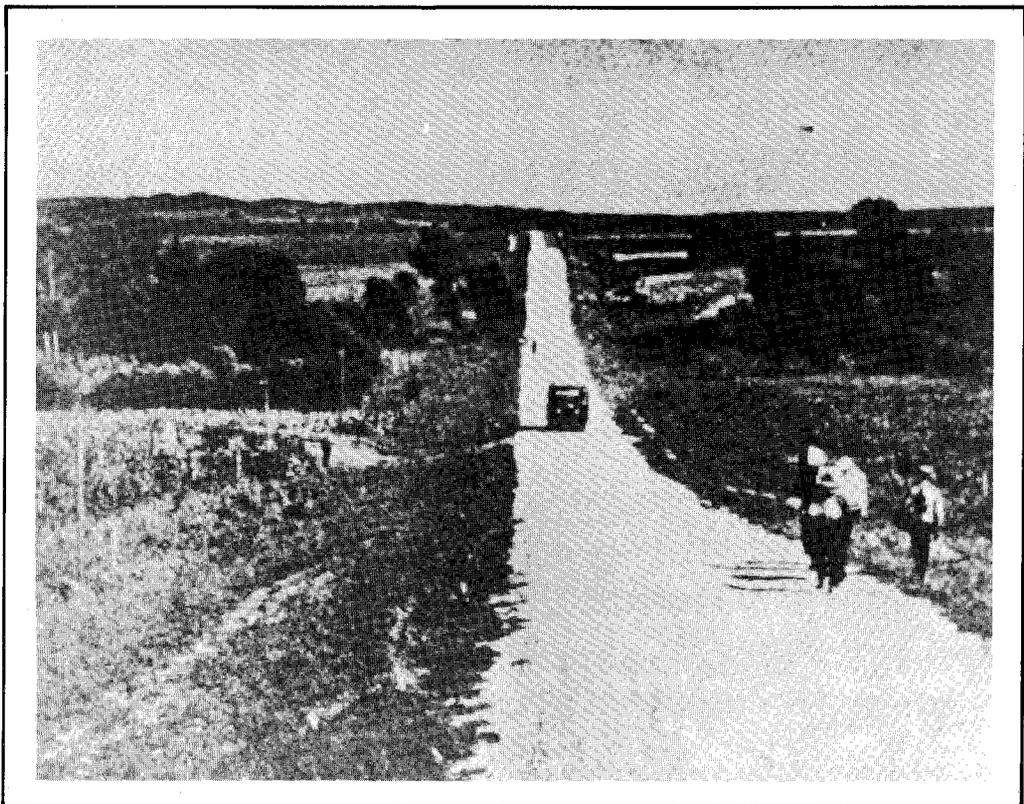


Area of Operations

2

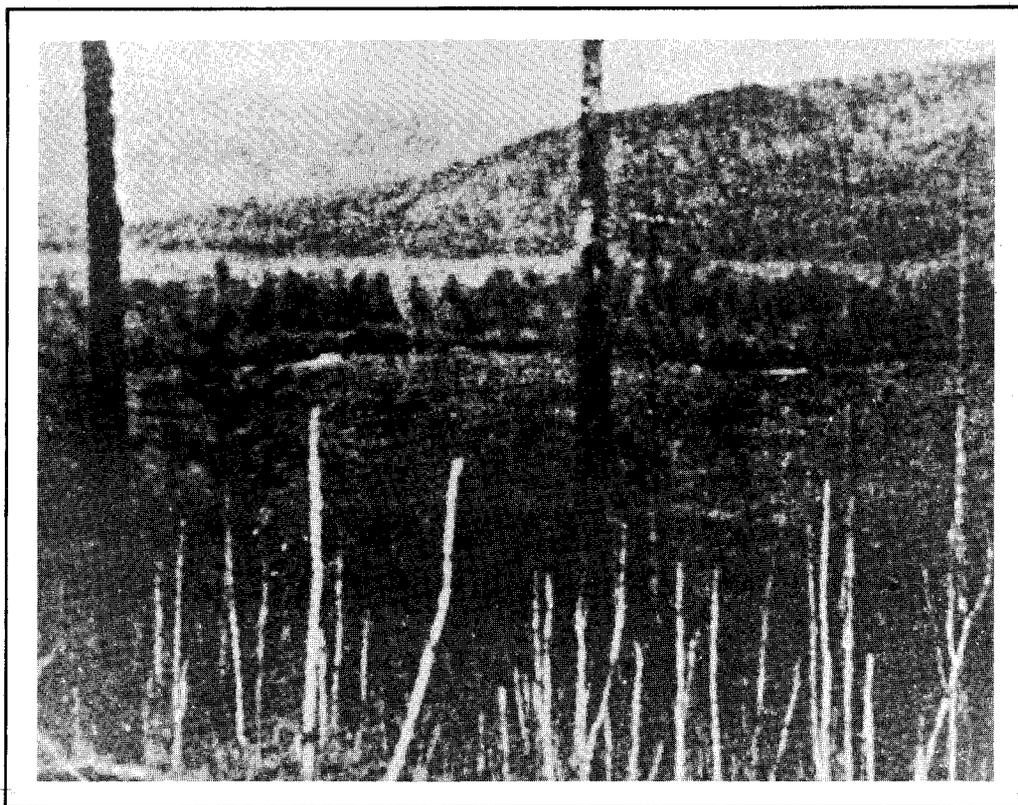


Manchuria covers 1.5 million square kilometers bounded on the south by Korea, the Liaotung Gulf, and China, on the east and north by the Soviet Far Eastern province and Siberia, and on the west by Outer Mongolia and Inner Mongolia. By virtue of its geographic location, its natural resources, and its population, Manchuria is an area of considerable strategic



Highway from Changchun to Kirin, near Changchun

value. Its fertile central regions are both industrially and agriculturally important. Its geographical location gives to it a dominant position vis-à-vis China and the Soviet Far East. For this reason, the major powers of the region, China, Russia, and Japan, have long sought possession of Manchuria.

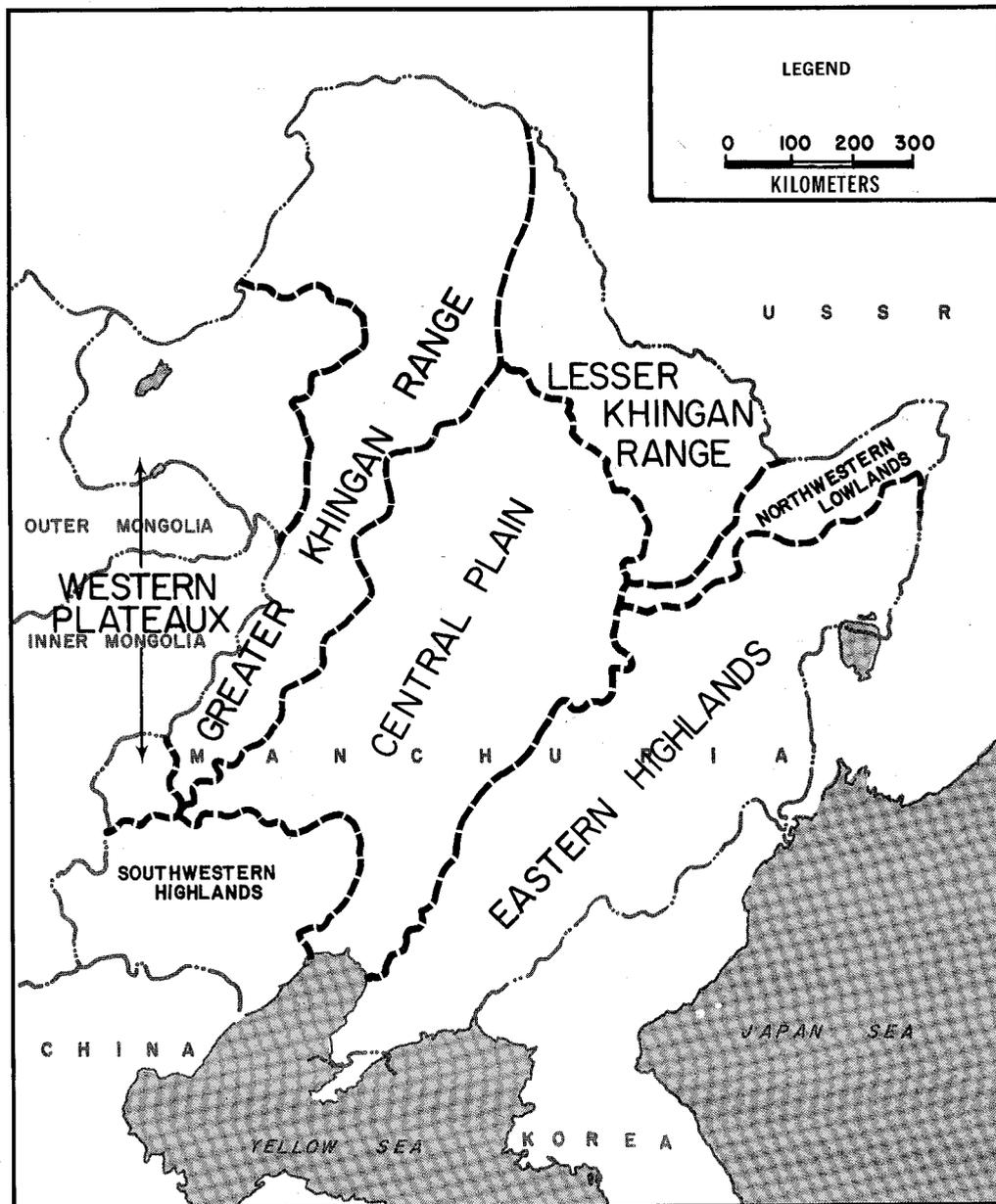


Northern and central Grand Khingan Mountains

Because of its large size and its geographical and climatic diversity (see maps 1—6), Manchuria can best be described as a series of concentric circles. The inner circle contains the heartland of Manchuria, the large central valley. Around the valley runs another large circle of mountains of various size and ruggedness, protecting the central valley from the west, north, east, and southeast. To the south, this circle opens onto the Liaotung Gulf. Beyond this circle of mountains is a peripheral area abutting Mongolia, Siberia, and the Soviet Far East.

The central valley of Manchuria, containing the basins of the Liao, Sungari, Nen, Hsiliao, Choerh, and other rivers, extends 1,000 kilometers from north to south and 400 to 500 kilometers from east to west. In 1945 a

well-developed road and rail network traversed the region, connecting the major industrial cities of Mukden, Changchun, Harbin, and Tsitsihar. Terrain in the central valley is generally flat, and cultivated areas predominate.



Map 1. Manchuria: Regions and Terrain

West of the central valley is the Grand Khingan mountain range. Running from north to south, this range extends from the Amur River region of northern Manchuria southward to a junction with the mountains of northern China. The mountains vary in height from 1,800 meters in the north, to 1,500 meters in the central region, and finally to 1,900 meters in the south. From the west the mountains rise less steeply than from the east. Land west of the mountains averages from 1,000 to 1,200 meters in altitude,



East slope of northern Grand Khingan Mountains near Pokotu

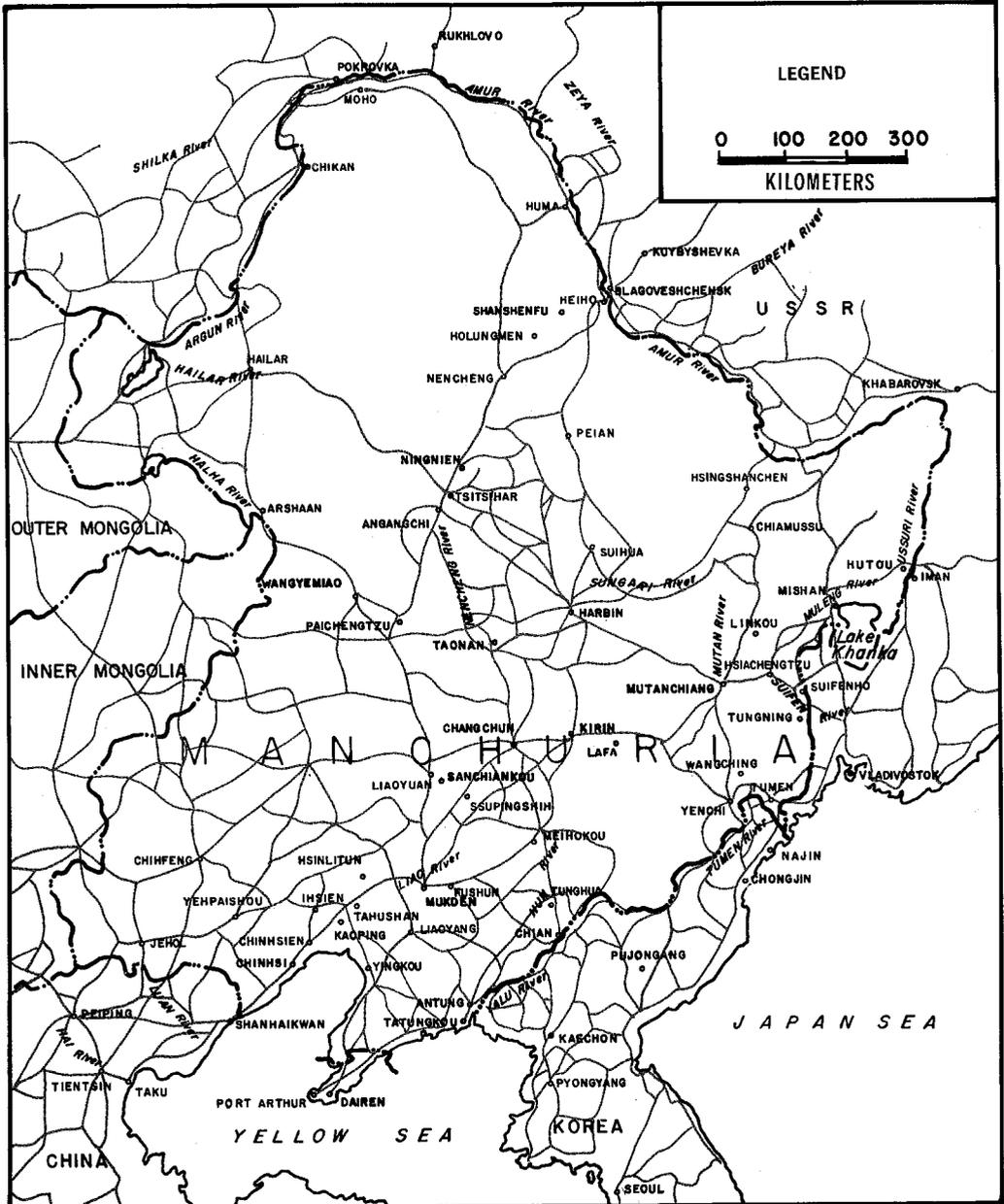
thus the mountains rise from 300 to 900 meters. Land east of the mountains averages from 500 to 700 meters, thus the mountains loom at greater heights. The Grand Khingans form a belt of dissected mountains and broad swampy valleys varying in width from 500 kilometers in the north to eighty kilometers in the south. The mountains are heavily forested in the north, but these forests decrease in density to the south, finally giving way to brush and scrub grass. Of several passes and narrow valleys that traverse

the Grand Khingans, in 1945 the two principal passes contained the rail-road lines from Yakoshih to Pokotu and from Halung-Arshaan to Solun. Poor roads paralleled these rail lines, and elsewhere numerous pack and cart trails traversed the mountain range.



Map 2. Size Comparator

Bounding the northern portion of the central valley of Manchuria, the Lesser Khingan Mountains extend from northwest to southeast for a distance of 600 kilometers, with an average width from 100 to 300 kilometers. These mountains, a series of heavily wooded rounded hills, conical summits, and open valleys, range in elevation from 700 to 1,300 meters. In 1945, the main passages through the mountains contained the rail lines from Tsitsihar and Harbin to Aihun on the Amur River.



Map 3. Manchuria: Road (left) and Railroad (right) Networks, 1945

from 900 to 1,500 meters, while south of the Sungari River elevations average 700 to 1,000 meters. In 1945, rail lines and roads traversed the Eastern Highlands from Changchun via Kirin to Tumen; from Harbin via Mutanchiang to Ussurysk; and from Harbin via Mutanchiang and Mishan to Iman on the Ussuri River. Less important military railroad lines ran from Tungning to Wangching and parallel to the Soviet border from Liaoheishan to Suiyang.



Eastern Manchurian Highlands

Heavy forests cover the Eastern Manchurian Highlands in the south, and dense thickets of small trees and brush cover the central and northern portions. The valley of the Sungari River, running northeast from Harbin to Chiamussu, separates the Eastern Highlands and Lesser Khingan Mountains. Before 1945, the Japanese built several military roads through the Eastern Highlands to provide communications between adjacent units and rear installations.



Map 5. Manchuria: Temperature