

FIFTY YEARS AGO IN HISTORY

The early spring of 1946 saw increasing tension among former allies, renewed hostility between old adversaries, and the early stages of a realignment that was to shape the political and military future of the world for the next five decades. The Soviet Union would repeatedly test the will of the United States, the Nationalist and Communist Chinese factions would remain implacable enemies, and the cornerstone would be laid for the establishment of a Korean army. The tensions and political and military maneuverings of those years echo even today, as China flexes her muscles and North Korea shows signs of becoming increasingly restive.

These and other highlights of the events of those days have been provided by Mr. Bud Hannings, in preparation for his upcoming chronology of the Korean War.

- 2 March** *Under the terms agreed upon at the London Conference of foreign ministers in September 1945, today is the last day for occupation forces to remain in Iran. Russian troops remain, however, in contravention of the pact they have signed, and inform the Iranians that they intend to remain for some time.*
- 4 March** *Concerned that the Russians pose threats to both the security of Turkey and the Iranian oil fields, President Truman meets with Secretary of State James Byrnes and directs that a strong but polite message be sent to the Russians concerning the situation in Iran. The Russians do not respond, and a stronger message is sent to Stalin; on March 24, the Soviets finally announce that their troops will be withdrawn.*
- 15 March** *Believing that the cease-fire between Nationalist and Communist Chinese forces in Manchuria is stable, Special Representative George C. Marshall returns from China to confer with President Truman; hostilities resume as Nationalist forces harshly restrain members of the cease-fire teams.*
- 21 March** *The U.S. Strategic Air Command is established, under the command of General George C. Kenney.*
- 25 March** *While in the United States, George C. Marshall arranges for vast quantities of war surplus materiel to be transferred to the government of a unified China, while President Truman has arranged a \$500 million loan for China from the Treasury department. After the Chinese ambassador demands changes to the terms of the loan and Chiang Kai-shek makes a fiery, militant speech, both deals fall through and Marshall returns to China.*
- 1 April** *Soviet troops enter the American zone of Berlin and set about removing railroad track, claiming that the rails are part of the war reparations due them. They dispatch armed troops to the scene when challenged by the Americans. Confronted by U.S. tanks, the Soviets eventually leave, after considerable tension on both sides.*
- 18 April** *George C. Marshall returns to China and finds the situation deteriorating rapidly, with Nationalist and Communist forces in open conflict. The Communists claim to have been attacked by a U.S. plane; it turns out to have been a U.S. plane, but one belonging to the Nationalist Air Force. Communists consolidate their gains, capturing the Nationalist capitol at Changchun and the Manchurian city of Harbin.*
- 30 April** *Japanese War Trials begin in Tokyo, with the former premier Hideki Tojo and 27 others among the first to be tried. Meanwhile, in Korea the establishment of a constabulary force is under way, with more than 2,000 troops recruited thus far. Constabulary regiments are established in Seoul and seven other towns and cities, for the purpose of augmenting the National Police Force.*

