt that "war with China is not in our interest. We should move forward hand in hand with China. If we were to fight, it would take a month to occupy Beijing (Peiping). After that, we would have to secure the Beining Line and stop our advance, and since the enemy would not be able to advance either, it would become a war of endurance. Such a war should not be waged."<sup>92</sup> "At present, our nation is concentrating on the completion of the establishment of Manchukuo and the



accumulation of armaments against the Soviet Union, which will ensure the security and solidity of our national defense. We must not fragment our attention by meddling with China.”<sup>93</sup> Therefore, at 6:42 p.m. on the same day, the General Staff issued Imperial Order No. 400, instructing the Commander-in-Chief of the Chinese Garrison Army to avoid the further use of military force to prevent the escalation of the incident.<sup>94</sup>

At an extraordinary cabinet meeting called for 8:30 a.m. on the 9<sup>th</sup>, the prime minister and the ministers of the Army, Navy, and Foreign Affairs met beforehand and agreed on the following points as government policy.

- 1) The cause of the incident in question is entirely due to China’s illegal actions.
- 2) We will adhere to our policy of non-expansion.
- 3) We hope that the situation will be resolved amicably through careful reflection on the part of China.
- 4) If we see the danger of a serious situation arising without reflection on China’s part, we will take appropriate and prompt measures to remedy the situation.
- 5) All ministers will be available for an extraordinary Cabinet meeting at any time.<sup>95</sup>

The Imperial Government’s plan to resolve the issue is as follows: to secure the withdrawal of the Chinese forces, the punishment of those responsible, an apology from China, and future guarantees.<sup>96</sup>

At the Cabinet meeting that followed, the Army Minister proposed the dispatch of three divisions from mainland Japan, but this was opposed by the Navy Minister, Yonai Mitsumasa. The proposal was then tabled due to the news that local negotiations were underway to secure a withdrawal, and the meeting was adjourned at 9:30 a.m.<sup>97</sup> In response, the General Staff Office notified the Chinese Garrison Army to issue these four demands in accordance with the aforementioned negotiation policy of avoiding escalation.<sup>98</sup>

In this initial response, the non-expansionist faction in the Army General Staff Office, led by Major-General Ishiwara, worked to prevent the situation from escalating. As the situation progressed, however, the hard-line faction that believed it was time to strike a blow against China gradually gained traction.<sup>99</sup> In particular, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Section (Operations), the 2<sup>nd</sup> Division (Intelligence), and the 7<sup>th</sup> Section (China Affairs) of the Army General Staff Office and the Military Affairs Section of the Army Ministry argued in favor of resolving the situation by force.<sup>100</sup>

Judging that the situation would escalate as things deteriorated, the General Staff Office proposed mobilizing the Kwantung Army, part of the Japanese Korean Army, and three divisions from mainland Japan along with a total of 18 air squadrons.<sup>101</sup> However, as can be seen from the scale of this deployment, even the hardliners had in mind only the localized use of force in northern China, and by no means a full-scale war. Although Major General Ishiwara

advocated a policy of non-expansion, he was forced to agree to the deployment based on his belief that “there is a dispute on the front line, and since it will take several weeks to deploy, even if we hope that the situation will not escalate, we still need to mobilize to be prepared for any contingency if the situation becomes strained.” The General Staff’s proposal also met with general approval in the Army Ministry, and it was decided that the deployment would consist of the two brigades of the Kwantung Army and the 20<sup>th</sup> Division of the Japanese Korean Army for the time being.<sup>102</sup>

This decision was supported by a steady stream of reports concerning the mustering of China’s Central Army and the northern advance of four of its divisions. At 11:00 p.m. on the 10<sup>th</sup>, an official telegram was sent to the Army Ministry stating that Chiang Kai-shek had ordered four divisions to move north to the vicinity of Shijiazhuang and had also ordered the mobilization of a squadron. In addition to this, a Dōmei News Agency cable from Hankou reported that the four Central Army divisions stationed mainly in Xuzhou had been ordered to muster at dawn on the 11<sup>th</sup> at the border of Henan Province in preparation for the advance.<sup>103</sup> According to Chief Cabinet Secretary Kazami Akira, on the night of the 10<sup>th</sup>, he received a telephone call from Colonel Shibayama Kenshiro, a military affairs section chief, who had come from the same region of the country, informing him that he had obtained confirmation of Chiang Kai-shek’s order to advance north and that he had received a telephone call “to the effect that a number of reports had been received indicating that the situation had finally reached a critical juncture.” Kazami also recalled that the following day at dawn he had received word to the effect that “at around half past midnight, the situation was becoming more and more serious, and the Army Minister felt that it might be necessary to hold a Cabinet meeting on the 11<sup>th</sup>, even though it was a Sunday,” which he in turn conveyed to Prime Minister Konoye.<sup>104</sup>

The Five Ministers Conference held the following day approved a deployment plan that included the mobilization of three divisions from mainland Japan, a decision that was also approved by the Cabinet meeting that was held immediately afterward. Initially, the Prime Minister, the Foreign Minister, and the Finance Minister were all opposed to the deployment, but with the Chinese Central Army advancing northward, the authorities could not simply stand by and watch Japanese officers, soldiers, and civilians be left to die. Defining the objectives of the deployment as being to relieve the China Garrison Army and to obtain an apology and future assurances from the Chinese, the mobilization of the divisions from mainland Japan was approved on the condition that the final decision would depend on the situation and would be called off if the objectives were achieved. Following the Cabinet meeting, Prime Minister Konoye reported the government’s policy to the Emperor, and delivered a statement about the deployment to appeal to the public in Japan and abroad.<sup>105</sup>

Although they had issued a statement approving the deployment, the Director of the 1<sup>st</sup> Division (Ishiwara) of the General Staff Office and Kawabe’s entire 2<sup>nd</sup> Section remained

opposed to the mobilization for fear of increased costs and troop commitments,<sup>106</sup> so that when the cease-fire agreement was reported from the field immediately afterward, “the Army’s attitude underwent an abrupt about-face and became extremely reluctant.”<sup>107</sup> As a result, on the evening of the 13<sup>th</sup>, the Army command postponed the mobilization of troops from mainland Japan, reaffirming its previous policy of “adhering to the policy of non-expansion and local settlement, and avoiding as far as possible any action that might plunge the country into all-out war.”<sup>108</sup>

The central government’s decision to send troops had the effect of muddying the waters for the local negotiations and the settlement that was reached, which were based on what had been the central government’s initial policy of non-expansion and local settlement. From the perspective of subsequent events, it proved to be a decision that sent the wrong signal to the local negotiations.

## **7) Arrival of a New Commander**

Despite the conclusion of the negotiations on the 11<sup>th</sup>, the state of emergency in Peiping did not subside the following day, and martial law was even tightened.<sup>109</sup> In addition, illegal actions on the part of the Chinese authorities, such as the detention, arrest, assault, and beatings of Japanese residents and their associates, were a frequent occurrence.<sup>110</sup>

The afternoon of the 12<sup>th</sup> saw the arrival in Tianjin of Lieutenant General Kiyoshi Katsuki, newly appointed to the post of commander-in-chief in place of Lieutenant General Tashiro, who had taken ill. The Garrison Command was less interested in the results of the negotiations than in mobilizing the divisions from mainland Japan and dispatching the Kwantung Army units and the Japanese Korean Army (made up primarily of the 20<sup>th</sup> Division) to North China. In the morning and afternoon, Kawabe’s brigade received orders by telephone that the army should organize itself in accordance with the arrival of an increasing number of troops and prepare for a full-scale operation against the Chinese.<sup>111</sup>

According to Lieutenant General Hashimoto, the Chinese Garrison Army’s command was very excited to hear of Tokyo’s decision to mobilize and was preparing for the war as though it were about to break out at any moment.<sup>112</sup> Lieutenant General Katsuki, whose previous post had been as the Chief Director of The Inspectorate General of Military Training, was not yet up to speed on the situation. On the morning of the 11<sup>th</sup>, Katsuki, who had been rather hastily appointed, was briefed by Minister Sugiyama at the Army Ministry, and by Major Imai at the General Staff Office in his position as Deputy Chief of Staff. However, whereas the Minister instructed him to seek a political solution to the situation on the ground based as much as possible on the policy of non-expansion, Prince Kan’in Kotohito, Chief of the Imperial Japanese Army General Staff Office, and Major Imai, the Deputy Chief of General Staff Office, made him aware of the tense situation, including their intentions to dispatch emergency troops, mobilize several divisions from mainland Japan, and prosecute an operation in Shandong.

After flying out from Tachikawa Airfield, inclement weather forced Katsuki to land and spend the night in Keijō (Seoul), where he learned of the government's statement regarding the deployment of troops to North China. Through the statement, Katsuki understood that the government's position was that "military negotiations in Peiping have not achieved their objectives in avoiding political problems, as the Army Minister hoped." Moreover, given that the Chinese Army's "planned armed resistance to Japan was no longer in doubt," he also took very seriously the view that "there is a minimal prospect of preventing the escalation of the incident and achieving the local settlement of the matter that the Army Minister is hoping for, and as expected by the General Staff Office, a war against China seems to be becoming unavoidable."<sup>113</sup> Also, while in Keijō, he obtained the views of Minami Jiro, the Governor-General of Korea, and Koiso Kuniaki, the commander of the Japanese Korean Army, that "the North China operation cannot be resolved without proceeding as far as the Yellow River," an opinion that he stressed quite forcefully upon first taking up his post.<sup>114</sup>

In the brigade, as well, when the orders were received by telephone from the Tianjin Garrison Army headquarters, the previous events and the atmosphere in the brigade headquarters since the day before contributed to a more forceful interpretation of the orders, as suggested by a communiqué that read as follows.

This morning, we received a military order to prepare for an all-out open war against China, and morale is high. [...] The usual enemy was only part of the 29<sup>th</sup> Army, and we had difficulty distinguishing between friend and foe. It was unbearably painful to always be pulling our punches in battle while being plagued by feints from the other side. However, now that it has been determined that this will be a full-scale war against China, it has finally been decided that the 29<sup>th</sup> Army is the enemy, and so the target of our attack has become crystal clear. Thus, the statement at the beginning of the brigade's orders that "the 29<sup>th</sup> Army is an enemy force" called for a major change in the mood on the front lines.

In response, brigade officials decided that "since we have decided to prepare for a full-scale operation, we are now on a purely operational footing, and the ongoing negotiations are no longer relevant." Major-General Kawabe gave the order "to occupy the Marco Polo Bridge, thereby completely cutting it off as a retreat route, and based on military intelligence, to prepare for a night attack on the bridge to block the enemy's northward march along the right bank of the river."<sup>115</sup>

However, the operation to occupy the Marco Polo Bridge was canceled when, before it could be launched, a phone call was received from Lieutenant General Hashimoto by which the brigade "was made to understand this phone call as 'a military order to cancel the attack.'" As Chief of Staff, Hashimoto felt that "any future operation is very much related to the ongoing negotiations. In other words, I will monitor the efforts of the Chinese Army to fulfill its

obligations, but since they will inevitably break the agreement, that is when I plan to launch an immediate attack. I hope to complete the concentration of all of our forces by that time. Accordingly, I would rather keep the Marco Polo Bridge open to use as bait, thereby allowing us to monitor their fulfillment of the agreement.”<sup>116</sup> Hence, even Hashimoto, who had previously been cautious about escalating the situation, was nevertheless prepared to resort to the active use of force if the Chinese side did not fulfill the agreement.

The military headquarters convened a staff meeting with the newly appointed commander and deliberated throughout the night. In the early morning of the 13<sup>th</sup>, the following assessment of the situation was communicated to the General Staff Office.

The Army must maintain a fair attitude and force the Hebei-Chahar authorities to comply with the current agreement. To this end, we expect to use military force only when necessary.<sup>117</sup>

As a guideline, “the Army will incorporate the first group of reinforcements (including the 20<sup>th</sup> Division) and, if necessary, quickly complete the necessary strategic basic deployment to be in a position to destroy the 29<sup>th</sup> Army at a single stroke, and then begin operational actions as necessary.” It was expected that this operation could be completed by around July 20.

During this period of preparation, the Japanese side was to keep a close watch on whether or not Chinese troops were advancing to the left bank of the Yongding River in violation of the terms of the agreement. If a breach were to be confirmed, the 37<sup>th</sup> Division would be asked to withdraw into southern Hebei Province. In the event that this request was not honored, military force would be used. In addition, the Hebei-Chahar authorities were requested to comply with seven other demands. These included 1) cracking down on the Communist Party and its activities, 2) dismissing high-profile anti-Japanese figures, 3) excluding anti-Japanese elements from central government agencies and anti-Japanese organizations, such as the Blue Shirts Society and the Central Club (CC) clique, from the Hebei-Chahar area, 4) suppressing anti-Japanese speech and propaganda organizations, as well as anti-Japanese movements by students and citizens, 5) cracking down on anti-Japanese education in schools and the military, and 6) eliminating the role of the military to provide security in Peiping (in place of the Public Security Brigades). If these conditions were not met, Japan would likewise demand the dissolution of the Hebei-Chahar Political Council and the withdrawal of the 29<sup>th</sup> Army from Hebei-Chahar.<sup>118</sup> Meanwhile, in terms of movements by the Chinese, it was confirmed on the same day that the 109<sup>th</sup> Brigade of the 37<sup>th</sup> Division, which had been stationed in Baoding, and cavalry units that had been based in Gu’an County had moved north and advanced to the west bank of the Yongding River.<sup>119</sup>

Although the immediate occupation of Wanping Fortress by the front-line troops had not been approved, the assessment of the headquarters’ situation was bleak, partly due to the newly

appointed commander's desire to maintain the hardline position touched upon in Keijō. Although this assessment of the situation initially stemmed from Tokyo's troop deployment policy, the Army Ministry was taken aback by the extremely hardline policy of the Japanese China garrison Army in the field, and the Deputy Chief of General Staff Office in Tokyo, concerned about the deteriorating situation, asked Major Imai to assess the situation as well.

Major Imai's opinion was not as strict and demanding as that of the military headquarters of the Japanese China garrison Army. Still, he shared the same view regarding monitoring the 29<sup>th</sup> Army's fulfillment of the agreement and concentrating forces to enhance their effectiveness. The views of Major Imai and the Army Special Service Agency differed from those of the military headquarters, however, was in the fact that they had higher expectations for the actions on the part of the Hebei-Chahar authorities.

### **8) A New Policy by the Army Central Command**

On the night of July 13, the Army Central Command reaffirmed its policy for handling the North China Incident (as the unfolding situation was then called), which stated, "We will continue to adhere to the policy of non-expansion and local settlement, and avoid as far as possible any action that might plunge the country into all-out war. Accordingly, we accept the terms of settlement submitted by the representative of the 29<sup>th</sup> Army and signed at 8:00 p.m. on July 11 and will monitor its implementation." It also placed restrictions on local actions, stating that the mobilization of troops from mainland Japan would be suspended for the time being and that any use of force in the event that China did not show good faith or that the Chinese Central Army moved northward would require the prior approval of Army Central Command.<sup>120</sup> This was because the General Staff's 2<sup>nd</sup> Section (War Leadership), which was well aware of the hardline views of the forces on the ground in China, had convinced the central army's high command that "excessive demands (on the part of the Tianjin Garrison Army staff) such as forcing the Chinese forces to withdraw beyond the Peiping city walls to ensure the cessation of anti-Japanese sentiment are not only contrary to the tenor of the present general policy but are in fact tantamount to an escalation of the incident. First and foremost, Tianjin must be instructed to proceed in accordance with the existing policy."<sup>121</sup> The Navy was also of the opinion that, "at present, we should avoid mustering the divisions without any clear justification and encourage sincere implementation based on the conditions for local settlement that have just been established." Given these considerations, the Army Central Command adopted a relatively detached wait-and-see attitude,<sup>122</sup> a decision that was partly due to uncertainty over whether or not China's Central Army was moving northward.

In fact, the units that had reached Baoding and Shijiazhuang by this time included part of the 53<sup>rd</sup> Army, which was currently stationed around Baoding, and part of the 26<sup>th</sup> Route Army (27<sup>th</sup> Division), initially stationed in Xinyang.<sup>123</sup> These units were associated with the Northwestern (Guominjun) Army and Northeastern (Fengtian) Army forces and were not

directly affiliated with China's central government.

By July 8, Chiang Kai-shek had called for the mobilization of several divisions in rapid succession,<sup>124</sup> initially planning to move only the 27<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> Divisions of the 26<sup>th</sup> Route Army, a Northwestern Army-affiliated force in North China, and the 39<sup>th</sup> and 84<sup>th</sup> Divisions of the 40<sup>th</sup> Army, to the vicinity of Baoding-Shijiazhuang, where they would be placed under the command of Song Zheyuan.<sup>125</sup> With the exception of the 84<sup>th</sup> Division, this could not really be considered a northward advance by the Central Army in the strict sense. Nevertheless, the next day, Chiang Kai-shek decided to send additional reinforcements, ordering the 21<sup>st</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> Divisions, which were under the direct command of the Central Army, and the 3<sup>rd</sup> Army of the Yunnan Army, which was aligned with the central government, to prepare for mobilization.<sup>126</sup> However, this was only an order to prepare for mobilization. It was generally only after mid-July that troops actually began to move to their designated positions, including those who were subsequently mobilized as reinforcements.<sup>127</sup>

The U.S. Army confirmed that four divisions had been ordered north as of July 11 but remained unaware of the movement of the Central Army.<sup>128</sup> According to a report by Robert Soule, an aide to the U.S. Army Attaché, only the 29<sup>th</sup> Army and the 53<sup>rd</sup> Army were known to be in Changxindian by the morning of July 17.<sup>129</sup> In addition, a report by the U.S. Army Attaché Joseph W. Stilwell stated that as of midnight on July 16, there had been no confirmation of Central Army forces moving north from Xuzhou along the Tianjin–Pukou Railway or from Hankou along the Peiping–Hankou Railway. Only vague reports of movement along the Baoji–Lianyungang Railway had surfaced, and what information had been received regarding the northward advance of the Central Forces in support of the 29<sup>th</sup> Army was highly dubious.<sup>130</sup> Similarly, up to the same day, the British Embassy also stated that it did not expect the Central Army forces to advance north of Baoding.<sup>131</sup> In addition, German Embassy sources familiar with the movements of the Central Army, to which a military advisory delegation had been dispatched, while acknowledging that modern weapons and other supplies and an unknown number of troops had moved northward along the Tianjin–Pukou Line as of the 16<sup>th</sup>, reported that no information had surfaced about large-scale troop movements and that no regional military facilities had been prepared based on any unified plan.<sup>132</sup> Instead, at this point, the Japanese had begun dispatching successive waves of reinforcements toward Tianjin.<sup>133</sup>

Like the armies of other countries, the Japanese had endeavored to keep abreast of developments in the movements of the Central Army. A shift in the position of the Army Central Command can be understood from the fact that in response to the decision by the General Staff Office's 2<sup>nd</sup> Division (Intelligence) in favor of immediate deployment, Deputy Chief of Staff Major Imai Kiyoshi stated that "the northward movement of the Central Army is not yet certain and requires careful examination," and that the deployment of troops from mainland Japan should be decided within a three-day timeframe.<sup>134</sup>

This policy of restraint, which reflected the situation of the past few days, was conveyed to

the local forces on July 14 in writing as “Jihen shori ni kan suru hōshin (Policy for Handling the North China Incident),” jointly signed by the Army Minister and the Chief of the General Staff. To ensure that there would be no misunderstanding, Major General Nakajima Tetsuzō, Director of the General Affairs Department of the General Staff Office, and Colonel Shibayama Kenshirō, Chief of the Military Affairs Division, were dispatched from Tokyo to the Garrison Headquarters in Tianjin to provide further explanation. Also, on the same day, a letter from Lieutenant General Usami Okiie, the Emperor’s chief aide-de-camp was delivered to Lieutenant General Katsuki reiterating the Emperor’s position that “Regarding the current North China Incident, We are particularly concerned about its escalation.” In response, Katsuki decided to urge the implementation of the agreement without the use of force and set a policy of encouraging the implementation of the agreement, isolating the two countries’ forces, halting provocations, and keeping reinforcements in remote areas so as not to provoke the Chinese side.<sup>135</sup>

Meanwhile, on the Hebei-Chahar side, Song Zheyuan had returned to Tianjin from his hometown of Laoling in Shandon Province on July 11. The following day, on July 12, he made a public statement advocating peace and ostensibly seeking to maintain the status quo while avoiding conflict with Japan as much as possible.<sup>136</sup> In response, the Japanese Army urged Song to make a decision on his attitude toward Japan, specifically demanding “1) the absolute cessation of resistance by the 29<sup>th</sup> Army to the Japanese forces, 2) the lifting of martial law in Peiping, 3) the reopening of the Beining Railway, and 4) the release of Japanese detainees.” After receiving these demands, at 11:00 p.m., Song responded by telephone through Chen Juheng (a member of the Hebei-Chahar government’s Foreign Relations Committee), “to the effect that we should maintain our relationship and not obey the order from the Central government to take hostile action against Japan,” and “to the effect of the immediate issuance of an order for the above four points be implemented by the relevant agencies.”<sup>137</sup> On the afternoon of July 12 and from 7:00 a.m. the following morning, Song held meetings in Tianjin with the heads of various organizations to inform them of the peace policy.<sup>138</sup> In fact, according to an intercepted naval cable dated July 13, Song ordered that his troops “should be the first to withdraw,” and his troops began moving at 7:00 p.m. on July 12.<sup>139</sup> In addition, two detained Japanese military police and six Korean civilians were released on July 13, and the Beining Railway resumed operations on July 14.<sup>140</sup>

On the other hand, Qin Dechun, who was in Peiping for a full-day meeting with Feng Zhi’an on July 12, made a statement through Li Shijun, director of the 29<sup>th</sup> Army’s office in Nanjing, emphasizing that he had rejected all of Japan’s demands and that he had not signed his consent to any of the terms.<sup>141</sup> This demonstrates how the 29<sup>th</sup> Army cadres took a more hardline stance in Peiping, closer to the front line. While there is no way to confirm whether this was done at Song’s request, it does appear that at this point, Song himself was not fully committed to peace with Japan, as indicated by his confession to visiting Zhang Yinwu (head of the Shanxi Army’s



Training Corps) that he “felt so out of step with the central government in Nanjing, and I am greatly concerned that I cannot cooperate.”<sup>142</sup>

## **9) Ongoing Confrontations**

As we have seen above, the Japanese side was proceeding with negotiations with Hebei-Chahar on the basis of a policy of restraint intended to prevent the situation from escalating. Song Zheyuan was also acceding to the Japanese side’s demands to the best of his ability. However, it was natural that the Hebei-Chahar authorities should be dissatisfied with the fact that, despite the withdrawal of their own forces, the Japanese had still not done so and were even sending reinforcements.<sup>143</sup> In fact, troops at the front reported that although the Japanese side had withdrawn from the north side of Wanping Fortress, they were still encamped at Wulidian and Dawayao on the high ground east of the river and were increasing their troop strength in the direction of Fengtai.<sup>144</sup> In addition, although the incident does not appear in Japanese records, a small-scale attack from the Japanese side (or a third party) occurred at 3:00 a.m. on July 13, spurring discontent at the troop level.<sup>145</sup> According to German embassy sources, the renewed fighting made negotiations with Japan difficult, and the Hebei-Chahar leadership was very pessimistic about how the situation was progressing.<sup>146</sup> On receipt of this report, the Hebei-Chahar officials and 29<sup>th</sup> Army cadres in Peiping issued orders to brigade commander Dai Shouyi, company commander Hu Wenyu, and company commander Ji Xingwen – all front-line officers – to the effect that “our side has decided to go on the offensive. You are to make preparations immediately without fail.”<sup>147</sup> The following day, Feng Zhi’an requested that Song Zheyuan issue 5,000 grenades and 50,000 rounds of ammunition as a matter of urgency.<sup>148</sup> On the 17<sup>th</sup>, rumors were circulating that Feng Zhi’an and his subordinate generals had decided to begin the battle in earnest and would fight the Japanese rather than accept such humiliating conditions. Given these rumors, it seems likely that the Japanese would also have had intelligence about the 37<sup>th</sup> Division’s decision to go on the offensive.<sup>149</sup> It also seems likely that a background factor leading to the offensive was related to the gradual build-up of reinforcements near Baoding and Shijiazhuang – reinforcements that, like the 29<sup>th</sup> Army, were affiliated with the Northwestern Army.<sup>150</sup>

According to the Tianjin Garrison Army’s observations, anti-Japanese sentiment on the part of the Chinese troops was running high. Their provocations had not yet stopped, and there were many doubts about whether they would fulfill the agreement in good faith.<sup>151</sup> In the midst of this situation, Japanese troops transporting a mechanized unit waiting at Tongzhou to Fengtai were fired upon by Chinese sentries at a point about 1 km from Yongdingmen on the road to Nanyuan, resulting in what came to be known as the Yongdingmen Shooting Incident in which four men were killed or wounded.<sup>152</sup> In addition, given the cessation of night-time enemy gunfire, which had been a nightly occurrence up until that point, the Japanese Army withdrew from the front line on the Marco Polo Bridge the following day, on July 15, leaving only a few

sentries behind.<sup>153</sup> On the same day, however, Japanese Army cavalry heading from Tongzhou to Fengtai was diverting south of Nanyuan in response to the incident at Yongdingmen when they came under heavy Chinese fire near Tuanhe, resulting in two casualties and the slaughter of one man (the Tuanhe Incident).<sup>154</sup>

On July 16, at 1:00 a.m., both sides exchanged gunfire at Dahongmen outside Yongdingmen.<sup>155</sup> Later that morning, Japanese troops en route from Tianjin to Tongzhou were fired on illegally by Chinese Peace Preservation Corps officers in Anping (in western Xianghe County). The continued occurrence of such incidents meant that the situation remained unpredictable.<sup>156</sup> In addition, although there is again no record of this incident on the Japanese side, a Chinese statement reported provocations by the Japanese in the form of three shooting incidents between 6:00 p.m. and midnight in Dajing village near Fengtai.<sup>157</sup>

At the Tianjin Garrison Army, in light of the situation, many observers believed that a solution could not be reached without the use of force. This was because, even if Song Zheyuan had acceded to the Japanese demands and decided to implement the agreement, it was doubtful whether the 29<sup>th</sup> Army would actually carry out Song's orders to their full extent.<sup>158</sup> Counselor Morishima, who was stationed in Peiping at the time, reported to the Ministry that, based in part on information from an advisor named Nishida (a member of the Hebei-Chahar government's Foreign Relations Committee), Communist Party and Blue Shirts Society elements inside the 29<sup>th</sup> Army had already made considerable inroads, and that the anti-Japanese sentiment in the Army's middle and lower ranks was quite fierce. His impression was that even if the negotiations in Tianjin were concluded, their concrete implementation would be accompanied by substantial difficulties.<sup>159</sup> The policy pursued by the Japanese forces in the field was to seek a way out of the situation through negotiations while preparing for both a peaceful outcome and the chance of war.

In response, in negotiations held in the field on July 14, the Chinese authorities refused to accept the Army Central Command's demands regarding the punishment of those responsible (the battalion commander, not Feng Zhi'an), the issuing of apologies (Qin Dechun, not Song Zheyuan), and the provision of security inside Peiping's city walls (the 38<sup>th</sup> Division, not the Peace Preservation Corps officers). There were also many requests within the General Staff in connection with Feng Zhi'an, including securing his apology and expulsion. "In the end, despite much discussion about whether to be satisfied with the existing settlement terms or to issue further orders, the Central Command did not reach a consensus." Nevertheless, the hardline view was gaining traction, and the situation gradually started to show signs of being drawn in the direction of the hardliners.<sup>160</sup> For example, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Division (Intelligence) of the General Staff Office determined that any hesitation in deploying troops would give China cause to doubt Japan's capabilities and trigger a stalemate. Meanwhile, the Operations Section maintained its policy of non-expansion but insisted that if China were discovered not to be acting in good faith, the Japanese should not hesitate to use the necessary force.<sup>161</sup>

In response to these views on the part of the Army, a Cabinet meeting convened on July 17 resolved to 1) set a deadline of July 19 to urge Song Zheyuan during the ongoing negotiations to take steps to issue his own apology, punish Feng Zhi'an, withdraw the 29<sup>th</sup> Army to the left bank of the Yonding River, and crack down on anti-Japanese sentiment and resistance, and in the absence of such measures to mobilized the divisions from mainland Japan; and 2) come to an understanding with the Nanjing government not to interfere in local negotiations and to halt the northward advance of the Central Army.<sup>162</sup> Following this resolution, the Vice Minister of the Army cabled a directive conveying the contents of item 1 to the Chief of Staff of the Japanese China Garrison Army.<sup>163</sup>

### **10) Negotiations in Tianjin**

Meanwhile, Lieutenant Colonel Wachi and Zhang Zizhong continued negotiating a ceasefire agreement in Tianjin, eventually arriving at an understanding on the 16<sup>th</sup>. During the talks, the Chinese side proposed that the deputy military commander (Qin Dechun) would visit the Japanese headquarters to apologize and that Song Zheyuan would visit the commander's office to pay him his regards. The next question was whether to punish the responsible persons should be punished by dismissal or salary reduction, to which an answer was deferred. Zhang Zizhong expressed no objection to the 37<sup>th</sup> Division's withdrawal outside Peiping's city walls. Still, since such a process would take a month to accomplish, it would be impossible to replace the division solely with officers of the Peace Preservation Corps. Accordingly, he proposed the alternative substitution of Zhang Zizhong's 38<sup>th</sup> Division and requested more time be given for removing anti-Japanese personnel in key positions.<sup>164</sup>

In response, at 1:00 p.m. on July 18, Song Zheyuan visited Lieutenant General Katsuki, the garrison's commander, ostensibly to pay his respects. During the visit, he offered an "apology" by saying that "I sincerely regret this incident. I have always been eager for peace in the Orient, and especially for goodwill between Japan and China, which I aim to do my utmost to achieve."<sup>165</sup> He further expressed his deepest regrets that such an incident had taken place in his absence. Having thus successfully fulfilled one of the local settlement conditions, he departed for Peiping.<sup>166</sup>

Negotiations in Tianjin were then delegated to Zhang Zizhong, who would proceed in talks with Lieutenant General Hashimoto. On July 19, when Song Zheyuan traveled to Peiping, negotiations continued late into the night. By 11:00 p.m. Hashimoto and the representatives of the 29<sup>th</sup> Army (Zhang Zizhong and Zhang Yunrong) had concluded the details for the implementation of the third paragraph of the ceasefire agreement, which dealt with the suppression of Communist Party elements and sympathizers and the elimination of anti-Japanese sentiment on the part of key figures, organizations, and movements, as well as in educational contexts. It was further decided that the Hebei-Chahar officials would voluntarily withdraw the 37<sup>th</sup> Division's troops outside the Peiping city walls, and notification of this

would be given in writing by the end of day on July 20.<sup>167</sup> It should be noted, however, that this was only announced in a summary form, without mentioning the withdrawal of the 37<sup>th</sup> Division.<sup>168</sup>

### **11) Song Zheyuan's Movements Before and After His Return to Peiping**

Song Zheyuan acceded to Japan's demands as much as possible and conducted himself so as not to offer undue provocation to the Japanese forces. Behind the scenes, however, he was gradually beginning to explore possibilities for a more aggressive response. When Song met with the heads of schools in Tianjin on July 15, he said privately that Japan had no intention of escalating the conflict and that it was only threatening China, that the 29<sup>th</sup> Army would stop the Japanese Army if it crossed the Yangcun railroad, and that while he hoped for a peaceful resolution, there were steps that could be taken if the conflict were to escalate.<sup>169</sup>

Song's statement that he would give the order to attack if the Japanese crossed the Yangcun railroad was effectively identical to the order issued on July 9, so it seems safe to assume that what was stated here reflects Song Zheyuan's own perception. Therefore, as opposed to his initial suspicions, Song Zheyuan no longer believed the incident to be a Japanese plot. Moreover, given the reports from various quarters that Japan was pursuing a non-expansionist policy, it follows that as of July 15, Song believed that Japan would not escalate the situation and did not consider the Japanese reinforcements a serious concern. This position was not limited to Song but was apparent throughout the 29<sup>th</sup> Army. For example, Yang Xuancheng, Director of the 1st Office of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Section, who had been dispatched to Baoding from the General Staff Office, stated in his report that "Song and his subordinates are all being overly simplistic in their thinking about the situation. This is apparent from the fact that Feng Zhi'an inquired by telegram whether or not the information on the Japanese mobilization and divisional dispatches being forwarded by the central government was ultimately reliable."<sup>170</sup>

However, Song's conduct appears to have changed after July 16. On that day, he issued military orders to the 29<sup>th</sup> Army under his direct command for the purpose of "ensuring resistance to the enemy at critical points in Peiping and the surrounding area and the rapid additional destruction of the enemy in the direction of the Marco Polo Bridge and Fengtai to facilitate the advance of the rear units." When preparations were completed, the troops were instructed to await further orders.<sup>171</sup> These orders are believed to have been drafted by Feng Zhi'an, but as I discuss later, it also seems likely that Song himself came to believe that the constant clashes necessitated troop concentration for a war of resistance.

The issue that most troubled Song during this period was being so out of step with the central government in Nanjing. Chiang Kai-shek had sent any number of telegrams to Song immediately after the incident to inform him that the central government would take responsibility. Still, to Song's frustration, the nature of any plans and arrangements the central government was making for the war effort remained opaque. It was ultimately unclear whether

North China and the Peiping-Tianjin area would be abandoned or defended to the death and, in the latter case, how many troops would be used.<sup>172</sup> Song so dissatisfied that he kept Xiong Bin, the deputy chief of staff who had come north as messenger, waiting in Baoding, refusing to meet with him, and did not take a phone call from He Yingqin (Minister of Military Affairs), citing ill health.<sup>173</sup> What frustrated Song most was that the battle against Japan had effectively been left to the 29<sup>th</sup> Army on its own. According to Zhang Yinwu, who met with Song on July 15 at the behest of Yan Xishan, Song was indignant, asking how the 29<sup>th</sup> Army could hold out against Japan on its own when its rear guard was unprepared and the army would not be coming in time.<sup>174</sup>

However, Xiong Bin, who had been kept waiting in Baoding, sent Li Xin (a Hebei Government Committee Member and Police Commissioner) to Tianjin to bring word of the central government's intention to resist Japan by force and the various measures and preparations being made to that end. As a result, Song was fully apprised of the central government's policy and preparations, and they discussed the concentration of the 29<sup>th</sup> Army's forces and ways of moving the Central Army in secret.<sup>175</sup> Furthermore, after meeting with Li, Song called Xiong Bin to communicate the following points.

- (1) War is likely inevitable.
- (2) Since I am currently in Tianjin, I cannot express my intentions clearly.
- (3) I would never give up my sovereignty or disgrace my country, so please don't believe a groundless rumor.
- (4) We must plan for a second phase, so after sending Zhang Weifan to Tianjin, I would like Zhang Weifan to negotiate with you in Baoding.
- (5) The 29<sup>th</sup> Army is scattered all over the country, and there is no opportunity to assemble them in one place. I hope tensions will remain under control for as long as possible and allow us to formulate a second phase of our plan.
- (6) I am determined to make sacrifices and will begin by doing what I can.<sup>176</sup>

Song also asked Xiong to come to Peiping, as there was still much that he wished to discuss with Song face to face.<sup>177</sup>

Zhang Yinwu, who had perceived how "out of step" Song Zheyuan was vis-à-vis the central government when he met with the former on July 15,<sup>178</sup> reported that, after his meeting with Li Xin, Song now "understood" the central government's plans. "He can no longer withstand the pressure being put on him by Japan, and his attitude [toward the central government] seems to have changed for the better."<sup>179</sup> On the 17th, intelligence arrived from He Yingqin, reporting on the mobilization of the Japanese Army. The 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup>, and 16<sup>th</sup> divisions from mainland Japan and the 20<sup>th</sup> Division from the Japanese Korean Army had been mobilized, and, as of July 15, after the arrival of about an entire division of the Kwantung Army in Tianjin in

twenty rail cars, several thousand men were now advancing along the Peiping–Tianjin and Tianjin–Baoding highways.<sup>180</sup> In addition, since Song and his colleagues had recently become ensnared in political negotiations and were seriously neglecting military preparations, He Yingqin offered to continue the peace talks on the one hand while secretly advancing military preparations on the other. In an emergency, he would send the Central Army forces in Baoding and Cangzhou north to provide support.<sup>181</sup> Chiang Kai-shek, who was now determined to fight back against Japan, also perceived Song's change of tone. He told Song that he ordered immediate dispatch four units of the Northwestern-affiliated 32<sup>nd</sup> Army, which was stationed in Hebei, to Shijiazhuang and notified him that he was placing the 26<sup>th</sup> Route Army and 40<sup>th</sup> Army under Song's command.<sup>182</sup> The same day, Song Zheyuan urged Chiang Kai-shek to put his trust in him. "I am a patriot," wrote Song. "I have the national interest at heart. I will take all measures following the will of the central government and will never disgrace my country through a loss of sovereignty."<sup>183</sup> Compared to previous missives he had sent to Chiang Kai-shek, this telegram demonstrates more faith in the central government. On July 18, the day before Song left for Peiping, he summoned Zhang Dengyu, commander of the 132<sup>nd</sup> Division in Hejian, and Zhang Weifan, who was planning the operation, to Tianjin to discuss subsequent policy.<sup>184</sup>

Thus, from the 16<sup>th</sup> to the 18<sup>th</sup>, Song Zheyuan narrowed the gap between his position and the central government, falling into step and coming to trust it to a certain extent. However, this was largely due to the fact that he had been directly informed of the central government's plans and preparations, in the course of which he had gained a better appreciation of the status of the Japanese reinforcements and come to the conclusion that war was inevitable. On the 18<sup>th</sup>, a Japanese warplane was scouting a military train traveling north on the Beijing–Guangzhou Line near Zhangde (now Xingtai) when it was fired upon by soldiers riding the train. The plane returned fire, resulting in a large number of military and civilian casualties. The wide publicity given to this incident further exacerbated anti-Japanese sentiment on the part of the Chinese public.<sup>185</sup> Song Zheyuan also believed that although war was inevitable, he still needed to stall as much as possible to prepare. In negotiations with Japan, he was therefore willing to stand behind Zhang Zizhong and accept any reasonable terms to buy as much time as possible.

According to U.S. Army intelligence, the 27<sup>th</sup> and part of the 31<sup>st</sup> Division of the 26<sup>th</sup> Route Army arrived in Baoding from Henan Province on July 17. Weapons and ammunition from Xiyuan were brought to Changxindian at 11 a.m., and an armored train from the (Northeastern-affiliated) 53<sup>rd</sup> Army arrived in Changxindian at 1:30 p.m. on the 18<sup>th</sup>.<sup>186</sup> A new road with a buried emergency telegraph and phone line was laid between Mentougou and Changxindian, and soldiers from the 83<sup>rd</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> divisions of the 14<sup>th</sup> Army (Central Army), the 3<sup>rd</sup> Army (the Central-affiliated Yunnan Army), and the 53<sup>rd</sup> Army arrived by truck from Datong in Shanxi Province via Peiping Xizhimen using the newly laid road to Changxinjian.<sup>187</sup> Preparations were gradually being made at the front line to strike back.

## 12) The Developing Situation in Peiping

After delivering his “apology,” Song Zheyuan returned to Peiping at 9:40 a.m. on July 19. After entering the city, Song met with Qin Dechun, Feng Zhi’an, Zhang Weifan, and others at his private residence in Wuyiku to discuss future plans.<sup>188</sup> According to information from the U.S. military attaché, Song brought together five generals to vote on whether or not to fight, with the result that three voted against and two voted to fight.<sup>189</sup> A reliable source claimed that Song had been given full command of all troops in Hebei (although he could not dispatch them outside Hebei) and that he had been considering attempting to assert calm and improve the overall situation.<sup>190</sup> The question was whether he could reliably control even his own 29<sup>th</sup> Army, let alone the rest of the troops.

Since Song Zheyuan was now back in Peiping, the implementation of agreements would now take place in Peiping and around the Marco Polo Bridge under Song Zheyuan’s leadership. However, as predicted by a German Embassy source close to the Hebei-Chahar authorities, although Feng Zhi’an would not oppose Song Zheyuan’s implementation of these agreements, there was no telling how far Song’s policies would be implemented among the commanders and soldiers at the level of individual companies (equivalent to regiments) and below. Accordingly, things did not go quite so smoothly.<sup>191</sup>

On July 19, when Song Zheyuan arrived in Peiping, shots were fired at 5:00 AM from a Chinese position near Mt. Yiwenzi (Ichimonji), wounding one person. At 8:00 the same day, Colonel Matsui, director of the Army Special Service Agency, notified the Hebei-Chahar authorities that if a similar illegal shooting were repeated after noon on the 20<sup>th</sup>, The Japanese Army would take a free hand in resolving the matter.<sup>192</sup>

Certainly, martial law in the city was relaxed after Song Zheyuan’s return. Moreover, on the morning of July 20, Song Zheyuan ordered the 37<sup>th</sup> Division near Peiping to muster at Xiyuan by the 21<sup>st</sup> to prepare for their next move. That afternoon, Song Zheyuan met with Colonel Matsui, Lieutenant Colonel Wachi from the General Staff, and Major Imai for a discussion in which Song proposed 1) the withdrawal of the 37<sup>th</sup> Division to the vicinity of Baoding, and 2) the replacement of the 37<sup>th</sup> Division with Zhao Dengyu’s unit (132<sup>nd</sup> Division). That same evening, the Japanese side received word from Song that the person responsible (the battalion commander) had been relieved of his post on July 12 as a punishment for his actions, that the details of the agreement of July 19 would be fully implemented, and that the withdrawal of troops from the front lines would begin by noon on the following day (July 21). The situation seemed once again to be moving toward a resolution.<sup>193</sup>

However, even as negotiations were underway to ease the situation, tensions continued to mount on the front lines at the Marco Polo Bridge. Even though the Japanese had already informed the Chinese that they would take a free hand in responding to any illegal shootings that might occur after noon on July 20, the Chinese opened fire again from their position at the Marco Polo Bridge at 2:30 p.m. that day. Japan returned fire (with the first artillery shots fired

from the Japanese side), after which dozens of shots were fired from the west bank of the Yongding River at Mount Yiwenzi from 3:00 p.m. The exchange resulted in two casualties.<sup>194</sup> At around 5:00 p.m., the bombardment was temporarily halted, but around 7:30 p.m., artillery fire recommenced from the direction of Changxindian toward Wulidian, the site of Japan's battle headquarters, which came under concentrated fire.<sup>195</sup> During the firefight, the Japanese forces destroyed the watchtower and gate at the southeast corner of Wanping Fortress, where they stored ammunition and sent them to Mt. Yiwenzi as a punitive measure.<sup>196</sup> As a result of this series of attacks, the Chinese suffered 16 wounded, including Ji Xingwen, commander of the 219<sup>th</sup> Regiment, and the deaths of 2 officers of the Peace Preservation Corps, along with 11 others injured. In addition, the bombardment of Changxindian reportedly resulted in the deaths and wounding of dozens of other civilian and military personnel.<sup>197</sup>

Meanwhile, on the Chinese side, three companies of the 40<sup>th</sup> Army that had been moving north arrived in Shijiazhuang in the early hours of July 19. Likewise, the 7<sup>th</sup> Central Artillery Corps had passed through Shijiazhuang in the night and continued northward.<sup>198</sup> Also, an anti-aircraft machine gun battalion from Luoyang had been moved northward to be placed under the command of Sun Lianzhong.<sup>199</sup> On July 21, the 132<sup>nd</sup> Division of the 29<sup>th</sup> Army, which had been stationed near Hejian, approximately 200 kilometers south of Peiping, began moving to muster in Handan, with the 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade assigned to travel to Changxindian.<sup>200</sup> Thus, in addition to the concentration of their units in Changxindian, reinforcements from the Central Army were gradually assembling in the vicinity of Shijiazhuang and Baoding, where preparations were underway for an offensive. At this point, however, Feng Zhi'an was reminding Gao Shuxun (director of the Hebei Security Department), based in Baoding, that "In principle, defense. Do not attack first. This is very important."<sup>201</sup>

Following the fighting on July 20, Song Zheyuan again appealed for peace the next day by issuing a written statement to ease the tense situation.<sup>202</sup> On the 21<sup>st</sup>, only a few shots were fired in the morning, and around 8:00 p.m. Chinese army troops on the Marco Polo Bridge and at Yamenkou began withdrawing to the rear. The transportation of the 37<sup>th</sup> Division from fortified Peiping and Xiyuan to Baoding was also set to take place as soon as the repairs on the Beijing–Guangzhou Line, scheduled for the 22<sup>nd</sup>, could be completed.<sup>203</sup>

The Tianjin Garrison Army, too, in light of Song's "apology" and his subsequent actions, was more concerned with the sincerity of the Hebei-Chahar officials than with the conflict on the front lines. On the 21<sup>st</sup>, in response to Army Central Command's request for opinions on the mobilization of the three divisions from mainland Japan, the Tianjin Garrison Army expressed its appreciation of the sincerity on the part of the Hebei-Chahar authorities but took a negative view toward mobilizing the divisions from mainland Japan, taking the view that "... the 29<sup>th</sup> Army has fully acceded to the [Imperial Japanese] Army's demands and is putting them into practice one after the other. Any complications arising in the process should be resolved according to the military's pre-existing policy. There is no reason that the military's



current strength should not be sufficient to achieve its objectives.”<sup>204</sup>

However, units of the 37<sup>th</sup> Division camped in Babaoshan had not received the orders and did not withdraw, prompting Colonel Matsui, accompanied by Major Imai, to question Qin Dechun about the situation. The failure to withdraw was determined to be an oversight in the communication of the orders. After apologizing, Qin stated that the 37<sup>th</sup> Division near Babaoshan would begin withdrawing by 8:00 p.m. that day.<sup>205</sup>

On the Japanese side, Counselor Morishima, who was based in Peiping, felt that this response by Hebei-Chahar could not immediately be dismissed as bad faith on the part of the leadership, but Major Imai, the military attaché, had decided at the negotiation table that the escalation of the incident could no longer be avoided.<sup>206</sup> Indeed, as pointed out to Song by Major Sakurai, who, as military advisor to the 29<sup>th</sup> Army, was well-versed with both sides of the situation, the Chinese troops on the front line tended in their reports to rectify any details that were unfavorable to themselves, so that more senior officers often misconstrued the truth.<sup>207</sup> In light of later developments, Morishima’s thinking was derived from his immediate understanding of the problem as a miscommunication between the 29<sup>th</sup> Army’s leadership and its frontline units. In contrast, Imai’s understanding came from his recognition of this as the crux of the problem.

Eventually, at 9:40 p.m., the brigade commander had decided to muster the troops at Babaoshan to move out. However, six gunshots were heard in the midst of the exercise, and when the withdrawal was temporarily halted to check with the Japanese side, the matter was discovered to be absolutely unfounded. Even the Japanese replied that they had their own suspicions about the gunfire. When the shots were determined to be the work of a provocateur, it was decided that the troops would withdraw to the vicinity of Huangcun for the time being.<sup>208</sup>

On July 22, the transfer of the 37<sup>th</sup> Division units commenced in the evening. The train, originally scheduled to leave at 3:00 p.m., finally began its departure for Zhuozhou at 6:00 p.m., at which point the units that had been mustered were expected to be transferred one at a time.<sup>209</sup> There was also the prospect of martial law being lifted that night, making it the calmest day that the streets of Peiping and the front line on the Marco Polo Bridge had seen in some time.<sup>210</sup> The French Army also made a special note that it was a remarkably peaceful day.<sup>211</sup>

On the same day, it was confirmed that the 37<sup>th</sup> Division inside Peiping’s city walls began moving south. The troops on the far side of the Marco Polo Bridge set out for Changxindian. The troops camped near Babaoshan and Yamenkou began to muster in preparation for their withdrawal to their respective rears. Regarding the punishment, the Hebei-Chahar authorities presented the original copy of the written order for the dismissal of the battalion commander and the reprimand of the division commander for the same infraction. Lei Sishang, the director of the Peiping Municipal Social Affairs Bureau, who was regarded as a key figure with anti-Japanese views, was dismissed from his post. In addition, anti-Japanese books, magazines, and other publications were banned, and bookstores were notified of the prohibition.<sup>212</sup>

These measures led the Japanese to acknowledge that the Hebei-Chahar authorities were fulfilling the local agreement in good faith and that the tense situation was gradually beginning to ease.<sup>213</sup> On the other hand, many soldiers of the 29<sup>th</sup> Army wept so bitterly upon learning of the “peace settlement” on the 20<sup>th</sup> that they lost their voices, crying aloud exclamations that “Our brothers’ blood has been spilled in vain once again!” Anti-Japanese sentiment was reported to be abnormally high, and unlike the easing of tension in the upper ranks, sentiment toward Japan at the unit level continued to deteriorate.<sup>214</sup>

### **13) Xiong Bin’s Arrival in Peiping and a Change of Attitude of the Hebei-Chahar authorities**

The arrival in Peiping on July 23 of Xiong Bin, the deputy chief of staff dispatched from Nanjing, marked a change in attitude on the part of the authorities in Hebei-Chahar. First, the withdrawal of the 37<sup>th</sup> Division was halted after the 218<sup>th</sup> Regiment completed its withdrawal toward Zhuozhou at 11:00 that morning. The 110<sup>th</sup> Brigade was positioned beyond Babaoshan and making no preparations to move. Neither were there any apparent signs of withdrawal on the part of the 111<sup>th</sup> Brigade still inside Peiping’s city walls or the 25<sup>th</sup> Brigade, which had decamped to Mentougou. Nor were any preparations for withdrawal being made at the army headquarters in Xiyuan, while in the direction of the Marco Polo Bridge, the 219<sup>th</sup> Regiment had taken up a position on the right bank of the Yongding River. On the other hand, despite the lack of progress in the withdrawal from Peiping, the incoming replacement troops from the 132<sup>nd</sup> Division entered Peiping with two companies instead of the single company that had been initially planned. These facts, along with the prevarication by the Hebei-Chahar authorities that only one company had entered the city, aroused suspicions on the part of the Japanese.<sup>215</sup>

In connection with this, Colonel Matsui, accompanied by Major Imai and Ikeda Sumihisa, a staff of the Japanese China Garrison Army, met with Song Zheyuan at 3:00 p.m. on the 24<sup>th</sup>. During the discussion, it became clear that Song Zheyuan was not aware of the detailed agreement with the Japanese side and that Song’s order had not been issued,<sup>216</sup> revelations that left the Japanese side stunned. Despite his pledge to fulfill the written terms of the agreement in good faith, it became evident that Song had not been briefed by the parties as to the implementation of the detailed agreement demanded by Japan. Major Imai expressed the opinion that “even if Song had ordered this, it was clear that it could not be thoroughly implemented in every detail; in fact, half of the responsibility should be attributed to the fact that the Japanese authorities had not properly obtained the approval of the responsible parties for the important points.” Certainly, it could hardly be said that there were no issues in making the Japanese side fully aware of the agreement’s implementation.<sup>217</sup>

According to the answers given by Song Zheyuan, first, he had no recollection of any promise to relocate the entire 37<sup>th</sup> Division; if Zhang Yunrong had agreed to withdraw the 37<sup>th</sup>

Division in its entirety, then he had taken the decision on his own. Moreover, if the 111<sup>th</sup> Brigade remaining in Peiping city were to move out of the city (possibly to Xiyuan), he believed this would fulfill the promised withdrawal of the 37<sup>th</sup> Division. Second, with regard to the planned replacement of the 37<sup>th</sup> Division by the 132<sup>nd</sup> Division, he insisted to enter three companies into the city saying that the military commander in Tianjin had given permission. The meeting led to a hardening of attitudes even on the part of the Army Special Service Agency, which had previously been relatively sympathetic to Hebei-Chahar.<sup>218</sup> According to one of the Army Special Service Agency's informants, a Taiwanese national named Xie Luxi, the situation changed after Xiong Bin arrived in Peiping. Qin Dechun and Feng Zhi'an's attitudes had hardened, and Song Zheyuan's orders no longer held sway. Meanwhile, Zhai Xieyuan, who had been working to prevent an escalation between Japan and China, was reportedly incapacitated by dysentery.<sup>219</sup>

Xiong Bin's arrival in Peiping had originally been at the request of Song Zheyuan. On the evening of the 23<sup>rd</sup>, Xiong Bin, accompanied by Li Xin, visited the Chinese military headquarters named Jindeshe, where they met with Song and Qin, among others.<sup>220</sup> Upon his arrival in Peiping, Xiong brought instructions from Baoding that he had obtained from Chiang Kai-shek and proceeded to convey Chiang's thoughts as follows.

In acknowledgment of your telegram [of the 22<sup>nd</sup>]. As far as the present incident is concerned, we in the central government wish to assume responsibility together with you; if it comes to fighting, we will commit ourselves to fight, and if it comes to seeking peace, we will commit ourselves to peace. To the extent that it does not undermine our territorial sovereignty, there is no reason why we should not hope for peace rather than battle. If you have already signed the three conditions as drafted, then the central government agrees and takes responsibility for them together with you. However, the text as it is written is quite lacking in substance. I think it is imperative to point out that the ban on stationing troops in Article 2 should be a temporary measure or else only valid for a certain period of time and should not call for a limit on the number of troops. Thorough implementation of Article 3 must be carried out voluntarily by our side and not demanded arbitrarily by the Japanese side. If we are truly to resolve this incident under the present circumstances, then it is extremely important for the Japanese side to withdraw the reinforcements that have arrived since the 7<sup>th</sup>, and I hope you will pay special attention to this matter. In addition, if you have not yet signed the above three conditions, there are further corrections and points for discussion. I ask that you reply indicating whether you have signed them after all.<sup>221</sup>

Song Zheyuan and the rest of the Hebei-Chahar authorities had, in fact, come to deny that they had ever concluded the agreement reached with the Japanese side on July 11. Nevertheless, Chiang Kai-shek, recognizing that the three conditions of the agreement, which he had already

learned from various sources, were not entirely inconsistent with the four positions he had announced in his Lushan Declaration on July 17,<sup>222</sup> told Song on July 21 that the central government was also prepared to accept the conditions and that Song should therefore communicate the substance of these conditions.<sup>223</sup> As a result, on July 22, Song informed Chiang for the first time that the three conditions he had signed were: 1) to express regret, punish those responsible, and give assurances for the future; 2) to turn over the defense of Wanping Fortress to the officers of the Peace Preservation Corps; and 3) to crack down thoroughly on elements such as the Communist Party and the Blue Shirts Society.<sup>224</sup>

In the telegram responding to this message, quoted above, the central government in Nanjing acknowledged the three conditions and clearly stated its intention to share responsibility for them. Presumably, after receiving this explanation from Xiong Bin, Song Zheyuan decided that it would be possible to cooperate with the central government within the framework of the three conditions of July 11 without being punished by the central government after the fact. However, since the relocation of the entire 37<sup>th</sup> Division as stipulated in the agreement of July 19 would be contrary to Chiang Kai-shek's four positions, he seems to have decided to stall the relocation of the 37<sup>th</sup> Division as long as possible.

On the morning of the following day, July 24, Song called a meeting with Qin Dechun, Feng Zhi'an, Liu Ruming (commander of the 143<sup>rd</sup> Division), and Zhao Dengyu to discuss their future course of action.<sup>225</sup> That afternoon, news came from Chiang Kai-shek that Japan had begun transporting mechanized units and a large number of large trucks into North China on the 22<sup>nd</sup> and that large forces had landed in Korea and Dalian on the 23<sup>rd</sup> and were being transported to the plains along the Wei River, suggesting that a major action was certain within the week.<sup>226</sup>

At this point, Song Zheyuan probably realized that the 29<sup>th</sup> Army could not stand up to the Japanese Army's reinforcements on its own and that steering a balanced course between Japan and China by compromising with Japan would no longer be easily accomplished. In the end, Song Zheyuan seems to have decided to use the negotiations to buy time to prepare for a war of resistance while preserving his strength as much as possible, even if it meant having to rely on the central government. On the same day, Song Zheyuan wrote a letter to Chiang Kai-shek stating that although war was inevitable, the enemy could not be defeated, or the mission accomplished under the present circumstances. Therefore, he wished to ease the current situation by having the northward troops withdraw slightly, thereby using the negotiations to buy time to complete preparations.<sup>227</sup> On that day, Peiping was once again brought partially under martial law.<sup>228</sup>

July 24 can be seen as the day when the tide turned on the ground in the area around Peiping. The subsequent Langfang Incident on the 25<sup>th</sup> and the Guanganmen Incident on the 26<sup>th</sup>, which will be discussed below, should also be understood as having been perceived by the Japanese as part of an irreversible trend underscoring the changes that had taken place on the 24<sup>th</sup>.

## 14) The Japanese Response

On July 24, as the tide was turning, a joint meeting of the various organizational actors on the Japanese side was taking place in Peiping. Possibly in response to the slow pace of the withdrawal, some of the participants at the meeting expressed the strong opinion that it might be necessary to shell Xiyuan to clear out the 37<sup>th</sup> Division. At the Japanese embassy in Peiping, it was believed that the misunderstanding over the withdrawal of the 37<sup>th</sup> Division might have been caused by the frequent involvement of third parties in the attendant discussions. Since even Song Zheyuan had reaffirmed his definite intention to carry out the promises made to the Japanese, the current state of affairs was not necessarily seen as an indication of disloyalty on Song's part.

Since Colonel Matsui was going to Tianjin on the 25<sup>th</sup>, it was proposed at the Peiping Embassy that Major Imai that he should have a proper discussion with Song Zheyuan again in person. The assistant military attaché, being of the same mind, submitted the following two proposals to the Tianjin Garrison Army for approval: 1) since Zhai Xieyuan and Zhang Yunrong had made promises on behalf of Song Zheyuan, to demand that they be carried out within a set time frame regardless of Song's explanation, or else face action against the 37<sup>th</sup> Division; 2) to have a definitive discussion with Song directly about the implementation of the details of the agreement reached on July 19. Major Imai's gut feeling was that the Tianjin Garrison would likely adopt the latter approach.<sup>229</sup>

Meanwhile, a major disagreement had arisen in that while the understanding on the part of the Japanese at the Tianjin Garrison was that the entire 37<sup>th</sup> Division would be relocating to the south, Song's idea was only the part of the 37<sup>th</sup> Division stationed inside Peiping's city walls would be moving. Since the troops that were moving out were also quite upset about this, Zhang Zizhong was invited to a meeting on the evening of the 24<sup>th</sup> to hear from the Chief of Staff, General Hashimoto, once more regarding the misunderstanding over the withdrawal of the troops. As a result of the meeting, Zhang assured the Japanese that he would take responsibility for the following: 1) the troops of the 37<sup>th</sup> Division stationed inside the city walls would complete their relocation to the south within ten days; 2) since the He (Fengji) Brigade in Mentougou was the unit dispatched to the incident, the entire brigade would be quickly relocated to the south; 3) as the units of the 37<sup>th</sup> Division in Xiyuan (one company and two battalions) had nothing to do with the incident and their immediate relocation was not feasible given their facilities and other considerations, they would be relocated in the near future; and 4) the forces that Zhao Dengyu was sending into Peiping to replace the 37<sup>th</sup> Division would be limited to two companies.

Despite his ill health, Zhang Zizhong arrived in Peiping at 4:00 p.m. on the afternoon of July 25. At the meeting, partly in consideration of Song Zheyuan's position, Hashimoto decided to leave action on the above four articles to the initiative of the Chinese. Nevertheless, in view of the many misunderstandings that had occurred in the past, he asked Zhang to promise

to persuade Song to implement the articles promptly and appropriately and to report the results directly to him, to which Zhang replied that he thought that this would be possible.

It should also be mentioned that the Tianjin Garrison intended to press for the implementation of the articles of its demands in the event that Song did not accede to their implementation or else agreed to do so but postponed said implementation without any sign of sincerity. However, if it came to that, the Japanese predicted that Song would likely put the articles into effect.<sup>230</sup> Accordingly, as of the evening of July 24, the Tianjin Garrison had come to the same conclusion as Major Imai's proposal and had already formulated a firm policy for dealing with Hebei-Chahar.

Promising not to publicize the details of the above policy, on July 25, the Tianjin Garrison invited a delegate from each newspaper and news agency to frame the policy as follows:

Hebei-Chahar has agreed to and begun to implement all of our demands. If they are completed in good faith, there is no reason to attack the 29<sup>th</sup> Army. [...] Therefore, we believe that mere emotionalism would not drive the Tianjin Garrison to drive us to launch any further attack under the current circumstances, as though to say that we cannot simply pull out without bloodying our swords now that we have so many reinforcements ready to go, which would be a contradiction in terms.

The members of the press corps were surprised at how different the Tianjin Garrison's policy announcement was from their previous coverage, and many apparently left in a somewhat disgruntled mood.<sup>231</sup>

Thus, as of July 25, the Tianjin Garrison, the Army Special Service Agency, and the embassy were all still pursuing a policy of non-expansion and urging the 29<sup>th</sup> Army to implement the agreement without resorting to military means.

## **15) The Langfang Incident**

After 11:00 p.m. of the 25<sup>th</sup>, matters took a sudden turn for the worse. The incident in question took place in Langfang, located between Peiping and Tianjin. Other than the lack of progress in the troop withdrawal, the day had been passing peacefully without any noteworthy clashes until that evening, when Chinese troops opened fire against the Japanese forces that had been dispatched to Langfang to repair military communication cables.

Since the Marco Polo Bridge Incident, military cable lines had constantly been being severed. Several days earlier, a company of infantry seconded to a communications team had been repairing and maintaining lines in Yangcun, and on the 23<sup>rd</sup>, another communication team had likewise been dispatched to Langfang due to the frequent sabotage. However, when they were blocked from doing so by Peace Preservation Corps officers, Japan reiterated its request for permission at a meeting with Zhang Zizhong on the 24<sup>th</sup>. Although Zhang wanted Japan to

refrain from dispatching its troops to Langfang, saying that his own troops would provide protection, after repeated appeals from Japan, he acceded to Japan's request. The Japanese had obtained prior permission from Zhang Zizhong and Li Wentian (acting commander of the 38<sup>th</sup> Division), and since the communication line ran through the barracks of the 226<sup>th</sup> Company of the 113<sup>th</sup> Brigade, which were stationed in the area, they had dispatched the unit after giving written notice on the 25<sup>th</sup>, having already obtained the unit's approval.<sup>232</sup> Since the start of the year, there had been three separate incidents of cable lines being cut in Langfang prior to the clash at the Marco Polo Bridge, and even after the incident, a cable line was cut on July 19, which was also causing headaches for the Japanese.<sup>233</sup>

The repair team arrived at 4:30 p.m. and was met by the local adjutant before it began making repairs inside the barracks compound. However, they were unable to come to an agreement with the Chinese over where to stay for the night. During this time, the Chinese, realizing the small size of the Japanese detachment, surreptitiously completed a cordon around the group by midnight. At 11:10 p.m., the Japanese troops, who had stacked their arms to eat a meal at the train station, came under fire from the 226<sup>th</sup> Company at the Chinese barracks, first with rifles and then with light machine guns and hand grenades. The Japanese responded with rifles, heavy machine guns, and hand grenades. The Chinese escalated to mortar rounds, killing ten of the opponent number, and the Japanese called for reinforcements when they once again came under gunfire and mortar shell attack at midnight.<sup>234</sup> According to the Chinese account, a repair crew had arrived in Langfang that evening and attempted to stay at the station but had been denied permission by Liu Zhensan, the commander of the 113<sup>th</sup> Brigade. Furthermore, at around 11:30 at night, a detachment of 200 to 300 Japanese troops from Yangcun arrived by armored train, demanding that Langfang Station be surrendered to them. When the 38<sup>th</sup> Division (about 1,200 soldiers) refused, the Japanese attacked the station, and the fighting began.<sup>235</sup> The Japanese side dispatched troops only after giving written notice; if they were going to demand the surrender of Langfang, they would have done so after preparing the appropriate number of troops. There are thus several inconsistencies in the Chinese explanation, and the facts are generally considered to be closer to the Japanese account.<sup>236</sup>

Upon receiving news of the incident, at the headquarters in Tianjin, it was decided that any further attempts to resolve the problem through diplomatic negotiations would be abandoned in favor of a thorough counterattack. The fact that the attacking forces belonged to Zhang Zizhong's 38<sup>th</sup> Division, which had been considered sympathetic to Japan, also had a considerable effect on the Japanese decision. At 3:30 a.m., Japan's military headquarters issued new orders. At 3:45 a.m., the Peiping Army Special Service Agency was notified of the new policy,<sup>237</sup> whereupon relief units were quickly dispatched to Langfang, where air strike began at 6:00 a.m.<sup>238</sup> Also, when the Chief of the General Staff was asked for permission to exercise military force ("“Out of self-defense in response to the illegal shooting by Chinese troops near Langfang, our army resorted to military force to chastise the Chinese troops there. As a result

of this incident, the situation could inevitably escalate. Accordingly, I request your approval in advance to use military force as needed”’),<sup>239</sup> the Chief of the General Staff rescinded Imperial Order no. 400, which had instructed the Japanese to pursue a policy of non-expansion, and authorized the use of military force as necessary.<sup>240</sup>

On the 26<sup>th</sup>, the Army Special Service Agency directly informed Zhang Zizhong of the situation, and the military headquarters prepared a letter to Song Zheyuan that read as follows:

It is very regrettable that yesterday evening, on July 25, a clash at last took place between our two armies as the result of illegal firing by your army on a unit of our troops dispatched to provide support for communications in Langfang. That such a situation could have arisen is due to your army’s lack of sincerity in carrying out the facts agreed upon with our army and your continued unwillingness to relax your bellicose attitude. In the event that your forces still intend to work to prevent the escalation of the situation, then first, the 37<sup>th</sup> Division stationed in the vicinity of the Marco Polo Bridge and Babaoshan must withdraw to Changxindian by noon tomorrow, July 27. In addition, the troops of the 37<sup>th</sup> Division inside Peiping’s city walls must leave the city and be moved with the forces of the 37<sup>th</sup> Division in Xiyuan firstly via the area north of the Peiping–Hankou railway to the area west of the Yongding River by noon on the 28<sup>th</sup> of this month, whereupon you are to continue transporting these troops toward Baoding. If you fail to do so, this will be taken as a sign that your army is not sincere, and regrettably, our army will have no choice but to take independent action. In such a case, all responsibility shall naturally be borne by your army.<sup>241</sup>

The army attempted to hand deliver the letter to Song directly through the Army Special Service Agency, but Song did not show up, claiming illness, so the letter was received by Qin Dechun and Zhang Weifan in his stead.<sup>242</sup> As described above, the incident at Langfang marked a major change in policy at the Tianjin Garrison, one that was further entrenched by another incident that occurred the same evening.

## **16) The Guanganmen Incident**

On July 26, at the request of the Peiping Army Special Service Agency, the Tianjin Garrison decided to dispatch the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Regiment, stationed in Tianjin, to Peiping to protect the Japanese national resident in the city. After proceeding by train as far as Fengtai, they were loaded onto 26 trucks that began to make their way to Peiping. In Peiping, it was planned that Major Sakurai would obtain authorization from the 29<sup>th</sup> Army and arranged to have the city gates at Guanganmen open at 4:00 p.m.<sup>243</sup> However, when the interpreter, Saitō, who had left Fengtai in advance of the main party, arrived at Guanganmen at 3:20 p.m., he found that the Chinese forces had blockaded the open gates at Guanganmen and begun arming



themselves to prevent the troops from passing through the city walls. After arriving at 4:00 p.m., Major Sakurai entered into negotiations with Liu Zizhen (commander of the 111<sup>th</sup> Brigade) of the Martial Law Command, with the result that the gates were opened and the Japanese forces were allowed to enter the city.<sup>244</sup>

On the other hand, the Japanese forces were delayed in their departure from Fengtai and arrived at Guanganmen an hour later than planned. By the time they arrived, the city gates had once again been closed at the order of Qin Dechun, and the Chinese side was already on high alert. Even so, Major Sakurai negotiated with the Chinese once again, and at 5:40 p.m., an order was issued by Martial Law Command to the troops guarding Guanganmen that the gates should be opened. In response, after checking to make sure the gates were open, the Japanese troops began to enter the city at 6:20 p.m. However, as the third truck approached the gate, the Chinese began closing the gate and suddenly opened fire with machine guns, rifles, grenades, and mortar rounds. By the time the sixth truck arrived, the Japanese were returning fire with machine guns, and the firing continued for about ten minutes. The first six trucks managed to pass through the city gates, but the rest of the convoy gave up and turned back. The shooting left three dead and ten wounded on the Japanese side and two dead and nine wounded police officers on the Chinese side.<sup>245</sup>

At the headquarters in Tianjin, fragmentary reports led to initial fears that the convoy had been wiped out entirely. The military authorities broke off negotiations with Hebei-Chahar and, at 10:20 p.m., issued orders for the attack to be carried out as scheduled from noon on July 27. However, in light of the fact that the earlier written notice had set a deadline of noon on the 28<sup>th</sup>, the repatriation of Japanese nationals was not yet complete, and the Guanganmen incident was not as serious as initially feared, Colonel Matsui's opinion prompted a decision that the start of the attack should temporarily be postponed to 4:30 a.m.<sup>246</sup> Although the military command at the Tianjin Garrison headquarters had previously been focusing its attention on the withdrawal of Song Zheyuan and the 29<sup>th</sup> Army and aiming for a negotiated settlement, the incidents at Langfang on the 25<sup>th</sup> and at Guanganmen on the 26<sup>th</sup> finally led to its abandonment of hopes for a negotiated settlement.

## **17) Response of Hebei-Chahar Authorities**

Zhang Zizhong arrived in Peiping at 4:00 p.m. bearing the results of his discussion on July 25 with the Chief of Staff of the Japanese China Garrison Army and immediately paid a visit to Song Zheyuan, who was in meetings at Jindeshe. At the time, key figures in Hebei-Chahar, including the 29<sup>th</sup> Army's divisional commanders, had gathered at Jindeshe to discuss potential responses. It seems likely that one of the matters discussed at the meeting, which lasted until after midnight, was the Japanese demands delivered by Zhang Zizhong.<sup>247</sup> The following morning, in response to the Langfang Incident, Song Zheyuan, Qin Dechun, and Zhang Yunrong were party to a group that met at Qin Dechun's private residence for another

discussion of potential responses.<sup>248</sup> As a result, Zhang Weifan was dispatched to the Japanese side to say that the Chinese would accept all of Japan's demands and begin implementing them on the morning of the 27<sup>th</sup>. The Chinese were constantly using this tactic to give notices that they did not subsequently put into practice, so the Japanese army had doubts about this notice, as well. Accordingly, the Japanese authorities decided to avoid giving a direct response and to keep a close watch on whether the withdrawal would be carried out before the deadline.<sup>249</sup> In addition, the aforementioned written notice – that the 37<sup>th</sup> Division at the Marco Polo Bridge and Babaoshan were to be withdrawn by noon on the 27<sup>th</sup> and the parts of the 37<sup>th</sup> Division in Peiping and Xiyuan were to be withdrawn to the opposite bank of the Yongding River by noon of the 28<sup>th</sup> – was delivered to Hebei-Chahar via the Army Special Service Agency at 5:30 p.m. on July 26.<sup>250</sup>

Song Zheyuan once again convened a meeting of the Hebei-Chahar leadership at his private residence on the evening of the 26<sup>th</sup> to discuss their response to the Japanese ultimatum.<sup>251</sup> Just then, however, the new incident was unfolding at Guanganmen, and it seems likely that at this point, the gathered leaders of Hebei-Chahar must have thought that an all-out attack by Japan was an inevitability. In fact, immediately after the Guanganmen incident, Song Zheyuan gave orders to the army's deputy commander Tong Linge to have all troops in the vicinity of Peiping, excepting those required to defend the barracks, to prepare for the enemy bombardment by leaving their barracks before dawn on the 27<sup>th</sup> and taking cover in the fields.<sup>252</sup> In addition, at the same time, a call (and telegram) came in from Chiang Kai-shek requesting that decisions be made on the following four points: 1) to resolve to go to war and deploy troops along the Baoding–Cang County and Shijiazhuang–Cang County lines, 2) to prepare Peiping's city fortifications for the outbreak of war, 3) to reinstate security and defensive measures at Wanping Fortress, and 4) for Song to personally go to Baoding to take command.<sup>253</sup>

The Guanganmen incident itself came as a surprise, at least from the perspective of the Hebei-Chahar leadership, whose immediate goal was to buy time. It was thus unlikely to have been ordered by the top officials but rather sparked off by the anti-Japanese sentiment of the troops on the ground. While a large-scale battle with Japan was now only a matter of time, the northern buildup of the Central Army at the Hebei border was proceeding more slowly than the authorities had hoped. Nor had the distrust Song and others harbored toward the central government been entirely resolved. At the very least, their stalling tactics had to be drawn out as long as possible. Given that the Tianjin Garrison had already decided to turn down any contact from the Chinese, Song suggested that Qin Dechun invite Secretary Katō of the Japanese Embassy to sound out the Japanese side and explore the possibility of further negotiations.

At 1:00 a.m. on July 27, Secretary Katō accepted Qin Dechun's invitation to visit him at his private residence. Qin opened the meeting by expressing his deep regret at this sudden turn of events, just when he and Chairman Song were making sincere efforts in Hebei-Chahar to find

a localized solution to the situation that would avoid escalation, and asked Katō if there were anything that could be done to resolve the problematic situation. To this, Katō replied that although the Japanese government had been making every effort from the beginning to resolve the situation locally under a policy of non-escalation, matters had now come to a point where all those efforts had come to naught. The Japanese felt this to be most regrettable but could see no way out of the current situation. Qin responded that although the clashes between the two armies had been escalating since two days earlier, he felt there was still a glimmer of hope for a peaceful resolution. He said that he had made a last-ditch effort to pull back and save the situation before it was too late (“to rein in the horse at the edge of the precipice”), but that matters had unfortunately gotten deplorably out of hand. Katō retorted by asking why, if the Hebei-Chahar authorities had been so determined to make good on their promises, they had not immediately implemented the things that were within their power to do. Qin replied that they could not actually withdraw the 37<sup>th</sup> Division from Peiping while the two armies were engaged in hostilities. In effect, it was simply a matter of time. Although he could not hope for a resolution as things stood with the two armies clashing, Qin asked that Katō do his best to prevent and minimize the disaster, whereupon the meeting was concluded.<sup>254</sup> This meeting between Qin and Kato proved to be the last negotiation between the local authorities in Japan and China regarding the Marco Polo Bridge Incident.<sup>255</sup>

Now that negotiations with Japan had been broken off, the problem for Song Zheyuan was his relationship with the central government. Although Chiang Kai-shek had informed him the previous day to prepare for war and go to Baoding, Song was hesitant to abandon Peiping. This hesitation stemmed from the fact that the reinforcements sent by the central government were still not up to fighting strength and his inability to fully trust the central government’s determination to fight a campaign with him. Chiang dispatched Liu Jianqun (secretary of the Fuxing Society) to reiterate the central government’s position and persuade Song to go to Baoding to take command. In a meeting on the night of July 26, however, Song put the following questions to Liu. “Chairman Chiang says that I must go to Baoding and must not negotiate with the Japanese, but are we already prepared for war with Japan? Why hasn’t the central government sent us troops?” This suggests that Song still did not fully trust the central government.<sup>256</sup> Although the 10<sup>th</sup> and 83<sup>rd</sup> Divisions of the 14<sup>th</sup> Army of the central forces had arrived in Shijiazhuang by the 25<sup>th</sup>, it appears that they were poorly equipped.<sup>257</sup>

On the 27<sup>th</sup>, the Japanese notified the 29<sup>th</sup> Army in Tongzhou of their intention to disarm the Chinese soldiers. When the Chinese still showed defiance, the Japanese attacked at 5:00 a.m. Both sides suffered casualties in the skirmish, including six dead and 26 wounded on the Japanese side.<sup>258</sup> In response to the battle in Tongzhou, Song finally replied to the phone message sent by Chiang the previous day on the morning of the 27<sup>th</sup>. He sent a telegram to the effect that while he was in receipt of Chiang’s four-point instructions, including the matter relating to his relocation to Baoding, he had decided to stay in Peiping, partly due to the new

fighting that had broken out in Tongzhou.<sup>259</sup>

Later, a battle broke out between the Chinese and the 1<sup>st</sup> Independent Mixed Brigade (commanded by Sakai Kōji), which comprised approximately 3,000 troops advancing from Xiaotangshan in Changping County on the northern outskirts of Peiping and Shunyi near the Shahe River. Recognizing the situation's urgency, Song Zheyuan sent the following telegram to Chiang, once again requesting reinforcements from the central government.<sup>260</sup>

The enemy is besieging Peiping in full force, and the situation is dire. I would like to ask that the central government promptly begin preparing for the second phase. In addition, I would like to request that a large force be sent north from the Peiping–Hankou and Tianjin–Pukou railway lines overnight to break the encirclement of Peiping. It would be even more beneficial to the war situation if you could dispatch an air squadron to the Hejian–Renqiu area.<sup>261</sup>

In response to Song's request, Chiang Kai-shek sent two telegrams that afternoon stating that preparations for the second-phase plan were already in place and that he would take steps to send a large force as requested in Song's telegram to provide full-scale reinforcements and would also dispatch a high-ranking official to Baoding. In addition, Chiang ordered Song to establish a clear understanding of the situation. If Song could remain calm and stand against the enemy with a firm offensive for three days, this would frustrate the Japanese and enable the Chinese forces to accomplish their objective more easily. To this end, Chiang issued strict orders that all units were to dig their trenches deep, hold fast, and not retreat.<sup>262</sup> Although Chiang Kai-shek expressed concern for Song Zheyuan in his replies, he privately felt that Song was getting what he deserved. In a diary entry for that day, Chiang wrote the following:

Today, war broke out in all four circuits outside the Peiping city walls. Only now has Song Zheyuan suddenly become impatient. Because he was not inclined to believe what I said and thought he could gain temporary peace of mind by playing nice with the enemy, he was hesitant to build up his position simply for fear that the enemy would suspect his motives. Even though the enemy had already completed its encirclement of Peiping before July 25, Song was still ignorant of the danger he faced, still demanding the withdrawal of the Central Army forces that had entered Hebei Province. What a tragedy.<sup>263</sup>

Song, on the other hand, expressed his thanks to Chiang for dispatching a large force and a high-ranking official but chose to remain in Peiping.<sup>264</sup> It is safe to assume that Song Zheyuan's reservations about the central government were never resolved.

The full-scale attack by the Japanese Army, which had not yet begun, was scheduled for dawn on July 28. However, when the deadline passed at 1:00 p.m. on the 27<sup>th</sup>, the 37<sup>th</sup> Division

and some of the Peace Preservation Corps were still in Babaoshan, whence the Japanese had demanded they withdraw, as these units had not received any orders to move.<sup>265</sup> Although the Japanese authorities received explanation from the Chinese side that ostensibly attributed the holdup to the delayed transmission of orders within the 29<sup>th</sup> Army, there was now little chance of avoiding a large-scale battle.<sup>266</sup> Around 2:00 p.m., a clash broke out at Tuanhe south of Nanyuan between a brigade of China's 132<sup>nd</sup> Division, which had been sent to defend the area, and Commander Takagi's unit of the 20<sup>th</sup> Division (part of Japanese Korean Army).<sup>267</sup> That afternoon, Germany ordered its citizens to evacuate to the German embassy, indicating the steadily increasing urgency of the situation.<sup>268</sup>

At 3:00 p.m., the Peiping Newspaper Inspectorate announced via the Central News Agency that "the Hebei-Chahar Political Council rejects Japan's unreasonable ultimatum," thereby bringing an end to twenty-one days of Sino-Japanese negotiations between the local authorities.<sup>269</sup> Around 4:00 p.m., with the escalation of the clashes near Tuanhe into an artillery battle, war had become inevitable.<sup>270</sup>

## **18) All-Out Attack on North China**

On the 27<sup>th</sup>, martial law was once again imposed in Peiping following the incident that had taken place the previous day.<sup>271</sup> At a meeting that took place that evening, the American, British, French, and Italian delegations decided to begin housing their nations' citizens in the Legation Quarter, Dong Jiaomin Xiang, in the early morning of the 28<sup>th</sup> and to request that Japan not use the Legation Quarter for military operations.<sup>272</sup> On this day, the gates at the entrance of the Legation Quarter were closed for the first time.<sup>273</sup>

That same day, the Japanese army's central command decided to deploy the Divisions from mainland Japan, which it had until then been postponing.<sup>274</sup> At 11:50 a.m., an order was issued designating July 29 as the first day of mobilization. The General Staff Office also issued an order that "the commander of the China Garrison shall, in addition to his present duties, chastise the Chinese forces in Peiping and Tianjin and take charge of stabilizing key areas in the region, assigning the Tianjin Garrison to a new operational mission."<sup>275</sup>

At midnight on the 28<sup>th</sup>, the Tianjin Garrison headquarters dictated the final letter to be sent to Song Zheyuan to the Army Special Service Agency by telephone.<sup>276</sup>

At 2:00 a.m., the Army Special Service Agency communicated this to Qin Dechun through his secretary, Zhu Yuzhen, and it was then passed on to Song Zheyuan.<sup>277</sup> In the early morning of the same day, the Tianjin Garrison launched an all-out attack on the area around Peiping. With this, the initial policy by which Japan had aimed to avoid escalation by the local settlement of disputes ended with the punitive exercise of military force.<sup>278</sup>

The British Army's view was that Japan "desire economic domination in the area concerned (and the adjacent provinces of Shansi, Shantung and Suiyuan) but do not wish to annex this Part of China." The observation that "the danger, that the various incidents may develop into

perations approaching the nature of as Sino-Japanese war, lies in the fact that it may be difficult to restrain the ardour of the local Japanese commanders which may be fanned by the recent somewhat bellicose attitude of the Chinese “suggests that British intelligence had an accurate grasp of the problems facing Japan.”<sup>279</sup> On the other hand, Lt. Colonel W.A. Lovat-Fraser, the military attaché to the British Embassy, stated that even the Chinese military overwhelmingly lacked modern artillery firepower, even in the Central Army, despite its possession of comparatively valuable military hardware that it had moved north to Hebei. Lovat-Fraser was dismissive of the ideas of Alexander von Falkenhausen, the German military advisor, whom he believed overestimated the Chinese military, and his idea that any war between the two powers would ultimately be decided by human resources.<sup>280</sup>

In a top-secret confidential conversation, Falkenhausen informed Ambassador Trautman that although Chiang Kai-shek was not a warmonger, he would nevertheless opt for a military confrontation if Japan continued its aggression, which would lead to an all-out war. Such a war would begin with China’s initiative to drive Japan out of the Yangtze River basin, followed by fighting in various parts of the country. Although the odds did not favor China, Japan would have to mobilize all its forces to secure victory, a challenging prospect that appeared even more dubious in the face of the Soviet Union. He predicted that China would fight desperately to the very end and that any war would become a deadly quagmire.<sup>281</sup>

Despite all efforts to avoid such an outcome, the subsequent situation developed just as Falkenhausen predicted, turning into an all-out war as China launched a campaign in the lower reaches of the Yangtze River. However, as Lovat-Fraser had feared, the Chinese army, lacking in modern firepower, gradually lost the advantage it had gained in the early stages of the conflict. As a result, the war proceeded to become mired in deadly struggle, although in a manner different from what Falkenhausen had predicted.

## **Conclusion**

In retrospect, the July 7 shooting incident on the banks of the Yongding River was not in itself significant enough to have set off an eight-year war that would cost both Japan and China so dearly. The previous year, in September 1936, another clash had occurred in what came to be known as the Second Fengtai Incident,<sup>282</sup> in which a skirmish between Chinese and Japanese forces in the vicinity of a nearby barracks had escalated into a firefight. There were also the various incidents resulting in numerous casualties that took place between the Marco Polo Bridge Incident and Japan’s launch of an all-out attack on July 28. Compared to these other incidents, the initial character of the Marco Polo Bridge Incident was such that it could easily have ended immediately, aside from the incidental problem of the missing soldier, which had no bearing on the shooting incident itself. Indeed, although the armed clashes on the morning of July 8 were more serious than the Second Fengtai Incident in terms of their scale and the nature of the violence, on several occasions thereafter, the situation settled to the point where

a resolution would have been likely under conventional circumstances. Nevertheless, on each occasion, new skirmishes and clashes erupted that sent the negotiations back to the drawing board and, in some cases, imposed new conditions. Even as the situation continued to escalate and then subside, little by little, the crisis grew in severity.

Where matters differed from the Second Fengtai Incident of September 1936 was not on the Japanese side but on the Chinese side. Of course, Japan continued to exert pressure as before, but, in terms of degree, there were no rapid moves to strengthen their hand around this time. In fact, by early 1937, the case for reconsidering Japan's China policy was gaining momentum. The blatant demands that the Japanese were making at the local level in China could even be said to have been more restrained than they had been previously. Also, another incident involving Soviet army troops had taken place at Kanchazu Island in June 1937, and Japan's heightened wariness toward the USSR had resulted in increased sensitivity to military conflict with China.

Conversely, not only was Chinese sentiment toward Japan deteriorating, but domestic developments such as the Xi'an Incident had also stoked a rising nationalism among the Chinese populace. In the 29<sup>th</sup> Army, as well, anti-Japanese sentiment among the rank-and-file soldiers had risen to an unparalleled level compared to the previous year. Moreover, the Suiyuan campaign in late 1936, which ended with the defeat of the Japanese-allied Inner Mongolian Army, supported by the Kwantung Army, by the Chinese General Fu Zuoyi's 35<sup>th</sup> Army, had been widely publicized through the media, with the result that China had become more confident in its military capabilities. Inside the 29<sup>th</sup> Army, the closer the troops were to the front line, the stronger their anti-Japanese sentiment became, and even though Song Zheyuan and other senior officers ordered a compromise with Japan, the situation was one that they could not fully control.

Accordingly, even if Song Zheyuan had taken steps to redress the situation with Japan through deputies like Zhang Zizhong, although they would have been able to crack down on anti-Japanese publications and dismiss key figures harboring anti-Japanese sentiment, when the time came to relocate their troops, the implementation of the move was fraught with difficulties. Although the Japanese side also understood this situation, on the other hand, they also felt that no progress could be made under such a status quo.

Both Japan and China sent reinforcements to the area in the unlikely case that anything went wrong, but in an environment of mutual distrust, this meant that they were, in fact, ready for things to go wrong. Initially, Song Zheyuan, who felt himself to be out of step with the Central Government in Nanjing, was willing to compromise with Japan as much as he was able to settle the matter. Even so, with the successive arrival of Japanese reinforcements and the gradual increase in the stringency of the Japanese demands, Song ultimately decided that he had no choice but to side with Nanjing. Of course, regardless of whether Song reached a partial compromise with Japan or sided with Nanjing, Hebei-Chahar and the 29<sup>th</sup> Army needed to

prepare for a defensive war. The Japanese regarded this as a tactic to buy time with the negotiations, and it aroused their suspicions of Song's insincerity. The bombardment of Wanping Fortress by the Japanese on July 20, immediately after Song Zheyuan had delivered his "apology" and arrived in Peiping to implement the Japanese demands in rapid succession, followed by their ultimatum requiring that the entire 37<sup>th</sup> Division move south – a demand that violated Chiang Kai-shek's four conditions – seem to have been significant factors prompting Song to abandon his efforts to seek a local compromise with the Japanese.

On the other hand, the Japanese also complicated any solution by imposing stricter demands and new conditions after each clash, such as the withdrawal of the entire 37<sup>th</sup> Division, and in doing so tied their own hands by trying to save face, a consideration that was of no practical value in the negotiations. This was not something that could be easily achieved, given the anti-Japanese sentiment and dissatisfaction among the local troops on the Chinese side. The critical difference between this incident and the Second Fengtai Incident of September 1936 lay in this heightened anti-Japanese sentiment at the unit level. Japan's final insistence on the relocation of the 37<sup>th</sup> Division to the south was conditional on the relocation of the 132<sup>nd</sup> Division inside Peiping's city walls. The 132<sup>nd</sup> Division, commanded by Zhao Dengyu, who had fought a heated battle with the Kwantung Army during the Defense of the Great Wall in 1933 (known as Operation Nekka (Jehol) in Japan), was an equally if not even more strongly anti-Japanese unit than the 37<sup>th</sup> Division.<sup>283</sup> Accordingly, even if the withdrawal of the 37<sup>th</sup> Division had been accomplished, similar clashes would likely have taken place around Peiping soon enough. Considering that this process would then have been repeated until one side backed down – something unlikely to happen – it was only a matter of time before Japan launched an all-out attack.

Japan's announcement of its intention to deploy its troops from mainland Japan and the dispatch of reinforcements eventually pushed Song Zheyuan toward Nanjing. Without these reinforcements, however, Song would likely have continued to negotiate with Japan to the extent that he was able. Nevertheless, it also seems likely that he would have done so in order to make his own preparations for a war of resistance and to prepare for the imminent conflict with Japan. Therefore, in all probability, any time that Song might have gained would have been brief and would have done little more than boost confidence and anti-Japanese sentiment on the front lines. For its part, as well, regardless of the actual situation, Japan would not have left the overwhelmingly outnumbered Tianjin Garrison on its own once the Central Army was ordered north by the Nanjing government, and so its dispatch of reinforcements was inevitable.

The shots fired on July 7 were a trifling incident, and there seem to be many possibilities as to how this might have been brought to an end. However, as of July 1937, the will on the part of the local authorities to restore the status quo was already quite weakened, and they had already lost confidence in their ability to avoid clashes at the unit level. Although Chiang Kai-shek had been considering launching a short campaign in the lower reaches of the Yangtze



when Peiping fell, the Japanese failed to anticipate China's fierce resolve when they launched their all-out attack on North China. Both sides erred in their judgment of the other's plans and estimates of their military potential, leading to a protracted power struggle that could have no predictable end.<sup>284</sup>

## Endnotes

### Abbreviations

BKZ Bōei-Kenkyūsho Senshi Kenkyū Sentā Shiryō-shitsu-zō (Collection of the Military Archives, Center for Military History, National Institute for Defense Studies)

<sup>1</sup> Yasui Sankichi, *Rokōkyō jiken* [Marco Polo Bridge Incident] (Tokyo: Kenbun Shuppan, 1993), Ryū Ketsu, *Nitchū sensō-ka no gaikō* [Diplomacy in the Second Sino-Japanese War] (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1995), Hata Ikuhiko, *Rokōkyō jiken no kenkyū* [A Study of the Marco Polo Bridge Incident] (Tokyo: Tokyo University Press, 1996). In particular, the study by Hata brings together all of the historical sources available at the time to offer an extremely detailed examination. This paper owes much to Hata's work.

<sup>2</sup> “Jiken chokuzen no kita Shina chūton-gun no ninmu to heiryoku [Mission and strength of Japanese China Garrison Army just prior to the Marco Polo incident]”, in Rikugun Daigakkō (Army War College), ed., *Shina jihen shoki ni okeru kita Shina sakusen-shiyō* [An Historical Overview of the North China Operation in the Early Period of the Second Sino-Japanese War], volume 2, BKZ (hereinafter, *Operational History*). In these notes, I refer to the name of the repository of archival materials only when they are first mentioned.

<sup>3</sup> Shina chūton-gun shirei-bu (Japanese China Garrison Army Headquarters), “Shōwa 12-nen 8-gatsu-ka genzai Shina seiji kikō [Contemporary Chinese Political Organization as of August 1937]” (BKZ); Guofang Bu Shi Zheng Bianyi Ju (Ministry of National Defense Military History and Translation Bureau), *Kang ri zhan shi: Qiqi shibian yu pingjin kangzhan* [A History of the War Against Japan: The July 7 Incident and the Pingjin Campaign] (Taipei: Guofang Bu Shi Zheng Bianyi Ju, 1981), Part 4, Chapter 5, Section 1, Insert Table 2.

<sup>4</sup> Imai Takeo nikki [Diaries of Imai Takeo], entry for July 1, 1937 (for all dates hereafter, I omit the year 1937).

<sup>5</sup> Imai Takeo nikki, 7/2.

<sup>6</sup> Wanping Fortress near the Marco Polo Bridge is also known as Lugouqiao Fortress and Gongji Fortress. For the purpose of this paper, I will refer to it consistently as Wanping Fortress.

<sup>7</sup> Shina chūton-gun hohei dai-1 rentai dai-3 daitai (3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, 1st regiment, China Garrison Army), “Ryūōbyō fukin sentō shōhō (shiho ichi no san senshō dai-1-gō) [Detailed Battle Report of the Engagement Near Marco Polo Bridge (3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, 1<sup>st</sup> regiment, China Garrison Army, no. 1)],” BKZ (hereinafter, “3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion Battle Report no. 1”). However, since the relevant page has been removed from the BKZ battle report, please refer to the 1970 version published by Nagasawa Renji.

<sup>8</sup> Wang Lengzhai, “Lugouqiao shibian huiyi lu [A Memoir of the Marco Polo Bridge Incident], in Cun Yong (ed.) *Kangzhan jianguo di yi nian* [The First Year of the War of Resistance and the State Building] (Chongqing, 1938), p. 4.

<sup>9</sup> *Hokuhei rikugun kikan gyōmu nisshi* [Administrative Log of Imperial Japanese Army Special Agency in Peiping] July 8, 12:10 a.m., BKZ (hereinafter abbreviated as *Peiping Log*, 7/8, 00:10, etc.).

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 7/8, 00:30, 01:10, 01:45.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 7/8, 2:15, 3:10; memoir by Major Sakurai “Kaisen tōsho no shinsō (The Truth about the Outbreak of the War),” in *Operational History*.

<sup>12</sup> Shina chūton-gun hohei dai-1 rentai (1<sup>st</sup> regiment, China Garrison Army), “Ryūōbyō fukin sentō shōhō (Shichūho ichi no san senshō dai-1-gō) [Detailed Battle Report of the Engagement Near Marco Polo Bridge (1<sup>st</sup> regiment, China Garrison Army, no. 1)],” BKZ (hereinafter, “1<sup>st</sup> Regiment Battle Report no. 1”).

<sup>13</sup> *Peiping Log*, 7/8, 02:20.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 7/8, 02:40

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 7/8, 03:35; Telegram from Secretary Katō to Minister Hirota, no. 333, sent July 8 at 06:20 (compiled in *Zai-Chūkaminkoku Hokuhei Nihon taishikan kiroku* [Records of the Japanese Embassy in Peiping, Republic of China] (hereinafter abbreviated as *Records*; all telegrams are based on the same compilation). In the following, except for in the first instance of a person’s name, I abbreviate such telegrams in the following format: “Telegram No. 333 from Katō to Hirota, sent 7/8, 06:20,” with punctuation marks added as necessary.

<sup>16</sup> “3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion Battle Report no. 1”

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*; Noji Ishichi, “Jihen hottan no omoide [A Reminiscence of the Inception of the Marco Polo Incident],” *Kaikōsha kiji tokuhō* (Kaikosha Articles Special Report), no. 36 (July 1938), pp. 24–26. *Peiping Log*, 7/8, 5:30.

<sup>18</sup> Military telephone call from Secretary Shima (Regimental Command), 7/8, 11:00 (record); *Peiping Log*, 7/8, 06:00.

<sup>19</sup> Telegram No. 335 from Katō to Hirota, sent 7/8, 08:00.

<sup>20</sup> *Peiping Log*, 7/8, 07:00.

<sup>21</sup> Telegram No. 336 from Katō to Hirota, sent 7/8, 09:00

<sup>22</sup> Communication from the regiment (Shima), 7/8, 10:45 (record); *Peiping Log*, 7/8, 10:10.

<sup>23</sup> Telephone call from Shima (12:10) (record).

<sup>24</sup> He Jifeng et al. “Qiqi shibian jishi [An Account of the July 7<sup>th</sup> Incident], in “Qiqi shibian” bianshen zu (“July 7 Incident” Editorial Review Team) (ed.), *Qiqi shibian: yuanguomindang jiangling kangri zhanzheng qinliji* [The July 7 Incident: A Personal Account of the War Against Japan by Former KMT Generals] (Beijing: Zhongguo wenshi chubanshe, 1986), p. 44.

<sup>25</sup> Jin Zhenzhong, “Ning wei zhansi gui buzuo wangguonu [Better to die in battle than live a subjugated slave],” *Ibid.*, p. 58.

<sup>26</sup> Telegram from Ji Xingwen to Brigade Commander Liu, 7/8 (in *Yan Xishan shiliao* [Yan Xishan Archives], “Ge fang minguo ershiliu nian qi yue wanglai dianwen lu cun (2) [A record of telegram correspondence between

various parties in July 1937 (Part 2)], *Academica Historica*, File number: 116-010108-0370-016) (hereinafter “Yan File...”). It is also worth noting that Commander Harvey Edward Overesch, the U.S. Naval Attaché in Peiping, said that a night attack by the Chinese was expected on the same day. Radiogram from Naval Attaché Peiping China to Navy Department, July 8, 1937, 22:10, Formerly Security Classified General Correspondence, 1929 – 1943, Box 279, Division of Naval Intelligence, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, RG38, U. S. National Archives I (USNA I) Washington D.C.

<sup>27</sup> Telegram from Li Baoshan to Ji Xingwen (7/7) (Yan File 116-010108-0370-016).

<sup>28</sup> Conversation with Captain Teradaira in the Special Service Agency, 7/8, 5:00 p.m. (record).

<sup>29</sup> No. 344 (from Katō) to the Minister; telephone call Captain Teradaira at 3:55 p.m. (Starting date and time not recorded); Conversation with Captain Teradaira in the Special Service Agency, 7/8, 5:00 p.m. (record).

<sup>30</sup> No. 342 from Katō to Hirota, sent 7/8, 22:30.

<sup>31</sup> No. 353 from Katō to Hirota, sent 7/9, 07:00.

<sup>32</sup> Imai Takeo nikki, 7/8.

<sup>33</sup> Peiping Log, 7/8, 16:10.

<sup>34</sup> Peiping Log, 7/9, 01:10.

<sup>35</sup> *Peiping Log*, 7/9, 01:30, 2:10.

<sup>36</sup> No. 351 (from Katō) to the Minister, sent 7/9, 01:00.

<sup>37</sup> Received 7/9, 04:30 (Secretary Shima at Regimental Command) (record).

<sup>38</sup> Peiping Log, 7/9, 03:00.

<sup>39</sup> *Peiping Log*, 7/9, 05:10; No. 356 from Katō to Hirota, sent 7/9, 06:30; Teradaira Tadasuke, *Rokōkyō jiken: Nihon no higeki* [The Marco Polo Bridge Incident: Japan’s Tragedy] (Tokyo: Yomiuri Shinbunsha, 1970), pp. 196–197.

<sup>40</sup> (7/9, 08:10 Regimental Command) (record).

<sup>41</sup> “Shina chūton hohei ryodan no sakusen [China Garrison Infantry Brigade Operations]” (BKZ) (hereinafter, “China Garrison Infantry Operations”).

<sup>42</sup> Telegram from the Staff Office of the 37<sup>th</sup> Division Brigade Headquarters to Battalion Commander Fu (7/9) (Yan File 116-010108-0370-028).

<sup>43</sup> Note that neither side admitted to firing any shots. *Peiping Log*, 7/9, 09:50; No. 362 from Katō to Hirota, sent 7/9, 16:00

<sup>44</sup> Telegram from Zhang Zizhong to Ruan Xuanwu, Huang Weigang, Liu Zhensan, Dong Shengtang, and Li Zhiyuan, 7/9 (Yan File 116-010108-0370-020).

<sup>45</sup> Telegram from Feng Zhi’an to Song Zheyuan, 7/9 (116-010108-0370-030). Note that upon investigation, the

Japanese discovered that the unit involved in the clash was in fact the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Regiment of the Hebei Security Brigade under the direct command of Feng Zhi'an ("China Garrison Infantry Operations.").

<sup>46</sup> Kawano Matashirō, *Rokōkyō jiken shuki* [A Personal Account of the Marco Polo Bridge Incident] (Tokyo: Privately printed, 1981), pp. 75–76; "China Garrison Infantry Operations." Note that in the original plan, this was to be 30 rounds of ammunition, with a patrol by the brigade commander's patrol in Wanping County to ensure compliance with the agreement, but this was subsequently changed ("1st Regiment Battle Report no. 1").

<sup>47</sup> No. 365 from Katō to Hirota, sent 7/9, 06:10; *Peiping Log*, 7/9, 13:05, 18:30.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., No. 366 from Katō to Hirota; *Peiping Log*, 7/9, 19:50.

<sup>49</sup> Unsigned telegram from Commander Shi [Yousan] and Brigade Commander Cheng, 7/11 (Yan File 116-010108-0370-057).

<sup>50</sup> 7/9, 01:50 (Report by Secretary Takenaka from Regimental Command) (record).

<sup>51</sup> Encrypted telegram from Zhao Dengyu to Liu Jingshan, Shi Zhengang, Wang Changhai, and Chai Jianrui (7/9) (Yan File 116-010108-0370-035).

<sup>52</sup> Telegram from Zhao Dengyu to Brigade Commanders (7/9) (Yan File 116-010108-0370-029).

<sup>53</sup> Telegram from Chai Jianrui to Liu Jingshan and Shi Zhengang (7/9) (Yan File 116-010108-0370-021).

<sup>54</sup> Telegram from 132<sup>nd</sup> Division Staff Department to 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade (7/9) (Yan File 116-010108-0370-022).

<sup>55</sup> Telegram from Yao Jingchuan to 29<sup>th</sup> Army General Councilor Zhang (7/9) (Yan File 116-010108-0370-027). In this telegram, Yao Jingchuan, commander of the 13<sup>th</sup> Independent Cavalry Brigade, reported a shortage of arms and ammunition.

<sup>56</sup> Telegram from Zhang Yueting to Ji Xingwen (7/10) (Yan File 116-010108-0370-040).

<sup>57</sup> Imai Takeo nikki, 7/10.

<sup>58</sup> "Rokōkyō jiken kaiketsu no tame tai-Shi sesshō hōshin ni kan suru ken [Matters related to policies for negotiating with China to resolve the Marco Polo Bridge Incident]" (in "Shina jihen sensō shidō kankei tsudzuri [sono 1] [File on War Leadership for the Second Sino-Japanese War (1)] (BKZ) (hereinafter, "War Leadership File 1"); Sanbō honbu (General Staff Headquarters), *Shina jihen rikusen gai-shi* [History of Land Battles in the Second Sino-Japanese War], vol. 1, p. 87 (BKZ).

<sup>59</sup> *Shina jihen rikusen gai-shi*, vol. 1, p. 88.

<sup>60</sup> *Peiping Log*, 7/10, 16:00.

<sup>61</sup> "China Garrison Infantry Operations."

<sup>62</sup> "Ryo sakumei kō dai-9-gō [Brigade Operational Order A, no. 9] (in "China Garrison Infantry Operations"). "Ho-1 sakumei dai-10-gō [1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Operational Order, no. 10], (in *Shina chūton-gun hohei dai-1 rentai*, "Ryūōb yō fukin sentō shōhō (Shichū ho-1 senshō dai-3-gō) [China Garrison Army 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Regiment, "Details of battles in the vicinity of China Garrison Army 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Regiment (China Garrison Army 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Regiment

Battle Details no. 3)] (BKZ) (hereinafter, “1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Battle Details no. 3”).

<sup>63</sup> Conversation with Capt. Teradaira, 7/10, 22:00 (reported by Kusano) (record). “China Garrison Infantry Operations.”

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., “China Garrison Infantry Operations.”

<sup>65</sup> “Ho-1 sakumei dai-11-gō [1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Regiment Operational Order, no. 11]” (in “1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Battle Details no. 3.”

<sup>66</sup> Conversation with Capt. Teradaira, 7/10, 19:40 (reported by Shimazu) (record).

<sup>67</sup> Conversation with Capt. Teradaira, 7/10, 22:00 (reported by Kusano) (record); “China Garrison Infantry Operations”.

<sup>68</sup> Kawano Matashirō, *Rokōkyō jiken shuki*, pp. 83–84.

<sup>69</sup> “1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Battle Details no. 3.”

<sup>70</sup> “China Garrison Infantry Operations.”

<sup>71</sup> Conversation with Capt. Teradaira, 7/10, 19:40 (reported by Shimazu) (record).

<sup>72</sup> Telegram from Feng Zhi’an to Song Zheyuan (7/10) (Yan File 116-010108-0370-052).

<sup>73</sup> “Hōtei-shō dai 2481-gō: Wachi Tsunezō (Bengo-gawa bunsho dai-594-gō) [Court Testimony No. 2481: Affidavit of Wachi Tsunezō (Defense document no. 594)]” (Japanese Documentation from the International Military Tribunal for the Far East, formerly owned by the Asahi Shimbun, V, Box 46), Modern Japanese Political History Materials Room; Tanaka Shin’ichi, “Shina jihen kiroku (sono 1) [Record of the Second Sino-Japanese War (1)] (7/10) (BKZ) (hereinafter, “Tanaka Record”). Upon investigation, the original text of the telegram could not be found.

<sup>74</sup> Telegram from Zheyuan to Feng Zhi’an (7/10) (Yan File 116-010108-0370-051).

<sup>75</sup> Telegram from Ji Xingwen to Feng Zhi’an and He Jifeng (7/10) (Yan File 116-010108-0370-045).

<sup>76</sup> Telegram from Feng Zhi’an to Song Zheyuan (7/10) (Yan File 116-010108-0370-056).

<sup>77</sup> Encrypted telegram from Feng Zhi’an, Zhang Zizhong, Qin Dechun, and Zhang Weifan to Gao Guizi in Suide (7/10) (Yan File 116-010108-0370-064). Additionally, Xiong Bin, the Deputy Chief of the General Staff, who received a phone call from Qin Dechun and others, proposed to Chiang Kai-shek to concentrate troops south of Zhangde (on the north bank of the Yellow River). Telegram from Xiong Bin to Chiang (7/10), Archives of President Jiang Zhongzheng (Chiang Kai-shek), *Academica Historica*, File no. 002-090105-00004-086 (hereinafter, “Chiang File”).

<sup>78</sup> 7/11, 00:30, at the Special Service Agency (record).

<sup>79</sup> Imai Takeo *nikki*, 7/11.

<sup>80</sup> No. 483 from Hirota to Katō, received 7/11, 10:10.

<sup>81</sup> “Chūton-gun shirei-kan no shochi narabi ni jōkyō no suii [Measures taken by the garrison commander and situational developments] (in *Operational History*) (hereinafter, abbreviated as “Situational Developments”).

<sup>82</sup> Imai Takeo nikki, 7/11.

<sup>83</sup> *Peiping Log*, 7/11.

<sup>84</sup> No. 504 from Hirota to Katō, received 7/13, 02:05; “Situational Developments.”

<sup>85</sup> Telegram from Ji Xingwen to Feng Zhi’an (7/11) (Yan File 116-010108-0370-048).

<sup>86</sup> Telegram from Ji Xingwen to Feng Zhi’an (7/11) (Yan File 116-010108-0370-043).

<sup>87</sup> Telegram from Feng Zhi’an to He Jifeng and Wang Weixian (7/11) (Yan File 116-010108-0370-63).

<sup>88</sup> Telegram from He Jifeng to Ji Xingwen (7/11) (Yan File 116-010108-0370-47).

<sup>89</sup> Telegram from Imai Takeo to Tokyo no. 211, sent 03:25. Note also that a second report sent at 04:00 reported the discovery of the missing soldier (ibid., no. 212 telegraph, sent 04:00 [record]).

<sup>90</sup> “Tanaka Record” 7/8.

<sup>91</sup> “Kawabe Torashirō shōshō kaisō ōtō-roku (Sanbō honbu sakusei) [Recollections and Responses of Major-General Kawabe Torashirō (prepared by the General Staff)]” (BKZ).

<sup>92</sup> “Shimada Shigetarō bibōroku [Notebook of Shimada Shigetarō]” (BKZ).

<sup>93</sup> “Nishimura Toshio kaisōroku [Recollections of Nishimura Toshio]” (BKZ).

<sup>94</sup> “Rinmei dai-400-gō [Imperial Order No. 400]” (in “Shina jihen rinmei [Imperial Orders Issued During the Second Sino-Japanese War]”) (BKZ).

<sup>95</sup> *Rokōkyō jiken nisshi* [Daily Log of the Marco Polo Bridge Incident], 7/9 (in *Gaimushō kiroku* (MOFA Records), “Shina jihen kankei ikken [A case relating to the Second Sino-Japanese War], vol. 1), held in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan Diplomatic Archives; Tō-A-kyoku (East Asia Bureau), *Shōwa 12-endo shitsumu hōkoku* [FY 1937 Annual Report], Book 1 (re: First Section), p. 15.

<sup>96</sup> “Tanaka Record” 7/9; Although the minutes relating to the Second Sino-Japanese War states that it was a meeting of five ministers, according to Chief Cabinet Secretary Kazami’s recollection, it was more likely an early meeting of the prime minister and the ministers of the Army, Navy, and Foreign Affairs that preceded the cabinet meeting, and the agreement reached at that meeting was considered to have been discussed at the later meeting. While some sources claim that the government policy set at the meeting of the four ministers was decided at the Cabinet meeting on the 11<sup>th</sup>, the fact that it was already stated in the negotiation policy issued on the 9<sup>th</sup> presumably indicates that it was decided on that day (Kazami Akira, *Konoye Naikaku* [The Konoye Cabinet], (Tokyo: Nihon Shuppan Kyōdō Kabushiki Kaisha, 1951), pp. 29–30).

<sup>97</sup> Gunrei-bu (Naval General Staff), *Dai-tōasensō kaigun senshi: Hongi* [A Naval History of the Greater East Asian War: Official Chronicle], vol.1 (BKZ); “Shimada Shigetarō bibōroku” (BKZ), 7/11.

<sup>98</sup> “Rokōkyō jiken kaiketsu no tame tai-Shi sesshō hōshin ni kan suru ken” (in “War Leadership File 1”).

<sup>99</sup> “Shimada Shigetarō bibōroku” 7/15.

<sup>100</sup> “Kawabe Torashirō shōshō kaisō ōtō-roku.”

<sup>101</sup> *Shina jihen rikusen gai-shi*, vol. 1, p. 69; “Tanaka Record” 7/10.

<sup>102</sup> “Ishiwara Kanji chūshō kaisō ōtō-roku [Recollections and Responses of Lieutenant-General Ishiwara Kanji]” (BKZ); “Tanaka Record” 7/10.

<sup>103</sup> *Asahi Shinbun* (Osaka, morning edition), 7/11; “Tanaka Record” 7/11. The next day, Central Command received reports of an armored train entering Changxindian. (Director-General of the Military Maintenance Bureau [Yamawaki Masataka], “Hoku-Shi jihen bibō [Memorandum on the North China Incident],” 7/12 (information as of 09:00) (BKZ)).

<sup>104</sup> Kitagawa Kenzō, Mochizuki Masashi, and Kijima Atsushi (eds), *Kazami Akira nikki, kankei shiryō* [The Diary of Kazami Akira and Associated Materials] (Tokyo: Misuzu Shobō, 2008), pp. 20–21.

<sup>105</sup> “Kakugi no jōkyō 12/7/11 [Cabinet Situation, July 11, 1937], (in Gunrei-bu dai-1-bu kō-buin (Naval General Staff, First Section, Staff Member A), “Shina jihen shori [Handling of the China Incident]” (BKZ); “Shimada Shigetarō bibōroku” 7/11.

<sup>106</sup> “Shimada Shigetarō bibōroku” 7/12.

<sup>107</sup> Gunrei-bu Yokoi taisa (Captain Yokoi of the Naval General Command), “Shina jihen n ikan suru iken-shū (1) [Collected Opinions on the Second Sino-Japanese War (Part 1)] in *Shōwa shakai keizai shiryō shūsei: Kaigun-shō shiryō* [Collected Socio-Economic Materials from the Shōwa Period: Ministry of the Navy Archives] (Tokyo: Institute for Oriental Studies of Daito Bunka University, 1984), vol. 8, p. 599.

<sup>108</sup> “Hoku-Shi jihen shori hōshin [Policy for handling the North China Incident] (in “War Leadership File 1”).

<sup>109</sup> Trautmann (Peiping) an das AA, 12. Juli 1937, 8.00 Uhr, Nr. 14, (Pol. VIII, 10, Politik 3A, China-Japan, Akten betreffend: Der chinesisch-japanische Konflikt im Jahre 1937, Bd. 1, RZ 211/104823, Politische Archiv des Auswärtigen Amts (PAAA), Berlin).

<sup>110</sup> Imai Takeo nikki, 7/11; Peiping Log., 7/12, 21:15.

<sup>111</sup> Shi sakumei kō dai-13-gō, dai-14-gō [China Operational Orders A, no. 13 and no. 14] (in *Operational History*). Note that there are slight differences in wording between the two orders, though their meaning is identical.

<sup>112</sup> “Hashimoto Gun chūjō kaisō-roku [Memoirs of General Hashimoto Gun],” (BKZ).

<sup>113</sup> Katsuki Kiyoshi shuki, “Shina jihen shoki ni okeru Hoku-Shi Jōsei kaisōroku [A memoir of the North China situation in the early days of the Second Sino-Japanese War] (in *Operational History*) (hereinafter, “*Katsuki shuki*”).

<sup>114</sup> “Situational Developments.”

<sup>115</sup> “China Garrison Infantry Operations.”

<sup>116</sup> Ibid.



<sup>117</sup> Top Secret China Garrison Army Staff Section Urgent Telegram, no. 404 (General Staff Office, 2<sup>nd</sup> Section, “Hoku-Shi jihen gyōmu nisshi [Administrative log of the North China Incident]” (BKZ)).

<sup>118</sup> “Situational assessment (7/13)” (in *Operational History*).

<sup>119</sup> Kaikōsha Hensanbu (ed.), *Hoku-Shi jihen jōhō dai-3-gō* [Information on the North China Incident], no. 3 (September 1937), p. 18.

<sup>120</sup> “Hoku-Shi jihen shori hōshin [Policy for addressing the North China Incident] (July 13, 20:00),” (in “War Leadership File 1”).

<sup>121</sup> “7-gatsu 13-nichi Chūō no torubeki shochi ni kan suru iken [Opinion on measures to be taken by the central Army, July 13],” (in “War Leadership File 1”). General Staff Office 2<sup>nd</sup> Section, “Hoku-Shi jihen gyōmu nisshi [Administrative log of the North China Incident].” A record by Major Takashima Tatsuhiko, at that time a member of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Section, reads “I submitted an opinion about the non-escalation of the incident this afternoon, and it seems that it will be adopted for the most part,” (“Takashima Tatsuhiko nisshi (Daybook of Takashima Tatsuhiko), entry for July 13, BKZ)).

<sup>122</sup> Gunrei-bu (Naval General Staff), *Dai-tōasensō kaigun senshi: Hongi*, vol.1, p. 317.

<sup>123</sup> Guofang Bu Shi Zheng Bianyi Ju, pp. 11, 12, 32; *Xu Yongchang Riji* [Diaries of Xu Yongchang], 7/13 (Institute of Modern History Archives, Academia Sinica).

<sup>124</sup> First, telegrams were sent to various officials, including Xu Yongchang, the director of the office of the Military Affairs Commission, Cheng Qian, the chief of the General Staff, and Liu Zhi, the chief of the Honan-Anhui Pacification Command, ordering them to advance one division west of Kaifeng north of the Yellow River and to prepare to mobilize two other divisions as needed (Telegram from Jiang Zhongzheng to Liu Zhi (7/8) (Chiang File 002-020300-00001-008). Orders were also issued to Sun Lianzhong, Commander-in-Chief of the 26<sup>th</sup> Route Army, and Pang Bingxun, Commander-in-Chief of the 40<sup>th</sup> Army, to concentrate their forces in Shijiazhuang (Zhang Shiving (ed.), *Jiang Zhongzheng zong tong dang'an: Shilue gao ben* [Archives of President Chiang Kai-shek: Draft Manuscripts], Book 40, Supplemental Volume (Taipei: Academia Historica, 2015), p. 36).

<sup>125</sup> Telegram from Jiang Zhongzheng to Sun Lianzhong, Pang Bingxun, and Gao Guizhi (7/9) (Chiang File 002-090105-00003-532). “He yingqin zai guofang huiyi baogao lu gouqiao shihou zhongyang junshi zhunbei [He Yingqin’s report on the Central Military Preparations after the Marco Polo Bridge Incident at the National Defense Conference],” (in “Guofang Bu Shi Zhengju Ji Zhanshi Bianzuan Weiyuan Hui [Archives of the National Defense Bureau of History and War History Compilation Committee],” File no. 787–7201, Second Historical Archives of China, Nanjing).

<sup>126</sup> Telegram from Jiang Zhongzheng via Xu Yongchang to Cheng Qian (7/9) (Chiang File 002-020300-00001-015). Jiang Zhong Zheng Riji [Chiang-shek Diaries], 7/8, Hoover Institution Archives (HIA). *Xu Yongchang Riji*, 7/9.

<sup>127</sup> Guofang Bu Shi Zheng Bianyi Ju, pp. 47, 50. “Ping han yanxian zuozhan shi gao [A draft account of the history of military operations along the Peiping-Hankou Railway Line] (in “Guofang Bu Shi Zhengju Ji Zhanshi Bianzuan

Wei Yuan Hui,” File no. 787–683).

<sup>128</sup> Weekly Intelligence Summary for week ending 11 July, 1937, 14 July 1937, Intelligence Report from Headquarters, Fourth Marines Shanghai, China, July 1937–Sept. 1938, Box 2, Far Eastern Theater Section (Confidential) 1936–41, Foreign Intelligence Branch, RG 38, USNA I.

<sup>129</sup> Letter from Robert Soule to Joseph Stilwell on July 18, 1937, Joseph Stilwell Papers (hereinafter, JSP), Box 47–3, HIA.

<sup>130</sup> Comments on Current Events July 3–16, 1937, Sino-Japanese Relations, From M/A, China, Report No. 9580, Nanking Embassy Correspondence 1937, vol. 39, Box 2106, Reports from military attaché, U.S. Embassy China, RG 84, U. S. National Archives II (USNA II) College Park. Situation Report, July 3–16, 1937, G-2 Report, No. 9579, *ibid*.

<sup>131</sup> Telegram No. 313, from Mr. Cowan to FO, 16th July, 1937, F4206, FO 371/20950, Political Department, General Correspondence, Far Eastern, China 1937, File 9 Part 2, The National Archives (TNA), Kew.

<sup>132</sup> Politischer Bericht, Nanking, den 16. Juli 1937 (Nanking, den 19. Juli 1937, Nr. 805, Den chinesisch japanischen Konflikt im Jahre 1937, Bd. 1.).

<sup>133</sup> The first to be dispatched to Kannai (Guannei) [inside of the Great Wall] seem to have been the 1<sup>st</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> Mixed Brigades, which had been gathered and waiting at Gubeikou. The British Embassy in Peiping reported that, as of July 13<sup>th</sup>, 600 troops had arrived in the Peiping area from Gubeikou, and about 1,600 in Tianjin. According to estimates by commander-in-chief of the British Army in Tianjin, approximately 9,000 troops were deployed in the Peiping-Tianjin area. The French Army, which was also headquartered in Tianjin, reported that by 9:30 AM on the 16<sup>th</sup>, a total of 5,000 Japanese soldiers, 60 airplanes, 10 tanks, 60 artillery guns, and 70 trucks loaded with weapons and ammunition had arrived in Tianjin. Also, according to a report from Tianjin by the U.S. Army Attaché Joseph Stilwell, as of 6:00 p.m. on July 15<sup>th</sup>, the garrisoned forces in Tianjin, together with the arriving troops, numbered 12,000 men. (“Shimada Shigetaro bibōroku,” 7/12. Telegram No. 304, from Mr. Cowan (Peking) to FO, July 13th, 1937, F4098, FO 371/20950. Secret Cipher Telegram, from Commander Tientsin Area to The War Office, 13. 7. 37, F4119, *ibid*. Télégramme n° 174/S du commandant supérieur des troupes françaises en Chine (Tien-Tsin), à l’amiral du Forces navales françaises en Extrême-Orient (Aviso Tahure), en datée du 16 Juillet 1937, (GR 11H60, Dossier 1, Télégrammes Chiffres Arrives, Archives du Service historique de la Défense (SHD), Vincennes). Report-July 15th, 1:00 PM From Tientsin (J. W. S.), JSP, 47-8. Radiogram from Peiping (Stilwell) to the Adjutant General, No. 650, July 15, 1937, 2657-H439, RG 165 (M1216), USNA II).

<sup>134</sup> “Shimada Shigetaro bibōroku,” 7/15.

<sup>135</sup> Katsuki shuki.

<sup>136</sup> *Huabei ribao* [North China Daily], 7/13.

<sup>137</sup> No. 433 from Katō to Hirota, 7/14, sent 14:50.

<sup>138</sup> *Huabei ribao*, 7/14; *Pingbao* [Peiping News], 7/14.

<sup>139</sup> *Peiping Log*, 7/13, 19:30; No. 415 from Katō to Hirota, 7/13, sent 12:30.

<sup>140</sup> No. 432 from Katō to Hirota, 7/14, sent 14:30.

<sup>141</sup> *Shen bao* [Shanghai News], 7/14.

<sup>142</sup> Telegram from Yan Xishan to Xu Yongchang (7/16), in “Quanmian kangzhan shibian kaishi zhi Pingjin xianluo an [From the beginning of the total war of resistance against Japan to the occupation of Peiping and Tianjin],” (Yan Xishan shiliao [Yan Xishan Archives], File no. 116-010101-0116-080).

<sup>143</sup> No. 428 from Katō to Hirota, 7/14, sent 06:00.

<sup>144</sup> Telegram from Wang Huichen and Jia Chaoyi to Qin Dechun and Shi Yousan (7/13), (Yan File 116-010108-0370-084); Telegram from Ji Xingwen to Feng Zhi'an (7/13), (ibid., 116-010108-0370-083).

<sup>145</sup> Telegram from Ji Xingwen to He Jifeng (7/14), (Yan File 116-010108-0370-081); Dai Shouyi to Feng Zhi'an (7/14), (ibid., 116-010108-0370-077).

<sup>146</sup> Trautmann (Peitaiho) an das AA, 14. Juli 1937 15.10 Uhr, Nr. 2, Den chinesisch japanischen Konflikt im Jahre 1937, Bd. 1.

<sup>147</sup> Telegram from Feng Zhi'an via Changxindian to Dai Shouyi and Hu Wenyu (7/14), (Yan File 116-010108-0370-089).

<sup>148</sup> Telegram from Feng Zhi'an to Song Zheyuan (7/17), (in Yan Xishan shiliao [Yan Xishan Archives], “Ge fang minguo ershiliu nian qi yue wanglai dianwen lu cun [Correspondence between the parties in July 1937], no. 6, File no. 116-010108-0374-012).

<sup>149</sup> Zhonggong beijing shiwei dang shi yanjiu shi (Party History Research Office of the Beijing Municipal Committee of the CCP) (ed.), *Beijing diqu kangri yundong shiliao huibian* [Compiled Historical Materials of the Anti-Japanese Movement in Beijing] (Beijing: Zhongguo Wenshi Chubanshe, 1996), Book 3, p. 308.

<sup>150</sup> On July 14, a company of the 26<sup>th</sup> Route Army's 27<sup>th</sup> Division arrived in Zhending County, and two battalions attached to the 40<sup>th</sup> Army in Shimen (now Shijiazhuang) (Telegram from Feng Zhi'an to Song Zheyuan (7/14), (Yan File 116-010108-0374-038)).

<sup>151</sup> No. 512 from Katō to Hirota, 7/14, received 00:30.

<sup>152</sup> No. 287 from Horiuchi to Katō (Ministerial Telegram no. 421), 7/14, received 00:50; No. 431 from Katō to Hirota, 7/14, sent 07:00.

<sup>153</sup> *Peiping Log*, 7/15, 07:25; 7/16 entry for “Nihon-gun no dōsei ni kan suru ken [On the movements of the Japanese Army].”

<sup>154</sup> Ibid., 7/16, 10:45, 19:30; No. 300 from Horiuchi to Katō (Ministerial Telegram no. 427), 7/16, received 0:00.

<sup>155</sup> Ibid., 7/16 entry for “Nihon-gun no dōsei ni kan suru ken [On the movements of the Japanese Army].”

<sup>156</sup> No. 322 from Horiuchi to Katō (Ministerial Telegram no. 441), 7/17, received 01:50.

<sup>157</sup> Shen bao, 7/18.

<sup>158</sup> No. 298 from Horiuchi to Katō (Ministerial Telegram no. 425), 7/16, received 20:00

<sup>159</sup> No. 471 from Counselor Morishima to Hirota, 7/17, sent 20:40

<sup>160</sup> “San hon 2-kachō to no renraku (12/7/16) [Communication with the Chief of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Section of the General Staff Office (1937/7/16)]” (in “Shina jihen shori”).

<sup>161</sup> Sanbō honbu, dai-2-bu [General Staff Office, 2<sup>nd</sup> Division], “Jōsei handan [Situational assessment]” (7/15) (in *Operational History*).

<sup>162</sup> “7/17 Goshōkaigi [Five Ministers Conference] (in “Shina jihen shori”). Gunrei-bu (Naval General Staff), *Dai-tōasensō kaigun senshi: Hongi*, vol.1, pp. 324–326.

<sup>163</sup> Sanbō honbu, dai-2-bu [General Staff Office, 2<sup>nd</sup> Division], “Shina jihen shori nisshi [Log of measures taken in the China Incident],” 7/17 (BKZ); “Shimada Shigetarō bibōroku,” 7/17.

<sup>164</sup> No. 298 from Horiuchi to Morishima (Ministerial Telegram no. 46? [sic]), 7/18, received 05:10.

<sup>165</sup> Katsuki shuki.

<sup>166</sup> No. 585 from Horiuchi to Morishima, received 7/19, 22:29. Note, however, that the Chinese side regarded this as a visit by Song to pay his regards upon returning to his post and explained that it was not an apology but an expression of regret for the incident, and this was also how it was received (Politischer Bericht, Tientsin, den 21. Juli 1937 (Nanking, den 22. Juli 1937, Nr. 810, Den chinesisch japanischen Konflikt im Jahre 1937, Bd. 1.)).

<sup>167</sup> “Shi-san 2 den 74-gō [China Army Command, 2<sup>nd</sup> Division Telegram No. 74] (in “Hoku-Shi jihen kaiketsugo no shochi [Measures following the resolution of the North China Incident]” (BKZ)).

<sup>168</sup> No. 361 from Horiuchi to Morishima (Ministerial Telegram no. 498), 7/19, sent 11:40.

<sup>169</sup> “Diaocha tongji ju cheng Jiang Zhongzheng [Investigation and Statistics Bureau to Chiang Kai-shek]” (Chiang File 002-080200-00482-182).

<sup>170</sup> Yang Xuancheng, “Bàogào [Report]” (Chiang File 002-080103-00025-007).

<sup>171</sup> “Lujun di 29 jun mingling zhan zi di 1 hao [29<sup>th</sup> Army Order, War Character No. 1] (Chiang File 002-020300-00001-040).

<sup>172</sup> Letter from Song Zheyuan to Jiang Zhongzheng (7/15) (Chiang File 002-080114-00021-034).

<sup>173</sup> Telegram from Zheng Jiemin to Jiang Zhongzheng (7/14) (Chiang File 002-080103-00027-003).

<sup>174</sup> Telegram from Chen Cheng to Jiang Zhongzheng (7/24) (Archives of Vice-President Chen Cheng, in “Wǎnglái hándiàn [Correspondence] (58),” File no. 008-010202-00058-002, *Academica Historica*).

<sup>175</sup> Encrypted Telegram from Zhang Tongxuan (7/18) (Yan File 116-010101-0116-090).

<sup>176</sup> Telegram from Xiong Bin to Jiang Zhongzheng (7/18) (Chiang File 002-020300-00001-049). Given the date and times of the telegrams to Chiang from Xiong Bin and Song Zheyuan, Li Xin’s communication to Song

Zheyuan seems likely to have taken place between the afternoon of the 16<sup>th</sup> and the morning of the 17<sup>th</sup>.

<sup>177</sup> Zhongguo Di Er Lishi Dang'an (Second Historical Archives of China) (ed.), *Zhonghua minguo shi dang'an ziliao huibian* [A Compilation of Historical Archives of the Republic of China], Book 5, Part 2, Military (II) (Nanjing: Jiangsu guji chubanshe, 1998), pp. 89–90.

<sup>178</sup> Telegram from Yan Xishan to Xu Yongchang (7/18) (Yan File 116-010101-0116-080).

<sup>179</sup> Telegram from Yan Xishan to Xu Yongchang (7/18) (Yan File 116-010101-0116-072). *Xu Yongchang Riji*, 7/17.

<sup>180</sup> In fact, only the 20<sup>th</sup> Division of the Japanese Korean Army and two brigades of the Kwantung Army were dispatched in the emergency mobilization. The 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, and 10<sup>th</sup> Divisions were scheduled for dispatch from Japan, and their mobilization was ordered on July 27.

<sup>181</sup> Zhongguo Di Er Lishi Dang'an (Second Historical Archives of China), *op. cit.*, p. 87.

<sup>182</sup> Ibid., p. 88; telegram from Jiang Zhongzheng to Xu Yongchang (7/17) (Chiang File 002-090106-00012-037); telegram from Jiang Zhongzheng to Xu Yongchang (7/17) (Chiang File 002-090106-00012-088). Jiang Zhongzheng Riji [Chang Kai-shek diaries], 7/17.

<sup>183</sup> Telegram from Song Zheyuan to Jiang Zhongzheng (7/17) (Chiang File 002-090105-00002-074).

<sup>184</sup> Huabei ribao, 7/19.

<sup>185</sup> No. 361 from Morishima to Hirota (Ministerial Telegram no. 483), 7/22, received 15:35.

<sup>186</sup> Radiogram from Peiping (Stilwell) to the Adjutant General, No. 654, July 17th, 1937, 2657-H439, RG 165.

<sup>187</sup> Telephone, July 18th, 11:45 PM from Fisher, JSP 47–8.

<sup>188</sup> Shen bao, 7/20.

<sup>189</sup> Report, July 19th, 6:20 PM from Sweetland, JSP 47–8.

<sup>190</sup> Telephone, July 19th, 8:30 PM from McGregor and Fisher, JSP 47–8.

<sup>191</sup> Politischer Bericht, Tientsin, den 21. Juli 1937 (Nanking, den 22. Juli 1937, Nr. 810, Den chinesisches japanischen Konflikt im Jahre 1937, Bd. 1.).

<sup>192</sup> No. 489 from Morishima to Hirota, 7/20, sent 22:30; no. 365 from Horiuchi to Morishima (Ministerial Telegram no. 495), 7/21, received 09:05.

<sup>193</sup> *Peiping Log*, 7/20, 11:00, 15:00, 22:00.

<sup>194</sup> Ibid., 7/20, 15:15; no. 359 from Horiuchi to Morishima (Ministerial Telegram no. 496), 7/21, received 09:15. According to the Tianjin Garrison Army, they were also hit by mortar fire at 9 a.m. (ibid., no. 365).

<sup>195</sup> Ibid., 7/20, 19:50; no. 367 from Horiuchi to Morishima (Ministerial Telegram no. 505), 7/21, received 11:45.

<sup>196</sup> Ibid., 7/20, 20:40.

- <sup>197</sup> Telegram from Ji Xingwen to Feng Zhi'an (7/22) (Yan File 116-010108-0374-033).
- <sup>198</sup> Telegram from Feng Zhi'an Gao Shuxun to Song Zheyuan (7/20) (Yan File 116-010108-0374-034).
- <sup>199</sup> Telegram from Feng Zhi'an to Gao Shuxun (7/22) (Yan File 116-010108-0374-024).
- <sup>200</sup> Telegram from Liu Jingshan to Zhao Dengyu (7/21) (Yan File 116-010108-0374-036).
- <sup>201</sup> Telegram from Feng Zhi'an to Gao Shuxun (7/20) (Yan File 116-010108-0374-040).
- <sup>202</sup> Huabei ribao, 7/21.
- <sup>203</sup> No. 632 from Hirota to Morishima, 7/22, received 23:00; no. 510 from Morishima to Hirota, 7/22, sent 14:20; *Peiping Log*, 7/21, 15:30.
- <sup>204</sup> "Gokuhi Shi-san 1-den dai-56-gō [Top Secret Telegram from China Garrison Army Command, 1<sup>st</sup> Division Telegram no. 56]" (in *Operational History*).
- <sup>205</sup> *Peiping Log*, 7/21, 17:45.
- <sup>206</sup> No. 51 from Morishima to Hirota, 7/22, sent 14:10. Imai Takeo, "Shina jihen nisshi [Daily Log of the China Incident], 7/21.
- <sup>207</sup> *Peiping Log*, 7/19, 16:30.
- <sup>208</sup> *Ibid.*, 7/19, 21:40, 22:00.
- <sup>209</sup> No. 512 from Morishima to Hirota, 7/22, sent 19:30; no. 640 from Hirota to Morishima, 7/24, sent 00:11.
- <sup>210</sup> *Peiping Log*, 7/22, 22:30.
- <sup>211</sup> Incident Sino-japonais de Juillet-août 1937, (Lettre n° 297/S datée du 13 Juillet 1937, GR 11H58, Dossier 3 Pékin: correspondances 1922-1939, SHD).
- <sup>212</sup> Zhonggong beijing shiwei dang shi yanjiu shi, *op. cit.*, p. 318.
- <sup>213</sup> No. 380 from Horiuchi to Morishima (Ministerial Telegram no. 522), 7/23, received 01:20; Telegram no. 632, no. 640, *op. cit.*
- <sup>214</sup> Zhonggong beijing shiwei dang shi yanjiu shi, *op. cit.*, p. 322
- <sup>215</sup> *Peiping Log*, 7/23, 16:00; No. 535 from Morishima to Hirota, 7/24, 22:30.
- <sup>216</sup> Imai Takeo, "Shina jihen nisshi," 7/24; *Imai Takeo nikki*, 7/24.
- <sup>217</sup> Imai Takeo nikki, 7/24.
- <sup>218</sup> No. 535 from Morishima to Hirota, *op. cit.*
- <sup>219</sup> *Peiping Log*, 7/24, 15:00.
- <sup>220</sup> Beijing diqu kangri yundong shiliao huibian, *op. cit.*, p. 335.
- <sup>221</sup> Telegram from Jiang Zhongzheng to Song Zheyuan via Xiong Bin (7/23) (Chiang File 002-020300-00001-

059).

<sup>222</sup> 1) No solution shall infringe upon China's sovereignty or territorial integrity; 2) no unlawful changes in the administrative organization of Hebei-Chahar shall be permitted; 3) local officials appointed by the central government, including Song Zheyuan, Chairman of the Hebei-Chahar Political Council, may not be removed on demand; and 4) the current garrison of the 29<sup>th</sup> shall not be subject to any restrictions.

<sup>223</sup> Telegram from Jiang Zhongzheng to Song Zheyuan via Qin Dechun (7/21) (Chiang File 002-090105-00002-192).

<sup>224</sup> Telegram from Song Zheyuan to Jiang Zhongzheng (7/22) (Chiang File 002-090105-00001-076).

<sup>225</sup> Shen bao, 7/25.

<sup>226</sup> Telegram from Jiang Zhongzheng to Song Zheyuan via Xiong Bin (7/24) (Chiang File 002-090105-00002-194).

<sup>227</sup> Letter from Song Zheyuan to Jiang Zhongzheng (7/24) (Chiang File 002-020300-00001-062).

<sup>228</sup> Incident Sino-japonais de Juillet-août 1937, SHD.

<sup>229</sup> No. 61 from Morishima to Horiuchi (Ministerial Telegram no. 536) 7/25, sent 00:25.

<sup>230</sup> No. 401 from Horiuchi to Morishima (Ministerial Telegram no. 548) 7/25, received 13:35.

<sup>231</sup> No. 402 from Horiuchi to Morishima (Ministerial Telegram no. 549) 7/26, received 02:10.

<sup>232</sup> Intercepted telegram from Tianjin to the Minister, 7/26, sent 11:00 (Chiang File 002-080200-00488-021); No. 406 from Horiuchi to Morishima (Ministerial Telegram no. 557) 7/26, received 19:00.

<sup>233</sup> These were not thefts for surplus (i.e., cutting two locations and taking away the middle), but sabotage by which the lines were severed at one location to interfere with communications.

<sup>234</sup> "Bō sanbō [Horike sanbō] shuki [A staff officer's memoir (Memoir of Major-General Horike) (7/25–26), "Situational Developments" (in *Operational History*); No. 406 from Horiuchi to Morishima (op. cit.); Dainijū shidan sanbō-bu (20<sup>th</sup> Division General Staff), "Kimitsu sakusen nisshi [Classified Operations Logbook]" (BKZ).

<sup>235</sup> Compte-rendu des événements militaires survenus du 22 juillet au 10 août 1937 dans la région Pékin-Tientsin (Lettre n° 301/S datée du 16 août 1937, Série E-Asie, Chine 1930-1940, E 513-9, vol. 702, Archives diplomatiques de La Courneuve (ADC), La Courneuve; Situation Report, July 17-August 8, 1937, G-2 Report, No. 9583, U.S. Embassy China, RG 84; Telephone, July 26th, from White, JSP, 47-8.

<sup>236</sup> In the estimation of the British Embassy, however, irrespective of the circumstances, given that the Japanese reinforcements and air strikes inflicted extensive damage on the Chinese side afterward, the more reasonable conclusion was that the Japanese objective was to evict the troops threatening the lines of communication (Telegram No. 65, From Sir Knatchbull-Hugessen to FO, Nanking, August 5th, 1937, 396/23L/1937, FO 676/327, Embassy and Consular Archives, China Correspondence Series 2, Sino-Japanese Situation in North China Part 6, TNA).

<sup>237</sup> Peiping Log, 7/26, 03:45.

<sup>238</sup> Shi sakumei kō dai-58-gō [China Operational Order A, no. 58] (in *Operational History*); *ibid.*, 7/26, 06:25.

<sup>239</sup> “Shi-san 1 dai-74-gō [China Garrison Army Command, 1<sup>st</sup> Division Telegram No. 74] (in *Operational History*); *ibid.*, 7/26, 03:45.

<sup>240</sup> “Rinmei dai-418-gō [Imperial Order No. 400]” (in “Shina jihen rinmei [Imperial Orders Issued During the Second Sino-Japanese War]”) (BKZ).

<sup>241</sup> “Tsūkoku-bun [Written notice]” (in *Operational History*).

<sup>242</sup> *Peiping Log*, 7/26, 00:00, 17:40.

<sup>243</sup> Kawabe Brigade Headquarters, “Kōanmon jihen ni tsuite [Concerning the Guanganmen Incident],” (in *Operational History*).

<sup>244</sup> Shigeo Yoshitomi, “Kōanmon jiken hōkoku [Report on the Guanganmen Incident]; Saitō Sukekuni, “Kōanmon jiken Keii [Background of the Guanganmen Incident]” (in *Operational History*).

<sup>245</sup> *Ibid.*; Intercepted telegram from Peiping to the Minister, 7/27, sent 18:00 (Chiang File 002-080200-00488-024). *Compte-rendu des événements militaires survenus du 22 juillet au 10 août 1937 dans la région Pékin-Tientsin*, ADC. It is also worth noting that the French Army reported 2 dead and 19 wounded on the Japanese side.

<sup>246</sup> “Situational Developments”; The Peiping Special Service Agency was informed of the postponement of notification at 3:00 a.m. (*Peiping Log*, 7/27, 03:00).

<sup>247</sup> *Shen bao*, 7/26; Zhonggong beijing shiwei dang shi yanjiu shi, *op. cit.*, p. 337.

<sup>248</sup> *Compte-rendu des événements militaires survenus du 22 juillet au 10 août 1937 dans la Region Pékin-Tientsin*; *Zhongyang ribao* (Central Daily), 7/26.

<sup>249</sup> Intercepted telegram from Peiping to the Minister, 7/27, sent 15:00 (Chiang File 002-080200-00488-024).

<sup>250</sup> *Peiping Log*, 7/28, 17:40.

<sup>251</sup> *Shen bao*, 7/27.

<sup>252</sup> Telegram from Song Zheyuan to Deputy Commander Tong, 7/26 (Yan File 116-010108-0374-070).

<sup>253</sup> Telegram from Chiang Kai-shek to Song Zheyuan, 7/26 (Chiang File 002-020300-00001-065).

<sup>254</sup> Intercepted telegrams from Peiping to the Minister, 7/27, sent 09:00, 11:00 (Chiang File 002-080200-00488-025). U.S. Embassy Peiping to Department of State, Telegram No. 302, Embassy’s No. 300, July 27, 1937, 1 p.m., File 793.94/8999, RG 59.

<sup>255</sup> According to U.S. Embassy intelligence (provided by an informant among the Chinese officials), negotiations over the withdrawal of the 37<sup>th</sup> Division involving Colonel Matsui, Chen Jusheng, and Zhang Zizhong were held over the night of the 26<sup>th</sup> into the morning of the 27<sup>th</sup>, but although agreement was reached on some items, the



negotiations ultimately fell apart. However, based on Japanese documentary sources and recollections by the parties involved, no negotiations between the Japanese and Hebei-Chahar authorities took place on the evening of the 26<sup>th</sup> and the morning of the 27<sup>th</sup>, aside from a meeting between Katō and Qin Dechun. For U.S. information, see the following (U.S. Embassy Peiping to Department of State, Telegram No. 303, 306, Embassy's No. 302, 303, July 27, 1937, 2 p.m., 6 p.m., File 793.94/9000, 9003, RG 59).

<sup>256</sup> Liu Jianqun, *Yinhe yiwang* [A Galaxy of Memories] (Taipei: Zhuanji Wenxue Chubanshe, 1988), p. 101. As recalled by Liu Jianqun, he arrived in Peiping on the afternoon of the day after a meeting with Chiang Kai-shek. He then met with Song on the eve of his departure from Peiping and then, despite heavy rain, passed through Mentougou to proceed directly to Baoding by way of the Marco Polo Bridge. Liu met with Chiang Kai-shek on July 22, and Qin Dechun and Song Zheyuan received a phone call from Chiang at noon on the 23<sup>rd</sup> instructing them to receive Liu. In addition, according to an operations log kept by the Special Service Agency, the only rain that fell between the 22<sup>nd</sup> and the 28<sup>th</sup> was on the night of the 26<sup>th</sup>, which suggests that Liu entered Peiping on July 23 and left after meeting with Song on the night of July 26. Also, from a telegram he sent to Chiang on July 27, it appears that Liu was not actually able to persuade Song Zheyuan to leave Peiping; Jiang Zhongzheng Riji, 7/22; telegram from Jiang Zhongzheng to Song Zheyuan via Qin Dechun (7/23) (Chiang File 002-010300-00001-027); telegram from Ge Dingyuan and Liu Jianqun to Jiang Zhongzheng (7/27) (Chiang File 002-090105-00004-215).

<sup>257</sup> Telegram July 27th, 1:30 PM from Sutherland (Shihkiachuang)[Shijiazhuang], JSP, 47-8.

<sup>258</sup> Peiping Log, 7/27, 07:20; Rokōkyō jiken nisshi 7/26, op. cit.

<sup>259</sup> Zhongguo Di Er Lishi Dang'an (Second Historical Archives of China), op. cit., p. 98.

<sup>260</sup> "China Garrison Infantry Operations"; Compte-rendu des événements militaires survenus du 22 juillet au 10 août 1937 dans la région Pékin-Tientsin.

<sup>261</sup> Telegram from Song Zheyuan to Jiang Zhongzheng, 7/27 (Chiang File 002- 020300-00001-068).

<sup>262</sup> Telegrams from Jiang Zhongzheng to Song Zheyuan, 7/27 (Chiang File 002-090106-00012-224, 225).

<sup>263</sup> Jiang Zhongzheng Riji, 7/27.

<sup>264</sup> Telegram from Song Zheyuan to Jiang Zhongzheng, 7/27 (Chiang File 002-090105-00002-383).

<sup>265</sup> Telephone July 27th, 3:00 PM from Fisher (Report from McGregor), JSP, 47-8.

<sup>266</sup> Télégramme de M. Naggiar Ambassadeur de France à Pékin, à M. Delbos, Ministère des Affaires étrangères, daté du 27 Juillet 1937, n° 189 P, Série E-Asie, Chine 1930-1940, E 513-9, Vol. 700, ADC.

<sup>267</sup> Dainijū shidan sanbō-bu, "Kimitsu sakusen nisshi"; Compte-rendu des événements militaires survenus du 22 juillet au 10 août 1937 dans la région Pékin-Tientsin.

<sup>268</sup> Telephone July 27th, 3:45 PM from Pettus, JSP, 47-8. U.S. Embassy Peiping to Department of State, Telegram No. 304, July 27th, 1937, 3 p.m., File 793.94/9001, RG 59.

<sup>269</sup> *Zhongyang ribao*, 7/28; Telephone July 27th, 5:45 PM from Fisher, JSP, 47-8. U.S. Embassy Peiping to Department of State, Telegram No. 306, Embassy's No. 303, July 27th, 1937, 2 p.m., File 793.94/9003, RG 59.

<sup>270</sup> *Huabei ribao*, 7/28; Telephone July 27th, 4:15 PM from Pettus, JSP, 47-8.

<sup>271</sup> Telegram No. 358, from Mr. Cowan (Peking) to FO, July 27th, 1937, F4580, FO 371/20951, TNA.

<sup>272</sup> U.S. Embassy Peiping to Department of State, Telegram No. 308, July 28th, 1937. 7 a.m., File 793.94/9013, RG 59.

<sup>273</sup> Telegram from Italian Embassy, Peking, to Ministry of Marine, Rome and Italian Consul, Tientsin, No. 390, 27th July 1937, (HW/12/217, Government Code and Cypher School Diplomatic Section and Predecessors Decrypts of Intercepted Diplomatic Communications (BJ Series), July 1937, TNA).

<sup>274</sup> Gunrei-bu (Naval General Staff), *Dai-tōa sensō kaigun senshi: Hongi*, vol.1, p. 344.

<sup>275</sup> “Rinsanmei dai-64-gō [Imperial Army Order no. 64],” (in “Shina jihen rinsanmei [Imperial Army Orders in the Second Sino-Japanese War]”) (BKZ).

<sup>276</sup> Peiping Log, 7/28, 00:00.

<sup>277</sup> Ibid., 7/28, 02:00.

<sup>278</sup> Situational Developments.

<sup>279</sup> “Sino-Japanese Clash near Peking,” M.I.2.(c). / 12.7.1937, WO 106/5309, TNA.

<sup>280</sup> Telegram No. 217, from Sir Knatchbull-Hugessen (Nanking) to FO, July 18th, 1937, F4295, FO 371/20950.

<sup>281</sup> Trautmann (Nanking) an das AA, 21 Juli 1937 18.50 Uhr., Nr. 91, Den chinesisch japanischen Konflikt im Jahre 1937, Bd. 1. Von Falkenhausen, “Memoiren”, Kapitel 5, S. 55, Nachlass Alexander von Falkenhausen, N 246/42, Bundesarchiv-Militärarchiv, Freiburg im Breisgau. It is also worth noting that, at a very early stage, Falkenhausen had confided to William Henry Donald, an advisor to Chiang Kai-shek, his belief that the Chinese Army could wage an effective campaign against Japan, and the influence of this estimation on Chiang’s decision to go to war with Japan cannot be ignored (Telegram No. 188, from Mr. Prideaux Brune (Nanking) to FO, 12th July 1937, F4036, FO 371/20949).

<sup>282</sup> For a detailed examination of the Second Fengtai Incident, see Uchida Naotaka, “Shina chūton-gun zōkyō to Hōtai jiken [Reinforcement of the China Garrison Army and the Fengtai Incident],” *Komyunikāre* [Communicare: Doshisha Studies in Global Communications], No. 6, March 2017, pp. 63–88.

<sup>283</sup> For example, Liu Jingshan, the commander of the 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade of the 132<sup>nd</sup> Division, told the divisional commander that he “swore to purge this grudge against the Japanese and not to tolerate their existence under the same heaven as our own; in so doing I shall fulfill my vocation by wiping away my disgrace as a soldier [for the defeat in 1933]” (telegram from Liu Jingshan to Zhao Dengyu, 7/14 in Yan Xishan shiliao [Yan Xishan Archives], no. 6, File 116-010108-0370-088]). Also, Colonel Valentine R. Burkhardt of the British Far East Combined Bureau (FECB) stated that the 132<sup>nd</sup> Division had previously engaged in fierce combat against the Japanese in defense of the Great Wall in 1933, at which time they had been a part of the 37<sup>th</sup> Division. Archibald T. Steele, a *New York Times* correspondent, also considered the 132<sup>nd</sup> Division to be fiercely anti-Japanese (Telegram July 24th, 4:40 AM from Soule, JSP, 47-8).

<sup>284</sup> For a discussion of Chinese plans regarding the Battle of Shanghai (referred to as the “Second Shanghai Incident” in Japanese), see Iwatani Nobu, “Nitchū sensō kakudai katei no sai kenshō: Rokōkyō jiken kara dainiji Shanhai jihen o chūshin ni [The Escalation of the Sino-Japanese War Revisited: From the Marco Polo Bridge Incident to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Shanghai Incident],” *Gunji shigaku* [The Journal of Military History], Vol. 53, No. 2, September 2017, pp. 4–27.